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LILI KRAUS: THE PERSON, THE PERFORMER, AND THE TEACHER

The University of Oklahoma

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LILI KRAUS:
THE PERSON, THE PERFORMER, AND THE TEACHER

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
MUSIC EDUCATION

By
STEVEN HENRY ROBERSON
Norman, Oklahoma
1985

LILI KRAUS:
THE PERSON, THE PERFORMER, AND THE TEACHER

A DISSERTATION
APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Problem	1
Purpose	1
Basic Assumptions	2
Definitions	5
Methodology and Procedure	6
Limitations	12
Significance	13
Personal Qualifications	13
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
III. KRAUS THE PERSON	22
IV. KRAUS THE MUSICIAN	77
The Reviews	77
Kraus Views Playing and Performance Practices	92
V. KRAUS'S TECHNICAL SYSTEM	109
Genesis and Overview	109
Prolongation of Sound	118
Rushing	118
Slow Playing	119
Weight Transfer	120
Close to Keys	121
Relaxation and Tension	121
Tone Quality	122
Wrist Motions	124
Advance Preparation	125
Superfluous Motion	126
Physical and Musical Considerations	127
Summary	140

VI. KRAUS THE TEACHER	141
Kraus's Pedagogical Philosophy	141
Evaluations of Kraus's Teaching	150
VII. SUMMARY	169
APPENDIX A	177
APPENDIX B	186
APPENDIX C	191
APPENDIX D	193
APPENDIX E	195
DISCOGRAPHY	201
BIBLIOGRAPHY	206

LILI KRAUS:
THE PERSON, THE PERFORMER, AND THE TEACHER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

Lili Kraus has earned the distinction as one of the preeminent piano performers and pedagogues of the twentieth century. She has been the subject of numerous interviews, made many recordings, served as artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University from 1967 to 1983, and enjoyed a distinguished performing career spanning more than six decades. Yet, no thorough study has been made of her life and work. This deficiency will hopefully be remedied by this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the life, performance, and teaching of a woman who stands at the fore of performer-educators. Kraus's musical preparation and academic study, technical and musical accomplishments, performing career, and teaching activities were examined in order to record, document, and preserve an account of her life and contribution to the music profession.

Basic Assumptions

This study was predicated upon the assumption that Lili Kraus has attained a high level of success in the community of musicians and with a significantly large segment of the musical cognoscenti. Evidence of Kraus's professional stature include a royal command performance at the wedding banquet of the Shah of Iran, the presentation of the first secular recital at Canterbury Cathedral, the first concert in the new city of Brasilia, appearances at the Royal Moroccan Mozart Festival and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, and participation in an orchestral concert at London's Royal Festival Hall honoring the ninetieth birthday of Bertrand Russell. She has served as a permanent jury member of the Van Cliburn Competition since its inception in 1962. Honors that have been bestowed upon Kraus include the receipt in 1978 of the Austrian government's highest award for outstanding achievement in the arts and sciences. She has also received honorary doctorates from Roosevelt University in 1968 and from Texas Christian University in 1980, where the citation described her as "spiritual in the fullest human sense . . . dedicated to the highest degree and talented almost beyond belief."¹ Many tributes have been paid to Kraus over the years. Perhaps the most cogent was penned by Russ Rymer:

¹"Lili Kraus," The Piano Quarterly 110 (Summer 1980): 48.

Passion has made Lili Kraus great in a field where greatness is something larger than perfection, where cold technique alone will not suffice. In music, a bird in the bush is worth a thousand in the hand: it is not the things that can be held or defined that raise a performance above the ordinary, but the fleeting and ineffable qualities, the intensity of understanding that a musician must discover in some internal reservoir of experience and personality. And it is that understanding that Mme. Kraus has in spades.¹

Chief among Kraus's recordings are the Mozart piano concertos and sonatas for the Columbia label. Her recordings of the Beethoven and Mozart Violin Sonatas with Szymon Goldberg from the 1930s led to the founding of the Mozart Society in London.² Under the sponsorship of this society, Kraus recorded most of the Mozart piano repertoire for Parlophone, a feat she repeated in 1954 for Discophiles Francais. Through these and subsequent recordings, Kraus "has become something of a living legend to U.S. record collectors."³ Of her recording of Schubert's Sonata in A major, La Tribune of Geneva commented:

With seeming effortlessness and with ever more concentrated surges of the imagination, she soars from expressive depths imbued with spontaneous, impulsive charm and feeling up to those realms where constructive intelligence reigns supreme in all its full might. Lili

¹Russ Rymer, "The Greatness of Lili Kraus," Atlanta Weekly magazine of Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution, 16 January 1983, p. 6.

²Richard Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," Stereo Review, February 1975, p. 77.

³W. A. Mozart, The Complete Piano Concerti. Lili Kraus, pianist. Columbia records, P12 11806. Record booklet notes unsigned.

Kraus is an artist completely in a class by herself,
one who defies comparison.¹

On the occasion of her recording of the Schubert Sonata in B-flat major, Peter G. Davies of the New York Times wrote:

A Schubert anniversary without a concert by Lili Kraus would be as unthinkable as a Mozart anniversary without a concert by Lili Kraus. The pianist has become so closely identified with these two composers, playing their music and speaking of them with such passionate commitment, that one sometimes feels that she must have known them personally.²

Kraus's teaching career began with her appointment as a full professor at the Vienna Academy of Music when she was but twenty, a post she maintained until 1931. She taught at Capetown University, South Africa, during the 1949-50 academic year, and served as artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University from 1967 until her retirement in 1983. Kraus has demonstrated in word and deed that she places high value on teaching, especially that which she learned through her own study and discovery, a subject about which she speaks with compelling force:

I am among the very few people, a handful if there are that many today, who represent an unbroken tradition, who adores teaching because I am able to impart what I have gained by experience and learned by these superb people, like Bartok, Kodaly, Schnabel, and Steuermann. I made up my mind that the sacrifice I will bring for music, among the million other sacrifices that you have to bring, is to forego the pleasure of teaching people who prepare to be performers, per se.

¹Undated issue of La Tribune as quoted in record jacket notes of Franz Schubert, Sonata in A Major. Lili Kraus, pianist. Festival Records, MU 314.

²Franz Schubert, Sonata in B-flat Major. Lili Kraus, pianist. Vanguard Records, VSD 71267. Record jacket notes unsigned.

The fate of music depends not on those people but on the teachers who will teach them. Therefore, I decided that I will teach at a university where there are talented people, at least not to the sole purpose of becoming performers, but they will become teachers. You see, we have excellent performers, we have jolly, jolly few excellent teachers. Those are needed, and that's why I'm teaching.¹

Kraus's position as a successful performer and teacher cannot be questioned. Her life and contribution to music deserve attention and study. She has achieved great success as a concert pianist and master teacher. This investigation of her life has documented and preserved the legacy of one of the foremost pianists of the twentieth century. This distillation of the highlights of Kraus's life and work has endowed them with permanency and will help to insure their survival.

Definitions

The following definitions served the purposes of this study:

Concert Pianist. One who derives a substantial portion of his/her income on a regular basis from piano recitals and concerts that typically are booked by a professional manager.

Pedagogy. The art and science of teaching.

Master Class. A public teaching demonstration presented by a renowned musician-teacher.

Technic. A total concept of playing a musical in-

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili By Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 29.

strument that manifests itself in physical execution.

Technique. A method or strategy of procedure.

Recital. A public performance by an individual.

Concert. A public performance involving two or more performers.

Methodology and Procedure

The first task was to review the related literature, including published interviews with Kraus, articles about her, and concert and record reviews. This literature review constitutes the second chapter. Chapter Three is devoted to a survey of Kraus's life and career; among the topics covered are her childhood, her education and study with Bartok, Steuermann, and Schnabel, her marriage and family life, the concentration-camp experience, her public and recorded performing career, and her teaching positions. Chapter Four examines both the reviews of Kraus's performances and also her interpretive ideas. Her technical system is discussed in Chapter Five. Attention in Chapter Six turns to Kraus's pedagogical activities, focusing especially on the distinguishing tactics and strategems employed in her teaching as viewed from her own perspective and that of her former students and colleagues. A Summary concludes the study by providing a concise and cogent overview of Kraus's life, musicianship, and pedagogical pursuits.

Important sources of information for this study were published interviews with and articles about Kraus, reviews,

and newspaper accounts. In addition, the researcher conducted a series of four interviews with Kraus in January, August, and November 1984, and January 1985. Kraus has seen the transcripts of the first three of these interviews and has reworked and corrected her responses to her satisfaction. Poor health has prevented her from reviewing the transcript of the last interview. In the interviews, she responded to questions relevant to her life, academic study, performance career, practice procedures, philosophical and religious views, personality, imagination, recordings, technic, professional colleagues, and pedagogical theories. A list of the questions answered by Kraus has been included in Appendix E. Kraus's answers to questions one through twenty-one were a source of information for Chapter Three. Her answers to questions twenty-two through forty-six were used in the preparation of Chapter Four. Responses to questions forty-seven through sixty were instrumental in the formulation of Chapter Five. Answers to questions sixty-one through eighty-two were drawn upon for Chapter Six. Comments and observations noted in the literature review were also included in these chapters as needed. In the interviews, Kraus's replies were in some instances wide-ranging, touching on subjects beyond the scope of the specific question. Yet these answers often provided useful adjunct information. Due to the circumstances of her health at the time of the interviews, Kraus was queried only on those subjects which could not be fully researched else-

where. The interviews with her answered many of the crucial and essential questions left unanswered in the extant literature.

Also, Jo Boatright, a former assistant to Kraus from 1973 to 1982 at Texas Christian University, has shared with the researcher her journal of notes about Kraus's technical system, a journal based on the observation of hundreds of lessons and masterclasses taught by Kraus spanning more than a decade. This journal details various physical and musical manifestations of Kraus's technical system, and portions of its contents have been approved by Kraus herself. While the journal was not compiled systematically, it does provide personal insights into the Kraus technic that cannot be found elsewhere. Further, Robert Silverman, editor of The Piano Quarterly and former Director of Publication at Mills Publishing Corporation (now Belwin-Mills Publishing Corporation) during the time of negotiations with Kraus for publication of her edition of the Cadenzas for the Mozart Piano Concertos, has discussed with the researcher his involvement with that project. In an interview conducted by telephone, he recollected his collaboration with Kraus from the initial conversations to the publication of that edition. Another source of information was access to the data about Kraus collected by Fort Worth Productions in the course of their preparation of the film, Lili, a documentary on the life and teaching of Kraus that was aired nationally on public television in

January 1985. They allowed the researcher to make photocopies of transcripts of interviews they conducted with the following people: Kraus; Alix Williamson, Kraus's personal representative; Ruth Mandl Pope and Michael Mandl, Kraus's children; Otto Mandl, Kraus's stepson; Fergus Pope, Kraus's son-in-law; Michael Winesanker, Chairman of the Music Department at Texas Christian University during Kraus's residency there; Eugene Fodor, the noted author of travel books and Kraus's former student; and Claude Frank, concert pianist and friend of Kraus. Finally, Ruth Pope, Kraus's daughter, was interviewed by telephone in order to ascertain and/or corroborate biographical details about Kraus that were unavailable or uncertain elsewhere.

Two questionnaires were disseminated, the first addressed to Kraus's students and the second to her former colleagues at Texas Christian University. The questionnaires gathered information regarding Kraus's pedagogical characteristics and methods. Copies of the questionnaires, both of which are open-ended, are included in Appendices A and B. The student questionnaire was submitted to all of Kraus's former students whose names and addresses could be located in various files at Texas Christian University. A total of twenty-one questionnaires were sent to former students, and eight initial responses were received. A follow-up solicitation via letters and telephone calls netted six additional replies, for a final total of fourteen completed questionnaires.

naires. The colleague questionnaire was sent to all of the music faculty members who taught at Texas Christian University during her residency there and whose names and addresses could be obtained from university files. Questionnaires were sent to thirteen of Kraus's former colleagues, and four were completed and returned. A follow-up mailing and telephone calls to delinquent respondents netted two additional completed forms for a total of six.

In both questionnaires, the questions are ordered according to the length of the anticipated response, from shortest to longest. The student questionnaire requested information about Kraus's pedagogical activities, with the first three questions soliciting information about such specifics as practice methodology, technic, and interpretation as taught by Kraus. Questions four through six inquired about the tactics employed by Kraus or characteristics inherent in her professional position that motivated or influenced the respondent. Questions seven, eight, and nine required an appraisal of Kraus's teaching, while questions ten through twelve asked for an opinion about the effect of Kraus's teaching upon the respondent's subsequent musicianship and career.

In the colleague questionnaire, questions one and two called for a judgment about Kraus's pedagogical tactics and effectiveness. Questions three and four asked for an evaluation of the personal qualities that characterized Kraus's

pedagogical approach and about her position in comparison with other piano teachers.

The final two questions of both questionnaires asked for any additional comments and requested that the respondent sign his/her name if permission was granted to quote the author by name. Otherwise, anonymity was promised.

The information obtained from both questionnaires was used in the preparation of Chapter Six in order to allow for a critical documentation of Kraus's pedagogical activities. Since a great many reviews exist that evaluate Kraus's performances and recordings, no questionnaire was needed in the area of her musicianship. Likewise, details of her biography are treated adequately elsewhere.

Both questionnaires were pilot-tested in order to determine if the questions were ambiguous, redundant in content, or unreasonable in the amount of information they requested. The student questionnaire was pilot-tested by ten graduate piano majors at the University of Oklahoma and three members of the piano faculty at the University of Oklahoma. The colleague questionnaire was pilot-tested among two faculty members from each of the following divisions within the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma: applied music, history, theory, and education. Respondents were asked to evaluate the questions in terms of clarity, redundancy, and reasonableness of the length of response anticipated in light of the open-ended nature of the questions and

the fairly lengthy amount of answer space. The problems revealed in the pilot-testing were remedied by a redesign of questions where appropriate. Cover letters for both pilot-tests are included in Appendices C and D.

Questionnaires were marked by a single letter in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of each questionnaire. This coding system allowed the researcher to pursue tardy respondents with a follow-up letter.

Limitations

This study does not purport to furnish a detailed biography of Lili Kraus. Rather, a sufficient biographical sketch was developed for the purpose of outlining those events that have had an impact on Kraus the person, the performer, and the teacher. Similarly, the discussion of Kraus's technic is not intended to serve as a "how to" manual. A step-by-step guide to an exact replication of her technical system is neither practical nor is it even possible without aural and visual demonstration. Further, only Kraus could articulate every nuance of her technic with complete assurance of accuracy. The operative boundaries imposed by the researcher on the discussion of Kraus's technical system allowed for the presentation only of documentable detail, including Kraus's own remarks drawn from published accounts, the series of interviews conducted with her by the researcher, and the journal compiled by Boatright that details various aspects of Kraus's technic.

Significance

An examination of the events and professional activities and characteristics that have distinguished the life, musicianship, and teaching of Lili Kraus uncovered and preserved a vast storehouse of accumulated pianistic and pedagogical wisdom extending over a career of more than eighty years. Kraus serves as transmitter of a musical tradition descended from her study with Bartok, Steuermann, and Schnabel. She has evolved a singular technic that has elicited salutations from around the world, and she has personalized an interpretive approach, particularly as regards the Viennese Classicists that, by her own admission, "has brought Mozart into the twentieth century."¹ An examination and documentation of her performances, technic, pedagogical strategies, life, and critical evaluations about her have allowed a permanent record to be created that can illuminate the accomplishments of this great musician for current and future generations of musicians and aficionados.

Personal Qualifications

The researcher studied piano with Lili Kraus from September 1972 through December 1975 during his work on a master's degree in piano performance at Texas Christian University. He enjoys a considerable measure of entree with Kraus and a large number of her former students and colleagues.

¹Michael Fleming, "Pianist Impressed Both Students, Fans," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 24 April 1983, sec. E, p. 4.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

No thorough study of Lili Kraus predates this investigation. Various aspects of her life, philosophy, playing, and teaching have been treated in a significant number of short articles, mostly in an interview format. Many of these naturally recount the same details; typically, the biographical outlines are presented, and then some area of specific interest is explored. The absence of a unified and systematic exposition of Kraus's life and genius created a void that threatened the survival of her insights, discoveries, and wisdom in a meaningful and useful format..

Among those articles that primarily address the details of Kraus's life, the most complete account appeared in Musicians Since 1900.¹ While some of the dates cited in this article are incorrect (a fact substantiated by Kraus herself), the rest of the piece is accurate and thorough in its discussion of the highlights of Kraus's career, including a recounting of her formal study, marriage and family, concertizing, prison internment in a World War II Japanese concentration

¹David Ewen, ed., Musicians Since 1900 (New York: The H.W. Wilson Co., 1978), pp. 418-420.

camp, recital and record reviews, and honors. Another article that devotes considerable space to biographical details appeared in This Is TCU and is entitled "The Legend of Lili Kraus."¹ This article concludes with a reprint from Guideposts Magazine in which Kraus described her concentration camp experiences and the impact that those years had upon her philosophy and musicianship. This subject is also treated extensively in an interview that appeared in Elyse Mach's Great Pianists Speak for Themselves.² The balance of this interview deals with Kraus's preference for a projection of artistic vision in place of mere technical display. Speaking of contestants in the many competitions she adjudicates, Kraus stated:

Technically, they are wonderful; after all, we are living in a technological epoch which was never dreamed of in our evolution. The emphasis, therefore, seems to be on playing every note in its proper place, but without making a personal statement, showing no passionate involvement and taking no risks. Sometimes, when I listen to them, I fail to detect any joy or sadness. It all sounds the same: slow, fast, soft, loud. But I want to hear concepts, not just notes. The emotional content of what is played must be in₃ head and heart, not just in the fingers or on the sleeve.

Kraus echoes this same theme in a number of other interviews, often prescribing the solution she has etched in the mosaic of artistic inspiration versus shallow showmanship. In a

¹"The Legend of Lili Kraus," This Is TCU, Spring 1968, pp. 17-21.

²Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1980), pp. 145-155.

³Ibid., p. 153.

wide-ranging interview in Vision, Kraus explains that an artist must claim more than a dazzling technic:

The way I play music is an answer to how I feel about life. I never was a career woman and I have a million interests in life: hobbies, desires, passions. I was an excellent mountaineer. I won many prizes in swimming. I adore to draw in the camp (Japanese prison) where I had no piano. I made portraits and got bread for it, so to speak. I love to write. I love to read. I love my children. I can kill time with dreaming like nobody else. All of this is the nature, I think, of a real artist. If you are concerned with music only, you can't be a real artist. How then do you know hell and heaven as one knows when one really lives?¹

Kraus again speaks to the eclecticism demanded of a great artist in a well-written article that appeared in the Atlanta Weekly; there she articulates a subject that surfaces often in her discussions--her empathetic affinity with nature:

Oh, my dear, beautiful French Broad River. . . . I love it so. That's why I have an affinity for Shubert [sic]. When you talk about a performer's style, you must understand his affinity for the way a particular composer spoke. . . . Bach was the composer of the birds of the air. Shubert [sic] was the composer of water. How could I play him if I did not love that river?²

A similar and often-repeated story was cited in a feature article about Kraus in the magazine of Texas Christian University, This Is TCU. As she has done many times in print, Kraus described her aesthetic impulse by interrupting the outdoor interview when a bird perched in a nearby tree

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili by Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 26.

²Russ Rymer, "The Greatness of Lili Kraus," Atlanta Weekly magazine of Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution, 16 January 1983, p. 15.

began singing joyously: "That's how I want to give my music! Freely. And for the glory of God."¹ Later in the same interview, Kraus talked about her profound religious convictions, saying, "Am I religious? Am I breathing? I cannot imagine anyone fool enough to look around and not be aware of a higher intelligence."² These same sentiments are reflected time and again in the Kraus interviews.

More has been written about Kraus's musicianship and technic than any other aspect of her life and art, a feat accomplished in a number of interviews and printed master lessons. In a conversation with Marion Stone that appeared in Clavier in 1968, Kraus explained her devotion to Mozart:

When I began to explore Mozart, I discovered the infinite beauty of that music, and somehow it is given to me to give life to that beauty. Now, I am quite sure that there are any number of my colleagues who play Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovitch and the rest infinitely better than I do. I do not think that that is the case in Mozart. So, I find it my God-given duty, privilege, and if you like, cross, to consecrate my life to this music.³

Further along in the same interview, Kraus was asked to discuss her views on concertizing:

To share my love . . . is the God-willed reason of all my endeavors, the crowning happiness of my being. When fulfillment is experienced the message is passed directly from heart to heart as if from the mouth of the Lord. Thus, in spite of the agonizing tension and excitement

¹Latryl Ohendalski, "Lili Kraus," This Is TCU, June 1983, pp. 3-6.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Marion Stone, "Interview with Lili Kraus," Clavier 12 (September 1968): 24.

which I go through before every concert . . . , at the moment when I see the people there, I know that they have come . . . with the deep longing to witness the miracle, to share it. Then I am filled with the sole desire to make music shine in all its divine splendor, so that the people may share with me the bliss of its beauty and meaning.¹

In an article printed in Stereo Review in 1975, Kraus's artistic concept of Mozart was analyzed when she was asked to respond to the charge that her Mozart was too aggressive:

"To say that Mozart should be played delicately," she said, "is to say that life should only have pink pastel and blue pastel colors--no ups and downs; that it should be white, serene, not too happy, please, but just nice, comfortable, pleasant, charming. As we all know, there are no depths of unhappiness, tragedy, frustration, anger that haven't touched Mozart to the core--likewise no bliss that he has not experienced"

"Only people who are conventionally and superficially acquainted with Mozart can ever come to the idea that he should be played delicately or lifelessly--prettily. Never, never, never!"²

Dean Elder has produced several articles about Lili Kraus for Clavier, the first of which in 1969 queried the pianist about many facets of her musicianship, including such questions as, "How do you practice now?," "How do you memorize?," "What is your approach to interpretation?," "What are your ideals of tone?," and "Should a great pianist have great passion for playing the piano?" Kraus's response to this last question was particularly revealing:

No, for music. There is a great, great difference. From what I gather a man like Lhevinne--whom I didn't

¹Ibid.

²Richard Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," Stereo Review, February 1975, p. 76.

have the pleasure of knowing or hearing--had a great passion for playing the piano, but not for music. . . . with Schnabel it was just the other way around. Schnabel's first and last concern was the music which he eventually put into words through the medium of the piano. Backhaus was similar.¹

Elder has also recorded in print three master classes taught by Kraus. In the first, Kraus addresses such topics as Mozart's piano, technic, expression, harmonic structure, strict adherence to the text, superfluous movements, perfecting details, and dynamics.² In the second, discussions include hand positions, Mozart slurs, spontaneity, technic, Alberti Basses, trills, Mozart editions, tempi, economy of means, and interpretation.³ In the third installment, Kraus spoke about dynamics, memorizing, trills, and pedaling.⁴

References to Kraus's pedagogical strategies have appeared frequently. An article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in 1983 quotes Kraus's former assistant at Texas Christian University, Jo Boatright in this regard:

Those who stayed with Kraus gained more than the ability to play the piano, they acquired a fresh outlook on life. Without forcing her own philosophy on students, she instilled in them a reverence for music that per-

¹Dean Elder, "Lili Kraus . . . Regal Lady of the Keyboard," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 26.

²Dean Elder, "On Mastering Mozart," Clavier 10 (April 1971): 10-16.

³Dean Elder, "Making Mozart Live," Clavier 10 (May-June 1971): 12-18.

⁴Dean Elder, "Master Class," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 26-27.

meated their lives outside the studio and the concert hall.¹

In a feature article that appeared in the Dallas Morning News in 1976, John Adroin described Kraus's performance at a week-long master class that she presented at Texas Christian University in June, 1976:

I have attended many such classes by a variety of renowned artists and have often found them a platform more for ego than sharing. Not so with Kraus. She submerges herself and her ego deeply into that of her students, agonizing with them over memory slips, prodding them into fuller self-expression and verbally rapping their knuckles for an unmusical phrase.

Only from Maria Callas, when she taught at Juilliard, have I experienced such selfless, concentrated giving as Kraus gave last week at TCU.²

Several articles detailing the production of the film, Lili, a docu-drama depicting Kraus's life and career, have been published recently, including "'Lili': The Legend Lives On" and "The Filming of Lili."³ The film, shown nationally on Public Broadcasting Service in January 1985, was filmed on location in Fort Worth, New York, Budapest, and Vienna. It will also be aired on Hungarian, Austrian, and New Zealand television stations.

Two other articles of interest include "Lili Kraus: Spirited Doyenne of Mozart and Bartok" in which Kraus dis-

¹Michael Fleming, "Pianist Impressed Both Students, Fans," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 24 April 1983, sec. E, p. 4.

²John Ardoin, "Learning with Lili," Dallas Morning News, 20 June 1976, p. 7C.

³Claire Eyrich, "'Lili': The Legend Lives On," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 22 April 1984, pp. 1F-2F; and "The Filming of Lili," This Is TCU, Fall 1984, pp. 40-43.

cusses the relative merits of different pianos, while the second one lists some of Kraus's recital programs from 1938 to 1974.¹ There are also twenty recital and concert reviews that have appeared in the London Times, spanning a period from 1931 to 1976. In addition, the New York Times has published a number of articles and reviews, beginning in 1963 through 1970.

While a wealth of informative articles has been produced describing Lili Kraus in various aspects, no one work of sufficient breadth existed that undertook the assimilation of these assorted facts while at the same time penetrating to a far deeper level of insight and truth. This study seeks to rectify both problems by providing a scholarly work that is both complete and accessible, thereby insuring the preservation and continuity of the contribution of Lili Kraus.

¹Bob Doerschuk, "Lili Kraus: Spirited Doyenne of Mozart and Bartok," Keyboard, October 1983, pp. 52, 54, 66, 75; and George Kehler, ed., The Piano in Concert, 2 vols. (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1982), vol. 1, pp. 693-94.

CHAPTER III

KRAUS THE PERSON

Lili Kraus was born on March 4, 1905, in Budapest to Victor and Irene Bak Kraus. Her father, of Czechoslovakian descent, earned his living as a stone grinder by sharpening knives and scissors. The family was desperately poor at first, and Kraus remembers that her cradle was a laundry basket on the kitchen table.

Kraus's mother, Hungarian by birth, was an amateur singer whose professional aspirations in that direction had been thwarted by her parents' objections. Kraus recalls:

My mother was really almost hysterical with fear and ambition. Whereas my father was a self-taught man, my mother had an excellent education, but besides had nothing to do with music because her parents wouldn't allow her to become a singer. That was her only, only desire in life. But it was unthinkable. Singers, professional women, were naughty ladies, one step removed from the street. All the ambition unfulfilled of my mother was centered on my growing up and being what I have become.¹

Kraus was thus encouraged from her earliest days to give vent to her expressive nature, the first manifestation of which was in dance. "I danced as I breathed; I had to dance wherever I heard music, and I heard it even if it

¹Interview with Lili Kraus, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

wasn't there."¹ When she was five, Kraus and her family were on holiday at "a cheap little summer resort." She was dancing happily and with complete abandon when Hungary's great tragic actress, Yascai Mari, happened upon the scene. Mari was immensely taken with the child's spontaneity and rhythmic impulse and told the parents that she could make of their daughter the greatest dancer the world had yet known if they were to entrust her into Mari's custody. Kraus's mother adamantly refused, despite all protestations from Mari and Kraus. Apparently, being a dancer was only a slightly less disastrous fate for a young woman than singing for a living. Her hopes for a ballet career were abruptly ended, and Kraus felt that "this was a terrible, terrible disappointment for me, a real almost breaking-point disappointment."²

Her mother was very determined that Kraus should become a musician, and specifically an instrumental musician, for that was considered more respectable than singing. Kraus wanted to play the violin, but her mother chose the piano for her "because it belongs to decent households."³ At first, Kraus hated the piano, believing it to be "too mechanical, ugly, and far away from the music."⁴ When she began taking lessons at age six, though, those negative impressions were forever changed:

From the moment onward when I set finger to it, it dawned on me that I can do anything on that piano. I had absolute good pitch since ever and ever. Anything, any

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

melody I knew or heard, I immediately found, plus the improvised bass, plus improvisations. I was happy as a lark and would have remained that happy had I been allowed to¹ continue to study with my superb little piano teacher.

This first teacher that Kraus so adored had been a student of Árpád Szendy, a man who, according to Kraus, "was perhaps a hundred years ahead of his time, and so was my little teacher."² Once again, though, Kraus's wishes and her mother's plans and ambitions for her conflicted, and Kraus lost.

When Kraus was eight she was sent to audition at Budapest's Royal Academy of Music despite the urgent pleas of her teacher who felt that her young student would likely be placed with a student-teacher with little experience. Notwithstanding the fact that the normal age of admittance to the Academy was fourteen, Kraus undertook the audition:

At the Royal Academy, as it was called then, nothing helped you except talent. You could be as rich as hell and the child of the prime minister--never mind! You either were outstanding or not taken.³

I created a sensation. True to my entire lack of diplomacy displayed throughout my life, it showed its devastating fearlessness during the audition. István Chován, Chairman of the Piano Faculty, had compulsory pieces on the repertoire to be presented by the aspirants. When asked to play one of the selections, I answered truthfully that I don't play them. In the awe-struck silence following my statement, one of the more courageous professors, with a camouflaged laughter in his

¹Ibid.

²Interview with Lili Kraus, conducted by Steve Roberson on January 21, 1984.

³Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

voice, asked me how come I haven't studied any of the pieces. I answered that I didn't like them and my teacher said they are not good compositions either. Astonishingly, they accepted me all the same. We had a little shop quite near the school, and after the audition, where I think some 103 competitors played and only eleven were taken, including myself, one professor after the other came to our shop and wanted to be assured that I would be their prospective student. I did create a real sensation.¹

Kraus was placed with a student-teacher during her first year at the Academy. She blames this young teacher for assigning repertoire that was much too difficult and for demanding excessively-fast tempos, so that by the end of the year her hands and arms were almost paralyzed with pain. The professors stopped coming by the shop. At that time, when she was nine, Kraus changed teachers. "I was taken by God's grace by a very excellent teacher called Székely who was a direct student of Busoni, and his beneficial advantage was that he let me do what I wished; he never interfered."² She also studied theory with Zoltan Kodaly and chamber music with Leo Weiner, but she had to go unprepared to the chamber music classes because her mother thought that was a waste of time.

Kraus stayed at the Royal Academy until she was seventeen, at which time she was graduated with highest honors. During that nine-year period of childhood through adolescence, she practiced between two and three hours daily, played with her friends whenever possible--"play with my peers was a source of infinite joy and totally carefree

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 21, 1984.

²Ibid.

passionate abandon"¹--and made daily visits to the zoo. She prized these visits and feels that her love for animals nurtured her musicianship. So enraptured was she with the animals that her boldness once led to near catastrophe:

I made an agreement with the son of one of the wards that, if he allowed me to go into the lion cubs' cage, he gets all my Christmas treats. He said, "yes, yes, yes." He did as the agreement was made, but, in the meantime, those cubs had become big, big animals, and the door was open, unfortunately, between the mother and the cubs. Luckily that ward was somewhere nearby, and so I survived. But I must say, I stood there. There was no question of patting the lions.²

Such adventures have continually characterized Kraus's life, forming a pool of experience upon which she has drawn for her personal and musical inspiration. Kraus also began teaching during these early years. She was eight when she accepted her first piano student, a five-year-old. Three years later, she had her next student, this time a forty-five-year-old woman. "At that time, I chose to teach due to bare necessity, really; we were terribly, terribly poor, and teaching was a vital help towards ensuring the family's daily bread."³

At the beginning of Kraus's last year at the Royal Academy, she was accepted into the Masterclass of Szendy, her first teacher's teacher. Before the classes started, though, Szendy died, and Kraus was temporarily set adrift. She accepted a job teaching piano to children in a small Hungarian town near the Czechoslovakian border. She lived in the

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

same house that doubled during the day as her studio. For the first time, she had a room to herself and independence from home. There she met Eugene Fodor, the Hungarian-born editor-publisher of travel books who now resides in Litchfield, Connecticut. She gave him lessons, along with a number of other young students, gaining "tremendous experience in teaching."¹ Fodor remembers that Kraus was a dynamic and charismatic young woman who took the town by storm. About her teaching he recalls:

She was an inspiring teacher because she taught even young non-professionals in a way where the appreciation and understanding of music were just as important as technique, if not more important. She could demonstrate what she meant by perfection, but she also had that ability to explain to her students the nature of music and the intentions of the composer and a deeper meaning in music that gave her students an entirely different type of understanding of music from the routine type which was available in a provincial town.

Another thing she did right from the beginning was to initiate pupils in the latest contemporary Hungarian music alive at that time, namely the works of two great composers appearing on the scene--Bartok and Kodaly. Even the Hungarian public knew little about them, but she was teaching complete beginners with the most sophisticated music, and the children took to it like ducks to water.²

Kraus fondly recollects that year as a time of great exploration and growth during which she taught, practiced often until dawn, and made friends:

There were a pair of twins, the ugliest sisters you can imagine, with whom I had philosophical discussions from here to the next orbit. Oh, that was a wonderful time.

¹Ibid.

²Interview with Eugene Fodor, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

A really fruitful time.¹

During her sojourn at this first teaching post, Kraus completed her coursework at the Academy by proxy and then returned to study piano with Bela Bartok.

The greatest influence I ever was blessed to experience was that of Bartok's teaching. Not only did he play the piano like nobody else in the world ever has or ever will, but he also impressed upon me that it is ridiculous to assume that with coercion you get anywhere. It is not possible. He was the least coercive teacher I ever knew to exist. In the lessons, after we played something, he just sat there silently. It was understood--I don't know how one knew--that you have to replay the piece. And so, for the better or the worse, you did replay it, and somehow it was totally different from the first time. That was his emanation, his projection, his vividness of creating the vision and the will. He would say, "Don't you see?" or "Have you considered what it could be?" or "I think it is more or less" or "But don't you find . . .". There was never, "That is like that; that you do like that." Never coercive! He taught like the Indian Gurus, to whom people pose their questions and they would remain silent, but they stay together in congenial silence for hours. At the end, the disciple stands up and he has received his answer. He never taught me any technic--absolutely never.²

Now, there is nobody, nobody, nobody today, I repeat, comparable to that playing of Bartok, but now why was it so incomparable? First of all, his method was that of Liszt, first class pianism, but inborn also, of course. He had very thin fingers, and he was not a sensuous man. Sometimes you had the feeling that bone hit against bone, so it was not a luxurious song, but boy, every note had its meaning. Every transition, everything, every phrase breathed out and in, and began again and went there, and came back. You heard the speech in all the voices, but implicated. There is no such playing today.³

Bartok taught mostly his own works. It was difficult to ask other professors to teach Bartok's compositions;

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

³Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

permission was given reluctantly or not at all. I was passionately drawn to his music and his teaching enabled me to do things I never imagined I would be able to do. The only other music I studied with Bartok was the occasional Beethoven sonata, no Mozart, and some Liszt, including the E-flat major Concerto and the "Eroica" Transcendental Etude.¹

Kraus concluded her study with Bartok and left for Vienna in 1923 to study with Severin Eisenberger in the Masterclass at the Academy of Music. Eisenberger was a Leschetizky student who at twenty-three had headed the Masterclass at the Berlin Academy, but during World War I he suffered shell shock which affected his memory and resulted in a diminishment of his fame. While the normal course of the Masterclass was three years, Kraus completed the work in one year but stayed on. In the following year she studied contemporary music with Edward Steuermann, the disciple and interpreter for Schoenberg. About Steuermann, Kraus has commented:

He was the brightest, intellectually the brightest, teacher I can possibly imagine, shedding light right and left, yet, the most boring player there ever was in the world. But apropos technic, he didn't teach me technic either; but when I played for him, I'll never forget--it was the Brahms' Schumann Variations--the first piece I played for him, he said at the end of it: "I am really full of admiration." My seams burst. However, he continued: "As to your technic, I can't understand that against all rational consideration you escape breaking every one of your ten fingers."²

In 1925, Kraus was named a full professor of piano at the Vienna Academy, a significant accomplishment for someone

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, November 22, 1984.

²Ibid.

only twenty years old. She had begun teaching at the Academy in 1924 as an assistant teacher, but her popularity was such that she soon had more students than did her supervisory teacher. Naturally, this situation was untenable for the faculty, and Kraus almost lost her job, but she managed to turn near-disaster into victory:

The director came to me and said, "Lili, what is happening, dear?" I answered, "I don't know what is happening. People come." "Yeah, but this is an impossible situation. I will have to ask you to leave that position." I said, "Yes, I wouldn't mind that, but I have no money, and we have no Masterclass in Budapest, and therefore, I would like to teach here at the Academy." "But a permanent job as a full professor?" I said, "Yes." "But that's impossible; you're much too young." I said, "Please make it possible." And he did.¹

Kraus continued to teach at the Academy for six years.

A great deal of Kraus's popularity with the students at the Academy was due to her budding concert career. Her debut had taken place in Holland in 1923. She performed there with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Mengelberg. With the next two years, Kraus played forty-five recitals, including appearances with the Dresden Philharmonic with Morike and the Berlin Philharmonic under Kleiber.

In the early years of her career, Kraus played a great deal of Chopin in a manner that, by her own admission, must have been quite dramatic:

From about eighteen to twenty-three I was known as a Chopin player. I had then a forest of hair on my head, and no matter how many hairpins I would use to keep it

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

up, by the end of a dramatic piece--say, the F Minor Fantasie--the hairpins would be scattered on the floor and my hair down. I'm sure the audience thought: "If this isn't Romantic, what is!"¹

Perhaps the most important event in Kraus's personal and professional life occurred while she taught at the Academy. On October 31, 1930, she married Otto Mandl, a wealthy mining engineer, a doctor of philosophy with an interest in theology, and an ardent art patron. Nearly twenty years older than Kraus, Mandl was married with three children when he met the pianist. Kraus insists that she did not destroy that marriage. "They were already apart, but for the children's sake they remained together in very good friendship."² Mandl's British-American Timber Trust Company imported timber from Russia and was a thriving concern with offices in Vienna and London, but after the depression began in 1929, Mandl suffered financial reversals and the business went into liquidation. He sold the firm and devoted his life to the promotion and furtherance of Kraus's career. He became her impresario, confidant, critic, and traveling companion. Michael Mandl, the son of Mandl and Kraus, feels that his father made the transition from successful businessman to his new role as promoter of someone else's career with ease:

I think that my father felt totally happy in that he was completely and overwhelmingly in love with my mother, and his success and happiness and satisfaction came out

¹Richard Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," Stereo Review, February 1975, p. 77.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

of her growing fame.

He took it upon himself to devote his total attention towards building, creating, and helping this beautiful young woman, who was my mother, to becoming a world-famous artist. He in fact became her impresario, and whereas most impresarios have more than one artist, he devoted all his attention, efforts, and dedication towards her career.¹

About their relationship, Kraus has said, "How I adored my husband who was absolutely everything for me: lover, idol, guide, and source of information."² With Mandl at the helm, Kraus's career soared, commencing in 1931 with a world tour that included visits to the Orient, Australia, South Africa, and throughout Europe.

Kraus never traveled without Mandl until shortly before his death in 1956. She credits him with having infused her career and life with vitality, purpose, and direction:

He had two interests. One was the female principle. He thought that all females must be redeemed, that they know only misery. The second interest was in the creative spirit, and in me he found both united, and I became his very life.

After the terrible crash of 1929, my husband surely, as he said, would not have stayed alive but for me. It turned out that we were meant for each other, and I adored him, but words are so feeble really.

For me, he was everything. Impractical as I am, I could never have made a career. While he was never my manager, he did put himself between me and the manager, and he handled all the details. He was absolutely every single thing I loved, admired, desired, looked up to--a father, son, idol, lover, just everything--so there was never a question of taking advice. I never asked whether his decisions were right or not; they were always right.

¹Interview with Michael Mandl, conducted by Fort Worth Productions, 1983.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

For instance, when I was once in France making some Mozart recordings, I asked my husband right after the sessions, "was that good, Dickey?" "Yes, but there are two harsh accents." "Where? How can you say such a thing? I hardly touched that key; what do you mean, accent? There is no accent. There's no reason to have the accent." About two months later, I heard the playback. I was shocked--two harsh accents! So, in this way he had an infallible sense, an indefatigable patience to be my critic, my scourge, and my promise.

He also took over so many of the social obligations that an artist faces while on tour. He often went in my stead, saying, "she is tired, or she has to work." It was tremendous. But our life was so much more based on things that come from within. Our life was so bountifying because, after all the work was done, whatever work it was, I would say, "Dickey, when are we going to leave?" We talked about what we will do, what we have done, what is possible, what the aspects are, etc.¹

While Mandl encouraged and facilitated Kraus's career during the pre-war years, presiding over her ever-expanding fame, Kraus's charm, personality, physical beauty, and charisma were the instrumental factors in fostering her growing success as a performer. Her stepson, William Otto Mandl, describes her appearance in those days:

She was ravishingly beautiful, dressed completely different than people were in London at that time. She wore clothes which, as my mother expressed it, were a little sudden. The colors were intense, but she could afford to wear intense colors because she had an enormously dynamic and vivacious personality. Her movements were majestic, and when she walked on the street, there was a queen walking. She tossed her head and people turned around because she was so beautiful, just marvelously beautiful. Her personal appearance was just something you never forgot. The same is true of her stage presence. She has this marvelous way of giving the audience a feeling that she² cares. She just does that by the way she moves on stage.

¹Ibid.

²Interview with William Otto Mandl, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

Eugene Fodor similarly describes the young Kraus:

She was a very, very stunning young woman at the age of nineteen when I first met her. She was beautiful and very, very dedicated to her music. The whole town, whether young or old or man or woman simply madly fell in love with her, and I called her a sort of a revolutionary phenomenon.¹

Kraus acknowledges her charm and charisma but disavows any pretense or premeditated showmanship, claiming that such magnetism must be come by naturally and cannot be copied:

I never had the airs of a prima donna, never. My behavior on the stage was perhaps so attractive because it was completely natural. I never thought of being a famous artist; I never thought of being arrogant.²

Kraus has also frequently won over audiences by prefacing each work on her programs with commentary from the stage. She has described her views on this practice:

Expressing the meaning of music in words is an easy task if you know the literature, for almost all composers at one time or another have put words to their musical symbols: Mozart in his operas, Schubert in his songs, Beethoven in his Mass, Bach in his cantatas.

Now why is expressing the meaning in words so helpful? Because if someone has a completely wrong feeling for a passage, words will help Schnabel used to improvise texts for almost all the music he taught, and his texts were extremely helpful.³

Even before their wedding, Mandl had decided that Kraus should study with Artur Schnabel. Kraus demurred, largely because Severin Eisenberger, her teacher at the Academy in Vienna, had warned that Schnabel was an intolerant tyrant who

¹Fodor interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

³Dean Elder, "Lili Kraus . . . Regal Lady of the Keyboard," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 24.

would leave those who dared to study with him little more than caricatures of himself.¹ Despite all attempts at persuasion, Mandl failed to convert his wife on this issue, so he resorted to trickery. He insisted that Lavinia, his daughter by his first wife and Kraus's pupil for two years, should audition for Schnabel. Knowing that Lavinia was wholly inadequate for such a task, Kraus vigorously protested. She lost, and the three of them arrived at Schnabel's studio in Berlin in 1930. As expected, Schnabel suggested that Lavinia might enjoy working with one of his assistants. Kraus was so "overwhelmed by the terrific personality" of Schnabel that she asked if he would accept her. Within two months, she had twenty lessons with the great pianist, and Kraus and Mandl moved to Berlin to be near him. Kraus vividly remembers those early lessons:

After the first session, agonizing in front of twenty to thirty auditors, I had a vital decision to make: would I accept my total ignorance in view of Schnabel's total knowledge, knuckle down and trample my pride underfoot--or would I walk out, never to return? Never to succeed in scaling the wall behind which lies a world of infinite splendor, adventure, deadly hazards, and undreamed-of glory? I felt that Schnabel lived and moved in that world with complete ease and freedom as in his native element; but I was outside, for I failed to understand what he had to tell me. The terms used, the context he used them in, and his entire approach were new and strange to me. Naturally, after a short struggle, one "seal" after² the other yielded and the initiation took its course.

¹Lili Kraus, "Of Teachers and Husbands," The Piano Quarterly 84 (Winter 1973-74): 34.

²Ibid.

Kraus never had a private lesson with Schnabel during the four years from 1930 to 1934 that she studied with him. The lessons with Bartok, on the other hand, had been on an individual basis, but with Schnabel there were always twenty to twenty-five auditors present.

The work with Schnabel proved to be revolutionary for Kraus:

I had already reached the level of a fine young upcoming artist, having given many concerts. Of course, there I learned everything that is worth knowing in that his genius did not know compromises. For the better or the worse, the exaggerated slow and the exaggerated fast tempi that he moved in commanded by his nature were totally acceptable and valid and admirable if you knew him, if you heard him play, if you were taught by him. You had to be, however, superbly talented to benefit by his teaching. I, for instance, was shattered for two years. I couldn't, practically couldn't, play because I cannot copy, and I lost all I had and hadn't regained; I had to spit out and digest all that which I was taught. He, too, didn't teach me technically. We became very dear friends; he stayed at our house. One day, unforgettably, we went out for a beautiful evening walk, and I said, "Artur, how does one play a forte?" "Are you serious?" "I am damn serious," I told him. "But all you do is this" [Kraus waved her wrist amid a chuckle]. As it happens, in a nutshell and with countless modifications, this movement is the key to a flexible wrist. But, yes, I was left to discover technic partly through the other students and partly through myself; I understood that.¹

Kraus remembers that the lessons with her teacher were always inspiring:

He was the most eloquent speaker you have ever seen. Before he let the person play his or her piece from beginning to end, he embarked on a dissertation on which we all hung like on the gospel. He adored to speak. Now what would he say? The essence of what he said was, "No matter how fascinatingly, colorfully, brilliantly, musi-

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 21, 1984.

cianly, thrillingly you play, unless you have learned to read the score and do, and feel, and say everything that that score contains, your playing is not worth a blown out egg."¹

What he cared for, in a nutshell, presuming that the student had sufficient insight, passion, and humility, was to invoke the meaning of the work beyond the shell. To Schnabel's best conviction, no matter how brilliant the presentation turned out to be, it remained valueless unless it succeeded in projecting the artistic image of the composition. He preferred a musically compelling rendition, even if not flawless, to the most infallible production of technical proficiency.

The second inestimable principle I received from Schnabel was the fact that, no matter how clever the commentator was, the edition to be used had to be the "urtext", the original edition which showed the intentions of the composer, un-adulterated.²

Claude Frank, concert pianist, was also a student of Schnabel, though his study was done some years after Kraus's association with their shared mentor. Frank believes that Kraus's playing reflects two important lessons learned from Schnabel:

I would say she got two things from Schnabel. One is a complete refusal of artistic compromise which is exemplified in the playing itself. There are no concessions to immediate popularity. There are no concessions to trying to be "expressive" like slowing down the end of a phrase to show an imaginary audience, "here is the end of a phrase." Schnabel refused ever to do that, and Lili also refuses to do it. Schnabel's influence was very strong in this. The other thing is something that actually I think no other teacher really, at least by example, gave to his students as much as Schnabel did, and that is to give every phrase in music, every theme, every motive a particular face. Character is not enough to say, but a face, just like he was painting it or just like a character appearing in an opera. When he played a theme that returned throughout a piece, Schnabel insisted and demonstrated that it is another character, it is

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Kraus, "Of Teachers and Husbands," p. 35.

suddenly a man where it had been a woman; it is suddenly somebody young if it had been somebody old; it is suddenly somebody in green where it had been somebody in red and something very, very distinct. He constantly did that and Lili very much does that too. Everything she does in her playing has a particular specific character that defies words, that one cannot describe in words, that one can describe only in music. I think those are the two main things.¹

With Schnabel, Kraus studied an eclectic repertoire, including Mozart, Schubert, Weber, and Brahms, and though he insisted on fidelity to the composer's indications, he was motivated by a dramatic impulse to employ a good deal of tempo rubato that manifested itself in both his playing and teaching. However, he also advised the use of the metronome. Kraus recalls:

One day he asked, "Do you use the metronome?" Somewhat astonished I answered: "No--I don't think so." he said, "You should, you know, but not when you 'practice' but when you play. You will be amazed how necessary the metronome is because you have no idea what kind of freedom you take at the cost of an even tempo in trying to "express your feelings."

Of course, there can never be a uniform metronome beat in a performance. But, within the "beat" of the metronome, you may use all the freedom of your own heart-beat, employing the infinitely minute entities projecting the nature the human heart manifests: now quickening in joy, reaching out towards the keynote of the goal (accelerandi) or saddening or at peace or calm after having fulfilled its intent (ritardandi). It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that none of these fluctuations may destroy the even, fundamental tempo of the piece.

I also observed that Schnabel, being a composer himself, read and played no matter what was put before him as if he had studied that piece his whole life. From that I learned that it is a total misconception to speak about "style" of playing. If you understand the language, the style is given. If you understand the fabulous message of Mozart's dynamic signs, you will have no

¹Interview with Claude Frank, conducted by Fort Worth Productions, 1983.

doubts. A fortepiano, a fortissimo, or whatever dynamic mark he uses are but a heightened espressivo within a narrow frame in accordance with the nature of his instrument and his mode of expression. Unfortunately, to this day people either totally ignore them or emphasize them instead of understanding that they are simply explanations of that experience. You must have endless grades of emphasis depending on what the music says.¹

Kraus and her family remained life-long friends with Schnabel and his wife, Therese. In fact, when Hitler came to power in Germany, Schnabel moved to Tremezzo, Italy, to take up residence near Kraus. Many years later, just before he died, he told Kraus that she was his only spiritual heir.²

The early 1930s were busy years for the young pianist. She was newly married, the study with Schnabel continued, and the demands of touring were mounting. In the midst of all this, though, she gave birth to two children. Ruth was born on August 18, 1930, and Michael made his debut on November 15, 1931. While Mandl always traveled with his wife, the children were left at home with a nanny so that Kraus's career could continue uninterrupted. Kraus anguished over these frequent separations:

Everytime you leave, you leave half your life behind you. When I was at home, I was torn by the necessity to prepare my concerts but dying with the wish to be with the children.²

When the children are tiny you worry about the nana to whom you entrusted them. When they are bigger, you hope to God that their peers are not yet spoiled and contaminated. When they are adults, or adolescents you hope that their friends won't seduce them to drugs or alcohol. And the more positive your relationship is to

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

²Ibid.

them, to life and to your husband, the more you are likely to succeed in your assumption that it might go well. More you cannot do.¹

From the perspective of the children, the separations, while difficult, were compensated for in large measure by the joy of their famous mother's presence during her stays at home. Ruth Mandl Pope, who now lives in North Carolina, offered this view:

I think that Lili managed her artistic life and her family life as well as a human being could. I never felt growing up that we really, I must speak for myself, that I really suffered under the fact that she was a world-renowned concert pianist. When she was around it was such a special time that it made up for the absences and the separations. It was such a great thing to have this person being your mother because we had always grown up with the knowledge that this was a great thing. My father I think contributed a tremendous lot to that because he worshipped her. She was on a pedestal all our life. He instilled this great love of her, of her art, of the importance of her work into us children, or into me certainly. We took the good with the bad and I've always felt that it was a great privilege to have Lili as a mother.²

Kraus's career throughout the 1930s demanded an increasing number of separations from her children. Beginning in 1931, her performing activities took her to all corners of the world, including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, China, and Japan. Her fame quickly spread, promoted especially by the partnership she formed with the violinist Szymon Goldberg. Their performances were so successful, both

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili By Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 28.

²Interview with Ruth Mandl Pope, conducted by Fort Worth Productions, 1983.

live and on record, that the Kraus-Goldberg Duo became a household word.¹ They toured throughout Europe, focusing particularly on the Beethoven Violin-Piano Sonatas. Partly because of this emphasis and partly because she began programming many Beethoven solo works, Kraus soon became regarded as a Beethoven specialist for several years in the early 1930s.

With regard to the formation of the Kraus-Goldberg duo, Kraus recalls that that partnership was her brother-in-law's idea. On that advice, Kraus invited Goldberg to move into her house for six months where they worked to prepare their upcoming concerts.² She also remembers that Goldberg used to call her the "tempo-Konigen," or the queen of the tempi. She explains this ideal:

No, never a change in the tempo, but, I hope, in depth, in colorfulness without wanting to color (I never think in terms of dynamics: I just speak), in articulation, and, I hope, in technical perfection.³

Kraus's devotion to Mozart, the composer with whose name she was to become inextricably linked, began only after the Chopin and Beethoven eras. She had studied no Mozart at the Academy and played little of that composer's works. Her baptism into the world of Mozart took place in Vienna in 1924

¹Dean Elder, "Lili Kraus . . . Regal Lady of the Keyboard," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 22.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

³Marion Stone, "Interview with Lili Kraus," Clavier 12 (September 1968): 24.

when she heard for the first time the "Jupiter" Symphony. She still vividly remembers that evening: "I thought I would not survive that beauty."¹ When in the early 1930s she made her first solo recording of Mozart's music--the C minor Fantasy and Sonata (K. 475 and 457)--one critic wrote, "Would that all pianists would sit at the feet of Mme. Lili Kraus."² From that moment onward, Kraus recalls feeling that "I could play Mozart whenever I liked."³ She and Goldberg began programming the Mozart Violin-Piano Sonatas, eventually recording all ten of them for the English firm Parlophone, a collection that "rated as an all time classic" and led to the formation of the Mozart Society in London.⁴ Under the sponsorship of this society, Kraus recorded for Parlophone a great deal of the Mozart solo and concerted repertoire for piano.

While forever captivated by Mozart's music, Kraus continued to play works by other composers:

To have played Mozart to the exclusion of all else would have killed Mozart. You cannot live on one divinity alone; you have to refresh the blood that makes it alive. Therefore, I played normal programs--Brahms, Schubert, Chopin. Schubert, by the way, was also a late discovery. I was already in Vienna when my teacher, Severin Eisenberger, spoke about Schubert and played some for me. He played only a fragment, and I said, "I don't like Schubert." Happily, I soon came to adore Schubert.

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴W. A. Mozart, The Complete Piano Concerti. Lili Kraus, pianist. Columbia records, P12 11806. Record booklet notes unsigned.

I had so many loves, and the difference lay only therein that they were at a different level of love. It is terrific fun to play Debussy, but it doesn't stir my real being. So with Chopin--terrific fun, great challenge--but I have never felt that I couldn't live without it. Of course, with Beethoven, that doesn't hold good at all. Beethoven: yes, yes, and forever.¹

While she had played very little of Bartok's works while studying with him, Kraus became one of the first pianists to program and record his music, doing so even before Bartok himself had done so.² Kraus recalls that:

Bartok himself asked me to record his music, and I made the first recordings of his piano works before he did himself. The Parlophone people said it was "suicide," and I told them: "All right, let it be suicide"--but until the war every radio station in Europe played those recordings regularly. I adore to play Bartok, and still include his music in all my recitals, though I'm sorry to say I have never played the concertos.³

In early 1932, the entire family moved to a manor house nine hundred feet above the Lago di Como near Tremezzo, Italy. The 450 year-old house had been built for a Hapsburg and stands today as a protected national treasure. The years spent in Italy were happy ones for Kraus until Hitler and Mussolini formed their alliance. When Germany annexed Austria, Kraus and her family were asked to exchange their passports for German ones. The questura in Milan hounded them endlessly with this request, but they resisted for several reasons. First, Mandl was half Jewish, and he had

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²David Ewen, ed., Musicians Since 1900 (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1979), p. 418.

³Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," p. 78.

further complicated his position by translating and editing the works of H. G. Wells, including Shape of Things To Come which was severly critical of Hitler. Finally, in addition to the obvious danger they faced had they remained in Axis-held territory, Kraus and Mandl were unwilling to accept German citizenship because of their total philosophic disagreement with Hitler's policies. In late 1938, Mandl informed the Italian authorities that he and his family would become British subjects, and, on behalf of the German government, they were summarily expelled from the country. They left behind almost all of their possessions, including two Steinway concert grands, three thousand books, many of which were first editions, and highly-prized facsimiles of Leonardo da Vinci's diaries. The house, too, was appropriated by the Italians. After fleeing Italy, the Mandls went first to Paris for a short time, finally making their way to London in early 1939. Included among her many performances in the English capital during that frantic pre-war year were frequent appearances at the famous musical receptions held at the Austrian Legation by the Austrian Minister, Sir George Franckenstein. Also, they were introduced by H. G. Wells to Walter Nash, the Minister of Finance and Immigration for New Zealand. Nash suggested that they become New Zealand citizens since they had renounced their own citizenship. While waiting for the New Zealand passports to be processed, Kraus, Mandl, and the children obtained British

"Certificates of Identity," or temporary papers issued by the British Foreign Office granting them the protection of British citizenship. With New Zealand as their ultimate destination, Kraus and family left Holland in 1940 to begin a tour that was to begin in Djakarta, Indonesia (then known as Batavia, Java), and culminate with Kraus's American debut with the San Francisco Symphony under Monteux in February 1943. Unfortunately, that American debut performance was forcibly postponed until 1949.

The Mandls, accompanied by Goldberg, sailed from Holland in 1940 for the Dutch East Indies. They arrived in Djakarta, hoping that they had escaped the war that was raging in Europe. When Singapore fell to the Japanese, though, they knew that travel was far too dangerous, so they remained in Indonesia. They took a house in Bandung, located in the mountains, in an effort to escape the stifling heat. Every month, Kraus, accompanied by Mandl, journeyed to Djakarta to present a recital for the radio. Even after the Japanese occupied Indonesia, the recitals were allowed to continue. Kraus was also permitted to perform at the women's and children's prison camps that the Japanese had set up around the country. Misfortune soon intruded, however. In March 1942, Kraus was summoned to appear at the Japanese headquarters in Djakarta. Along with her husband, Kraus arrived as commanded, assuming that Mandl was the target of Japanese suspicion. She was shocked to learn that she was

the one under arrest. She inquired as to the charge, but no answer was given. After a moment alone with her husband, Kraus was led away to a filthy subterranean cell that was four feet by twelve feet in size and only four feet high. For the next two weeks, she shared this space with fifteen other women. The Japanese constantly paraded by the caged women, jeering at them.

Mandl was urged by friends to return to Bandung to be with the children who had remained behind with the servants. Instead, he went to the prison four days in a row to plead with the Japanese to take him instead of his wife. They finally did arrest him on the fourth day but refused to release Kraus. He was placed in a cell a few feet from her.

Kraus was questioned every day during these two weeks. The chief question, posed in English, concerned her friendship with Christine von Starkitenborgh, the American wife of the Dutch Governor General of Java. The charge leveled against the two was that they had conspired to free the British and Australian prisoners by killing the guards. A Dutch woman, while being severely beaten, had implicated them in exchange for promised freedom. Though this accusation was totally false, Kraus had committed other "offenses" about which the Japanese were ignorant:

It was fortunate they had only this charge against me, for if they had known what my husband and I had done they probably would have killed us: we had a hidden radio, we were harboring goods for the Dutch already in prison, transporting money from camp to camp, smuggling

letters from wives to husbands.¹

The two weeks spent in the cells were traumatic for both Kraus and Mandl. While the women were not hurt, many of the men were beaten daily. Mandl was spared the beatings, but Kraus remembers the horror of that time:

They did not beat him, but from his cell--it was three cells farther than my own--there was such yelling, hurt every night, that I thought, I really died there. I never knew for sure that my husband was not among them. The people whom they beat so mercilessly were mostly their own people who would be caught either drunk, or fraternizing, or who knows what. My husband later told me that they were so beaten that, for protection, they hid their head between the feet of those who beat them.²

At the beginning, I guess I was just too dazed to think or feel anything. I never became used to the yelling and cries of pain that echoed through those subterranean cells. I would sit with my hands over my ears to help shut out the screams. I imagined that Dante's Inferno was a tea party compared to this place.³

You sat there with the absolute command that you may not talk, not open your mouth. To let my husband know that I was alive and okay, I began to sing Hungarian folk songs. At the first sound, one of the guards rushed at me. Though he didn't beat me, he promised to do so if I once more opened my mouth. Five minutes later, I sang again. Finally they got used to it. What could they do? They were enchanted, so they listened, and my husband knew that all was well.⁴

I realized that, in a sense, they had to leave me alone. They could kill me, but that would have been too difficult to explain. Least of all could they beat or torture me, because they knew who I was and were probably afraid that, if I were physically harmed, I'd tell the

¹Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," p. 77.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

³Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1980), p. 149.

⁴Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

world all that happened in the course of my travels. I did have one fear, though, and it was that they might violate or mishandle me. But they let me alone. In fact, you might say they behaved extremely well, considering what they really could have done. After all, we were entirely at their mercy.¹

At the conclusion of this two-week nightmare, Kraus was taken to a women's camp high in the mountains above Djakarta. Mandl went to a prison camp for men. The children, who had remained behind in Bandung, had no word of their parents' plight. After two weeks, the youngsters dismissed the servants and went to stay with friends. Three weeks later, a postcard arrived from Mandl, written in Malay and heavily censored, reassuring the children that all was well and a reunion would take place soon. However, the Japanese had already begun jailing all Europeans on the island, so Ruth and Michael, then twelve and eleven, voluntarily entered a prison camp in Bandung. They felt they had no alternative but to submit. For the next year, neither Kraus, Mandl, nor the children knew anything about each other's whereabouts or fate. Kraus, understandably, was severely tested by this separation:

For a year, I didn't know if my husband and children were alive. A year. To hear, 365 times, the Japanese national anthem played on a gramophone as they raised the flag and think that to the end of my days It was such a tin-tone thing, with no fundamental key, and it just ended somewhere, on some arbitrary note. Oh, God, I

¹Mach, p. 149.

hated it.¹

When Kraus first arrived at the camp, she discovered that many of the women had given up:

Unsure of their future, they had already lost hope, dignity, self-respect. It was in their face, in their voice, in their stance, in their crude treatment of each other.

I knew I had to make a choice. Either I would deteriorate or I could make this experience the treasure fund of my life by falling back wholly on whatever I had within myself. I chose to cling to God.²

Nobody saw me with a sad face. It didn't occur to me that I could get ill, and I carried many women on my back to the so-called hospital we had, which was, of course, not at all hygienic and not at all properly disinfected by a long shot. All kinds of illnesses and death occurred there. But you see, life is so miraculous, so manifold, and the less you are occupied with that fictitious personal self (that is really only a figment of our imagination--it doesn't exist), the easier you bear it.³

I am one who dreams all the time--fantastic dreams. But the whole time I was there, I never dreamed once about my husband or my children. The other women used to say "Why are you so cheerful? You never tell us about your family." "No," I reply, "I don't." And that was all. I had put them away in my subconscious mind, where we could be together in spirit, safe from my fears and uncertainties for them. Instead, I concentrated on the work I⁴ had to do. And as I worked, I played music in my mind.

Kraus was assigned to a regimen of hard, grueling

¹Russ Rymer, "The Greatness of Lili Kraus," Atlanta Weekly magazine of Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution, 16 January 1983, p. 8.

²"The Legend of Lili Kraus," This Is TCU, Spring 1968, p. 21.

³Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

⁴Louis Snyder, "Applause from Four Continents," Christian Science Monitor, August 20, 1970, p. 19.

labor which varied every two weeks. For instance, she had to clean street gutters with her bare hands:

My nails broke; my fingers split. Another chore was to draw water in a bucket attached to a metal chain from a deep well. My palms were blisters that broke but never festered, although the rest of my body was a mass of festering wounds.¹

All during this ordeal, Kraus subsisted on a daily ration of two cups of rice and bitter herbs.

Despite the deprivation and suffering, Kraus managed to turn this horrible first year of her imprisonment into a rewarding experience:

These were the most privileged experiences God ever gave me. The significance of spiritual life showed nowhere more² than in prison because you had nothing to fall back upon.

Imprisonment was an arc of experience, and one can't imagine what it contained in revelation. Locked in a subterranean chamber, starving, no human contact, so alone, so alone, so alone, you must grow as you cannot grow in normal life. You must have something that far surpasses your tangible³ being, that intuitive certainty of your indwelling God.

So I am happy for these experiences, grateful, and I can only tell you that it is a tremendous asset to know the value of food, to abhor waste, therefore to know the incredible nobility of work. And I use this word not as a high faluting adjective, I mean nobility. Whether you clean the latrine or the gutter, or carry rice for eight hundred people like a coolee, if you do it to the best possibility, it's noble, it really lifts you to⁴ your highest potential. And that's the whole thing.

For the first nine months, Kraus had no access to a

¹Rymer, p. 21.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

³Rymer, p. 14. ⁴Swank, p. 29.

piano. In December 1943, though, a Japanese commander recognized her name and decided she should be able to play. A piano was brought into the camp and she was commanded to play it:

It was as if a crystal source had sprung up from the sand of the Sahara before a man who had spent days and days wandering in the desert; I just poured over that piano and, without any music, I played on and on with my whole heart, in pain and joy. I don't even remember how long, but I don't recall repeating any piece, nor do I remember making any mistakes while playing them. It was as if I could play anything and everything ever known to man--what merciful madness.¹

The first pieces that Kraus played were Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy and some Mozart. She was allowed to play for half an hour, then the camp commander stopped her. The windows had been open, and the entire camp had witnessed her playing.

Kraus recalls that everyone was moved:

As I left the building, I saw that scores of women had stopped at their work. Others had come out of their cells. The guards had lowered their rifles. They had been listening. I hoped I had given them the same peace I had received.

That night and for the next few days, an unusual quiet settled upon the camp. There was less dissension among the women. The guards were less brutal, less threatening. The work went easier.²

Thereafter, Kraus was allowed to play an hour one afternoon a week, but her ordinary life of hard physical labor continued.

Three months later, Kraus was put on a truck and, without any explanation, driven to the city. She was taken to a residential area of Djakarta where a detention facility

¹Mach, p. 150.

²"The Legend of Lili Kraus," p. 21.

had been arranged for her, consisting of a fenced-in single-car garage. Waiting for her there were Mandl and the children. A Japanese conductor who had heard Kraus play in Japan in 1936 had discovered her name on a list of prisoners. Horrified, he asked her if he could do anything to make life more bearable. According to Kraus's daughter, she replied, "I would love a piano and to be reunited with my family, in that order."¹ Thereupon, he arranged for the reunion of the Mandl family in this "privileged" setting. He had also managed to have an old piano placed in this garage that served as home for the family for the remaining two years before liberation.

As harrowing as these three years were, Kraus professes no resentment toward the Japanese. She has played in Japan many times since the war. On one such tour, several of the guards she had known at the camp met her at the Tokyo airport to present her with gifts. She remembers that this meeting was totally amicable, and that the feelings of penitence and absolution were genuine.

In October 1945, the Japanese surrendered their control of Djakarta and the Mandls were freed. Two months more passed, however, before the family was flown by the British Red Cross to Australia. They finally made their way to New Zealand where they remained until 1948. Within eighteen months there, Kraus played more than 120 recitals in order to

¹Ruth Pope interview, Fort Worth Productions.

sustain the family financially. New Zealand, in recognition of her "unrelenting efforts in aid of countries in need as well as for educational achievements," conferred honorary citizenship on Kraus, and she has ever since traveled on a New Zealand passport.

During Kraus's imprisonment, her career came to a halt, but her musicianship continued on an internal plane. With no instrument to play for most of the first year of her incarceration, Kraus rehearsed her repertoire mentally, discovering new levels and facets of meaning. She also committed many works to memory for the first time during those years.¹

Kraus amazingly feels that her imprisonment was a blessing in many ways:

I have spent years more pleasantly, but not more fruitfully. The miracle of it is that I was aware even while it went on that there was no greater privilege God bestowed on me than these three years, because what I learned then I could never, never have² understood and learned under any other circumstances.

One of the lessons that Kraus learned was that her musicianship could not only survive but grow, despite the circumstances and against all odds:

Nothing has ever altered my simultaneous living in the world of music and the daily existence. They are always parallel, always overlapping. This experience deepened my music to no end because it all had to take place in the region that matters, namely the spirit, the

¹Management Information Sheet, supplied by Alix Williamson, Kraus's personal representative, 1985.

²Freed, "Lili Kraus: Mozartean," p. 77.

emotion, and the intellect, and that was fully at work.¹

. . . I was consumed by the desire to sit down at the piano and play and play. This longing almost drove me mad. So I resorted to a kind of "recall" from the subconscious realizing that I had to materialize all the music within me--the composition and the projection--silently. I worked so hard at doing this that scores and technique, which seemed to have been buried many fathoms deep, now appeared so real, so present, that I knew that if I were seated before a piano I could play pieces I hadn't practiced since childhood, and in doing so discover new wonders that never seemed so apparent before.²

This internalization of her art led Kraus to a philosophical realization that a true artist can withstand all tests and travails and emerge without a diminished aesthetic psyche. Her musicianship had undergone the trial by fire, and its survival proved its worth:

I became more conscious of something else during this period of my life, namely, that an artist is born and not made. Talent is given, and there is no way it can be poured into someone. An individual can study until doomsday but, if the gift isn't there, progress will remain forever only surface brilliancy, technical progress at its best. What sustained me most in those years were my faith, my love and my identification with music. I was able to live in the music. And during this period, the conviction grew in me that, unless man totally disappears from the face of the earth, whether by atomic bombs or abuses of nature, his final evolution will be the replacement of words by music. Nobody will talk, nobody will sing. Music may well become the communication between man because it will be so alive in everybody that it will not need any more material manifestation. When you look at a person, you will know what kind of music is going on in him: "song without words," ultimately, in the final destination, "song without sound." Who knows?³

The three years in captivity, from 1942 to 1945, were a

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Mach, p. 150.

³Ibid.

period in which Kraus never once saw a music score. Yet, her musicianship flowered in an internalization that was sublimely complete and content within itself.

During Kraus's post-war stay in Australia and then New Zealand, she made two tours of those countries in 1946-47, performing frequently, often playing as many as three times within twenty-four hours while enduring dreadful playing conditions characterized by sweltering heat and dilapidated pianos. The family's financial plight left no alternative despite Kraus's weakend physical condition. In fact, she weighed less than one hundred pounds upon liberation, and her health was precarious during this period. She recalls:

We had lost everything, so I had to earn money. There was no other way; my husband was much too frail with diabetes. Now I was down to the bone. There was no air conditioning, and the days were very hot. So, I earned money, earned money sweating blood, but ever more believing that I played more beautifully than anybody ever has, mainly because my hands were so strong from the harsh physical labor I had performed with them at the prison camp.¹

Kraus admits that her illusion about the state of her playing was shattered upon her return to London in 1948 and her first recording session since before the war:

When I heard the first thing which I played, I thought I'd die there and then. Undisciplined, incoherent, conceited, and stupid. I cannot tell you the shock.²

For the next year, Kraus reworked and refined her playing in

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Ibid.

preparation for a return to the international concert circuit. She toured South Africa in 1948 and served as head of the piano department at Capetown University in 1949. That same year, she made her postponed and long-awaited debut in the United States, playing in New York City's Town Hall. She had thus begun the long road back on the way to the second phase of her career. Alix Williamson, Kraus's personal representative since 1963, recalls that the return to the mainstream of concert activity was arduous because of the hiatus in Kraus's career:

I understand she was something of a shambles physically right after the war, and her economic status was in a bad way. She had to work pretty hard to support her family and was not in good shape. Therefore, I understand she went through a period of not playing particularly well, and she had also been pushed out of the mainline of international concert activity. She was playing in the relatively small cities of Europe. She really needed to start all over again. The problem was that a whole generation of conductors had grown up during the 1940s not knowing Lili Kraus.¹

Kraus rebuilt her career through her efforts both as a traveling and recording artist. She and Mandl moved to Paris in 1950, and she resumed her journeys throughout the world, appearing with many of the great orchestras and at music festivals in Europe, North and South America, Japan, India, and the Antipodes. She began making numerous recordings on the Parlophone, Discophiles Francais, Vox and Educo labels. Educo, in fact, was formed in 1953 by Michael Ehr-

¹Interview with Alix Williamson, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

hardt of Ventura, California, based on a suggestion by Kraus. She convinced Ehrhardt that students at all levels should have the opportunity to hear the works they study played by the very best performers. Kraus made the first seven recordings for the new company, including selections of student repertoire by composers such as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Bartok.¹

In 1954, the French firm Discophiles Francais, in conjunction with the Haydn Society of Boston, commissioned Kraus to record the entire piano works of Mozart, including the chamber music and concertos. Part of that project, the recordings of the seven Piano Trios with members of the renowned Vienna Octet, was awarded the famed "Grand Prix du Disque."² After completing this cycle of recordings, Kraus and Mandl moved to Vienna for two years.

Kraus toured the United States in 1956 featuring "A Day With Lili Kraus," consisting of a seminar in the morning, a masterclass in the afternoon, and a recital in the evening.

With her career firmly reestablished, Kraus was once again basking in the warm sun of success when tragedy struck. Mandl, who had suffered a heart attack in 1952, was ill again, and on her 1956 American tour Kraus had traveled for

¹"The Pianist's Label," a publicity sheet published by Educo Records, Ventura, California, n.d.

²W. A. Mozart, The Complete Piano Sonatas. Lili Kraus, pianist. Vol. 1-2. Columbia Odyssey Y3 33220 and Y3 33224. Record jacket notes unsigned.

the first time without her husband. Mandl remained in southern France, near Nice where he and Kraus had assumed residence in early 1956 on the advice of his physician to abandon the Austrian capital for a warmer climate. Mandl had been in frail health for many years. During World War I he had been injured by shrapnel which had lodged in his hip. He refused to allow the doctors to amputate his leg, and that injury, according to Kraus, precipitated the onset of diabetes at the age of twenty-three. While the Japanese had given him insulin during his imprisonment, captivity had also taken its toll on his health.

Frantically worried about Mandl's health, Kraus hurried through her American tour and arrived back in Nice:

When I arrived, there he was at the station--can you imagine! A week later (exactly a week), he said, "I arranged a little excursion; I want you to see this beautiful chapel." I said, "But, Dickey, don't let's travel. I travel so much, and it's so nice here." But he insisted.

We had to traverse a square to arrive at the beautiful old place which was exactly like a backdrop to an opera, a little place with a fountain that allegedly has healing powers. He couldn't really walk properly because of his bad circulation. I asked him, "Dickey, don't you want to see the fountain?" He replied, "No, no, no. I can't make it there." We were standing with the couple who had driven us. I was with the lady in front, and my husband with the man, looking at that fountain, and so suddenly, he stretched out his arm quite slowly and sank, and that was his death.¹

Mandl died in August 1956, at age sixty-seven, of a heart attack. Though Kraus says that she was literally "bowed down" with grief, she felt that she had to go on playing

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

because that would have been her husband's desire. Kraus was devastated, but she forced herself to continue her career within a few days and shortly moved to London, where she took an apartment. Her daughter, Ruth Pope, remembers what a tremendous change her father's death wrought on Kraus:

They were as close as any two people could possibly be. This was probably one of the great marriages of the century, if I may be so bold to say that. It totally wiped her out except that she had her music.

She went on concertizing. I think she only canceled one concert, or two at the most. She just pressed on. From doing nothing from not buying a toothbrush to not having the foggiest idea about money or anything else, from one day to the next she got herself together and really managed her own life. Now, it was very rocky, and it wasn't until Fergus--my husband--came into the picture that her career really went on a more even keel again. It was he that went to Alix Williamson and got her to become Lili's publicity manager. That was in 1963.¹

In 1959, Kraus's daughter, Ruth, and her husband of one year, Fergus Pope, a physician, bought a house in London, and Kraus moved in with them. While her career continued in full bloom, Kraus also busied herself with a host of activities, including the care of a grandchild and participation in peace marches. In the early 1960s, "Ban-the-Bomb" demonstrations were gaining momentum in England and elsewhere. Fergus Pope was working with Bertrand Russell and Norman Cousins in the Nuclear Disarmament Campaign. Kraus, always the political liberal, needed no encouragement to join the movement. She participated in a peace march in Trafalgar Square and, for her efforts, was arrested. She was held for only a few

¹Ruth Pope interview, Fort Worth Productions.

hours, "but that was a gesture to risk all you had--the most valuable thing you had, to prevent them from doing these foolish things."¹ Pope feels that his mother-in-law's involvement was typical:

She really wanted to be in on everything. There wasn't a thing she could miss. Whether it was a good² experience or difficult experience, Lili was in on it.

Through Pope, Kraus met Bertrand Russell, and one of the admitted highlights of her career took place on May 19, 1962, when she performed at a concert in London's Royal Festival Hall honoring Russell's ninetieth birthday. Pope also introduced her to Albert Schweitzer whom she visited on a number of occasions at his hospital in Lambaréné, Africa. In the summer of 1965, Kraus stayed with the great humanitarian for several weeks shortly before his death. She played for him almost nightly on the battered upright in the little mess hall of his jungle hospital. Pope, who had moved to Africa to work with Schweitzer, remembers those evenings:

Lili came and was charming and charmed everyone, including Schweitzer. Nobody played that piano like Lili did and the Africans as well as all the nursing staff and everybody else just kind of came alive when she came into the dining room to play the piano.

Schweitzer took great pleasure in hearing Lili in those days, and shortly before his death asked to hear her recording of the Fourth Beethoven Piano Concerto. He then had a stroke and for the last two weeks of his life was semi-conscious. When he died on the fifth of September in 1965, he really hadn't been able to enjoy music for some days. But the last music he heard was Lili

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Interview with Fergus Pope, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

playing the Beethoven Piano Concerto.¹

Pope also ultimately was to introduce Kraus to Alix Williamson of New York City. Williamson has represented leading concert and opera artists and music organizations for many years. She remembers that her first association with Kraus started in the early 1950s, predating even Pope's involvement:

An elderly gentleman came to see me at my office and told me that his wife was the greatest pianist in the world and asked if I'd be interested in doing her publicity. I didn't feel from what he told me that I could do anything for her at the time because they were just passing through New York very quickly. She wasn't coming back to the United States in the foreseeable future, and I'd never heard of her and knew nothing of her activities. But somehow I couldn't put out of my mind the burning intensity of this man and his glowing eyes as he talked about his wife as the greatest pianist in the world.

Subsequently, through the next ten years or so, I found myself occasionally seeing the name of his wife in record reviews from abroad or international music magazines and so forth, and I found myself with some curiosity.

Then, about ten years later, another gentleman came to see me who also had very burning, glowing eyes and a great deal of intensity and conviction as he told me that his mother-in-law was the greatest pianist in the world. It turned out that his mother-in-law was the same lady who was the wife of the gentleman I had originally seen. That time I was prepared to sit down with him and say, "well, if your mother-in-law wants to have a career in this country, there are certain things she's going to have to do because at the moment she is not known in the United States."

We talked about what her strengths and weaknesses were and I discovered that she was particularly a specialist in Mozart, and I said if she's such a Mozart specialist why doesn't she do something very daring. "Do you think she could play all twenty-five Mozart Piano Concerti in New York in one season? It's never been done professionally." I think it had been done by somebody on

¹Ibid.

radio but never in a concert hall. Lili's son-in-law, Fergus Pope, and Lili, when I subsequently met her, threw up their hands in horror and said this is something that nobody could do. I said, "well, that's why we're going to do it."

I brought her together with Stephen Simon and the orchestra and also negotiated for the complete Piano Concerti to be recorded in Vienna prior to the concert series so that they would be on the American market at the time the concerts were presented.

That was the kind of publicity I was able to engender, kicking off a whole new career for her.¹

Kraus and Stephen Simon, the twenty-eight-year-old student of Josef Krips, met in early 1965 in New York's Russian Tea Room to lay their plans for the recording sessions that were to take place in Vienna during four separate periods between May 1965 and September 1966. Members of the Vienna Symphony were assembled to form the Mozart Festival Orchestra, and the setting for the recordings was the historic Mozart Saal of the Vienna Konzerthaus. Simon recollects the events that led to the completion of these records for Columbia's Epic label, later reissued under Columbia's special order series, representing the first ever issue of all twenty-five of the Mozart Piano Concertos:

It's difficult to remember the first time that we actually met. What I remember most of all was sitting with her in a very dark second floor of a piano factory in Vienna and playing the Concertos four hands before we went into the actual recording sessions. She discussed all of the Concerti as we played through them. She was an indefatigable artist, full of life and verve.

She described each of the Piano Concertos as a mini opera where you had major characters and minor characters and assigned themes to each of these characters in the opera and played through the work as if it were a drama. That approach was particularly effective in the entire

¹Williamson interview, Fort Worth Productions.

project. The overview that we were able to construct by beginning with the very earliest ones and ending with the last ones is like a survey of Mozart's compositional life. This was an amazingly instructional force for me. Her ability to be able to bring that kind of expertise to the entire project was, I think, what made the recordings so valuable.

She worked very, very hard with all of the people with whom she ever made music. The recording sessions were extremely difficult. I remember over and over and over again she would complain to the members of the orchestra and say to them, "you must play softer, you must play softer." They would say, "but we cannot play softer, Mme. Kraus." She said, "oh yes you can, and they did." From that point of view she would cajole people into getting what she wanted from them. She was very, very demanding indeed.

After the orchestral sessions were over, she would then go in and record the cadenzas. They were taken out of context because we didn't want to use orchestra time to do those segments which were without orchestra. Mme. Kraus spent hours practicing and going over passages and over passages again because she wasn't happy with them. The cadenzas were either those which Mozart wrote or which Mme. Kraus composed herself in the style of Mozart for those Concertos which had no original cadenzas. I helped her to edit the cadenzas for publication later on, and what was amazing to me was to look at Lili's manuscript and then to look at Mozart's manuscript and to see how very similar they were. It was almost as though Mozart's hand had set down those cadenzas which were actually by Mme. Kraus.¹

Mills Publishing Corporation (now Belwin-Mills) published Kraus's edition of the cadenzas for the Mozart Piano Concertos in 1972. Kraus wrote her own cadenzas for a third of the Concertos and edited the Beethoven cadenzas for the D minor Concerto, K. 466. She used the original Mozart cadenzas when they existed. The Kraus cadenzas fill the void left by Mozart in the following Concertos: K. 37, K. 39, K. 41, the third movement to K. 175, K. 238, K. 467, K. 482, K. 491,

¹Interview with Stephen Simon, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

K. 503, and K. 537. Robert Silverman, then Director of Publication at Mills Publishing Corporation and now Editor-Publisher of The Piano Quarterly, worked closely with Kraus during the preparation of this publication:

We never considered that this project would have any kind of significant sales; it was an item that should be published. From the standpoint of a publication, I considered it very important and was very proud to publish it. At that time, we felt we had produced the definitive edition, though since then other cadenzas have been discovered.

The work on the cadenzas went on over a period of months. Kraus came into my office a number of times during that period. While we did not discuss the music per se, we talked about the details of the project. This is a fairly elaborate publication. There were questions of authenticity, dates, etc. We were seeking to produce the definitive, scholarly edition of the Mozart cadenzas. I did quite a bit of research on my own to make sure that this publication was definitive. There is nothing that resembles it today. Within a few years after our publication, two other editions of the cadenzas appeared; one was a French publication and the other was Schirmer, I think. That amused me. None of the other editions come close to Kraus's.

Lili Kraus has a special place in the minds and hearts of all people in the music world. She is a major Mozart specialist and her relationship with Schnabel is known by all people in the music world and is respected. Her integrity as a musician and her knowledge of Mozart--representing an immersion in Mozart's music all her life--along with her editing and collecting every available cadenza and lead-in that she could find, a project that had taken many years, was all that was necessary for me to react very positively to the project. Then it was only a matter of deciding from a practical standpoint whether we would only hope to get any part of our money back from investing in such a project. We felt that with Lili Kraus's name on it, it had the best possible chance.

A music publisher is a businessman and looks to stay in business by publishing pieces of music that people will purchase. There is no purpose in publishing something to satisfy someone's ego or for prestige purposes. If people don't buy the publication and use it, there is no prestige. It sits in the equivalent of a vault as if it were a great piece of music and nobody played it. So the important thing for a music publisher to do is to look not only at quality as regards what he selects to

publish but also at what the people will purchase and use. I thought we could get our money back with the Kraus edition, and the fact that the publication is still in print all these years is very, very encouraging. That means it has gone through more than one print.

I always found her extremely charming. I have a strong remembrance of really liking her and being impressed by her as a person and that our meetings were not just business-like meetings. They were filled with warmth and good conversation. She was easy to work with. There is nothing negative I can say about Lili Kraus. She was a delight to work with; I wish that all authors were like that.¹

Silverman's gamble has proven to have been a wise one. In 1985, the issue continued to sell at a rate of 200 to 400 copies per year, and in March 1984 Belwin-Mills reprinted another 1000 copies.²

Two weeks after the recording of the Mozart Piano Concertos was completed in Vienna, Kraus and Simon presented the first of a series of nine concerts in New York's Town Hall in an unprecedented series that presented all twenty-five of the Concertos. The sold-out concerts took place on Tuesday evenings--October 4 and 25, November 15, and December 6, 1966, and January 17 and 31, February 14, and March 14 and 28, 1967. Kraus played three Concertos on all but two of the programs, when she played only two. Simon regards Kraus's accomplishment as legendary:

It was a monumental undertaking. I remember having to convince Lili that she was actually up to the task of

¹Interview with Robert Silverman, conducted by Steve Roberson on December 15, 1984.

²Bruce Winkler, Executive Vice-President at Belwin-Mills Publishing Corporation, personal letter to Steve Roberson, December 26, 1984.

doing all of these concerts in New York. She came to me in Vienna and said, "but I don't think I'm able to do it," in that wonderful Hungarian way of hers, and everyone sort of bandied around her and said, "of course you can, Lili. It's going to be a very major series."

Lili was performing all of them from memory, which was an incredible task for any pianist. Twenty-five piano concertos from memory is really an impossible task, I think. In the third concert, she actually had a memory slip and got lost and had to stop. Now, for most people this would have been a disaster and a blemish upon one's career, but not for Lili. She had this wonderful way of being able to improvise an answer for every difficulty. She said, "excuse me," and went off stage and brought back her music and a pair of glasses, as I recall. She said, "I have to use these," and put on the glasses. Then she got up and went to the front of the stage and began to talk to the audience about the Concerto that she was playing. It was as though the audience had been brought into not a concert hall but her living room, that these were all intimate friends of hers for whom she was giving this soiree and that the orchestra members on stage were also friends of hers. She transformed the entire concert into a very intimate evening. It was a format in fact that we used throughout the rest of the series where she would give her own personal insights into the rest of the Concerti.¹

Kraus herself marvels at her stamina during the New York series:

How did I survive? I can only say, "God alone knows. I don't!" There was no budgeting. I worked at least eight hours a day, day in and day out, hardly having the time to gobble down my meals. And there were periods when there was nobody to cook for me, during which time I ate out of the icebox and lived on cold turkey and Sarah Lee coffee cake--all² of which nearly killed me, if you really want to know!

The magnitude of the critical popular acclaim afforded the spectacular Concerti project led Kraus to return to New York in the 1967-68 season when she presented five recit-

¹Simon interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Stone, p. 24.

als, performing all of the Mozart Piano Sonatas. She also recorded the Sonatas on the now defunct Epic label. They later reappeared on the CBS Odyssey label.

In December 1967, Riverside Radio, WRVR of New York, paid tribute to Kraus's Mozart triumphs by broadcasting a two-part "Mozart marathon" program embracing Kraus's recordings of all twenty-five of the Concertos. Kraus herself supplied commentary for the selections played on Christmas and New Year's, giving a brief historical background, musical analysis, and insight into her interpretive approach. The month prior to that she had to interrupt her American tour to fly to London to participate in concerts and telecasts after being named the Britist Broadcasting Corporation's "Artist of the Month." Back in the United States, Kraus recorded a ninety-minute television special, "Lili Kraus and the Mozart Piano Concerti," for the Public Broadcasting System (then known as National Educational Television) that was aired nationally in 1968. In it, she performed three of the Concertos with the Mozart Chamber Orchestra of New York and discussed her career and affinity for Mozart. Shortly afterwards, Roosevelt University awarded Kraus an honorary Doctor of Music degree during special ceremonies commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Chicago Musical College, now a part of Roosevelt. The degree citation paid homage to the pianist:

. . . renowned pianist, teacher and scholar, who, by her great gifts of heart and mind, her keen perception, love

and utter dedication to music has, with extraordinary sensitivity over several decades, communicated the music of Mozart to eager and receptive world-wide audiences.¹

The arduous course piloted for Kraus by Alix Williamson had paid handsome dividends. She had made her mark as a Mozart pianist, but her musical appetite was more eclectic than that. She said she would "kick and fight" if she continued to play works of only one composer. During the 1968-69 season, she presented three all-Schubert recitals in New York. Also, on November 2, 1969, she appeared on Columbia Broadcasting System's "Camera Three" television program playing the world-premiere of Schubert's newly-discovered "Grazer" Fantasy. She subsequently recorded this work for the Odyssey label. In 1970, at the Brazilian Beethoven Festival, Kraus played all five of the Beethoven Piano Concertos as well as the Choral Fantasy.

Faced with the prospect of her growing American career, Kraus, accompanied by the Popes, moved to the United States in 1967. They stayed in New Jersey with Fergus Pope's mother before arriving in Rochester, Minnesota, in March 1967 where Pope took a position at the Mayo Clinic. That same year, Kraus became artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth. She had been an adjudicator at the first Van Cliburn International Competition, held every four years at TCU, in 1962 and had returned for the same purpose in 1966. Michael Winesanker, then chairman of

¹"The Legend of Lili Kraus," p. 19.

the TCU Music Department, had met with Kraus at her London home in 1965 to propose that she become artist-in-residence. He outlined the following conditions of her employment:

She would have complete freedom to go and come, to spend some time teaching, to go off on tour or make recordings. We would have an assistant for her to help the students while she was away.

I made it clear that we recognized the obligations she had to the world as a great artist and that we would take that into account and that her teaching would be fitted in, that first and foremost she is the great artist, Lili Kraus.¹

Such an appeal did not go unheeded. Kraus began teaching at TCU in July 1967 when she presented her first week-long masterclass at the University. These yearly events continued each summer until June 1980, concluding with a one-day masterclass in May 1981. Frank Hughes, Dean of the TCU School of Fine Arts at the time of Kraus's hiring, described his high regard for the new artist-in-residence: "She is one of the select few in the United States of such international repute in the fields of both concert performance and pedagogy."²

In June 1969, Kraus, along with Fergus and Ruth Pope, built a house, which they named Hill House, on a 400-acre farm in the mountains of North Carolina near the small town of Celo. Since that time, Hill House has been Kraus's home when she has not been teaching or traveling. In nearby

¹Interview with Michael Winesanker, conducted by Fort Worth Productions, 1983.

²"The Legend of Lili Kraus," p. 19.

Burnsville, she began giving an annual benefit recital at local churches to help fund an arts organization called Music in the Mountains. She continued these recitals for eleven years and was named Honorary Director of Music in the Mountains.

Throughout the 1970s, Kraus continued to play a great deal of Mozart, appearing often in New York's Mostly Mozart Festival and around the world, but she also frequently programmed works by other composers. A perusal of her recordings attest to that fact. In 1968, Vanguard's Everyman Classics released her recording of the Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 and the Rondo in B-flat for Piano and Orchestra. In the same year, Vanguard's Cardinal Series issued Kraus's rendering of Schubert's Impromptus, Op. 90 and Op. 142. The following year, Vanguard's Everyman label released the Schumann Piano Concerto and Weber's Konzertstuck for Piano and Orchestra, and in 1970, Kraus's reading of Schubert's Sonatas Op. 42 and Op. 120 was made available by Vanguard's Cardinal Series. In 1975, 1st Component Series released her recording of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 and the Rondo in B-flat for Piano and Orchestra. Kraus's last three recordings have also focused primarily on composers other than Mozart. In 1979, she recorded Schubert's B-flat major, Op. Posth., Sonata for Vanguard. The same company offered Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, Haydn's C major Fantasy, Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy, along with Mozart's D minor Fanta-

sy, K. 397, in 1980. Kraus's final recording, made for Vanguard in 1981, featured the works of Bartok, a fitting benediction to a career that had started sixty years earlier after study with that composer. The arthritis that has afflicted her hands since 1979 was a tremendous handicap during this last recording session in 1981, and this same malady ended her public performing career two years later.

On March 4, 1978, Kraus received the Austrian Government's Cross of Honor for Science and Art, First Class. In 1980, she added an honorary doctorate from TCU to the one she had received from Roosevelt University in 1968.

The year 1979 had its ups and downs for Kraus. In March she was involved in one of those minor skirmishes that sooner or later befall every career. After playing in Wichita, Kansas, Kraus wrote the following inscription on the piano's soundboard:

Happiness is playing Mozart with the incomparable Michael Palmer and his superb musician-virtuoso orchestra. May the listeners and players alike be blessed with such total fulfillment as was mine by the Lord's grace. Lili Kraus.¹

Palmer, the conductor, was delighted, but Jim Clancy, Director of Community Facilities, was furious:

I'm not going to have people writing all over that magnificent instrument. It is the symphony's responsibility to clean it off, to get that high-class graffiti off there.²

¹"'Graffiti' or an Honor?" New York Times, 17 March 1979, p. 9.

²Ibid.

As soon as that brouhaha had cooled down, Kraus's luck took a more favorable turn. "Friends of Lili Kraus" was established at TCU in the fall of 1979 to underwrite the Lili Kraus Artist Fund. A \$100,000 endowment had been raised by April 1983, permitting the awarding of scholarships to piano majors at TCU.¹

In December 1979 tragedy struck. Kraus contracted pneumonia and was hospitalized. She was given an antibiotic that caused an autoimmune inflammation of the soft tissues and the joints. She was transferred to the Mayo Clinic where she spent several months. Thus began the bout with rheumatoid arthritis that ended her career three years later. Actually, the first symptoms of this crippling disease had become apparent to Kraus even earlier. While on a concert tour of Japan in 1978, she had given so many autographs that she developed tremendous pains in her hands. About that experience she said:

If I had been a decent, reasonable citizen, I would have laid off for four months, six months, a year. No way. The dear Lord had to beat me on the head and say, "My dear child, you can't go on like that. No way." So that's how that skit ends. That's where we are today. But, it is a good thing on the other hand because, unfortunately, we all have to die. There's no exception to that. If one understands that when you embrace and integrate and keep all you are given, sharing it with everybody who can take it, it's yours. Then comes a point, caused by no matter what reason, when the zenith is your past, and you have to give back, give back, give back with the same joy and the same love, but totally divorced even from the desire to project, to project

¹"Friends of Lili Kraus To Help Young Pianists," New York Times, 28 October 1979, p. 67.

inside, and it is not yours. I think I'm at that state now.

You see, in a few words really, one can say that I was privileged to know the heights of Paradise and the fire of Hell, and that's tremendous. That is a richness that perhaps makes you deserve to be reunited to the one who made you.¹

On May 31, 1981, the final day of the Van Cliburn International Competition, Kraus was on the stage of the Tarrant County Convention Center with the other jury members for the announcement of the winners. At the end of the presentations, the warmest ovation was saved for Kraus. For the first time ever, Kraus, who is the only permanent member of the jury, had missed all of the competition except the award ceremony. She had once again been a patient at the Mayo Clinic, getting out just in time to arrive in Fort Worth for that special evening. She was still wearing her hospital identification bracelet when she walked on stage.

Two years later, in March 1983, Kraus's performing career came to an end. Just a few weeks later, she announced her retirement from TCU, and a gala party was given in her honor on April 29, 1983. Though officially separated from the University, she returned for six week-long periods during the 1983-84 academic year to continue to teach a few students. Since, then, she has remained in North Carolina, venturing out only for a brief trip to Fort Worth in December 1984 for a special showing of the documentary, Lili, that was produced by Fort Worth Productions and shown nationally on

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

PBS stations in January 1985.

Kraus had to withdraw completely from the jury of the 1985 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition because she underwent hand surgery at the Mayo Clinic just prior to the start of the Competition. The four large knuckles in her left hand were replaced, and the procedure was a success in that she was freed from the hand pain that had plagued her for several years. At the awards ceremony that concluded the 1985 Competition, F. Murray Abraham, the recipient of the 1985 Academy Award for his portrayal of Salieri in the motion picture, Amadeus, made the following comments from the stage of the Tarrant County Convention Center:

This Competition has had a marvelous jury, and I know they would have picked a Mozart over a Salieri every time! But before I introduce those who are here I must talk about one particular lady who unfortunately could not be with us. She has been a juror for every Van Cliburn Competition since the first in 1962, and both she and we were terribly unhappy that an operation on her hands prevented her being with us this year. We have talked to her by phone frequently and she is certainly here with us¹ this evening in spirit. Madame Lili Kraus, we miss you!

Kraus remains vibrant and articulate despite her disability. She hopes to write her autobiography someday, though she hesitates for fear of hurting others: "I have no love life, but I have known many people and their families go on living."² This woman of many talents and interests--she

¹Information provided by the Van Cliburn Foundation, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas, 1985.

²"Lili Kraus," This Is TCU, June 1983, p. 5.

draws, designs her own gowns, swam every day until the onset of her illness, practices yoga and transcendental meditation, professes her devout Catholicism, and converses easily in German, French, English, Hungarian, Dutch, Malay, and Italian-- still works her charismatic magic wherever she goes. While attending a recital at the White House on November 7, 1982, she was easily the center of attention. Patrick Hayes, Washington impresario, summed up her personality:

She is devastatingly charming, a Hungarian enchantress. She's an actress as well as a musician. Once a piano fell apart during a concert she was playing. A pedal was trying to fall off, and she gave the audience the speech of all time about the fragility of pianos. She's a latter-day Tallulah Bankhead.¹

When asked to describe herself, Kraus responded, "I am terribly passionate, irrational, and the most undiplomatic person God ever made."² Perhaps her children have provided the most remarkable insights into the personality of Lili Kraus.

Michael Mandl characterized her this way:

The best way of describing my mother would be a person who is totally genuine, passionate, caring for all people and all races and religions and somebody to whom music has meant as much as her family.³

Her stepson, William Otto Mandl now of Monmoth Lakes, California, views Kraus with the same intensity of veneration:

This intensity and complete openness for God's world is something which projects into her music and into her

¹Rymer, p. 6.

²Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

³Michael Mandl interview, Fort Worth Productions.

ability to interpret music in such a way that the audience is dumbfounded and experiences what she is projecting. In awe and wonder they sense that something marvelous is happening.¹

Ruth Pope probably came closest to depicting the ineffable and legendary spirit that is her mother:

The song from the Sound of Music--"How Can You Catch a Moonbeam and Hold It Down?"--that is how you catch the life that is in Lili and describe it. How can you catch the overwhelming love that she has in her heart for the music, nature, animals, human beings; how can you describe that in a word?²

¹William Otto Mandl interview, Fort Worth Productions.

¹Ruth Pope interview, Fort Worth Productions.

CHAPTER IV

KRAUS THE MUSICIAN

The Reviews

Lili Kraus began her career as a performer in 1913 when she was eight years old. She continued to perform and to record until March 3-5, 1983, when a series of three concerts with the Richmond (Virginia) Symphony Orchestra marked her last public appearances.¹

The extant reviews of Kraus's career date back to 1931 and extend through the first quarter of 1983. Her performances have been critiqued in newspapers and professional publications, notably including the London Times, the New York Times, Stereo Review, Musical America, and the Musical Courier. The various reviews provide valuable insight into Kraus's style characteristics.

On Wednesday evening, January 7, 1931, Kraus played a recital at London's Wigmore Hall. Her program consisted of Bach's "Capriccio on the Departure of A Beloved Brother," a sonata by Mozart, Beethoven's "Eroica" Variations, and Bartok's "Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs." The review in the

¹Information from Columbia Artists Management files, supplied by Alix Williamson, Kraus's personal representative.

Times of London praised her playing for its "fresh vitality and individual style."¹ Her reading of the Beethoven received high marks for "a delightful variety of touch and a really well-thought-out technical balance of tone and control," but, quite amazingly, the Mozart was criticized as being "less well played as a whole, since at times the time-keeping got out of hand; a rubato was too apt to ignore the natural accentuation, but otherwise the expression was sensitive."² Kraus's interpretive freedom and insight into the domain of Mozart that were to become so highly acclaimed were startling in 1931 to this reviewer.

Regarding the Kraus-Goldberg team of the 1930s, reviewers praised the duo's sense of ensemble. A writer for the London Times said in 1935 that the partnership was "one of mutual understanding, and the confidence--and indeed the brilliance--of the playing a source of contentment."³ The following year, the Times extolled the duo's ensemble playing but found that Kraus "did once or twice overwhelm the violinist's rather slender tone."⁴

In November 1937, Kraus played again at London's

¹Recital review, Times (London), 9 January 1931, p. 16.

²Ibid.

³Recital review, Times (London), 24 May 1935, p. 14.

⁴Recital review, Times (London), 30 November 1936, p. 19.

Wigmore Hall, presenting Haydn's "Andante con variazioni," Bartok's "Hungarian Songs and Rumanian Dances," Beethoven's Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 31, No. 3, and Mozart's C minor Sonata, K. 457. The Times reviewer admired her dynamics and tone:

The most immediately pleasing thing about her playing was that she made effective dynamic contrasts within a reasonable scale. She never had to resort to banging for a fortissimo, and the quality of her tone throughout its range was consistently good. From a purely technical point of view her performances were charming. Quick, easy finger work produced neat articulation (the ornaments in Haydn's Variations were most daintily touched in), and the melodies were made to "sing" with grace and pretty sentiment.¹

While Kraus's technic was readily praised, her interpretive powers were criticized. As was the case six years earlier, the reviewer argued that, "tempo and rhythm were not judged with much idea of dramatic effect."² The following year, however, the Times effused about Kraus's interpretation of the Mozart Piano Concerto in B-flat major, K. 456, that she had recorded for the Parlophone Company with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Walter Goehr:

Miss Krauss [sic] is an admirable interpreter of Mozart, clear without being finical, and appreciative of the deep emotion in the music without overloading it.³

In 1939, the Times once again praised the thirty-four year

¹Recital review, Times (London), 15 November 1937, p. 21.

²Ibid.

³Recital review, Times (London), 30 December 1938, p. 8.

old pianist's musical vision. She had played an all-Beethoven program at Aeolian Hall that opened with the "Eroica" Variations and closed with the Sonata, Op. 109. The reviewer spoke of her "subtle and well-controlled playing" and said she "gave a most intimate performance" of the Sonata.¹ Kraus was obviously reaching a plateau of critical acclaim that had come to accept and admire her particular approach to pianism. Unfortunately, the war was to interrupt Kraus's career the next year, and she would not return to the European stage for eight years.

After the war, Kraus made her long-awaited and once-postponed debut in the United States at New York's Town Hall on November 6, 1949. She played Bartok's "Peasant Songs and Dances," Mozart's A major Sonata, K. 331, Brahms's Rhapsody, Op. 79, No. 2, Intermezzo, Op. 117, No. 2, and Rhapsody, Op. 119, No. 4, Haydn's Sonata in D major, and Schubert's Sonata in A major, Op. Posth. Kraus's musical personality had aged and mellowed during the introspection of her imprisonment years, and according to the reviewer, her interpretive insight was nothing short of brilliant. Robert Sabin of Musical America found that even her rhythmic liberties were charmingly convincing. His review was all that any artist could have hoped for, heralding the arrival of a major new artist on the American scene:

A vivid musical temperament was introduced to the

¹Recital review, Times (London), 16 June 1939, p. 12.

United States at this recital. Miss Kraus was born in Budapest, but she is now a British subject. Her recordings had established a reputation for her here, especially as a chamber music artist and as an interpreter of her compatriot, Bela Bartok. Her personality in the concert hall was more fiery (and more wayward) than one had anticipated from the records. Miss Kraus played everything on her program with charm, intelligence and imagination. Even when she took liberties with rhythms, or indulged herself in caprices of phrasing, she did it with such brio that one was usually captivated into acquiescence. And many of her interpretations were as felicitous in style as they were original and communicative in feeling.

Miss Kraus began with Peasant Songs and Dances by Bartok, actually the Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs, followed without pause by the Rumanian Folk Dances. She played them, as the composer used to, with heady rhythms and accents, but lightly. As her recordings had already indicated, Miss Kraus proved to be a distinguished interpreter of Mozart and Haydn. She treated the rhythm of the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in A major, K. 331, capriciously, but she played the menuetto deliciously and the finale, *alla turca*, with exquisite lightness and impeccable line. If her conception of the work was not as profound as that of some other artists, it was intensely alive and full of beauty.

Miss Kraus imbued Brahms' Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2, with nostalgia, sustaining the melodic line with a legato. And she played the Rhapsody in E flat major, Op. 119, No. 4, majestically. Her tone was round and sonorous, her rhythms accurate, yet she did not find it necessary to pound the music out as so many pianists do. The Haydn Sonata in D major was wholly enchanting. Miss Kraus played it in harpsichord style, with almost no pedal, crisp touch, and enormous vivacity.

Perhaps the finest achievement of the recital was her interpretation of Schubert's posthumous Sonata in A major. Miss Kraus did not conceive the work as heroically as does Artur Schnabel (who was in the audience), but she played it with warmth, dramatic contrast and sustained emotion. Her touch in the scherzo was astonishingly light; and she captured the tenderness and playfulness of the rondo as only one who understands the Viennese spirit could. Her encores¹ consisted of Schubert dances, enchantingly played.

With her American debut a smashing success, Kraus had

¹Robert Sabin, recital review, Musical America, November 15, 1949, p. 36.

moved into the international spotlight. Her musical prowess was now as readily praised as her technical acumen. When she played again in Town Hall on October 17, 1958, Julius Simek of Musical America effused:

The listener forgot quickly the technical ease with which she manipulated the keyboard, for it seemed to be the least important phase of the concert. Musical continuity, breadth of expression, and a wondrous mental and emotional grasp of the music captivated the imagination.

Rapid passages had momentum without any suggestion of haste, and she molded the slow movements with great inner tranquility and contained expressiveness. Her touch is an inexhaustible source of color and variety. Yet, as much personality as she was able to display, it was always combined with a thorough artistic objectivity.¹

Back in London in the same year, the Times commented that Kraus "has her own way of playing the piano, growing from a very warm heart, and she sticks to it no matter who the composer."² In 1959, the same paper printed this review:

There is a distinction between the builder and the architect and no less of a distinction between the pianist of talent and a master of the keyboard.

Miss Lili Kraus, who played at Wigmore Hall yesterday afternoon, proved beyond a shadow of doubt that she belongs to the master class. Her interpretation of Schubert's great A minor Sonata, Op. 143, was on a majestic scale only rarely encountered. When it is, how grateful we must be!³

Kraus could apparently do no wrong on either side of the Atlantic. A reviewer for the Musical Courier tried at this time to probe the secret of this success, offering that

¹Julius Franz Simek, recital review, Musical America, November 1, 1958, p. 26.

²Recital review, Times (London), 10 February 1958, p. 3.

³"Miss Lili Kraus's Superb Musicianship," recital review, Times (London), 9 February 1959, p. 12.

Kraus infused her playing with passionate drama:

And this is not merely a cheap theatricality but a feeling for the value of contrasts, large and small, that one finds in all art. Her crescendo and diminuendo, her staccato and legato are not only musically exciting in themselves; they are intimately related to each other.¹

Wriston Locklair of Musical America also tried to unravel the mystic of Kraus's popularity and appeal as a performer:

Her playing remains unmistakably Viennese. In Mozart, rapid chromatic passages are executed deftly, but without a sense of rushing; in Haydn, the themes are broadly and beautifully stated; in Schubert, the melodies are meltingly lovely. The listener is not aware of Miss Kraus's technique, though it is there, and in abundance. The ease with which she performs the most complicated passages . . . is deceptive.

What really captivates an audience during an evening with Miss Kraus is the freshness and brilliance she brings to a repertory that can sound faded and out of fashion in less attentive hands.²

A reviewer for the London Times observed in 1962 that perhaps the real hallmark of Kraus's musical genius was the way in which she shaped the ends of phrases. The same reviewer, though, complained that Kraus's exaggerated dynamics occasionally led to a "touch of coarseness."³ Ross Parmenter of the New York Times cited in November 1963 his own formula for Kraus's rise to prominence:

Lili Kraus, who played a recital last night at Carne-

¹Recital review, Musical Courier, January 1961, p. 25.

²Wriston Locklair, recital review, Musical America, January 1961, p. 81.

³Recital review, Times (London), 10 December 1962, p. 5.

gie Hall, is one of the world's leading women pianists. She is also an artist with sharply personal ideas.

Both factors contributed to the pleasures of her latest appearance here. With her wide experience, her keyboard command and her manner of playing in front of an audience with a combination of flair and intimacy, she was always a compelling personality. And her ideas, some of them unexpected, constantly held the interest.¹

Parmenter further felt that two of Kraus's most important advantages were "a particularly articulate right hand, one that enables her to give strength and independence, and very distinct emphasis, to any treble melodic strand or figuration she wants to stress."² He found her other gift to be the ability "for making a melody sing almost as in an aria."³ However, Parmeter did find one fault. He agreed with his London colleague that Kraus's "sharp contrasts seemed a little exaggerated."⁴

Further proving that not every reviewer was completely smitten by Kraus's playing, Peter Davis of Musical America gave the pianist's November 18, 1963, appearance at Cargeie Hall a mixed review:

Moments of truly great pianism alternated with an extremely puzzling treatment of the music. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue opened the program. After a brilliantly executed fantasy, with scale passages of remarkable evenness and clarity, the fugue disappointed by being muddy and overpedaled. . . . Miss Kraus' Mozart playing is deservedly celebrated, for there was an inevitability in phrasing and touch that proved most reward-

¹Ross Parmenter, "Music: Sharply Personal," recital review, New York Times, 19 November 1963, p. 46.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

ing, and the finale was quite delicious.¹

Perfection obviously escapes every performer, no matter how great, at least in the eyes of some reviewers. Reliance upon criticism as a means of evaluating an artist is always risky because of the subjectivity involved; what one person dislikes, the other may love. For instance, Frederick Page published a review in The Musical Times in the same month as the one cited above, claiming that Kraus "gave a monumental performance of the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue at one of her Wellington recitals, superb even by her own standards."²

Harold Schonberg of the New York Times attended the first concert on October 4, 1966, of the series of nine concerts during which Kraus played all of the Mozart Piano Concertos. In his review the next day, he tried to capture the essence of her style:

Miss Kraus played handsomely. She is an interesting pianist--always has been--and has some individual ideas about the music. She does not try to evoke a rococo style, what the Germans call "kleine Fingern." Quite the contrary. Both Miss Kraus's ideas and her playing were robust. She feels the drama of the music and is not afraid to build to a healthy climax.

Thus there was throughout the evening a concentration on contrasts and dramatic values.

The overriding impression was of a pianist with taste, skill and heart, one with a smoothly-working technique; and, also, one who does not worry too much about musical niceties. There was, for instance, no way of determining how Miss Kraus would take a trill. It could

¹Peter Davis, recital review, Musical America, December 1963, p. 262.

²Frederick Page, recital review, The Musical Times, December 1963, p. 887.

be on the fundamental note, it could be a semitone up.¹ Schonberg succinctly summarized many of the observations about Kraus's playing that other critics have repeatedly enunciated, namely that her ideas are highly individualistic, often charting a new path, that her playing is hearty and dramatic, that her interpretation is punctuated with vivid contrasts, that her ornamentation is unencumbered by attention to pedantry, and that she is above all a pianist with "taste, skill, and heart." In a review of this same concert, Time magazine agreed with Schonberg's assessment:

It was impeccable Mozart throughout, original without being eccentric, introspective without being pedantic. At concert's end, the sellout crowd in Manhattan's Town Hall applauded like baseball fans who had just shared in winning the first game of the World Series.²

Another writer for the New York Times, Raymond Ericson, also tried to find that quality which distinguished Kraus's playing. In a review of her recordings of the Mozart Concertos that she made just before the New York series, he said:

For those who admire her, she possesses a basic attribute that is important--a tone that has vitality in and of itself. It has strength and glitter and each note has a kind of detached ping that reaches out to the listener and engages him forcibly. If the tone were hard or ugly, this sort of energy would be impossible to bear, as it often is in the case of today's young pianists.

The same aliveness that infuses the individual tone extends naturally to Miss Kraus's phrase-making and to

¹Harold C. Schonberg, "Music: Mozart Complete," concert review, New York Times, 5 October 1966, p. 39.

²Concert review, Time, October 14, 1966, p. 50.

her interpretations as a whole.¹

To the list of characteristics, then, must be added a vital and articulated tone.

Harris Goldsmith has written on several occasions about Kraus's recordings of the Mozart Piano Sonatas which first appeared on the Epic label in 1968, later to be reissued by Odyssey. In a comparison of Kraus's effort with a contemporary release of Glenn Gould's version of the Mozart Sonatas, Goldsmith stated:

Kraus also goes in for a bit of dramatizing. Like Gould, she indulges in dynamic extremes that can verge on the theatrical. Also like Gould, she abhors insipid Mozart playing and to preclude its possibility uses all sorts of devices--caesuras, vivid black-white contrasts, even laconic thrusts of downright plangent sound. The drama she creates, however, comes from an imaginative observance of the composer's own dynamic markings.²

In contrasting the Wilhelm Backhaus and Kraus recordings of the Mozart Sonatas, Goldsmith finds interrelationships:

As it happens, to listen to Backhaus and Mme. Kraus in parallel literature proves highly instructive. I had always categorized these two artists in two distinctly different traditions, yet hearing them in immediate juxtaposition shows how similar they really are. They share, for example, a robust, explosively contoured approach: both tend to be dramatic and a bit overdrawn in terms of dynamic contrasts, and both can be very cavalier about ornamentation. Moreover, you find the playing of Kraus and the playing of Backhaus similarly tinged with certain romantic mannerisms, such as a just discernible

¹Raymond Ericson, "Six Down--More to Come," record review, New York Times, 27 February 1966, p. 19.

²Harris Goldsmith, "From Five Artist Five Essays on Mozart's Piano Sonatas," record review, High Fidelity, July 1968, p. 72.

breaking of hands in cantabile passages.¹

In his third consideration of recordings of the Mozart Sonatas, Goldsmith finds Kraus to be "an expressionist, boldly reinforcing dramatic outbursts with stark, black outlines and vehement accents."² Richard Freed, writing in Stereo Review in 1975, recognized that the passionate drama Kraus brought to Mozart's music might invite criticism. He offered the following more as an explanation rather than a defense:

As for the suggestion that Kraus' way with Mozart is too aggressive, I can only wonder if that attitude doesn't represent some sort of lingering sexual prejudice. Walter Susskind remarked, in a recent memoir, that Artur Schnabel "played with great understanding, but almost against the accepted concept of Mozart style; he emphasized the masculine element, and brought it off superbly." This, it seems to me, is exactly what Kraus does in these recordings: there is nothing "ladylike" in her playing, and a comparison of her version of the great A Minor Sonata (K. 310) with Schnabel's will show some astonishingly close parallels.³

Freed goes on to provide some additional analysis of Kraus's style. In comparing her recordings of the Sonatas with those made by Artur Balsam, he summarizes:

There is, without question, more drama in Kraus' playing, and more variety, both throughout the series and within each work. It is not simply a matter of brisker tempos (there is nothing here resembling Glenn Gould's drive to see how fast the allegros can be played), but of an almost mystically enlivening "aura"--a visionary approach without self-consciousness on Kraus' part. She

¹Harris Goldsmith, Records in Review (Great Barrington, Mass: Wyeth Press, 1970), p. 239.

²Harris Goldsmith, Records in Review (Treat Barrington, Mass: Wyeth Press, 1976), p. 211.

³Richard Freed, "The Mozart Solo Sonatas: Two Integral Sets," Stereo Review, October 1975, p. 112.

takes some risks to achieve something like the improvisatory spirit we associate with Mozart-as-performer. Her phrasing is characterized by subtle inflection, one is aware of a controlled undercurrent of nervous animation, and there are most effective dynamic contrasts--but always within reasonable approximation of the¹ dynamic range of the late-eighteenth-century instruments.

Harris Goldsmith once again attempted to describe Kraus's musical style when he reviewed her recording of the Schubert Sonatas in A major, D. 664, and A minor, D. 845. He began by observing that rarely do "recorded performances capture the miraculous balance between classical poise and expressive fire that characterizes [Kraus's] best live work."² This record, he felt, is the fortunate exception. He believed that this album projects basic, inherent qualities of Kraus's style:

Kraus approaches the music in the manner of an expressionist painter. She works boldly and freely with large dabs of color, stressing the asymmetrical patterns in bar lines, shifting emphasis from one voice to another, and highlighting the strange harmonic turmoil. Her grasp of the over-all structure is so acute that it enables her to change tempo and bend the rhythm without forsaking forward continuity. Her brusque energy, I hasten to add, is counterbalanced here by an almost bejeweled grace and elegance.³

As for Kraus's personalized interpretations, Peter Davis provided insight into the pianist's artist vision when he reviewed her playing of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C minor in 1970 in the New York Times.

¹Ibid.

²Harris Goldsmith, Records in Review (Great Barrington, Mass: Wyeth Press, 1972), p. 321.

³Ibid., p. 322.

Miss Kraus gave a highly unusual and individual performance, very far from the prevailing view that holds this work to be the first true romantic concerto. The first movement, taken at a much brisker tempo than one generally hears, was full of impetuous explosions, gruff accents and stringent tone. The slow movement, which would seem to invite playing of lyrical repose, projected instead a mood of sullen impatience, while the finale bristled with snappish bad temper. In fact, the interpretation conveyed all the qualities one associates with Beethoven himself. A fascinating reading, and like it or not one must credit Miss Kraus with the courage and thoroughness of her convictions.¹

In another review that appeared in the New York Times in 1976, Donal Henahan wrote about Kraus's courage of conviction in breathing her aesthetic life into whatever she played:

Next to talent, the greatest gift nature can bestow on an artist is conviction. Lili Kraus, for one, oozes conviction when she performs Mozart . . . In the face of such confidence, which Miss Kraus has built up through many years of hard thought and hard work, even one who might prefer another Mozart style to hers could only sit in admiration.²

The reviews of Kraus's playing in the very last years of her performing career continued to reflect an admiration for her sense of drama. Of her recording of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert Fantasies released by Vanguard in 1980, Richard Freed wrote that "the playing is, as always, gutsy, involved, and urgently communicative."³ Harris Goldsmith

¹Peter G. Davis, "Lili Kraus Plays Beethoven Concerto," concert review, New York Times, 11 May 1970, p. 48.

²Donal Henahan, "Lili Kraus Has Vigor, Conviction, Confidence," concert review, New York Times, 4 August 1976, p. 14.

³Richard Freed, record review, Stereo Review, June 1982, p. 113.

agreed:

She is not, and never has been, a colorist in the Myra Hess tradition; yet in her own inimitable way, she conveys the tensions, mysteries, and grandeurs of these fantasies . . .

Kraus is a keyboard expressionist; the shaggy edges and heavy black Rouault outlines she gave the Bach impart a power and scope that will have purists up in arms but less prejudiced listeners enthralled. If memory serves, her mentor, Artur Schnabel, played this exceptional work in a similar manner.¹

Kraus's final recording was a collection of Bartok's smaller works released by Vanguard in 1981. Edward Tatnall Canby, writing for Audio, felt that Kraus's playing was very similar to Bartok's own recorded examples.² Richard Freed, in a review of this record, remarked again on the pianist's visionary freedom:

Her playing is characterized most of all by the sort of idiomatic freedom that suits the quasi-improvisatory nature of these works down the ground and makes them not only effective display pieces but exceptionally communicative.³

Perhaps Jacob Siskind of the Gazette of Montreal best summed up Kraus's musicianship when he asserted it ineffability:

It would be possible to dilate at length on the masterful sense of form to Miss Kraus' playing, her ability to shape and reshape the music as she plays, to keep a performance moving along reaching for one emotional peak after another, but words cannot describe the

¹Harris Goldsmith, record review, High Fidelity, January 1982, p. 75.

²Edward Tantall Canby, record review, Audio, July 1982, p. 70.

³Richard Freed, "Keyboard Bartok: Three Views," record review, Stereo Review, May 1982, p. 70.

elusive quality that is hers¹

If reviews prove somehow inadequate in shedding light on a performer's artistic psyche, perhaps the artist's own words will help.

Kraus Views Playing and Performance Practices

First, Kraus hates the words "practice" and "memorize." She once explained her objections in an interview with Dean Elder:

I never think of my work as practice. Practice somehow has the overtone of going over and over things, hoping to get the tempo. My work is not like that. I call what I am doing solid work, and it consists of many types of activities. First of all, before I approach a piece on the piano, I have lived with it for at least months and possibly years. The literature is big enough to allow for that. Secondly, there are certain parts in a composition which immediately, long before I materialize them, are clear and want to be played. And that is it.

Memorize--there again I don't know that word. By the time I can produce what I want to hear, by the time I am satisfied with the interpretation and it is technically correct, I have known it a long time by heart.²

The words "work" and "by heart" are substituted in the Kraus lexicon for "practice" and "memory." With regard to her own work, Kraus says that she practiced seven to eleven hours a day when she was not traveling, which was usually no more than a month at a time between tours. When she was touring, her practice, or work, time was limited to a few minutes here

¹Jacob Siskind, "Lili Kraus Sparks Concert by McGill Chamber Orchestra" concert review, Gazette (Montreal), 21 November 1972, page number unknown.

²Elder, "Regal Lady," pp. 22-23.

and there. Regarding the source of the motivation that spurred her to work so indefatigably over the years, she insists that "the irresistible wish to do justice to the piece will produce the motivation, and when one is on the road you have to deliver."¹

Kraus has also described how she learns "by heart":

The student or the artist must know the piece from every aspect--harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically. The harmonic life is the "key" in a classical composition. But first and last, a reliable memory is possible only if an absolute identification with the piece in living experience has taken place.

I have an excellent visual memory, but when I am playing I try to eliminate it because I want to remember with my ear, not my eye. I² don't want to see the music but to hear it, to live it.

Besides "practice" and "memorize," another word that Kraus scorns is "objectivity," or a fastidious attention to musicological detail at the expense of the emotional response which Kraus believes to be universally timeless:

Objectivity in music is rubbish, and who would want it anyway. Have you ever had an objective love affair? And what is music but love? To love is to live, and to be fully alive is to have the³ capacity to touch and move others if you are a musician.

Now seeing that I had the incredible privilege--surely undeserved to that extent--to be loved by all, I imagine that I reflect and project infinite love. I say that because I don't think I have ever hurt any creature. I am also one of the very few artists who hearing the performance that convinces me of the genuineness and

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 23.

³John Ardoin, "A Lesson in Musical Love With Lili Kraus," New York Times, 1 August 1976, p. 15.

extent of the talent of the performer, notwithstanding that it is not my image, I am so grateful to them that I would allow them to walk over me. On the other hand, when they are boring, for instance pretending that, "this is the classical way," and the public mistakes the frown on the artist's forehead for the depths of the composer, I could kill them.¹

Her ideas about ornamentation, particularly in Classic repertoire, are equally emphatic, answering those critics who complain that her ornaments sometimes begin on the "wrong note":

Every book about trills, whether it's by Leopold Mozart, Emanuel Bach, or whomever, ends by saying: "All these rules₂ are subject to the taste and judgment of the performer."²

Another practice which Kraus has objected to in masterclasses is the predilection of many musicians for stopping between movements. She argues that the train of thought is thereby interrupted and that only by viewing the work in its entirety can musical sense be discerned. She told a student once that, "I can't understand performers who finish such a movement as this and remove their handkerchief from their pocket to wipe their brow before going on."³

Still another term that Kraus believes is frequently abused by musicians is "style."

There is no such thing as the "Mozart style" so many talk about. The style of a composer, or of a writer or a

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Dean Elder, "Master Class," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 27.

³Dean Elder, "Making Mozart Live," Clavier 10 (May-June 1971): 18.

dancer, is how they speak. Each has his own language. To understand them, we who are performers, readers or audience must learn to speak their language. Only a fool would not know that Mozart--the man with the deepest soul, which he expressed with the fewest words--has his own way of speaking to us, and that you do not speak his words as you would those of Beethoven or Wagner.¹

A word that Kraus likes is "simplify." She has preached this concept many times but admits that the path to simplicity is fraught with potential pitfalls and distractions:

What I mean by "simplifying" is that the more concise the music, the more economic the means must be to bring the message across. If you understand the message, you don't have to gild the lily.

[In Mozart's music] if you take these dynamic markings at their face value and play actual forte, actual crescendo, actual piano, you break the piece into a thousand little bits. It took me almost a lifetime to understand that all these markings are grades of expression and are only infinitesimal diminishments or infinitesimal augmentations to bring home the sense of the happening.

Now this is simplification because you bring it down to a minimum instead of blowing it up to a maximum. Not every piece is like this. Beethoven asks for a maximum espressivo when he writes fortissimo; but there again instead of bodily volume per se, you must reach a climax in keeping with the sense of the text.²

In an effort to avoid breaking a piece "into a thousand little bits," she stresses the long line while at the same time giving life to the details, an apparent dialectical argument that she synthesizes thusly:

What is more important--to speak a whole sentence or to articulate syllables? The big line, of course, is absolutely indispensable. You articulate details to bring the whole sentence to life. The only reason for

¹Ardoin, "A Lesson in Musical Love," p. 15.

²Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 24.

articulating in small units is to enable the big line to emerge.¹

Kraus also has some interesting advice about concertizing and the making of a career. Surprisingly, she claims that she never made the building of a career a goal; rather, it was a byproduct:

I never even thought of success, to this hour. Never! I never had any idea of building a career. I didn't even know what career means, and nobody knows, really. There are as many careers as there are artists. My only ambition was to express the music and to communicate it. The career was just the consequence.²

Given the reality of the consequence, how does Kraus feel just before a concert?

Dead! Terrified! Always! The minute you walk out onto that stage, you ask yourself, "why do I do this? This is the last time I walk out on this stage." But it is not so. By chance,³ if you don't feel like that, the concert is never good.

Kraus has found that the solution to the problems of stage fright is to develop both assurance and fulfillment:

There is a healthy instinct and knowledge one acquires during a lifetime of playing which gives you the assurance and authority to follow your feelings in such matters. This is rarely found in the young, nor can it be taught them. Part of developing as a musician is learning how to convince yourself and others that your way is a right way.⁴

Further, fulfillment, and not mere success, breeds success. If you are fulfilled in several concerts, then you gain confidence. Also, the routine of playing is indispensable. If you play once a year, you have butter-

¹Elder, "Regal Lady," pp. 24-25.

²Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

³Ibid. ⁴Ardoyn, "A Lesson in Musical Love," p. 15.

flies up to your nose. If you are on the stage every other day, it is easier.

Peak fulfillment is when the conscious and the subconscious are in total balance. You don't think, "aha, I want to do this like that." You don't know that you do it, but you do it. You don't think when performing. There is no time. Instead, you live the music. The outstanding characteristic of life is that you feel, you understand, you absorb, you project, you enjoy, and you suffer. Not more, not less.¹

Kraus further credits her charisma, which she insists is God-given, with fostering her success on the stage:

You can't learn that; people are coached on how to go out on the stage--that is all rubbish. Of course you can learn it, but it is not interesting. You can tell that it is not genuine.²

A rich and vital imagination characterizes all facets of Kraus's personal and professional life. She says "there is nothing I experience by eye, ear, aura, or skill that does not fire my imagination," and believes that an active imagination fuels the interpretive genius.³

The way I play music is an answer to how I feel about life. . . . I have a million interests in life: hobbies, desires, passions. I was an excellent mountaineer. I won many prizes in swimming. I adore to draw in the camp (Japanese prison) where I had no piano. I made portraits and got bread for it, so to speak. I love to write. I love to read. I love people. I love my children. I can kill time with dreaming like nobody else. All of this is the nature, I think, of a real artist. If you are concerned with music only, you can't be a real artist. How then do you know hell and heaven as one knows when one really lives?

I think the more truly a person is blessed with the creative imagination, the less he thinks in the moment of performance. . . . you are--not you feel or you think--but you are either sad or expectant or carefree or fulfilled or redeemed or cast out. Every conceivable aspect

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

in the gamut of human feeling and experience takes place in you.¹

Two experiences which Kraus considers to have made significant contributions to her reservoir of imaginative insight were her daily visits to the zoo and her first pregnancy:

I visited the zoo daily from my seventh to my seventeenth year. The animals knew me and I knew them by name and by nature. There is no end to what men can learn from animals, and the daily visits to the zoo surely prepared me for what I am today.²

During her first pregnancy, she felt a particularly heightened sense of awareness:

To my mind, a real artist must be composed of the animal and the angel. It is a sensuous manifestation as well as a spiritual, intellectual, and emotional one. When I became pregnant, the animal had the upper hand, and I was so happy being pregnant as only that one time experience can produce. You see,³ all great women who came to fulfillment had children.

Kraus believes further that her role as "forwarder"--a word she uses quite deliberately--of the composer's message requires humility and encompassing love. While recognizing her own accomplishments, she avoids immodesty by crediting God with bestowing upon her the gift that she holds in stewardship. "The moment I say, 'Aha, how clever of me,' the gift is gone."⁴ She passionately gives credit for her musi-

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili by Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 26.

²Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

³Ibid.

⁴Latryl Ohendalski, "Lili Kraus," This Is TCU, June 1983, p. 5.

cianship to God:

We are all in God's image. There is no difference, except how clean that vessel is through which God can speak. Now, when He speaks through Hitler, there is no God speaking; He is trampled underfoot. When the so-called personality has cleansed itself so that it knows it doesn't exist but for Jesus, then God can be heard.¹

The concerts that are not good today and forever not good are when the personal fiction, "I do this superbly," overshadows the certainty that it is done for you.²

In a closely allied adjunct to this philosophical position, Kraus feels her love for all creatures has made her art possible. Love, she has said, illuminates her playing:

It was Goethe, I think, who said "the hallmark of genius is love." If you don't have love in you, how can you express it? If you have it but are afraid to express it, how can the listener receive this message? So I think that when an audience is thrilled for technical reasons, this thrill is on the surface. When listeners are moved because they have received the performer's³ emotional message, this is both elating and lasting.

For Kraus, music and love are synonymous, both dwelling in a spiritual realm. This empathy for the metaphysic has provided the undergirding for her insistence on creative spontaneity in the music. In a masterclass she told a student:

Spontaneity is the very essence of a performance. You should not let on that you know what the next note or bar is or that you have worked on the piece to the point of being sick and tired of it. I want to hear your one-time experience: you have never before seen this music, never known it; you invent it now, as you go along. Now how will you do this? By trying to imagine the ineffable beauty of the piece, by trying to imagine everything that

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid. ³Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 24.

happens in it, by¹ being utterly identified with it--body, soul, and spirit.

This same theosophic belief in the universality of divine love guides her approach to interpretation:

At my age this is the sum total of my life's experiences: that what you call a great interpretation must go far beyond not only the instrument but the music itself, and great music tries to manifest nothing less than the cosmos. This cosmos includes all that exists: the music of the spheres in all its appearances whether water, wind, bird, noise, storm, lightening, thunder, or the sweetest rustling of the leaf. Great composers like Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, of course, had such fine perception and heard these things within themselves so clearly they could give them immortal form.²

On a more practical aspect of interpretation, Kraus was once asked if her ideas had changed over the years:

Now, of course I have changed the interpretation, but it is never in tempo, or hardly ever in tempo. I have a very exact image within me of a tempo which is the piece. There is no discrepancy between today's slow and tomorrow's.³

Kraus's recordings provide convincing corroboration that her tempos have remained essentially constant throughout the course of her career. For instance, in a recording of the Mozart Concerto in A major, K. 414, that she made in 1953 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Pierre Monteux, she began the first movement at 144 to the quarter note.⁴ Twelve

¹Elder, "Making Mozart Live," p. 14.

²Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 23.

³Stone, p. 24.

⁴Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Concerti No. 12 in A, K. 414, and No. 18 in B-flat, K. 456. Lili Kraus, pianist. The Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux. RCA GM 43276.

years later, she rerecorded the same Concerto with Stephen Simon and the Mozart Festival Orchestra.¹ This time her opening tempo was 138 to the quarter note. The exact same situation holds true for the two recordings of the B-flat major Concerto, K. 456, made with Monteux in 1953 and with Simon in 1965-66. Once again, the piano enters at a metronome speed of 144 in the earlier recording and at 138 in the later one. Of course, the slight tempo fluctuations might have been dictated by the conductors and not by Kraus. A comparison of two recordings of solo Mozart Piano Sonatas shows an even greater degree of tempo constancy. In 1954, she recorded all the Sonatas for Discophiles Francais, and she repeated that feat in 1967-68 for Columbia.² She began the first movements of the Sonatas in F major, K. 332, and in C minor, K. 457, at 144 and 184, respectively. In the later recordings, she began the same two movements at precisely the same tempos. Perhaps even more remarkable testimony to the constancy of Kraus's tempos is revealed in a comparison of two recordings she made of the "Six Romanian Folk Dances" of Bartok. The first was made in the late 1930s for Parlophone

¹Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Complete Piano Concerti. Lili Kraus, pianist. The Mozart Festival Orchestra conducted by Stephen Simon. Twelve-record set. Columbia P12 11806.

²Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Complete Solo Piano Music. Vol 1-7. Reissue of the recordings made for Discophiles Francais in 1954. Angel Treasury EAC-31027 through EAC-30133; and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas. Vol. 1-2. Columbia Odyssey Y3 33220 and Y3 33224.

and the second one in 1981 for Vanguard.¹ In the case of each of the six dances, the tempos are absolutely identical between the two recordings that are separated by more than four decades. Kraus was not exaggerating when she claimed that her tempos hardly ever changed.

The same interviewer who had posed the question about tempos asked if Kraus's views about concertizing might have changed during her long career:

No, my attitude has never changed and never will change. I adore my audiences because I regard them as the third link in the chain, as indispensable as the composer and the performer. I am deeply beholden to them for their capability and willingness to function as the receivers of the message of the composers, which we, the performers, have to project to our best ability.

I am also beholden to them because, although there are all kinds of motives behind concert attendance (either the performing artist is very famous; or, as a sign of general culture, it is a social obligation; or one wants to display one's furs and jewels and so on), the great majority come because they love music. To share my love with them is the God-willed reason of all my endeavors, the crowning happiness of my being. Also, there is a deep yearning in music lovers for the revelation that brings the music home to them. When fulfillment is experienced the message is passed directly from heart to heart as if from the mouth of the Lord. It is this hope that compels them to return ever again, although such fulfillment is a rare, only too rare event. Thus, in spite of the agonizing tension and excitement which I go through before every concert (no matter whether there are twenty people or four thousand present), at the moment when I see the people there, I know that they have come, even if they are not aware of it, with the deep longing to witness the miracle, to share it. Then I am filled

¹Bela Bartok, Romanian Folk Dances and Rondo No. 3 on a Folk Tune. Lili Kraus, pianist. Parlophone P.X.O. 1026; and Bela Bartok, Six Romanian Folk Dances, Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs, Three Hungarian Folksongs, Three Rondos on Folk Tunes, Sonatina, Selections from For Children, Vol. 1, and Evening in the Country. Lili Kraus, pianist. Vanguard VSD 71249.

with the sole desire to make the music shine in all its divine splendor, so that the people may share with me the bliss of its beauty and meaning.¹

Kraus feels that the common denominator that distinguishes all great pianists is that they love music more than they love the piano. She says that Lhevinne and Horowitz were excellent pianists, but that Schnabel was a musician who happened to use the piano as his mode of expression.² Her views about other pianists are equally as fascinating, and she speaks about them with complete candor:

It is so beautiful that one admires pianists for different reasons. Of course, my immortal diety is Schnabel, and will forever remain so. On the same level, there is Bartok, for so different reasons. My most recent amour is Murray Perahia whom I never heard in the flesh, but what I heard on the radio was unforgettable, incomparable. When Pollini plays Chopin Studies I think that nothing as shiny and perfect has existed; when he plays the "Wanderer" Fantasy, I find him boring and lifeless. Ashkenazy I admire no end, but he does not play in the way I wish to hear the respective composition. I bow to his fabulous talent. He has everything but genius. I love Firkusny beyond words and Fleisher, when he still played. Of the Van Cliburn contestants, Radu Lupu was one of my favorites, but somehow he has trapped himself into a mannered way, but he is a wonderful talent. I adore Alicia de Larrocha on my knees when she plays Spanish music, but when she plays Mozart, though she plays it beautifully, it's not really Mozart. Gilels, whose playing I haven't heard much of, played the "Emperor" Concerto; it was so totally different--in every fiber of me lives the memory of Schnabel's "Emperor"--but it didn't matter because of the integrity and the fabulous pianism. Clifford Curzon I love. I adore Glenn Gould's Bach, but not his Mozart. His Bach is infinitely preferable to Rosalyn Tureck's.³

¹Ibid.

²Elder, "Regal lady," p. 70.

³Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

With regard to playing the music of specific composers, Kraus has ready advice gained from many years of study. For instance, in a 1983 interview that asked, among other things, about Bartok's music, she said that cultural and experiential background are crucial to the proper realization of this repertoire. To make her point, she spoke several Hungarian words, stopping to emphasize that "no matter how long the word is, even if it's 77 syllables, the accent is always on the first syllable."¹ Unless the performer understands this, she argued, he will never be able to play the rhythms as they conform to the text. As for Schubert's music, Kraus has advised:

When I think of Schubert, my heart is so brimming over with love and compassion that sometimes I can hardly bear it. But loving and understanding him is not enough. He really does present enormous problems. In his music the harmonic life of the piece is more moved, rich, and irrational than in any other composer's music I know. To be constantly aware of all this and yet not betray that you are is one of the difficulties in playing Schubert.² The other difficulty is to avoid sentimentality. . . .²

On Bach's polyphony and the decision of how much emphasis should be given the subject in each appearance, she has counseled:

I employ polyphonic hearing and the sense of proportion concerning how you will make the theme appear without losing the polyphony. But it has to appear. Everytime the theme appears, it must retain its exact nature. To think of playing the theme louder than its surrounding texture is too clumsy a way of thinking. It is not

¹Bob Doerschuk, "Lili Kraus: Spirited Doyenne of Mozart and Bartok," Keyboard, October 1983, p. 66.

²Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 25.

louder; it is just more conspicuous. You have to understand and articulate the theme and adhere to it from beginning to end.¹

Turning to Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart, Kraus has added:

Beethoven is something else. He speaks in interruptions, crescendi which end in a subito piano and vice versa. Brahms is again something else. His language is that of big, wonderful round harmonies and melodies. They are never very, very deep, but hover with mastery on the edge of sentiment. With them, as with Mozart, it is the job of we, the performers, to glean from the music its essence, and then to fuse this with our essence in order to consummate the union. In this way, a piece is born anew, quite unlike any other union which another may form with the same piece.

Actually, the performance of Mozart is somewhat special because there is a golden rule which must be followed when it comes to playing his piano music. We must remember that his writing was framed by the narrow dynamic range of the instrument he played. I own a piano of his day, and know first-hand that neither real forte nor a real pianissimo are possible on it. If you play too loudly, you will break a hammer. If you play too softly, the note simply does not speak. So, a real culminating forte or a whispered piano can be had only in a relative sense. This knowledge is what must guide us in performing Mozart's music. But I have always thought that his manner of speech tended toward a wonderful restraint anyway. I have found that even his most passionate outbursts, his darker sides, are tempered by grace.

As to tempos, there are in Mozart's music, as there are in the music of any composer, very precise indications in its character, in the notes of the music itself. For example, "con brio" in Haydn or Beethoven means something quite different than it does in Mozart. With Haydn, it brings an earthy lustiness, a bit of the beer hall. In Beethoven, it is a titanic outburst. But with Mozart there is a driven quality, something almost breathless.²

Pedaling in Mozart's music is another subject that has occupied a good deal of Kraus's attention. From her work

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, November 22, 1984.

²Ardoyn, "A Lesson in Musical Love," p. 15.

on a Mozart piano, she learned that the instrument had two pedals operated by the knees. The pedals could be used separately or simultaneously. The left knee pedal held up to the E above middle C, thus permitting a connection of the harmonies without affecting the melodic line. Given that the modern piano cannot reproduce this effect, a finger pedal technique must be employed in Alberti bass patterns to make the harmonies sound as if they are swimming in pedal. On the subject of the amount of damper pedal that should be used in Mozart's music, Kraus has remarked:

There is a superstition that the less pedal used in Mozart the better. This is nonsense; it fits in with the distorted picture of Mozart as a pretty, Rococo composer in silk breeches and powdered wig. I prefer Mozart in riding pants and boots!"¹

Any mention of the fact that a few critics have found Kraus's Mozart at times to be too aggressive brings a quick retort from the pianist:

To say that Mozart should be played delicately is to say that life should only have pink pastel and blue pastel colors--no ups and downs; that it should be white, serene, not too happy, please, but just nice, comfortable, pleasant, charming. As we all know, there are no depths of unhappiness, tragedy, frustration, anger that haven't touched Mozart to the core--likewise no bliss that he has not experienced. Any musician worth his salt speaks his life--the greater the master, the more economical the means; he doesn't have to put his heart on his sleeve. The past master of such understatement was Mozart, always with the understanding that what he had to say was glowing inside and shines through the seemingly restricted and almost childishly simple--close to the line between childish and childlike. Anybody who is not conversant through personal experience with the dynamic range will not be able to discern the difference between

¹Ibid.

the pretense of loud playing and the bodily forte. Now, when I play Mozart I don't ever really play loud--I would not play a single forte in Mozart as I play one in Beethoven--but by comparison the piano, which is never a Chopinesque pianissimo, already affects the listener as if it were loud. Through vitality, tension, imagination, I create the illusion that it is very loud, whereas it is never a forte per se.

Only people who are conventionally and superficially acquainted with Mozart can ever come to the idea that he should be played delicately or lifelessly--prettily. Never, never, never! Always he has to have that wonderful incision that he is capable of creating whether he is dolcissimo or in despair. Certainly it has to be subtle and to contain, like life itself, all the surprises from tragedy to comedy, and it does; but if you always play that through a veil it can never possibly show its true vigor and impressiveness. Contrasts only seem extreme to someone who expects blandness.¹

Kraus's ascendancy to the status of a champion of Mozart was obtained by long years of hard work and sacrifice:

In the beginning it seemed as if my own temperament--tending towards passionate outbursts, effusive utterances and unbridled rhythmical impulses--was ill-fitted for Mozart's way of speech. Also, it appeared that I would have to forego, the pagan joy of bodily release in the virtuoso pieces which had dominated my repertoire in early years. It was only a burning love for Mozart that finally enabled me to qualify as his interpreter, spurring me on through long years of "agony and ecstasy" during which I was obliged to submit to a self-imposed, uncompromising discipline until the² channels of communication could be freed and cleansed.

Now, I am quite sure that there are any number of my colleagues who play Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovich and the rest infinitely better than I do. I do not think that that is the case in Mozart. So I find it my God-given duty, privilege, and,³ if you like, cross, to consecrate my life to this music.

¹Freed, "Lili Kraus, Mozartean, p. 76.

²Lili Kraus, "Marriage to Mozart," Music Journal 24 (December 1966): 24.

³Stone, p. 24.

Mozart has given this gift of sweetness, which is so extraordinary because it is born out of tragedy. I feel an affinity to Mozart because he, like myself, had an almost unbearable sensitivity for all suffering around him, if I dare to speak of myself in the same breath with his name. Now, to be able to bear the pain, the dear Lord gave us as an antidote a capacity for tremendous serenity, humor and gaiety which leads to happiness; otherwise one couldn't bear the suffering. There's an old saying that the sea is as deep as the mountain is high on its shore. Thus, if you know these extremes of happiness and unhappiness, you are able to face whatever comes your way. Mozart's music is so irresistibly lovable because he didn't, like Beethoven, fight for perfection of expression; his perfection was in implying the totality of life, the good and the bad of it.

In his diary, Leonardo da Vinci said that the true experience of the artist at times is so terrifying that, if the artistic vision were presented in full truth to the layman, he would be so shocked that he would flee in terror. Therefore, according to Leonardo, it is the duty and sacred privilege of the creative artist to cloak his experience in the garb of love and perfection. Now this is precisely what Mozart has done, and his music has become so much a part of me that I agonize when the music turns to the minor, and I'm redeemed when it reverts to the major. If I could go back to times past, I certainly would pay homage to Bach, Haydn and Beethoven, but I would most assuredly bow low and kneel in the presence of Mozart. And if I may see him someday in the hereafter, I hope that he will confide in me, saying that I have not altogether displeased him with my interpretations of his works.¹

¹Mach, p. 155.

CHAPTER V

KRAUS'S TECHNICAL SYSTEM

Genesis and Overview

Lili Kraus has formulated a technical system that is distinctive, unique in many characteristics, and predicated upon an ever-vigilant and exacting scrutiny of every single detail in order to achieve physical motions that are anatomically correct, natural, and relaxed. The guiding precept in the evolution of the Kraus technic has been an unerring adherence to the principle of economy of means, with the operative goal in all instances being a simplicity borne of great insight and exploration that involves the identification and discard of extraneous and tense motions in favor of the most direct, comfortable, and unencumbered technic that can be brought to bear in the service of the music at hand.¹

Kraus insists that she learned technic from none of her teachers. Instead, her ideas are her own discoveries resulting from painstaking hard work and talent:

Let me hasten to tell you that neither Bartok, Schnabel, nor Steuermann taught me any technic, absolutely none.

¹Interview with Lili Kraus, conducted by Steve Roberson in January 8, 1985.

What I have discovered on my own is due mostly to my innate talent with which the Lord outfitted me to do what He wanted me to do. What I have done technically with that talent is due to the sweat of my own brow.¹

Kraus began to develop her technical system when she was but nine years old, a year after she had begun her studies at the Royal Academy in Budapest:

The start as a child was sensational at the Academy. One year later, though, I had a terrific setback so severe that my mother asked me if I still wanted to play the piano. I said, "yes, yes!"

The cause of the problem was that I had a teacher-candidate because I was too young to go into the proper class with an accomplished teacher. This first teacher spoiled my hand, and all the professors who had wanted me shied back.

Since I don't believe, and never have, in coincidence--everybody has a fate and a God-given plan and it is not to us to try to understand it--this happened to me because I was so darned brilliant that I would have taken the easy path technically. But through the terrible struggle to rid my arm of the problem--probably tendinitis--that was so severe that I could hardly finish one little piece without excruciating pain, I embarked on a life-long search for technical truth and simplicity.²

The initial impetus, then, for a detailed technical exploration was necessity arising from an arm injury. Kraus was faced with the choice of abandoning the piano or fashioning a technic that would allow for artistic expression while not straining the muscles.

Kraus began teaching in the same year her arm injury occurred. The desire to solve the technical problems of her students further fueled her drive to discover and articulate a technical system that was attentive to even the most minute details of physical execution:

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

My primary motivation technically has been in response to the shortcomings of my students. I have had an irresistible wish to find out why they get stuck, why at a certain level there is no progress possible, and how I can apply what I by and by understood dealing with various types of hands.¹

So the dual exigencies of physical trauma and pedagogical need gave birth to a technical system that is vastly detailed in its observational perception, simple in reductionist principle, and always in accord with the dictates of physical relaxation.

While various components of the Kraus technic are widely understood and employed by other pianists, elements of her approach are not widely practiced and are novel. This consequence is hardly surprising in light of the fact that Kraus made her series of technical discoveries and innovations completely independent of any other technical school or approach. When queried as to what other technical systems of the past influenced her own thinking, she replied:

None. I wasn't even acquainted with them. For instance, when Matthay talks about the rebounding finger, that is totally different from what I am doing. I did study the Alexander Technique, but never at the piano. That study influenced my body, certainly--how to walk, sit, etc. How far that was applied to my playing I don't know, but never consciously.²

With regard to technical approaches that are closely allied with her own philosophy but which developed independently, Kraus admires both Heinrich Neuhaus's The Art of Piano Playing and Jozsef Gat's The Technique of Piano Playing and

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

encourages her students to study them.¹

Importantly, Kraus insists that her technic is built on discovery and not invention. She has said that building a technic is much the same as the process by which Michelangelo sculpted: he chipped away the excess to get at the truth that was already residing inside.² Kraus has provided a glimpse of a few of these basic truths:

There are many kinds of methods that say no other way of playing is possible. Such a view is too limited. There are though a few essential and indispensable principles. For instance, it makes all the difference to your technique whether you do or do not play from the base of your finger--that is, from the knuckle--thereby using the entire finger as a long lever instead of breaking it up at the joints. You should view and feel the fingertip as the furthestmost point of the entire arm: the maximum extension.

Another essential technical principle is the complicated and opposite simultaneous functioning of wrist and finger: the finger always firm, the wrist always flexible. The one presupposes the other: in order to have a flexible wrist, you must have a firm finger foundation.³

These, along with a host of other technical principles, dwell within everyone, asserts Kraus, but are all too often obscured by inconsidered and unnecessary motions that lead to tension and diminished results.

The two basic principles of the Kraus technic--indeed, the hallmark of her approach--are the same two enunciated above: firm fingers and loose wrists. She has spoken about these twin necessities tirelessly in lectures, master-

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Dean Elder, "On Mastering Mozart," Clavier 10 (April 1971): 13.

classes, lessons, and interviews. She maintains that these are indispensable and must be mastered by every pianist from the earliest stages. For instance, when asked what she had learned from her seven decades of teaching, she replied:

Everything. That is to say, I have learned that for liberation the utmost precision and discipline are necessary. To achieve this discipline, you have to understand what the crucial points are that prevent you from obtaining that liberty. Now, what are they? To play with the fingers is indispensable; it is the finger that does the work. Everything and anything else has to serve to make the work of the finger as easy as possible. What makes the work of the finger easy? The wrist--the wrist that is both a vehicle moving up and down the keyboard, down from a certain point above keyboard height and rebounding to produce a new sound, from a kind of position in which, like in walking, the weight of the arm, shoulder, what have you, can be carried; and, lastly, to enable the wrist to do hundred-folds of movements. It is very difficult to explain that without demonstrating on the piano.

For the wrist, a totally elastic and knowing grace is indispensably necessary. However, it cannot replace the actual priority and permanency of the movement of the finger. The finger has to be exactly like a ballerina's leg--in an arc and hitting upon the very tip. What I have learned is what the hurdles are that have to be taken. These hurdles in principle are for every hand and for every person exactly the same with little modification. Of course, then, you must be intelligent enough to see where one hand is different from the other, but the principle is as sure to be coped with as the sun rises. That's it.¹

Another cornerstone of Kraus's technic is her emphatic rejection of technical brilliance whose sole purpose is barren and ostentatious display:

I have no use for mechanical excellence, no matter how brilliant, which is empty. If the container² is polished but there is no wine in it, what good is it?

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

²Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

Kraus has frequently repeated her disdain for mere speed and show. Instead, she has stressed control, tone, and interpretation, with emphasis always on the latter. She credits this particular bent largely to her study with Schnabel:

What I learned from Schnabel is that no matter how brilliantly, interestingly, even musically colorfully you play, if you through either failing inside or superficial approach cannot penetrate to the essence of the music, and therefore project it, your playing is not worth a blown-out egg.¹

Kraus feels that technical problems exist only when the correct mental and physical coordination has not been discovered for each note. Kraus advises performers to think about any problem, analyze it from every angle like a golfer lining up a putt, solve it like a brain surgeon mapping-out a delicate operation. She abhors the mindless repetition of a problem in a blind effort to subdue the fingers into submission. For instance, Kraus does not resort to such popular practice devices as deliberately restructuring the rhythmic grouping of passagework; such strategies are heresy for her. Instead, she calculates the technical solution for each note at the slowest imaginable speed and in the most painstakingly careful manner, discovering the correct feel and position for every muscle from finger tip to jaw to shoulders and throughout the body. No finger is ever permitted to stray, not even the ones resting at that moment. Every motion and body

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili By Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 26.

gesture is scrutinized and put in order.¹

Jo Boatright, longtime Kraus student and assistant at Texas Christian University, had the opportunity once to observe Kraus practice for forty-five minutes without being detected. Kraus was preparing Schubert's "Grazer" Fantasy, and Boatright reported that Kraus worked at an amazingly slow and deliberate pace in a state of total concentration, mastering one note at a time.²

Kraus has described her note-by-note, slow practice approach in the following story:

You remember the Opus 96 Sonata in G Major for piano and violin by Beethoven: it starts first with that shake on the violin and the piano answers.

When I recorded this work at the E.M.I. studios in London, I had the run of the place; they allowed me to come at any time. I remember I went there one night with my husband at 10 o'clock and left at one in the morning, and I worked on this shake and this shake only.

Now someone outside and uninitiated might think that I was demented, but I wasn't. This shake or trill had to speak in a certain way, and boy did I ever learn to play short shakes ever since! No trouble. So it works this way sometimes: one four-note section of a passage or 16 sixteenth notes might cause insurmountable difficulties. Why I don't know. The slightest difficult spot that "doesn't walk in the light before the Lord" casts its shadow₃ on the piece. And such shadows had best be eliminated.

Kraus has likened her practice methodology to programming a computer, implanting each separate and discrete

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, November 22, 1984.

²Interview with Jo Boatright, conducted by Steve Roberson in December 1984.

³Dean Elder, "Lili Kraus . . . Regal Lady of the Keyboard," Clavier 19 (September 1980): 22-23.

bit of information with utmost precision and care for the demands of anatomy and the music. The resultant "playback" yields technical serenity and security that bespeak confidence. Such an approach to preparation dispels for Kraus a sense of urgency in fast tempos. "There is no such thing as a quick passage. The tempo of a piece is its nature. If your technic is okay, you can play any speed."¹ Again and again she has stressed the need to focus on each individual note both in slow practice as well as at the ultimate tempo. Continuing the computer analogy, she has described the programmed technical "playback" as a sensation of a stream of flashbulbs going off in sequence and in perfect order according to the prearranged play.²

As has been noted on the subject of "practice," Kraus has been adamant in refusing to use that word. Instead, she has preferred "work," feeling that that word describes her process of analytic experimentation, whereas "practice" suggests a parrot-like repetition:

There is a total difference between what I call praxis--you practice--and what I call experiment--which is work. It's no use playing the same piece a hundred and fifty million times the same wrong way. Sure, mechanically, eventually you can learn it, but a parrot can do that. But let an ill wind blow, and you're finished. Whereas if you, in every layer of your consciousness, know where you are, why you are there, how you got there, how you get away from there, then (your playing) is not

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid.

dependent on your mechanical memory.¹

She has also advised:

Watch every detail as you go, as you learn. Otherwise it takes you fifty times as long. One can only make progress by getting one bar as perfect as it must be, that is, coping with one₂ problem at a time. This takes the greatest discipline.²

Finally, the apparent paradox in the Kraus approach can be resolved. This artist who has valued dramatic imagination above all else, dwelling as she does in the affective domain, has devoted such a significant portion of her life's work to cognitive and psycho-motor considerations. She has done so in order to remove all possible physical barriers that might constrain her interpretive vision. In this light, the following quote distills the essence of the Kraus technic, cleansed of all seeming contradiction:

When you work on a beautiful piece of music, it must be treated as a Hanon or Pischna finger exercise; be very attentive. When you play a scale it must sound like the most₃ divine piece in all the world. Never be mechanical.³

Regarding specific technical considerations, Kraus has spoken often and with conviction on the following subjects.

¹Michael Fleming, "Pianist Impressed Both Students, Fans," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 24 April 1983, sec. E, p. 4.

²Jo Boatright, "Kraus's Technic," an unpublished journal of observations of Kraus's lessons from 1973 to 1982.

³Ibid.

Prolongation of Sound

Kraus suggests that a legato effect can be achieved on the piano by a careful union of proper technic, pedal, and imagination:

The piano being a percussive instrument tends to encourage the use of brute strength. We, who are pianists, must strive to overcome this. We must work harder than other instrumentalists. We must find sounds dreamed of only by angels. Remember the piano's voice dies in the moment of its birth. You can only create the illusion of prolongation by the way you strike a key and by how you pedal. But actually, from the moment a tone is sounded, it begins to die. Everything we do before striking a key is decisive; everything we do afterwards is useless.

And incidentally, contrary to what many say, one must take as much pedal as possible. But this must be done cleverly, so that you tie sounds together as much as possible. Keep them pure.¹

Once you have struck the key, the sound can only diminish; there is no way of actually prolonging it. It is up to your imagination and vision to pretend and make believe that there is a continuity of sound equivalent to the sound of a flute, a voice, a cello, a horn, in fact, a whole orchestra.²

Rushing

Kraus has observed that musicians tend to rush the tempo when playing small-value notes; when confronted with notes of long duration, they tend to play too slowly. In a masterclass she once advised, "when you see all these black notes . . . , don't rush; play slowly. You [should] play

¹John Ardoin, "A Lesson in Musical Love With Lili Kraus," New York Times, 1 August 1976, p. 15.

²Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1980), p. 154.

fast when you see white notes!"¹ She also cautions against rushing from one phrase-ending to the next phrase-beginning before finishing the first thought:

How gospel true. Not only finish, but take the time to finish it properly. There must be a breath and a slowing down--infinitesimal--but it has to be there.²

Sometimes a perceived technical problem-passage is not the actual problem. The actual difficulty lies in the going to or coming away from it.³

Finally, she has frequently protested against the tendency on the part of many musicians to rush from the last beat of each measure to the downbeat of the next, saying, "music exists in a timeless realm. Angels never hurry."⁴

Slow Playing

Kraus argues that slow playing not only makes greater demands on a performer's musicianship but also requires a more sophisticated technic than does fast playing:

It is much more difficult, infinitely more difficult, to play a slow melody than the fastest speed. Slow playing needs control, technic, weight, and a terribly strong finger.⁵

¹ Ardoin, "A Lesson in Musical Love," p. 15.

² Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

³ Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

Weight Transfer

The transfer of arm weight from finger to finger serves as one of the guiding principles in Kraus's technic. She has often compared this concept to the transfer of body weight from foot to foot during walking. Kraus reasons that the use of weight, thereby allowing gravity to do much of the work, makes the most efficient use of the muscles while also producing the most sympathetic tone. When asked to describe the transfer of weight, she responded:

The transfer of weight is astonishingly dependent on the physical build of a person. You can watch a person walk, move, handle whatever he handles and can tell almost to the nth degree whether he will be able or won't be able to use his weight. A person has to be relaxed, easy in his skin, and has to have a first-class coordination between the brain and the muscles.¹

In another interview, she stated:

I always use weight. Only the speed with which I make contact on the key varies, and this safeguards the beauty and roundness of the tone because I never hit the key. Such increases or decreases in tone are produced always with the maintenance of weight,² firmness of finger, but with varying speeds of contact.

The observation that speed of descent, rather than strength or height of attack, controls volume has surfaced time and again in her remarks. Also, she tirelessly points out that in passagework, weight must be felt on every single note and every finger must strike, including the fourth and fifth, no matter how fast the tempo.³

¹Ibid. ²Elder, "Regal Lady," p. 26.

³Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

Lastly, on the subject of weight transfer, she urges that it be employed with the utmost precision. "You must measure your weight distribution carefully, like a pharmacist, to the tiniest fraction."¹

Close to Keys

Existing as a corollary to the use of weight, the need to keep the finger tips close to the keys is a central requirement in the Kraus technic. "Stay close to the keys. Nothing must ever be uncontrolled or uncontrollable."² This fiat against any lack of order, whether the disarray be physical or mental in origin, is of paramount importance for Kraus. Only via total technical control can there be interpretive freedom.³ In a masterclass, she urged a student to skate horizontally across the key surfaces rather than jump to the new position. "Don't scramble; don't hurry. Instead of lifting and moving the hand and fingers, stay close to the keys."⁴

Relaxation and Tension

Another prerequisite for playing with weight is total relaxation, but a relaxation interspersed with periodic moments of carefully applied tension. Tension occurs only long

¹Dean Elder, "Making Mozart Live," Clavier 10 (May-June 1971): 12.

²Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

³Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

⁴Elder, "Making Mozart Live," p. 15.

enough to permit a recovery from the application of weight. To explain this principle, Kraus has often resorted to the analogy of a series of pencil drops; the pencil will drop only if it reattains elevation between each fall. Similarly, the finger, wrist, or arm must lift in order to permit gravity to activate the next note through weight transfer. This lift is accomplished by a brief, slight, and imperceptible tensing of the appropriate muscles. The object is to apply tension only when and where needed and to avoid it at all other times.¹ So pervasive is the notion of relaxation to Kraus that she only grudgingly acknowledges the necessity of tension in order to make possible the coexistence of relaxation and sound production, admitting that relaxation by itself would lead simply to inaction after the first note or chord had been struck:

You cannot play without tension, but it is not really tension; it is "fixing." For instance, when you jump, you are not tense, but you are "collected" and then immediately relaxed. That is the feeling that you want.²

Kraus often cites one caution in the search for a relaxed technic: "rowing with the elbows is only an illusion of relaxing."³

Tone Quality

Kraus believes that one of the great virtues of her technical approach is that it allows for articulate tone

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid.

³Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

production devoid of harshness. The principles of transfer of weight, relaxation, and closeness preclude any possibility of a percussive attack, wherein the wrist and/or forearm become hammer-like in their attack. The dictum to keep the finger tips close to the keys disallows any surface noise as flesh meets ivory. '

Two additional technical considerations have been added by Kraus in the service of tone. One suggests that the fingers should play on their cushioned tips in order to dampen any surface noise and effect a "cat-paw" stroke. The other guideline demands that pressure be zealously guarded against in favor of a genuine strike by the finger. In other words, the transfer of weight cannot be facilitated adequately without a cooperating finger impulse. This impulse must carry the finger to the key-bed but then allow it to return to the level of escapement for all held notes. Kraus feels that the sensation that the key is alive and squirming beneath the finger tips makes a significant difference in the resultant hammer action and tone quality, and her arguments are as follows: a pressed sound--one where the finger continues to push against the key-bed--will cause the hammer to strike, rebound, then stop. A struck sound that is aware of the escapement point in the key action, in contrast, will make the hammer flutter after the rebound, producing a ringing tone. Finally, the louder the sound, the greater must be the rebound in the wrist. Much the same as the bounce of a

ball will increase in relation to the speed with which it is thrown down, the rebounding wrist motion that absorbs a thrust of energy must increase in direct proportion to the accelerating velocity and vigor of the initiating motion. The alternative is a clenched wrist and a percussive sound.¹

Wrist Motions

Kraus uses the wrist in either an up or down motion on phrase beginnings and endings, in octaves and chords, and with wrist staccato notes. She also advises that the wrist must be free in extended passagework, but its movement should be more gradual and less pronounced than when playing short slurs or wrist staccato notes, for example. She explains that a flexible wrist allows the fingers to stay close to the keys while allowing the tension-relaxation cycle to manifest itself and that a sense of musical unity and momentum are also imparted to a group of notes when they are played with one swooping wrist motion. Kraus typically lifts the wrist at phrase endings and allows a lengthening finger to linger on the key surface so as to taper the culminating phrase note, thus avoiding an accented ending.²

When the wrist is used in chordal, octave, and staccato passages, Kraus advises that the player use "always the same movement to ensure absolute regularity of rhythm."³

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Ibid.

³Elder, "Making Mozart Live," p. 17.

Advance Preparation

Kraus has been tireless in pointing out that jump chords and streams of notes in passagework must be prepared in the hand. Her meaning is evident in the case of jump chords: the hand must be flexibly "fixed"--or set into proper shape--during the lateral transit. If the chord shapes are all the same, the task is simple. If they are frequently changing, the hand has to be more aware of the upcoming alteration as far in advance of the moment of playing as possible. In passagework, groups of notes that can be covered by one hand shape as if they were a blocked chord must be similarly prepared. Once the first note of such a pattern is reached, the entire hand should assume its proper position according to the dictates of the passage. A passage is thus broken into units of hand shapes instead of a stream of notes, a stream described by Kraus as "a beginning note and ending note with a prayer in between."¹ Advance preparation of hand shapes replaces chance with control. In a masterclass, Kraus implored:

The entire body helps the legs to walk, but only they themselves can accomplish the steps which enable us to move. So it is with the fingers. And to get the most from our fingers we must prepare each upcoming pattern or chord so that it is in the hand before it is played, so that no motion or time is needlessly lost.

Put the chord in your hand before you play. Shape your hand in advance for the job it must do. Far be it for me to say that this is the only way to play, but I do believe this way your hands will stand ready to help when you need them the most. I wish I could be as sure that

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

other methods would be equally effective at crucial moments.¹

In another instance she offered:

You must have the feeling that you pre-play what you play. The whole chord of the measure must be prepared in the hand. The position must be prepared both as to timing and to volume. You must know in advance what finger comes next, as the foot "pre-feels" the spot on the ground it will tread on.²

Advance preparation of individual notes in scalar passages is also strongly advocated by Kraus. She has advised: "each finger must be ready to play at any moment. Fingers must move fast and play slowly. Always prepare at least one note ahead."³

Superfluous Motion

Kraus counsels against superfluous motion, no matter how small and no matter where it occurs in the body:

Please, don't make superfluous movements, either with your fingers or your hands. I used to climb high mountains. The guide would not lift his foot one inch higher than he had to, to save his strength. Not only for looks but for essence, it is important that nothing happens that is not to the point.⁴

Kraus's constant goal is the elimination of all but the precise and proper motion that fits the technical and musical demands of the moment. In a lesson, she once summarized her technic with cogent persuasiveness that embodied the simplic-

¹ Ardoin, "A Lesson in Musical Love," p. 15.

² Elder, "On Mastering Mozart," p. 12.

³ Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

⁴ Elder, "On Mastering Mozart," p. 14.

ity she prizes so highly: "know your choreography and have patience. Think and play one by one and have a leg to stand on."¹

Physical and Musical Considerations

Jo Boatright, Kraus's teaching assistant at Texas Christian University from 1973 to 1982, had the opportunity to observe Kraus teach hundreds of lessons and masterclasses. She kept a journal of notes and quotes from those years. This journal provides an invaluable overview of Kraus's technic as it manifests itself in various physical and musical considerations. The following pages are based on that journal, hopefully thereby capturing the true essence of Kraus's technical approach.

The Finger

Each note, each chord, each tone requires a physical motion, the most obvious being the motion employed by the finger. Fingers can move from the first joint, the second joint, and from the knuckles. The motion from the knuckle is the most powerful and allows the most freedom. The four knuckles, called the bridge, are the most important unit of structure in the hand shape. From this bridge all finger motions commence. So assured is Kraus that the bridge must be the only finger hinge that she feels this motion, allied with weight, erases many problems, even a weak fourth finger:

¹Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

I don't know any fourth finger. I know the music and the necessity of expressing every note with the same intensity. If you use fourth of fifth as you should, from the big knuckle in one lever in an arc, without pressure but with weight, the fourth is as good as any.¹

As the finger prepares to play, a cycle of tension and release is set up as energy from the "stretched finger" (a stretched finger means one that lengthens, not rigidly, but through its innate muscle tone, as in reaching to grasp a light object such as a pencil) is transferred to the key. Kraus has described this firm or stretched finger thusly:

Every time the finger is not firm enough, the wrist becomes rigid. What does firm enough mean? The first two joints of the finger are not the strongest ones. The strong point is the top knuckle. If you want to have a really firm finger--one that is firm enough--play from the top knuckle or joint.²

In the moment the tone sounds the finger "lets go," removing all possibility of pressure, regardless of whether it remains in the key to sustain the tone or leaves the key, thus producing a nonsustained tone. It then prepares to repeat the process. This double function of the finger motion conserves its energy and is simplicity itself.

Only the tip of the finger, at its center, makes contact with the key in its "grasping" of that key. The contour of the music's demands determines the amount of curvature of the finger. Ideally the last joint should be perpendicular to the key.

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 8, 1985.

²Elder, "On Mastering Mozart," p. 12.

In stretching the finger, feel it in its entirety. Every finger must feel alive. The skin must feel stretched over the two joints, and the joints must never be allowed to collapse or bend. The finger should not skate, push, press, or dust the key. It should be allowed to go straight into the key as the hammer does to the string.

The finger must be like a leg when used in walking. A leg cannot support the body unless it is stretched out. The finger can never give or bend at the last two joints but must remain firm while the hand remains relaxed. Success depends on the sensation that the finger and the key are one unit, i.e., the finger remains firm and close to the key. The following five exercises will help the fingers develop the proper shape, feel, and strength:

1. The finger must be "directed." Directed means lifted and aimed. Put one finger under the other hand's bridge to keep it elevated. Keeping the hand barely out of reach of the keyboard, try to stretch each finger, one at a time, to the keyboard. Be on the end or "tip-toe" of each finger.

2. This exercise is for overall shape of the hand and fingers. On a table top or similar surface, drop the weight of the arm onto the wrist with the hand flat. Draw the bridge of knuckles up until the shape of the hand is like that of grasping an orange. Then shift the weight, lifting the wrist not more than one-half inch, onto the finger tips,

being very careful not to press downwards or to stiffen the arm. The fingers should feel slightly stretched. Do this fifteen minutes each day for a week or so. This is a type of isometric exercise and strengthens the fingers while allowing a careful observation of the natural shape.

3. To learn to move only from the big knuckle, lay the full finger on the key as though glued to the surface of that key. Move only from the big knuckle. Very little volume will be produced. Play each finger alone, repeating the same motion from the knuckle, gradually increasing the angle of the finger to the key until only the tip of the finger is touching that key.

4. This exercise demonstrates weight transfer. Allow the weight of the arm to sink with each firm, stretched finger into the key. Never use pressure. Make a tiny preparatory lift and drop each stretched finger into the key, keeping the other fingers over the keys. The weight should be carried from the arm to the knuckle bridge to the finger which, although stretched, has some curvature. Bring the key "home" (to the bottom of the key-bed) to learn how the key works. Travel with the key. Stay on the key as weight is transferred from one finger to the next. In shifting weight, allow the weight employed with one finger stroke to fall onto the next finger which in turn grasps its key. This process is repeated with successive fingers, each one completing the tension-relaxation cycle. Each finger must play, or strike,

every time; pressing should be strictly avoided.

5. To develop a sensitive finger action that avoids pressing, play slowly while imagining a cushion on the end of the finger that touches and plays the key before the finger gets there. Allow the finger tip to feel the rebound to the escapement level, prohibiting the finger from pressing. Proper contact determines the sound. Never continue to force the key down after it has sounded.

The Thumb

As the thumb has no arch, it must move by itself. To learn the proper motion of the thumb, hold the hand in the air and move the thumb up and down at its full length from its root. This motion, when properly executed, encompasses the large muscle of the thumb and can be seen in the movement of the ligament that connects the tip of the thumb to the wrist area. The thumb should move as one unit, directed straight to the key or in a slight curve towards the hand for wider intervals. Also, the thumb should stretch the same as the other fingers; touching the key and playing the key are not the same thing.

The thumb should have only a tiny key space to tread on. Therefore, it must stay over the keyboard and not be allowed to pull the hand away from the keyboard.

The thumb is really a pivotal hinge. In passage-work (such as scales and *apreggios*), thumb "defines" the distance from one octave or area on the piano to the next.

This must be secure. Never allow the thumb to be "flighty" or make circles.

In arpeggios where the hands move away from the center of the keyboard (right hand moving up and the left hand going down), the thumb must let go of its key, slightly compromising the legato connection. It cannot form a diagonal bridge. Do not put the thumb under to a full stretch, as far as it can reach, ahead of time. This creates a cramp and a waste of motion. The thumb moves under the hand as a hinge, but not totally under; the thumb in moving must be at ease, for the ease of the bend is what matters, not how far the thumb bends.

In scales, the thumb should reach for its next note ahead of time. In a masterclass, Kraus once offered advice about the necessity of a flexible and prepared thumb to a student struggling to play a G major scale with the right hand:

In playing this scale, the thumb should be as flexible as a rubber spring. When you play the second note--the A--the thumb should already be prepared on the C.¹ Your thumb shouldn't go to the C at the last moment.¹

On another occasion, she spoke about the role of the thumb in octave playing:

In stretching for the octave, too much of your thumb is hanging over the key. All this overstretch is so much distance wasted. Only use as much of the thumb as you have to. Open the thumb whatever distance you need, moving from its root, having the feeling that you never let go. In other words, the thumb must get its strength from its root, but must play the key with only its tip.²

¹Ibid., p. 16. ²Elder, "Making Mozart Live," p. 13.

The Hand

The hand must always be at ease in fixing tension as well as in relaxation. It should always be pliable and never rigid. Keep a space inside the hand and be aware of this space. Indeed, the inside center of the hand should have a "hollow" in it.

Once the hand is at ease it can do almost anything. In a large chord the hand must be especially at ease. Do not "freeze" the hand but rather think and feel the "open" position of the hand.

There is an ideal alignment of the fingers, hand, and arm. The third finger--the axis of the hand--must line up with its respective key; the remaining four fingers spread like branches away from this straight "stem." This straight line should be continued in the axis of the forearm, thereby eliminating a twisted or pronated wrist.

The Wrist

The motions of the wrist are subtle, sometimes elusive, yet permanently required in discovering a smooth, pliable technique. These motions are the least understood by pianists and, therefore, often the least employed of all the motions in the playing mechanism.

The main function of the wrist is that of transferring energy from the weight of the arm through the knuckles to the finger tips. Wrist motions control tone production to a considerable extent.

The wrist's motions are similar to those of the ankle in walking. Just as the ankle gives, flexes, and distributes the weight, so does the wrist if allowed this comfort and freedom.

The wrist must be totally regulated and coordinated with the finger and arm motions. There is no security without a wrist motion that allows full weight to be used and disburdened quickly and with ease.

In portamento, the wrist is solely responsible for the motion that brings the key "home" with the right amount of hand weight. Of course, there must always be a firm finger on which to stand at all times. In wrist staccato, a long, steep finger must be employed. Otherwise, the wrist has to move too far and no velocity can be attained.

The wrist should ideally rest naturally at about the same level as the keyboard. From this position the wrist must be allowed to move up or down with total ease. There can be no real security when a constantly high wrist must carry the whole arm. The wrist permits the free transfer of weight.

The following four exercises demonstrate the proper functioning of the wrist:

1. Hold the fingers of one hand with the other hand while moving the wrist of the held hand up and down. Master this feeling so that it can be performed while keeping the fingers stationary without holding them. Repeat this motion

while resting the finger tips on the keys. This exercise demands wrist flexibility while allowing the fingers to remain close to the keys.

2. Rest the finger tips on a table edge or similar surface. Keeping the bridge of knuckles up and the hand in its natural, rounded shape, allow the wrist to move with gravity to its lowest, loosely hanging position. This is its most extreme low position. Feel the weight. Then SLOWLY allow the wrist (wrist only, watching and observing that the shoulder, arm, and elbow remain passive) to move up--straight up with no sideways motion--to its most extreme position. The fingers will barely be touching the surface at this point. Return SLOWLY to the lowest position of the wrist. Repeat this many times. This exercise should at first be done extremely slowly but later with increased velocity and reduced distance until the motion is nearly imperceptible to the eye.

3. Place one hand on a table top and form a rounded shape. With the other hand, gently lift the wrist by pushing up at the base of the palm. Allow the wrist to return to its starting position via a free falling drop. The wrist should sense a slight rebound when it falls if it is properly relaxed. Repeat this exercise, except imagine that the wrist is being effortlessly lifted by a puppet string attached to the top of the wrist.

4. In order to learn weight transfer, play a scale

with a drop-lift motion on every note. At first, play softly by dropping the wrist slowly; gradually increase the volume and speed of the drop without quickening the tempo. Next, use a drop-lift motion for every two notes, then every three, etc., always being aware of the shifting weight and a fluid wrist.

The Arm

On occasion an arm thrust is demanded by the music. In such instances, the arm must stretch and shove or push forward with a sudden impulse, as if pushing against the piano. This one motion is good for many notes and may be used with groups of rapid notes. This movement definitely presupposes a very firm finger.

Further, a pianist should always sit far enough away from the keyboard so that the arm has to reach forward, thus allowing freedom and use of full arm weight.

Weight

There must be arm weight on every note, but there must be a firm finger there to receive it. A fast weight drop makes a forte tone and a slow weight drop creates a piano tone. When weight is properly and freely used, the wrist will always feel a slight rebound. If the wrist locks instead of rebounding, pressure instead of weight has occurred.

Chords

Visualize chords and prepare them in advance. Feel the natural rebound on each chord from the absorption of speed but make the fingers stay on the keys. Avoid pressure at all times. To bring out or voice a particular note of a chord, make a slow preparation and fast contact.

Octaves

Make your hand "small" no matter what size the hand and do not stretch it unduly. With the exception of some legato, continuous passages, use the fifth finger along with the thumb. The proper angle of the thumb and fifth finger is indispensable; they should reach down and out diagonally. Imagine a magnetic band between the thumb and fifth. Clear the other fingers just out of the way but do not hold them tensely. Never allow the fifth finger to abandon its shape, but hold the tip without pressure. From one octave to the next there can be no change in shape.

Prepare the fingers and do not jump heedlessly in octave leaps. Take time on the leaps. Use the arm for lateral transportation and keep the hand rounded and held gently. Allow the wrist to go down into the key. The direction of the touch should be down and back out so quickly that the two motions seem simultaneous.

For loud octaves, use the forearm and play from the elbow. The playing motion must be fast. To learn this motion, start with a big movement and then gradually reduce

the size. Sometimes octaves are played with an upward motion that just barely touches the keys.

For repeated octaves, prepare the shape and shake out octaves with a loose wrist and arm.

Octave Tremolo

Prepare the shape while keeping the angle of the elbow up and comfortable. Play with a fast finger contact on each key. Never use a rotary motion.

Trills

Decide which note is more important and lean on this one with full weight, but make sure both notes are heard. The wrist must be free but weighted if necessary. Stay on the key surface always. For trills on black notes, use a flatter finger and a higher wrist. To develop a facile trill, practice with a triplet rhythm pattern, placing the weight on one note, then increase the speed. Also, hold one finger while repeating the other one.

Arpeggios

Keep the shape of the chord involved in the hand and move quickly to keep this shape. Never change distances between fingers and do not alter the shape of the hand. Watch the thumb. It must be angled slightly downward, and it should never reach for a legato connection. The thumb should be a hinge but must not reach under the hand. The fingers must be steep when crossing over the thumb. Hear and play

the notes one by one while feeling the cluster shapes of each hand position.

Accompanying Figures

In examples such as Chopin's "Berceuse" or Schubert's "Grazer" Fantasy, the left hand should always be quiet and the wrist must be flexible. In Alberti bass figures, measure the amount of weight to be used on each note according to the musical demands.

Tone Clusters

In such passages as the tone clusters in Bartok's "Three Rondos on Folk Tunes," Kraus advises:

Oh, God, I love them! First, total usage of the weight of the arm and the shoulder, from, if you'll pardon the rude word, the buttocks on which you sit, while keeping an absolute relaxation flowing through the motion. Now, the theme must be played like any beautiful folk melody, simple and true, until the discordant and shocking passages, which have nothing do with it. These you must play fiercely, with good, good rhythm.¹

Fingerings

Before beginning to play, decide on the best possible fingerings. Whenever possible, fingerings should be selected by each player to fit the individual hand. Otherwise, play from editions with good fingerings. The following are some that Kraus has recommended:

Mozart solo piano music - G. Henle Verlag; the Broder edition (Theodore Presser) is scientific and sterilized;

¹Bob Doerschuk, "Lili Kraus: Spirited Doyenne of Mozart and Bartok," Keyboard, October 1983, p. 66.

Mozart Piano Concertos - the Kurt Soldan edition (C. F. Peters) and the Edwin Fischer edition (C. F. Peters);

Schubert piano music - Universal, G. Henle Verlag, and Peters editions; and,

Beethoven Piano Sonatas - Breitkopf and Haertel edition; the fingerings in the Schnabel edition (Simon and Schuster) are "divine" if you can do them.¹

Summary

Kraus has summarized her technical system this way:

A pianist has to be resilient, strong, and every second aware of the importance of the "transportation of the arm." We have but one direction to go: the key has to reach the bottom. Whenever you find that this has happened through pressure instead of striking, you are lost.

There is one point of the hand that is really strong, and that is the big knuckle at the base of the finger. Unless you use the finger as a lever, in one arc, exactly like a ballerina uses her hip and leg, you are at a grave disadvantage. If you press or bend either the tip or middle joint of the finger instead of the big one, you are in a similar situation to a ballet dancer who, while standing on point, suddenly gives in at the ankle or the knee. Therefore, the arc of the finger engineered by the big joint, supported by the musculature of the hand, must be really strong so that when you strike the key it will not give. If any joint gives way, you are lost.

Second, like you have to use the instep when you stand on your toes, you have to use the bridge of the hand which is your instep, always flexible and independently supporting that arc on which the finger stands. The wrist moves up and down: that is the only direction in which the key moves. For lateral transportation, you use your shoulder and elbow that always leads the hand. Therefore, it is no use trying to play the piano pressing your elbow to your body or having it out where there is no keyboard. The elbow should hang, without any kind of holding it by force, in a natural way, aware of its weight. The movement of the arms is always conducted by the shoulder. Under no circumstances is it advisable or even possible to twist the wrist instead of putting the thumb under the hand.²

¹Boatright, "Kraus's Technic."

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, November 22, 1984.

CHAPTER VI

KRAUS THE TEACHER

Kraus's Pedagogical Philosophy

Lili Kraus began teaching when she was eight years old. From the very first, she "understood what a wonderfully enriching experience it is to teach."¹ Teaching has been an integral part of her life ever since: "I always knew that I had to perform, I had to record, and I had to teach."²

Kraus has dedicated herself to teaching because she feels that young pianists, products of the contemporary world, would otherwise be unable to find for themselves the keys to unlock the music of the past two centuries:

The total strangeness of the world (today) leaves the kids so distant from what they are playing that one just cannot imagine. Not that they are unmusical,³ but (their playing) is uncommitted, it is not personal.

In an age of technology as we live it today, where the general level of technical excellence has risen to undreamed-of heights in these youngsters, where at six-

¹Interview with Lili Kraus, conducted by Steve Roberson, January 21, 1984.

²Interview with Lili Kraus, conducted by Fort Worth Productions in 1983.

³Michael Fleming, "Pianist Impressed Both Students, Fans," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 24 April 1983, sec. E, p. 4.

teen they lap up difficult works like the "Hammerklavier" Sonata and the Goldberg Variations as if they were the easiest thing, I think again and again it should be noted that, at the time this great music was conceived and created, the source of inspiration was not the machine or the metronome but the human soul--the voice,¹ the breath, in fact the sum total of the cosmic sounds.

Many young pianists today are completely separated from the tradition of "classic" or even "romantic" feeling, and I don't see any road back for them because they are ceaselessly bombarded with noise that takes them further away. Consider for a moment the noise of the city, the road, the air, not to speak of jazz and rock music. Certainly jazz and rock have wonderful rhythms which are almost primitive in origin. Such rhythms hypnotize the mind, actually dull it, so that the listener is dazed.²

Now, what can one do about this? I would suggest trying to acquaint the student with the essential historic and biographical facts about the great masters. Also, make them listen to the fortunately-available recordings of Schnabel, Cortot, Backhaus, Kempff, and others of the same school--all of whom still represent the living tradition as to how this music should be performed. To say that this is old-fashioned because today the "tempo" is different is absurd! The human breath, the human heart have not changed.

You see, there is a living tradition handed down, and very few of us have really got it directly from the source. I am one of those. Now I think it would be indefensible to let that die. With my last strength I must be bent on keeping it alive.³

I made up my mind that the sacrifice I will bring for music, among the million other sacrifices that you have to bring, is to forego the pleasure of teaching people who prepare to be performers, per se.

The fate of music depends, not on those people, but on the teachers who will teach them. Therefore I decided that I will teach at a university where there are talented people, at least not to the sole purpose of becoming performers, but they will become teachers. You see, we have excellent performers, we have jolly, jolly few ex-

¹Marion Stone, "Interview with Lili Kraus," Clavier 12 (September 1968): 24 and 36.

²Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1980), p. 153.

³Stone, p. 36.

cellent teachers. Those are needed, and that's why I'm teaching.¹

Kraus, an apologist for the demise of the "Great Tradition," has also offered herself as the purveyor of the accumulated wisdom of the musical ages, descended from Bartok, Schnabel, and beyond. She quickly points out, though, that her self-appointed task and duty is fraught with difficulty:

The tradition goes back to (a) totally different instruments, and (b) essentially different surroundings; that is to say, the place you would have played at would have been perhaps one-fifth of a big hall such as we are playing in today. Because of the big hall, the instruments have changed, become much more percussive, much more "brilliant," much more "vulgar," if you like, and almost incapable of producing the most difficult demands of classical music, namely coherence of, say, slow singing four-consecutive eighth notes. Now, the tradition must, unfortunately, somehow fit into the picture of the time. But, where we sin is to imagine that we have to (and this goes for all stages, all artists, all music) prove how wonderfully we play, which fact is really irrelevant. The problem is that today, in this technological age, there is an array of I don't know how many first class gramophone records. The students hear them, the ear accommodates itself, and instead of penetration to the essence of the music, they take a crescendo from here, a crescendo from there, ritardando from this, accelerando from that rendering, thereby killing their own independent and creative imagination. On the other hand, it is a terrific way to learn the music and take what you want to take. Now, the tradition that always has been and always will be depends on the talent of the individual player. If you are blessed and cursed with the imperative necessity to project what you have read in the score, the tradition remains alive because the essence, the message, will always be the same. Never mind the garment, never mind the place, never mind the epoch, this is it. But for such penetration, it is necessary that you do not just see the score, but by intrinsic gift, you know what it means. Let's say, in the "Alla Turca" Sonata [K. 331], there is one little slur from the dotted

¹Patsy Swank, "Lili by Lili," Vision, October 1980, p. 29.

eighth to the sixteenth in the opening theme. The only legato that occurs is between the C-sharp and the D; the rest, according to the allegretto grazioso which is the indication of the composer, must be floating, contrary from being bogged down by a bar-long slur to be found in all the commented editions in contrast to the urtext which has no other guidelines than the essential idea of the composer. The charm and lightness gives the actual message of the piece, the very nature of Mozart's artistic vision. Now, this is just one of the many instances which have to be observed. All observations should be according to truth. "According to truth" can only exist if you know what the truth is, if you don't care a hang whether it is pleasing or not pleasing and just do it, and if you have the Holy Three--the Spirit, the Intellect, and the Emotional Identification to bring about "The Truth." There you have tradition, ever valid.¹

As for those people who today are teaching what Kraus calls "The Truth," they are few and far between, she believes. She has suggested the following names:

I think I would say Serkin, for certain types of students; Pierre Boulez, again for certain types; Gary Graffman, again, there is always a limit; and of course, myself, always also a limit. I don't know whether this wonderful chap, Murray Perahia, teaches--I don't think he teaches--I imagine that he should be a wonderful teacher. Jacques Fevrier was an excellent teacher at the French Conservatoire. They teach very well at the Royal Academy of Music in London; I don't know the individual teachers there, but they are all excellently taught who come out of there. The best harmony teacher I ever knew in my life was Hindemith because he really was totally down to earth, highly original, and was wonderfully creative and superb.²

Kraus has also identified other important qualities that distinguish excellence in piano teaching:

The man or woman who teaches should be super-human. That is exactly what they should be, but they aren't. However, you must come as near as you can to that ideal. What do I mean: compassion, observation, delicacy, brutality, holding the student to the straight and narrow, being whimsical, stubborn, all of this. Above all, what

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 21, 1984.

²Ibid.

he must have is human tolerance and human understanding. It's no use to demand something of a student that he cannot do--mind you, that's what I am mostly doing. I always demand much more than they can do, and that's my failing--and also my quality.¹

She also believes that the ability to perform and to teach are closely related:

The superstition that no great teacher is a great artist is utter rubbish. Busoni was a sensational teacher; Schnabel was a sensational teacher; Hofmann was a magnificent teacher; Lhevinne, for instance, was a terrific teacher. In my opinion, there are certain elements in performance that have to be experienced by the teacher; otherwise, he can't impart them. There are many, many such elements.²

To this growing list of pedagogical qualifications, Kraus adds the final caveat that a teacher must establish an integrated personal relationship with each student:

The Indian doctrine says that the highest function of a human being is to set the foot of his fellow-men on to the right path. Now, this is one hundred percent true between teacher and student. The relationship must be, ideally spoken, totally integrated so that all faculties of the one compliment all faculties of the other. That includes everything. There cannot be a superior attitude of the teacher concerning the relative lack of enlightenment of the student yet to evolve. It cannot be that the private life of the student does not sincerely interest the teacher, and all around, there must be a completely integrated human as well as artistic relationship. Otherwise, it is no good. But, of course, as I have said, it doesn't always work--it doesn't necessarily jell. There might be given a superb teacher, and yet no relationship with the student came about. You can't force that, and if both are dissatisfied, it is much better then that they separate.³

Kraus has not only described what she considers to be the essential prerequisites for pedagogical excellence, but she has also prescribed the path that an aspiring piano

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

teacher must pursue:

He must pull up his socks, that's what I am telling him. First of all, he can't even begin to aspire to become a piano teacher unless he knows--knows like his breath--these things: harmony, analysis (which means phrasing, etc.), reading the score, but reading the score properly, reading what is written there. He has to really have a good--I don't say an extraordinary, but just adequate--knowledge of the literature. "Yes, he can teach Bartok, but he can't teach Boulez"--that does not exist; either you can teach both or neither. Now, I don't have to say that of course there are certain types of compositions that are nearer to the nature of the artist in which he is more authentic, more emphatic, than in others. It is indispensable, though, that he possesses all round knowledge, knowledge of technic, form, and so forth. But, above all, he must have the urge to impart knowledge, and he must have the conviction that he really knows a sufficient amount to impart truth. But this is, of course, ridiculous, because this is once in a thousand times that a piano teacher is thus equipped. Perhaps these thoughts¹ never ever occur to the majority of teachers.

Kraus has mixed feelings about the piano pedagogy courses that are appearing in American universities with increasing frequency. She believes that music curricula should always stress performance study; however, pedagogy courses, when properly taught, might prove to be an extremely valuable adjunct support discipline:

If pedagogy includes, as it should, all the necessary information such as harmony, analysis, form, the secret language of music which consists first and last of true reading, then yes, pedagogy by all means, along with performance. If pedagogy is too abstract, too segregated, too cerebral, then I find that it doesn't help much. Performance per se can be just as dried up and just as far away from the essence without pedagogy; all depends on the student and on the teacher. But also,² not all teachers answer the requirements of all students.

Kraus insists that the dramatic interpretation of the

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, January 21, 1984.

²Ibid.

music, projected not just with fidelity to the written score but with the conviction of complete emotional identification and personal experience, has always been the hallmark of her teaching. All other considerations are secondary in the face of this one encompassing pedagogical goal:

You cannot in words describe music: this is the glory of music. Where words fail, there music starts. My aim is to point out to the student that the wonderful "virtues" of a performer, such as tremendous speed, tremendous volume, tremendous "originality" that sacrifices the music to the possibility of the player instead of the other way round, is totally uninteresting to me. If they want to learn that, they have to go to another teacher. I couldn't care less, nor am I particularly down on somebody who, in a performance, plays a wrong note, two wrong notes, or several wrong notes. Like hot hell, I breathe down on them if that happens during the lesson, though, because that means that the hand is not in the position it should be. Now, if you are high with excitement, everything can happen, and that goes also for sudden lapses of memory and so forth. The preparation and the message of the piece, the total unwillingness of compromise is what I teach. But for that, of course, you have to possess a glowing love for the music and a merciless understanding of the music, as I happen to have been given by the Lord. The beautiful word "gift," incidentally, the same in every language, reveals the Divine nature of your means of expression.¹

The subject of practice, or "work," has been another important pedagogical concern for Kraus:

The only advice I can give a student is not to kid himself. We all kid ourselves, look away from the difficulty, and dodge the issue. Who knows how many concessions are made in student performances to accommodate the music to the limit of their potential. It is not possible to evolve going this way. Unless you actually literally "face the music" both written and heard, you will never progress. The first ill wind will blow you over. Don't ever try to "possess" the music: music has to possess you. But the temptation is endless to be driven by speed, by colors per se (nothing to do with the text),

¹Ibid.

and by a thousand pitfalls that can serve but the delusion of one's prowess.¹

As for the metronome, Kraus advises its use when needed. In this regard, she recalls a lesson Schnabel taught her:

I'll never forget when Schnabel once asked me, "Tell me, do you use the metronome?" I said, "Yes, sometimes." "But do you use it when you play beautifully?" "No, no! Heaven forbid!" Yet that's when you most have to use it, when you're trying to play expressively, to see how terribly irregularly you do play.²

Finally, Kraus believes that students must be taught how to concentrate on relaxation during a performance; she adds, though, that both the realization of and the teaching of this elusive skill are vexing:

How can one teach it? There is only one escape, and I don't say that it always works. That one escape is your total identification with the music you project, body and soul. Then, the relaxation might come. It will come because the inspiration during the performance will make you forget your excitement born of fear to "cut a bad figure," which means that your vanity is bigger than your love. Of course, needless to say, the more often you are onstage, the less the excitement kills you. Relaxed you are when your intrinsic understanding led from high on fearlessly, infallably manifests the heavenly beauty of music.³

The impact of piano competition on students is a subject that has long troubled Kraus. She hates the "toughness" demanded of the competitors: "How can one go up there and say, 'I am better than you?'"⁴ She does feel, though,

¹Ibid.

²Bob Doerschuk, "Lili Kraus: Spirited Doyenne of Mozart and Bartok," Keyboard, October 1983, p. 75.

³Kraus interview, Roberson. ⁴Doerschuk, p. 75.

that they can provide a useful service by boosting fledgling careers. She has, therefore, encouraged her own students to enter them, and she has adjudicated countless competitions.

After having taught hundreds of students and hearing thousands more, Kraus has, like any number of piano teachers before her, abstracted her own definition of talent, at the same time giving insight into her own musicianship:

Talent must contain all the elements that are revealed in the creations of genius though once removed, as it were. The talented performer must be equipped with the fire and sensitiveness that will enable him to be the forwarder of the light he divines. He must have all these qualities, though minus the creative factor that has brought this very light through whatever medium it appears. The talented performer has to ask, to question, to obey, and to hope to have understood. Genius obeys the cosmic order and receives its command right from the bosom of the Lord and all His Angels, including Lucifer.¹

Despite Kraus's avowed passion for teaching, she admits to the subtle toll it exacts upon the performer's domain. She believes that the act of performance must take place in the subconscious mind, while teaching demands critical analysis, giving rise to a distressing conflict to the concert artist who is concurrently teaching. She feels that Bartok learned this lesson early in his career, thus explaining his life-long refusal to teach composition:

He did that, in my opinion, because he was fully aware of course of the knife-edge line of the division between the conscious and the subconscious. The moment when you somehow waver and fall from the one to the other, to an undue extent, you lose one or the other. It is not possible to express what you do without becoming aware of what you are doing, and therefore he never,

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

never taught composition.

When I've been teaching, it takes me at least a week after I've been back in the traffic to get rid of this conflict. It's very difficult inasmuch as, was it Shaw who said, "those who can, do; those who can't, teach"? There is something true in that.¹

Evaluations of Kraus's Teaching

The evaluation of Kraus's pedagogical effectiveness is a difficult and perhaps even impossible undertaking. The only valid and feasible approach to that problem is to examine the comments of a great many people who either studied with her or observed her teaching. Claude Frank, concert pianist, relates the following story about his encounter with Kraus:

I had played a recital in Montreal, and right after the concert Lili came back stage. I said, "now tell me honestly, what did you think?" She said, "I think it was very good, but in the Schumann Carnival, why don't you in the movement 'Chopin' do exactly what Schumann wrote, namely play the left hand with an accent on the top. Schumann wrote that and he asks you to do it; you must do it." That was sort of her way of not compromising. The next night I played in Toronto and I heeded what Lili said about the Carnival. Well, it so happened that Glenn Gould heard it on the radio. After the recital there was a little party at somebody's house, and Glenn Gould came and said, "that left hand in the 'Chopin' movement was wonderful." So, that was Lili's teaching, lasting exactly half a minute.²

Jo Boatright, Kraus's assistant at Texas Christian University, also studied with her for many years. She has made the following observation of her mentor's teaching:

A lot of people thought that she was totally mad. A

¹Kraus interview, Fort Worth Productions.

²Interview with Claude Frank, conducted by Fort Worth Production in 1983.

lot couldn't face being torn down and built up again. But others have worked and cried and sweated blood and learned a great deal from her.¹

Joan Reinthaler of the Washington Post observed Kraus present a masterclass in 1969. About Kraus's pedagogical performance, she effused:

Miss Kraus is everything a teacher should be: compelling, experienced, articulate, devoted, deeply knowledgeable, armed with total conviction and musical integrity, a first-rate psychologist and somewhat of a ham. This is an absolutely irresistible combination.²

John Ardoin, music critic of the Dallas Morning News attended Kraus's annual masterclass at TCU in June 1976. He, too, was generous in his praise of her public teaching:

I have attended many such classes by a variety of renowned artists and have often found them a platform more for ego than sharing. Not so with Kraus. She submerges herself and her ego deeply into that of the students, agonizing with them over memory slips, prodding them into fuller self-expression and verbally rapping their knuckles for an unmusical phrase.

Only from Maria Callas, when she taught at Juilliard, have I experienced such selfless, concentrated giving as Kraus gave last week at TCU.³

Kraus herself has made an appraisal of her pedagogical tactics:

In no case am I conventionally-minded, tame, and, so to speak, orthodox. The ideas come by the way of revelations. I love my students, and I don't know of one single instance that lack of talent dwarfed this love; contrary, it was a greater challenge that had to be met

¹Fleming, p. 4.

²Joan Reinthaler, "Lili Kraus Helps Students Find 'Elusive Musicality,'" Washington Post, 12 August 1969, page unknown.

³John Adroin, "Learning with Lili," Dallas Morning News, 20 June 1976, sec. C, p. 7.

and conquered.¹

A number of Kraus's former colleagues at TCU were surveyed in order to solicit their evaluations of the famous pianist's pedagogical effectiveness and characteristics during the course of her residency at TCU from 1967 to 1984. The open-ended questionnaires to which the colleagues responded involved a consideration of five questions.

The first question asked for a description of her pedagogical strategies and tactics. The following answers were typical of those received from the six respondents.

She was always concerned with the student's physical approach to the keyboard--position of arms, hands, fingers, relaxation, etc., and did not hesitate to revise this approach if need be, regardless of the difficulties the student might encounter in making the adjustment.

Her reaction in listening to a student play a piece was often--"good," "wonderful," "superb"--then, "but . . .," and she would proceed to "tear the student apart" phrase by phrase in an effort to improve the final shape of the work. (Michael Winesanker)

Mme. Kraus's approach to all pedagogical problems was unique. Each problem received "newly invented" solutions. If a difficulty was technical, we stayed with it until a solution was found, understood, and mastered. Often only one measure or one phrase would be played in an hour session. (Jo Boatright)

Lili was much given to "imagery" of a very lofty nature when she wanted to describe a "quality" of performance which did not lend itself to technical details, immediately. Schubert would cause her to "wax eloquent" on the "timelessness of this music," and the flights of legato transcendence to which the pianist must try to attain. To turn a Mozart phrase, she would dip into the "teardrops of God" bottle for certain sad middle movements.

She is a genuine "Romantic," but she would not tolerate romantic "excesses" in such pieces as the G minor

¹Kraus interview, Roberson, August 13, 1984.

Ballade, when rhythm would become so indeterminate as to be "stretched out of shape."

She could "heat up a phrase" more quickly than most pianists, but she could not tolerate a "vapidness" of rhythmic structure to the work, either. She LOVED a truly "beautiful" phrase when it was turned out for inside warmth, rhythmic cogency, and dynamic variance.

She was MOST effective in the Romantic repertoire, especially Brahms, Schumann, Chopin, in spite of her great (and just) fame as a Mozart interpreter. There was no one quite like her. She could inspire a student to better results than that student should have been able to give. (Ronald Shirey)

Her vast knowledge, experience, and her comments were often of inestimable value, particularly to the advanced performers. Often, however, things "bogged down," with much time being spent on one or two measures, and an overview of the entire work (or movement) was then lacking. (anonymous)

The second question put to Kraus's former colleagues asked, "Judging from the current performance and/or teaching record of her former students, how effective was Mme. Kraus as a teacher in transmitting her pedagogical ideas to her students?" While a number of respondents professed insufficient knowledge to answer this, replies include the following:

I have to judge by my knowledge of how two of Mme. Kraus's most successful students have performed as teachers--Jo Boatright and Donna Edwards. Both were fine performers and experienced teachers prior to their association with Lili Kraus. But both also drank in all the "tricks" and approaches of their teacher and exhibited the lessons learned through the many years of association with their mentor. Their performances in public reflect the richness of their experiences in the studio with Mme. Kraus, and their teaching also shows evidence of an ability to carry forward the Kraus approach by inculcating the tenets of their teacher in their own students. (Michael Winesanker)

I think Mme. Kraus was most effective with advanced performers whose piano technic was established and secure, imparting to them a sense of style and professional polish. Sometimes the younger and/or inexperienced

seemed confused and bewildered. (anonymous)

I've seen tremendous changes, complete transformations and also just normal progress. There are those who don't want to work so intensely, or cannot grasp the importance of working and become "drop-outs." This whole teaching process works only to the degree to which each individual possesses imagination and industry. (Jo Boatright)

The question, "What personal traits contributed to Mme. Kraus's effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness as a teacher?" elicited the lengthiest responses. Answers representative of those received include the following:

Mme. Kraus's love of the music and genuine concern for her students were her greatest traits. This love and concern were her roots which allowed her to be demanding of her students. She had a deep, concentrated perseverance in problem solving.

Her colorful, indeed beautiful, command of the English language allowed her to communicate through words just the right emotion or thought and to express a phrase or an individual note exactly right. Phrase after phrase came to life for the student with just a word from her. She possesses a vivid intuition for some composers such as Mozart and Schubert that to me borders on a kind of "musical reincarnation." Her speaking communication was as great as her musical communication.

She has charm and a positive way about all she wanted, whether for herself or her students and this came no doubt from her perfect musical intuition or genius as has often been acknowledged.

She is the most effective teacher of any discipline that I've encountered. (Jo Boatright)

Mme. Kraus is an unusually vibrant and majestic personality and "does not suffer fools gladly." She is extremely articulate and "in control" at all times, both very necessary for teaching. On the other hand, she seemed easily put off by unattractive personality and physical traits or idiosyncracies. One needed to be strong in many ways not to be overwhelmed. (anonymous)

Mme. Kraus always bubbled over with tremendous enthusiasm in her relations with students--enthusiasm for the great classics of music literature she taught in the studio. This enthusiasm had a way of transmitting itself to the student (it was infectious).

She was extremely articulate, possessing an ability to use words, phrases, and sentences in the English language that described accurately what she wished to communicate.

She exuded a warmth that was comforting to the student. Even when she criticized or reprimanded, she made you feel that she cared and that she had faith in your ability to work out your problems. (Michael Winesanker)

The fourth query, "How would you assess Mme. Kraus's position among other important twentieth-century piano teachers you have known?" was in most cases left unanswered. The following was one of the few replies received:

Her position is at the top so far as I'm concerned. However, being realistic, I realize that the world tends to judge harshly from limited information, and because of this a "realistic rating" would put her behind lesser teachers who produced or took the credit for producing many of the younger concert pianists of today. I always regretted the fact that more pianists were not exposed to her playing and especially her teaching. She chose to teach at Texas Christian University in order to teach future teachers. Her busy concert schedule wasn't compatible with the regime of a music conservatory. (Jo Boatright)

Kraus's former TCU colleagues also made the following additional comments:

The "artist-in-residence" concept always poses the problem of prolonged absences from one's pupils, especially if the artist is pursuing an active concert career, as Mme. Kraus was. This obviously leads to the interruption or displacement of the normal college set-up of jury exams, recital requirements, grading, and all the necessary paraphernalia of college routine. (anonymous)

I have known of cases where students were obviously not able to work with Mme. Kraus (only a few such). Whether because of their independent natures or their refusal to submit completely to the discipline demanded, they seemed unable to cope with the expectation that they undo old habits and through a rigid regimen develop new approaches and make them part of their very beings. In order to succeed and attain the goals set forth, the student needed to become a disciple in a sense, with the conviction that he or she was in the presence of a master

whose guidance would permit one to follow the path to artistic excellence. (Michael Winesanker)

Questionnaires were also submitted to all of Kraus's former students at TCU whose names and addresses could be located. In a series of thirteen questions, they were asked to comment on Kraus's pedagogical effectiveness, style, and total contribution to their own playing and teaching.

The first question asked, "What did you learn about practicing from your study with Mme. Kraus?" The following answers indicate that Kraus made a significant impact in the area of practice methodology:

I learned how to practice slowly and precisely with careful attention to detail. There were so many things to be worked out: fingering, wrist movements, hand positions, measured "jumps" from specific positions to new ones. (Laura Soles)

Much patience and slow work is required. Observe, think about it slowly and above all else LISTEN. Slow practice demands full concentration. It is better to have learned only one page or a few bars properly rather than an entire piece not so well. Learn to work properly: give attention to the fingers and exactly how they play, carry the arm weight with the finger, trust the hand, make certain the wrist functions as a hinge, and prepare the hand shape before reaching a chord. Always think simply--what is the simplest way to play.

The finger must be prepared. In other words, when striking a note, simultaneously already have the other finger over the next note. She called this a "diamond" law, not golden, but diamond! (Michael Reed)

The main thing I learned about practicing is that it requires absolute dedication and total concentration. Repetition of difficult passages is never good enough. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

One of the most fundamental aspects was the importance of slow practice and training the hand at the same time in the actual movements it would need to create the sound and speed desired, i.e., if a very fast passage were "in training," so to speak, slow practice must not involve exaggerated movements because speeded up the hand

would not allow for such.

Another thing of absolute importance is to listen, listen, listen at all times while practicing so that growth even in passagework and "technic" work will always produce the most complete, desired outcome. With her, no note was unimportant. She felt every sigh, every tear, every joy in every phrase she played and every phrase she taught. (Karen Franke)

All superfluous motion should be resolved or eliminated during practice. Minimal lateral movement should be permitted, while maximum vertical wrist movement should be stressed. All joint strength comes from the major knuckles, not from stiffened, curved fingers. Practicing can produce more in less time if the quality of that time is such that every rule is followed at a slower tempo. (Lawrence Wheat)

The question, "What important lessons regarding technic and tone production did you learn during your study with Mme. Kraus?" garnered the following answers:

The hand must be balanced laterally with primary shifts occurring toward the fourth and fifth fingers rather than the thumb. Tonal production consists of two intertwined actions: rapidity of attack to the key produces the volume level, and the amount of physical weight on the key determines duration and resonance of the note value. (Lawrence Wheat)

Always be conscious of the shape of the hand. The finger motion goes straight into the key with the wrist down and a steep finger, using the full length of the finger, feeling the "pulling" under the bridge of the hand. The finger is like a ballerina's leg as it moves from the knuckle in the way the leg moves from the hip and it plays on the tip as the ballerina dances on her toes. The fingers must carry the weight. A steep fifth finger helps keep the bridge of the hand up. I worked on striking from the knuckles (using a small mirror on the side of the piano), watching the fingers as I made the swing stroke, making the tones with the proper rebound. It is most important to listen to the sound and hear the difference in tones in pushing or pressing and striking from the knuckle. Nice tones result from striking the key like a lever, not from pushing.

We worked on hand alignment--the third finger being the axis of the hand--so that the wrist won't twist side to side. The wrist is to the arm as the ankle is to the leg. The wrist is like a shock absorber. Make the wrist

move up and down without having the whole arm do it and transfer the weight from finger to finger.

Another technical aspect we worked on is what Mme. Kraus called the thrust for chords or other passages to create a type of accent. This motion comes from the shoulder and forearm. The arm generates the thrust and the wrist receives it and releases it. (Michael Reed)

One of the focal points of her teaching was the use of the wrist in tone production and the relaxation of the wrist allowing complete freedom of movement and disallowing any tension whatsoever--anywhere.

The fingers have maximum strength potential when used as complete "levers" from the main large joint (where the finger begins) and it is from that base that the finger must work. The thumb's "base" is at the beginning of the hand.

The arm must hang completely relaxed from the shoulder. (Karen Franke)

On tone production, Mme. Kraus stressed relaxation which results physically in more use of a relaxed arm drop and use of weight for a large, rich sound. For a softer sound, she would say to play as if to produce forte, but not as far down in the keys. (Donna Warnock)

The next question, "What did you learn about interpretation from your study with Mme. Kraus?" produced some of the longer answers. The responses indicate a genuine divergence of opinion among the former students:

First of all, Mme. Kraus taught me the how and why of interpretation, not merely to imitate. By taking apart one phrase of a piece, I could interpret the rest of the entire piece. This I believe was her greatest gift to me--the freedom from dependence on a teacher! She taught or opened my eyes to better score reading, to see all the details. I learned to pay close attention to the harmonic framework of a piece and to view a composition in a larger, broader sense, while at the same time looking at the smallest detail. (Donna Warnock)

I learned to be true to the text and the composer's intentions. Mme. Kraus was fairly adamant in her feeling of how it should be. (Michael Reed)

I didn't learn very much. In the early years of study technic was stressed so much--always the "fingers." As a result, when it came to musicality, I was a great

copycat. Mme. Kraus would show me an example, then I would sit and play it back until it was an authentic copy of her ideas. This was fine until about the age of eighteen (1974), when I became very frustrated. I wanted to explore my own musicality and grow with my own ideas. This was virtually impossible and began to cause many problems in our relationship. Just in the last four years, after leaving Mme. Kraus, have I begun to feel a freedom with my own musical sense and trusting my own instincts. I was shocked to learn how illiterate my musical interpretations were. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

Mme. Kraus's interpretation of music was not always even. Her ideas of the Viennese Classical School were beautiful, but in the areas of the Baroque and Romantic eras some interpretations were not always believable. (anonymous)

There was no stress on fixed ideas or rigid interpretation at all. No two lessons on the same work were ever approached in the same way. The general tempos, character, and mood changed from lesson to lesson. However, the underlying motive behind such differences always stemmed from a strong musical breathing or length of line that determined the interpretation. Mechanical playing profoundly disturbed her. (Bridget de Moura Castro)

Typical of responses to, "What personal qualities did Mme. Kraus possess that influenced her pedagogical style and effectiveness?" were the following:

Mme. Kraus had a vitality and an unencumbered vision of the worth of what she had to say. There is a certain paranoia in some teaching that theory or even fact may not be accepted by the student. No such paranoia was in Madame's vocabulary. There was, in fact, a deep-seeded fear that the student would not reach his/her full potential as a teacher or artist, or even both. (Lawrence Wheat)

She possessed an extremely vast vocabulary and keen critical sense of phrasing. (Bridget de Moura Castro)

Lili had such a zest for life and a great love of humanity. Her bubbly personality reflected in everything she did. Just taking her on her daily errands in town and listening to her comments on life in general were, at times, more valuable than times spent in the studio. (anonymous)

Music and performance were channels for Lili to some deeper source. She spoke of music and experienced music in terms of the soul and God. This was her greatest attraction for me. The fantastic colorists, the impressive virtuosos--these players were good but their performances didn't leave me satisfied. Lili went beyond herself and her personal gifts--she became a medium through which that something greater than Man communicated its beauty to Man. (Jan Sawyer)

I remember her dedication to detail, her total absorption in "making music," and her willingness to go the basics. There was no "quick fix" sort of "band-aid" approach. Also, her beautiful way of describing the music and helping students become more imaginative and creative in their work was exceptional. (Shirley Counts)

A sincere interest in me and in my playing was to me a most strong point in her teaching effectiveness. Her general outlook on life and her own life as an example could not fail to inspire anyone. (anonymous)

Mme. Kraus had a very commanding presence, an authoritative approach that could have been intimidating but usually was not. She always had such energy, drive, and true love for the music that it was an inspiration to be her student. She had the patience to work with you intricately on a specific technical problem or listen to you over and over again. She was truly interested. (Laura Soles)

She was kind, charming, and had a dynamic presence. She had a wonderful way with words, a descriptive vocabulary, and an expressive way of conveying an idea or concept, relating things to many other experiences in life or in the spiritual realm. She had an opinion on almost everything. She had a sense of directness--getting to the point. (Michael Reed)

Her fiery temperament, her undying passion for everything (and therefore her true association with every aspect of life and consequently every aspect of playing), her true love of people, and her complete dedication to the truth of music made her a fascinating, compelling, and challenging teacher. (Karen Franke)

Mme. Kraus is a woman filled and overflowing with love: love of life, of people, of music, of beauty, of food, kittens, and on and on! At times she would be like a child, impatient and wanting her own way, but her love of music and life was contagious. She was very interested in and involved with her students which was an effec-

tive motivator. (Donna Warnock)

"How did she motivate you?" netted the following replies, indicating that Kraus exerted a powerful motivational force upon most of her students:

Lili, through her performances either in person or on record, was the strongest motivation for me. (anonymous)

All she had to do was sit down and play. Whether it be in a lesson or performance, I was very much in awe. Her regal entrances, her performances, and the adoration of her public were overwhelming. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

I wanted so badly to please her (which was difficult) that sometimes I tried too hard, and that in itself became a block.

Basically my motivation came from within myself, for I am very determined and have a tremendous will-power. Yes, many times I was discouraged and intimidated, but I've grown through the process and I was determined to complete my degree program, whatever it took.

At times she could be condescending and intimidating and that was difficult and trying. (Michael Reed)

Mme. Kraus made you believe that whatever she wanted you to do at that moment was possible. The music demanded it and that was that! She let the music motivate you. (Donna Warnock)

She motivated me by playing examples in lessons, through her public performances which were a great inspiration, and by her constant devotion and dedication to music--even when she was sick or ailing--and her total phenomenal involvement with art. (Bridget de Moura Castro)

She used two methods. The first was a deep, serious, caring attitude much like a grandmother might exude which motivates by guilt and/or concern that if we don't follow the suggestions we have somehow let her down. The second was, in my case, an attack on my masculinity in a variety of ways. She would tell me that I played "like a virgin," or "how long has it been since you've made love, you sound too autonomous." (Lawrence Wheat)

The next question, "How did Mme. Kraus's fame and recognition inspire or frustrate you during your study?" drew

the following responses:

She inspired me because I was extremely honored to be one of her students and very proud. Study with her was frustrating only when she was away for so long at the time traveling and concertizing. (Laura Soles)

I had always idolized Lili and considered her performances of Mozart as the way of interpreting his music. Being with her, I always felt intimidated by her and I was never able to overcome it. (anonymous)

Of course, her very active concert schedule when I began my study with her was certainly a source of frustration. But she had supplied us with a truly exceptional help-mate through her assistant who acted as a perfect complement to Mme. Kraus's teaching in demeanor, in temperament, in approach, etc.

It was not so bad most of the time actually to have a bit of a break from Mme. Kraus's incredible intensity to gather our wits, make progress in whatever she had "attacked" in the last lesson, and prepare to take her on again. (Karen Franke)

Her fame, of course, was very impressive and tremendously inspiring. It was also very inspiring to see her and hear her perform.

Study with her was frustrating in the sense that her prominence as a performer took her away from her teaching duties a good deal of the time. Consequently, there were times (even though she had a fabulous assistant, Jo Boatright) when you thought you were on the right track or had accomplished a great deal, only to find when she returned you had to begin again. (Michael Reed)

Her fame never frustrated me. I was always very proud of her and very proud that I could always say "I'm a Kraus student." (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

"In your opinion, what were the strengths in Mme. Kraus's teaching?" brought varied answers. Students pinpointed her technical system, her interpretive ideas, and her frequent use of metaphors in describing music:

Except for one important element, I didn't find her teaching distinguishable from anyone else's. That important element still improves my playing and hence my life. Her muscular approach to technic is brilliant and in my opinion unequalled. The clarity and ease of her method

cannot be overestimated. It is natural and effective.
(Lawrence Wheat)

Her strength was her vast knowledge of the repertoire and her ability to sit down and play a piece she hadn't seen in thirty years quite well. She always had a solution to technical problems. She was always willing to help, be it personal or professional. If she couldn't help, she listened. She is a great listener as well as a great story-teller. I think she loved each and every student and genuinely cared about each one's life and destiny. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

She developed her students into better musicians, not just better pianists. The piano was merely a medium.
(Donna Warnock)

Her main strength was her very clear conception of the true essence of music and her inability to settle for less than the truth. (Karen Franke)

She left a lot of the preparation and choice of repertoire, etc., up to the student. This placed a huge amount of responsibility on the student which in the long run built much strength. At the beginning of each lesson she would say, "what will you play today?" From there on out it was very intense work and never enough time.
(Laura Soles)

Conversely, the question, "In your opinion, what were the weaknesses in Mme. Kraus's teaching?" drew the following replies:

At times she could be overly negative and could discourage a student very quickly. Also, she perhaps did not always understand the American approach in academics and the degree programs. Finally, she did not allow for disagreement and was very opinionated. (Michael Reed)

Everything had to be her way: her interpretation, her tempi, her technic. I agreed with the technic, but there is more to being a pianist than technic! I think she wanted students to be totally dependent on her teaching, so much so that it crippled many students who studied for a master's degree that should have taken two years but that got drawn out into much more time. I saw many pianists devastated and destroyed, but the majority pulled out of it. There came a time when I felt I couldn't play a measure without being ripped apart in a

lesson, and I suffered much mental stress. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

I found, for very personal reasons, that her interpretive ability and, hence, teaching were not what they could be. I found a conformist philosophy in someone who was otherwise a non-conformist. I felt a sense of exploration was missing. (Lawrence Wheat)

I do believe one weakness was in not getting past the first few measures of a piece in one lesson. Attention to detail is necessary, but I would expect that young, undergraduate students especially need to learn a larger concept. (anonymous)

While Mme. Kraus had an inestimable wealth of information and insight to teach, she made access to that information tremendously difficult because of her frequent hostile and condescending attitude toward students. Too often the public and private Kraus were quite different. The lessons were both intensely rewarding and agonizing. Her negativism led many to feel that they couldn't play at all anymore, and that legacy persists for me years after the separation from Mme. Kraus. She profoundly overwhelmed and destroyed many students. Others worshipped her, feeling that her great gift absolved all transgressions. If their egos survived and eventually recovered from the ordeal, her students can take comfort and great pride in the knowledge that they have been ushered--not so gently--into a world of musical understanding few have been privileged to enter. (anonymous)

Lili was demanding and often insensitive, always speaking and moving with the utmost security that her way was the right way. Once, however, I saw the other side. She was preparing for a Dallas concert and was practicing in Ed Landreth Auditorium late one night. I snuck into the balcony to listen. She was playing some Brahms and, at the end of the piece, just bowed her head at the keyboard. She didn't know anyone was watching. I met her when she left the auditorium and said how moved I was by her playing of the Brahms. She was naked and vulnerable when she asked me if I really felt that way about it. I'd never seen her needing approval from someone else before--she always trusted her own instincts so strongly. (Jan Sawyer)

Sometimes it seemed she had little patience with others' opinions--that there was only one way of solving a particular problem, but this probably was ultimately one of her greatest strengths and not a weakness--just a

frustration for us. (Shirley Counts)

Her complete concentration on detail sometimes did not allow for enough time to hear complete repertoire before examination or recital time. (Karen Franke)

In the past I have had teachers who devoted themselves totally to furthering a student's career. To me, it seemed that Mme. Kraus would give only so much of herself to her students and really did very little to promote their careers. (anonymous)

Periods of impatience and sarcasm were only counter-productive to me. (Donna Warnock)

The answers to "What skills and traits set Mme. Kraus apart from other teachers with whom you have studied?" included the following:

She was different because of her absolute abhorrence for "showiness," her detest for anything which did not serve the music, her unique approach to technic, and her demonstrations on the piano of what she was looking for from a student. (Karen Franke)

I think her ability to analyze her own development and that of her students is very unusual for an artist. The fact that she felt very strongly about teaching and doing it in the positive-dedicated manner sets her apart.

Her involvement with students--the "whole person" attitude--is, I think, very unique for an artist-teacher. (Shirley Counts)

She was a stickler for things being done in a certain way, with an utter insistence that certain technical problems be corrected or changed before one could proceed with study.

Her very presence required one to diligently try his or her best. (Michael Reed)

She was very specific in her explanations and demonstrations of what she wanted you to do. She shared everything that she knew with her students. I had experienced teachers before that would point out all your deficiencies but never told you what to do about them. Also they would know certain styles and technics of playing and never really share them. Mme. Kraus took the time to share with you all the technical "secrets," anything she could think of to help you. For this I am eternally grateful. (Laura Soles)

Typical replies to "How did study with Mme. Kraus change your playing?" emphasized both the technical and musical insights learned from Kraus:

My playing became more cohesive and to the point. My technic became clearer and stronger, helping me to achieve my musical aims much better. (anonymous)

My long association with Mme. Kraus (1967-1983) was the single most important experience in my professional life. I would be playing the piano today out of sheer determination with great love for the music but with precious little technical "know how" were it not for her teachings. Everything she showed me, and this includes her practical approach to solving a problem at hand, is applied many times each day in my practice. As I perform some thirty to forty concerts each season and cover the entire gamut of the repertoire (Bach to Crumb and Davidovsky), I realize the necessity of her scientific, practical approach to technical problems. Of equal significance is her solving of musical problems, which is, of course, intertwined with the technic involved. (Jo Boatright)

I learned how to approach notes and phrases. I worked to make my fingers move like pistons and practiced to keep weight in my arms and to relax. (Jan Sawyer)

I have trouble believing that the same hands she was given produce what they do now. Relaxation and accuracy were my weakest points; they are becoming my strong points. (Lawrence Wheat)

My study with Lili Kraus improved my playing tremendously, giving me technical ability to make music in a way I previously had not been able to do, changing my tone to a much more beautiful sound through my understanding of the use of finger weight, wrist, arm, and relaxation of certain muscles. She also gave me a greater concept of music. (Michael Reed)

She changed my playing in every possible way--in sound, in musicianship, in intent, and in desire. (Karen Franke)

My playing became much more personal. More investment was demanded in thought and preparation so it became a much deeper part of me. (Donna Warnock)

The two questions, "Have you remained professionally

involved with music since your study with Mme. Kraus? How?" and "How has your commitment to and enjoyment of music been strengthened or weakened as a result of your study with Mme. Kraus?" were posed in order to assess in part the enduring contribution that study with Kraus might have made. Answers included the following:

I am an active recitalist and carry a full-teaching schedule. (anonymous)

I continue to perform concerts, accompany faculty from other universities, teach on the faculty of a community college, and just soloed with the local orchestra.

I wouldn't trade the years that I studied with her for anything. I teach very much like her and think of her constantly. (Laura Soles)

I am the principal keyboardist with the Fort Worth Symphony and the Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra. I performed as a member of the Chamber Orchestra in Carnegie Hall in 1980. (Candace Ann Bawcombe)

I have been on the piano faculty at Kansas State University continuously since my study with Mme. Kraus. (anonymous)

I am a symphony member (Fort Worth and then Hartford Chamber Orchestra), a free-lance accompanist, chamber musician, and faculty member at Hartt School of Music as accompanist and coach. (Bridget de Moura Castro)

For the past four years I have been under contract with the Americana Hotel in Fort Worth as principal pianist.

My commitment to music has been enriched greatly by my study with Mme. Kraus. I have made great improvement in my own playing. (Michael Reed)

I am currently teaching students of all ages in the TCU Preparatory Department. (Donna Warnock)

I accompany and coach singers. I have recently worked on one of the soap operas as a pianist, playing for one of the characters who was supposed to be a concert pianist. (Karen Franke)

When studying with Lili all the joy of making music

left me. There was no spontaneity or happiness. I should have learned about her technic and then gone to study with her. I would have been ready for what she was able to teach me. As it was it took several years of teaching and playing after TCU to come back to the original love of making music that led me to Mme. Kraus in the first place. Also, it wasn't until after I'd taught for a while that I began to understand what she'd tried to teach me about the components of phrasing, technic, and sound. (Jan Sawyer)

Additional comments submitted by Kraus's students include the following:

She was unstinting with her time and efforts to make me a better pianist. I believe that she did this. I have tried to follow her precepts, and I know my own teaching and performing have been better as a result. (anonymous)

It is due in very large part to Mme. Kraus's intense example that not only my love and appreciation of music but also my love and appreciation of life have been deeply enhanced. She was willing to pass on every aspect of her vast knowledge to anyone willing to open his eyes, whether it be her keen intuition about people, her supreme empathy and love for all animals, her relentless passion for excitement and challenge, and her undying devotion to music. Her enchantingly persuasive charm masked what was also a very private personality--one that needed space, quiet, solitude and time. She taught me many things--many more than I could ever delineate on paper. (Karen Franke)

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Born in Budapest on March 4, 1905, in impoverished circumstances, Lili Kraus was groomed for a career as a performing artist from her earliest recollections onwards. Her mother, a frustrated singer, steered her daughter away from a career as a dancer, deciding instead that she should become a pianist. At age six, Kraus started piano lessons. By eight, she accepted her first piano student and entered the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest, creating a sensation there in her audition. During the course of her work at the Academy, Kraus studied theory with Kodaly and piano with Bartok. At seventeen, she was graduated with highest honors and went to the Academy of Music in Vienna. There she studied piano with Severin Eisenberger, a Leschetitzky student, completing in one year the normally three-year Masterclass. The next year she studied contemporary music with Edward Steuermann, an early disciple of Schoenberg and interpreter of his music. In 1925, Kraus accepted a teaching position at the Vienna Academy that she retained for six years.

While in Vienna, Kraus met Otto Mandl, a wealthy mining engineer and philosopher. On October 31, 1930, they

were married, and he sold his business in order to devote himself to the furtherance of Kraus's career. He persuaded her to study with Artur Schnabel in 1930, a tutelage that continued until 1934. So that they could be nearer to Schnabel, Kraus and Mandl moved to Berlin in 1930. In that city their children, Ruth and Michael, were born. In early 1932, the family moved to an historic manor house overlooking the Lago di Como near Tremezzo, Italy. There they remained until late 1938. The approach of World War II prompted their flight from that idyllic setting in Italy to London where they lived for a year. In 1940, the entire family embarked from Holland on a world tour that was to have begun in Indonesia and culminated with Kraus's American debut in San Francisco in 1943.

The Japanese invasion of Singapore altered the family's travel plans, though, making any venture beyond the shores of Indonesia too risky. After the Japanese took Indonesia, the family was left alone at first, but in March 1943 Kraus was arrested and imprisoned on fabricated charges. Her husband and children were subsequently jailed in separate camps, so that for one year they knew nothing about one another's fate. During that year, Kraus endured in the most hostile conditions, subsisting on two cups of rice daily and sentenced to hard labor. Toward the end of that confinement, she was allowed to play on the camp commander's piano for one hour a week. Finally, due to the efforts of a Japa-

nese conductor who had heard Kraus play in 1936, the family was reunited in a privileged camp in Djakarta in 1944. Kraus was also given a piano. Two years later, in October 1945, the family was freed and two months later flown to Australia and then to New Zealand.

Emaciated at the time of her liberation and covered with sores, Kraus nonetheless felt that her imprisonment had been a time of immense personal and musical growth for which she was grateful.

She concertized intensely during the eighteen months following the war. Upon returning to Europe in 1948 and making her first recording since the 1930s, she was shocked to discover how undisciplined her playing had become. Following intensive work, she played her long-delayed American debut recital in New York in 1949. That same year she and Mandl moved to South Africa where she taught at Capetown University in 1949 and 1950.

After leaving South Africa, Kraus and Mandl lived in Paris, then Vienna, and finally Nice, where Mandl died in 1956. Kraus moved back to London and continued touring alone.

Along with her daughter and son-in-law, Kraus moved to the United States in 1967, living first in Minnesota before building a permanent home in the North Carolina mountains in 1969.

Kraus was appointed artist-in-residence at Texas

Christian University in 1967, a position she held until her retirement in 1983. Her performing career also ended that year, a bow to the crippling rheumatoid arthritis that has afflicted every joint in her body. Since 1983, she has lived on her North Carolina estate, learning to cope with her illness and the diminishments it has brought.

Kraus's debut concert, a performance in Amsterdam with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Mengelberg, took place in 1923. Since then, her performing and recording career continued unabated until 1983, with the exception of the three-year hiatus prompted by her imprisonment. During the first years of her career, she specialized in the repertoire of Chopin, but by the early 1930s, after she and the violinist Szymon Goldberg began touring Europe and recording the Beethoven Violin-Piano Sonatas, she became known as a Beethoven player. When shortly thereafter she made her first Mozart recording, though, her fame as a forwarder of that composer's music grew, and she and Goldberg began programming the Mozart Violin-Piano Sonatas. Kraus then recorded a great deal of the Mozart solo piano, concerto, and chamber music repertoire for Parlophone. Also, she became the first pianist to record some of Bartok's works, doing so even before the composer did.

After the war, Kraus began the second phase of her career, playing in Europe, North and South America, Japan, India, and the Antipodes. In 1954, she received a commission

to record the entire piano works of Mozart for the French firm, Discophiles Francais.

In 1963, Kraus engaged Alix Williamson of New York as her personal representative, and her career advanced rapidly. She recorded the Mozart Piano Concertos in 1965 and 1966 in Vienna and then played them all in an unprecedented nine-concert series in New York during the 1966-67 season. The critical acclaim generated by these performances led to an engagement to perform and record the Mozart Piano Sonatas the following season.

Among the many highlights of her career, Kraus cites a royal command performance at the wedding banquet for the Shah of Iran, the presentation of the first secular recital at Canterbury Cathedral, the first concert in the new city of Brasilia, appearances at the Royal Moroccan Mozart Festival and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, and participation in a concert at London's Royal Festival Hall honoring Bertrand Russell. She has been a permanent member of the Van Cliburn International Competition jury since its inception in 1962. Roosevelt University and Texas Christian University have bestowed honorary doctorates on Kraus, and Austria has awarded her its highest citation for outstanding achievement.

Reviews of Kraus's live performances and recordings agree on several characteristics that distinguish her playing. Traits that reviewers have consistently cited over six decades include technical fluency that emphasizes each note,

tonal beauty, drama, careful attention to phrasing, vivid dynamic contrasts, vigorous accents, highly individualistic ideas, lack of concern for pedantry where ornamentation is concerned, projection of absolute conviction, improvisatory spirit, and captivating charisma.

She has distinctive ideas about practice, memorizing, objectivity, ornamentation, style, success, fulfillment, imagination, spontaneity, love, and the unselfish stewardship of that which she considers to be her divine gift. She also has specific performance advice regarding a number of composers, particularly Mozart, and she has identified those pianists who come closest to satisfying her ideals. Technically, Kraus has devised an approach based on relaxation, firm fingers, loose wrists, weight transfer, and an exacting choreography.

As a teacher, Kraus feels that the contemporary environment has taken from young pianists the heritage of the interpretive practices of the Classic and Romantic periods. In her pedagogical efforts, she has been intent on transmitting the living tradition that she learned principally from Bartok and Schnabel. She has named those teachers who, she believes, share this mission. She has also discussed the requisite characteristics and training for excellence in piano teaching. She has spoken about ways to teach interpretation, practice methodologies, use of the metronome, and relaxation. Further, she has shared interesting observations

about competitions and the difficulty of trying to maintain a performing and teaching career concurrently. Finally, her former colleagues and students at TCU have evaluated her pedagogical effectiveness and characteristics, lauding her for her ideas regarding interpretation, practice, and technique, concern for her students, articulate and metaphoric descriptions, vast knowledge, exacting standards, international fame, bountiful enthusiasm, fiery temperament, love for all creatures, and vibrant personality. Most students felt that Kraus's teaching and personality had made a great impact on their lives and musicianship, particularly as regards a technical system that serves the demands of the music and an approach to practice predicated upon absolute concentration. More than ninety percent of the former Kraus students who responded to the survey reported that they have remained professionally involved in music since the conclusion of their work with Kraus. On the other hand, some respondents felt that Kraus occasionally overwhelmed students. Perceived weaknesses in her teaching included her insistence that everything had to be done her way, her desire that students be dependent on her teaching, the fact that lessons usually focused on a few measures and that she rarely heard an entire piece, her frequent absences, periods of impatience and sarcasm, lack of concern for her students' careers, unusual interpretive ideas, and her often hostile and condescending attitude. In any event, study with Kraus

seems to have been a milestone--indeed, a pivotal hinge--in the lives (professional and personal) of most of her students. Apparently she altered the course of many lives and careers. Her impact and influence--both good and bad--seem to have been pervasive.

APPENDIX A

Student Cover Letter and Questionnaire

2131 Vanessa Drive
Norman, Oklahoma 73071
March 25, 1985

Student's Name
Street
City, State 00000

Dear _____:

I studied with Lili Kraus during the time of my work on a master's degree in piano performance at TCU from 1972 to 1976. With the approval of Mme. Kraus and the support of Jo Boatright, I have decided to examine the life, playing, and teaching of Mme. Kraus, the subject of my dissertation. This task is in connection with the completion of my doctorate in piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma.

The enclosed questionnaire, copies of which have been sent to all of Mme. Kraus's former TCU students, is designed to solicit your views, opinions, and impressions about your study with her. Your responses, along with those of all your colleagues, will prove invaluable and crucial in compiling a complete portrait of Mme. Kraus's pedagogical effectiveness, style, and total contribution to your own playing and teaching.

Please answer all questions to your best recollection and as completely as possible. Feel free to use additional sheets of paper if the space provided is inadequate. I urge you to respond with an honest and candid evaluation for each question. My goal is to present a fair and balanced presentation. I would prefer to quote former Kraus students by name. If, however, you desire confidentiality, you need only omit your name from the final question. You may be sure that statements made in confidence will be held in that regard.

I look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience. Since I am faced with fast-approaching deadlines, I must ask you to complete and return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by April 15. Thank you in advance for your generous assistance. Be assured that your input will be highly prized.

Sincerely,

Steve Roberson

Student Questionnaire

How long did you study with Mme. Kraus? _____

When did you study with Mme. Kraus? _____

1. What did you learn about practicing from your study with Mme. Kraus?

2. What important lessons regarding technic and tone production did you learn during your study with Mme. Kraus?

3. What did you learn about interpretation from your study with Mme. Kraus?

4. What personal qualities did Mme. Kraus possess that influenced her pedagogical style and effectiveness?

5. How did she motivate you?

6. How did Mme. Kraus's fame and recognition inspire or frustrate you during your study?

7. In your opinion, what were the strengths in Mme. Kraus's teaching?

8. In your opinion, what were the weaknesses in Mme. Kraus's teaching?

9. What skills and traits set Mme. Kraus apart from other teachers with whom you have studied?

10. How did study with Mme. Kraus change your playing?

11. Have you remained professionally involved with music since your study with Mme. Kraus? How?
12. How has your commitment to and enjoyment of music been strengthened or weakened as a result of your study with Mme. Kraus?

13. Please make any additional comments you may have in the following space.

14. If I may use your name in connection with your remarks, please sign here: _____.

Please return to:

Steve Roberson
2131 Vanessa Drive
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

APPENDIX B

Colleague Cover Letter and Questionnaire

2131 Vanessa Drive
Norman, Oklahoma 73071
March 25, 1985

Colleague's Name
Street
City, State 00000

Dear _____:

I studied with Lili Kraus during the time of my work on a master's degree in piano performance at TCU from 1972 to 1976. With the approval of Mme. Kraus and the support of Jo Boatright, I have decided to examine the life, playing, and teaching of Mme. Kraus, the subject of my dissertation. This task is in connection with the completion of my doctorate in piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma.

The enclosed questionnaire, copies of which have been sent to Mme. Kraus's former TCU colleagues, is designed to solicit your views, opinions, and impressions about your association with and observations of Mme. Kraus. Your responses will prove invaluable and crucial in compiling a complete portrait of Mme. Kraus's pedagogical effectiveness and characteristics.

Please take a few minutes to record your answers and return the form to me in the envelope provided. Feel free to use the backs of pages or additional sheets of paper if the space provided is inadequate. I would prefer to quote former Kraus colleagues by name. If, however, you prefer confidentiality, you need only omit your name from the final question. You may be sure that statements made in confidence will be held in that regard.

I look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience. Since I am faced with fast-approaching deadlines, I must ask that you complete and return the questionnaire by April 15. Thank you in advance for your generous assistance. Be assured that your input will be highly prized.

Sincerely,

Steve Roberson

Colleague Questionnaire

2. Judging from the current performance and/or teaching record of her former students, how effective was Mme. Kraus as a teacher in transmitting her pedagogical ideas to her students?

3. What personal traits contributed to Mme. Kraus's effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness as a teacher?
4. How would you assess Mme. Kraus's position among other important twentieth-century piano teachers you have known?

5. Please make any additional comments you may have in the following space.

6. If I may use your name in connection with your remarks, please sign here: _____.

Please return to:

Steve Roberson
2131 Vanessa Drive
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

APPENDIX C

Student Questionnaire Pilot-Test Cover Letter

Box #656
OU Music Office
March 15, 1985

Dear Fellow Student (or Faculty Member):

With the approval and assistance of the pianist, Lili Kraus, I am researching my dissertation on her life and artistry. This task is in connection with the completion of my doctorate in piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. As a part of my analysis of her teaching, I will solicit the views of her former students. Copies of the enclosed questionnaire will be sent to each of them.

Before the questionnaires can be sent, however, they must be pilot-tested in order to determine if the questions are ambiguous, redundant in content, or unreasonable in the amount of information they request. I am asking ten graduate piano majors and three piano faculty members at OU to complete the pilot-test evaluation.

I would be most grateful if you would take a few minutes to read the questionnaire and then indicate in the space beneath each question your impressions regarding clarity, redundancy, and reasonableness of the length of response anticipated in light of the open-ended nature of the questions and the fairly lengthy amount of answer space. In considering each question, substitute the name of a teacher you have known in the place of Kraus's name, thereby making the question more relevant to your own situation. Any problems that you identify will be remedied by a redesign of questions where appropriate.

I look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience. Since I am faced with fast-approaching deadlines, I would appreciate your response by March 22. Please return the questionnaire to my box in the music office. Thank you in advance for your generous assistance. Be assured that your input will be highly prized.

Sincerely,

Steve Roberson

APPENDIX D

Colleague Questionnaire Pilot-Test Cover Letter

Box #656
OU Music Office
March 15, 1985

Dear Faculty Member:

With the approval and assistance of the pianist, Lili Kraus, I am researching my dissertation on her life, playing, and teaching. This task is in connection with the completion of my doctorate in piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. As a part of my analysis of her teaching, I will solicit the views of her former colleagues at Texas Christian University. Copies of the enclosed questionnaire will be sent to each of them.

Before the questionnaires can be sent, however, they must be pilot-tested in order to determine if the questions are ambiguous, redundant in content, or unreasonable in the amount of information they request. I am asking eight faculty members from the OU School of Music, two each from applied music, history, theory, and education, to complete the pilot-test evaluation.

I would be most grateful if you would take a few minutes to read the questionnaire and then indicate in the space beneath each question your impressions regarding clarity, redundancy, and reasonableness of the length of response anticipated in light of the open-ended nature of the questions and the fairly lengthy amount of answer space. In considering each question, substitute the name of an applied faculty member you have known in the place of Kraus's name, thereby making the question more relevant to your own situation. Any problems that you identify will be remedied by a redesign of questions where appropriate.

I look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience. Since I am faced with fast-approaching deadlines, I would appreciate your response by March 22. Please return the questionnaire to my box in the music office. Thank you in advance for your generous assistance. Be assured that your input will be highly prized.

Sincerely,

Steve Roberson

APPENDIX E

Kraus Interview Questions

The questions listed below are not necessarily in the order in which they were answered by Kraus.

Kraus The Person

1. What circumstances led to your arrest by the Japanese?
2. What was the emotional and mental state of the other prisoners when you arrived at the camp?
3. What happened to your musicianship during your imprisonment?
4. Do you harbor any resentment now toward the Japanese?
5. Do you feel that an artist has to suffer in some way?
6. How would you describe your personality?
7. Would you describe yourself as passive or assertive in your relations with other people?
8. Flaubert said, "Success is a result; it must not be a goal." Do you agree?
9. Do you recall your first public performance?
10. When and where was your last public performance?
11. Thinking of your own teachers, which ones influenced your playing the most?
12. What repertoire did you study with Bartok and Schnabel?
13. Did Schnabel encourage you to play with a great deal of tempo rubato?
14. Did Schnabel advise the use of the metronome?
15. Many creative people report that there was one period in their lives, usually in their twenties, when they witnessed a flash of creative activity when they learned very quickly and made great strides. Do you look back and find such a period in your life?
16. Were any of your family members musicians?
17. How did you manage your career when you children were young?

18. What is your full name?
19. How do you account for your charisma?
20. When was your last visit to Hungary?
21. Could you chronicle your residences?

Kraus The Musician

22. How many hours a day would have constituted a typical practice session for you?
23. How do you define talent?
24. Do you feel that your talent and ability are held in stewardship as a gift from God?
25. What role does ego serve in your musicianship?
26. What is the source of your ability?
27. To what formula do you attribute your success?
28. Rosinna Lhevinne once said that talent is the ability to persevere. Do you agree?
29. You have a terrific sense of imagination. What continues to nourish that imagination?
30. Have you sought a rich variety of experiences in order to fuel your imagination?
31. Do you believe that music is a universal language?
32. Where, how, and from whom did you develop a particular affinity for and insight into the Viennese Classic composers, especially Mozart?
33. What pianists have you admired over the years?
34. What do think about when you are playing?
35. You admire Timothy Gallwey's The Inner Game of Tennis. He describes the moment of peak performance as being lost in "Self 2," aware only of the rhythmic flow. Is this how you feel when performing?
36. How did you motivate yourself to practice? Did you ever

say, "I am too tired today"?

37. Who taught you to practice the way you do?
37. Has there been anything in your own playing that you have had to overcome?
38. In playing fugues, do you voice the subject so that it clearly stands out, or do you play in a harpsichord style with enunciated voicing?
39. How do you feel just before a performance?
40. Would you describe the Mozart sound and fortepiano?
41. Do you believe that occasional memory slips are preferable to a more rigid, programmed memory approach?
42. Do you feel that the total way an artist presents himself on stage is an essential consideration?
43. Did you always play from memory in recording sessions?
44. To which of your own recordings do you listen?
45. When you made the last Bartok recording, was the arthritis a problem for your hands?
46. Do you believe that there are several distinct schools of piano playing?

Kraus's Technical System

47. What piano technic books do you admire?
48. What did you do to increase the strength and effectiveness of your fourth finger?
49. Would you describe the transfer of weight?
50. You have talked about the finger and wrist. Could you speak about the arm and shoulder?
51. Ruth Slenczynska said that a sore arm is a sign of strengthening muscles. Do you agree that pianists should seek to develop strength to the point of fatigue during practice?
52. In a bravura piece--in fast passagework--do you ever have a sense of being rushed, or do you seek to maintain an internal calmness?

53. Of all the great technical systems of the past, did any of them influence you?
54. You once said that a firm finger is the secret to overcoming stage fright. What did you mean?
55. Did you once say that pianists often rush from phrase to phrase without finishing each thought?
56. You speak a great deal about relaxation. Is there ever room for tension?
57. Do you ever use rotary motion?
58. In playing trills, do you put equal weight on both notes?
59. Should there be equal weight in an "alberti" bass?
60. What mentors other than your teachers influenced your musicianship?

Kraus The Teacher

61. Unlike many pianists, you have made teaching a very important part of your life since the first days of your career. What has prompted your pedagogical involvement?
62. Rudolph Serkin has said that the great pianists must teach in order to keep alive the "great tradition." Do you agree?
63. What important qualities of mind and spirit distinguish excellence in piano teaching?
64. Who are the great teachers today?
65. Do you believe that the ability to perform and to teach are closely related?
66. How important is the personal relationship between student and teacher? Describe the proper role the ideal teacher will perform during the one-to-one exchange of give and take.
67. What type of study would you advise for a young person preparing to be a piano teacher?
68. Do you prefer to work with students whose main interest lies in performance or in pedagogy?

69. With your own students, what important goals do you seek?
70. How do you advise your students to practice?
71. Schnabel said that "the secret of successful performance lies in absolute concentration on absolute relaxation." How might one teach this principle of "concentration on relaxation?"
72. How far can a student with limited technical ability be expected to go?
73. Are you comfortable with the notion that people should try hard but should ultimately be satisfied with their best effort, or should a person always prod himself on to ever greater heights?
74. Self-confidence and conviction are prerequisites for any artist. How can one develop this assurance without crossing into the realm of egoism?
75. Of the thousands of terrifically gifted people, only a handful succeed. Why?
76. Do you believe that the Darwinian principle of the survival of the fittest should be applied to piano students?
77. In your practice and teaching, do you use technical exercises such as Czerny and Hanon?
78. Would you ever give to a beginning student the Mikrokosmos of Bartok?
79. Do you ever advise your students to study scales, thirds, sixths, tenths, double thirds, etc.?
80. Do you believe that a young person can devise a technical and interpretive approach that is absolutely unique from anything that has gone on before, and how can a person do this?
81. How does a teacher avoid the risk of making the student fit his own mold?
82. A Japanese proverb says, "To teach is to learn." What have you learned from teaching?

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