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Performing by the Book?

Musical Negotiations between Text and Act

Edited by Bruno Forment

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Introduction

Musical Texts and Contexts

Stairway to Heaven or Highway to Hell?

Bruno Forment

As if it were yesterday, I remember how, when I was a little boy, my piano teacher handed over the title and imprint of the first seminal score that was to reside on my instrument's desk: the *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach*, published by Henle Verlag (J. S. Bach 1983). What an indelible impression that volume made upon an eight-year-old! I recall that, while thumbing through its pages (which I did quite often), I was confronted with such unfathomable things as a table of ornaments, an editorial preface, a critical report, and a mysterious word on the cover saying *Urtext*. Filled with pride, I returned to the music academy to hand the dark bluish grey album to my piano teacher, who took the score, proposed a first piece (Christian Petzold's g-minor Minuet BWV Anhang 115), and played it for me. But consternation followed immediately thereupon, as she began to spoil the pristine pages by pencilling fingerings, dashes, and dots above and on the staves. So much for my spotless urtext! No matter what I felt about my teacher's scribbles, fighting with the clean typography, I had to endure the same abysmal spectacle lesson upon lesson, with dozens of marks for dynamics, articulation, and expression accumulating, turning my musical treasure into a palimpsest. By the time my life as an apprentice pianist with the *Notenbüchlein* was deemed over, the "Henle Verlag Urtext" had become, so to speak, "*her* text"—a piano teacher's artistic-technical script, notated on top of a dead composer's (idealised) score, and grafted onto a young, dutiful performer's fingers and body.

I took my revenge. Many years later, I presented what I remember to have been a magisterial rendering of a three-part Bach invention before an examination jury. Again, a heavily annotated Henle Urtext underlay my performance, but I played the piece by heart and with my whole heart. So impassioned it was, indeed, that I took a slightly different tempo than the one I had been taught, and added—oh, disgrace!—lush pedalling and rubato. The gesture did not please the jury: I remember my teacher coming to see me, right after the exam,

first to congratulate me on my audition and then to repudiate my musical interpretation—"that was Romantic, boy, not the way one plays Bach these days." In hindsight, I should have responded by inverting Wanda Landowska's legendary quip: "You play Bach *his* way, and I'll play him *mine*" (Watson 1994, 110)!

Had I been aware of the phenomenon of historically informed performance (HIP) at that time, I would not have felt so hurt and resentful towards both my teacher and Bach for seeming so inhospitable to a young musician's creative aspirations. Like most teenagers, I had not yet fully come to grips with the sensitivities of notated Western art music and the plain truth that, for compositions to become the audible matter we call music, they need to be transduced or, rather, *trans-muted*, undergoing a transformation from silent, symbolically coded prescriptions into physical actions on a sound-producing interface. Although the artistic responsibility for that transmutation is attributed to performing musicians, those actions are never arbitrary; rather, they are informed by an authoritative corpus of texts, contexts, and subtexts—with "texts" understood according to the broadest sense of the term, that is, as any language that can be notated or scripted. The score underlying a performance constitutes but one such text, usually joined by a gigantic set of alternative versions, "similar" compositions, instructions, conventions, opinions, and the like. Determined by, and themselves determining, performers' artistic (and pedagogical) orientations, skills, and worldviews, these texts drive artistry in more ways than some would readily admit.[1] The encounters between J. S. Bach's *Urtext*, my piano teacher's instructions, and my performances as an adolescent offer but one instance of musicians' negotiations with texts of all sorts. It is to the latter topic that this collection of essays turns.

Negotiating textuality and contextuality

Music practitioners and scholars maintain manifold modes of negotiation with musical textuality. One radical orientation has it that musicians should do without scores and rely exclusively on their auditory senses. It is well known, for that matter, that the pedagogy, performance, composition, and understanding of music have never depended exclusively on musical literacy, as several oral traditions—historical and contemporary, Western and non-Western—testify. François Couperin famously advised the readers of his *L'art de toucher le clavecin* "not to show the score to children until they have a certain quantity of pieces in their hands," it being "almost impossible that, while looking at their book, their fingers should not be disturbed and contorted, and that even the ornaments should not be altered; besides, memory is formed much better by learning by heart" ([1716] 1717, 12, my translation).[2] In a similar vein, but more than two

1 As Kristeva (1969) argues, texts constitute more than linguistic representations or signifiers of some reality; as *geno-texts*, they mobilise, produce, and transform realities when they engage—translinguistically and intertextually—with other texts.

2 "On devroit ne commencer a montrer la tablature aux enfans qu'apres qu'ils ont une certaine quantité de pieces dans les mains. Il est presqu'impossible, qu'en regardant leur Livre, les doigts ne se dérangent; et ne se contorsionnent: que les agrémens même n'ent soient altérés; d'ailleurs, la memoire se forme beaucoup mieux en aprenant par-cœur."

and a half centuries later, HIP cellist Anner Bylsma is recorded saying that "the mastering of an instrument never goes through reading first, and then playing. It goes through playing first, and then reading—and having good colleagues, especially people who play other instruments" (Sherman 1997, 209).[3] Both assertions presuppose that mimicking the playing of a skilled musician can substitute for deciphering a score, without compromising musical content. All the same, an underlying musical text remains essential as far as Western art music is concerned, even when transformed by a surrogate author like Couperin the harpsichord instructor, Bylsma's "colleagues," or my piano tutor.[4] A "good musician," Robert Schumann once remarked, "understands music without a score, and a score without music. The ear must not need the eye and the eye must not need the (external) ear" (1854, 1:28).[5] But the scriptural (or ocular) and aural remain standing as two branches of a single tree—a text-based and -producing art form—that cannot be cut down so easily.

A second, no less radical orientation towards textuality assumes the sanctitude of musical texts, beginning with the compositions themselves, or what remains of them on paper. In the present volume, though, we will not debate yet again whether there exists an ontological entity called a "musical work," the intellectual properties of which can be represented through a score.[6] After all, vital deviations can exist even between different "first" and "critical" editions of the same "work," as George Kennaway and Kate Bennett Wadsworth show in their contributions. Multiple scores of one and the same composition can divulge different amounts of detail, with varying quality and accuracy, as well as varying relevance for the context at hand. We cannot expect the lacunary "diagrams" from the Middle Ages and Renaissance—the material considered in Niels Berentsen's and Björn Schmelzer's chapters—to provide as many performative minutiae as, say, a score in the tradition of New Complexity. Neither should we be surprised that historical sources with a demonstrable link to live performances are not necessarily annotated more densely, as Nir Cohen-Shalit argues in his contribution.

By now, historically informed performers have forsaken the quest for the holy grail of the "authentic" or "definitive" text; instead, they have come to recognise the limitations of transmitted musical code, emphasising the need to turn "shorthand" or "thin writing" into vibrant performances (Haynes 2007; Kuijken 2013). HIPsters tend to rely for this on *con-text-ual* documentation of all kinds—theoretical treatises, vocal-instrumental methods, annotations, and

3 See also Kerman (1985, 196), where it is noted that "A musical tradition does not maintain its 'life' or continuity by means of books and book-learning. It is transmitted at private lessons not so much by words as by body language, and not so much by precept as by example."

4 As Small (1998, 110) remarks, musical notation can be a "tremendous enabler, permitting the accurate preservation of musical compositions, perhaps over centuries, and the learning of them quickly and efficiently by a player or group of players. . . . On the other hand, it is a limiter, since it confines what can be played to what has been notated, so the player's power of self-directed performance is liable to atrophy, especially when, as in the modern Western concert tradition, nonliterate performance is judged to be in some way inferior to literate."

5 "das ist der gute Musiker, der eine Musik ohne Partitur versteht, und eine Partitur ohne Musik. Das Ohr muß des Auges und das Auge des (äußern) Ohres nicht bedürfen."

6 See, among others, Wiora (1983); Goehr (2007), originally published in 1992; White (1997); Talbot (2000); Dodd (2007, 2020); Butt (2015); Assis (2018b).

the like. Thurston Dart (1954, 15) once contended that "every scrap of information that an early composer conveyed to his performer by means of the written notation he used must be treated as though it were gold; it is very precious, and far more valuable than any editor's opinion, however enlightened this may be."[7] In Dart's wake, an army of contextual gold diggers has hunted for treatises, methods, and other sources that can lend an allure of intellectual-artistic integrity to the sonic renderings of music early and not so early. Total immersion in a musical style or period helped by vintage materials has thus come to supplement the hunt for the *princeps*. But the sense of antiquarian prestige has remained. Already in *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, Arnold Dolmetsch (1915, 23) emphasised the presence of "both the German and the French versions" of Johann Joachim Quantz's 1752 *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* in his personal library, "as well as most of the other works quoted in these pages." And "if I had not been the owner of these precious books," Dolmetsch continued, "I could not have accomplished my work, for it is only by studying them again and again, at leisure, for years, that the light has come to me. The reading possible at a public library is necessarily too superficial to assimilate the details of such an intricate subject" (1915, 23). Buy the antique copy or facsimile, if you can! Dolmetsch's words betray an ambition to transcend current practice and knowledge through a deep, emphatic reading of historical (con)texts.[8] With the compositional text itself being insufficient, HIP demands that musicians inscribe their interpretations into scholarly verifiable *text-ures*, made up of historical "evidence" and accredited by extensive liner notes and similar documents.

The acute critic will immediately identify limits to such musical *con-text-ualisation*. The first concerns the fluid boundaries between text and context. How "open" or "closed" can a composition be, Niels Berentsen and Clare Lesser wonder in their chapters? Where to locate the liminal space between the "piece itself" and the "outside world" (Korsyn 1999)? What is a composition's immediate "good neighbour"—to use Aby Warburg's concept that is central to Björn Schmelzer's essay? And to what extent are composers' preparatory sketches and unfinished drafts intrinsic to the composition—*in-texts*, rather than *con-texts*?[9]

A second issue pertaining here is whether extra-musical discourses that affected a composer in creating a work can be fed back into performances of that very repertoire. Some modern authors have acknowledged that "authentic meanings of a work arise from our relating it to an array of things outside itself that we believe gave it meaning in its original context," but "these things are not inherent in the score," as a result of which they "are not susceptible of

7 Against all odds, Dart advocated thorough editing and updating of musical texts to modern notational conventions, including rhythmical values based on the crotchet as the time unit, key signatures, and clefs. Extended musicological prefaces to scores had no use in his eyes (1954, 22–23), and Dart considered facsimiles "of no use to the scholar" and even "a nuisance to the performer" (21)!

8 Robert Donington (1973, 23), too, considered it "an instructive experience to read straight off a facsimile. That, and no more than that, is what a baroque musician had on his stand in front of him." He advised musicians to at least check the "text of some modern performing edition with photocopies of original sources" and thus "be [their] own editor" (27).

9 Assis (2018a) offers examples of performances incorporating the various compositional strata of a formerly unified, unproblematic "work" or urtext.

presentation in concert" (Tomlinson 1988, 123). Xiangning Lin's essay in this volume boldly updates this view, exploring analytical tools and digital multimedia to artistically represent a composer's extra-musical influences directly in performance.

A third question concerns the degree to which contemporaneous primary sources can be both comprehensive and synchronously aligned to compositions and performances. Among primary sources, not everything that shines is necessarily gold. To begin with, the amount of available documentation varies greatly according to historical-geographical area: some repertoires are exceptionally well documented, while others are not in the least covered. Moreover, information from one context cannot be merely extrapolated to another, in particular when dealing with musical repertoires that are sensitive to regional, generic, and stylistic differences. Nevertheless, HIP has witnessed idiosyncratic precepts (such as the ideal harpsichord-cum-violoncello continuo proposed in C. P. E. Bach 1762) becoming conventions for vaster swaths of repertoire than was often meant. Many historical testimonies fail—or deliberately refuse—to confide every single trick of a trade; others are by no means up to date or muse nostalgically on an ideal past; and still others are simply not up to the task of articulating insights with the competence necessary to convince modern-day practitioners (Koopman 2019, 6). In no later than 1686, Andreas Werckmeister complained about over-codification in his time, about the "hundred special rules . . . prescribed for beginners," which in his view could be replaced with simpler foundations (96, my translation).[10] In a different realm, Voltaire held that the arts of his day were awash in "a prodigious number of rules, most of which are useless or false. We will find lessons everywhere, but few examples. Nothing is easier than to speak in the tone of a master about things that cannot be executed: there are a hundred poetics against one single poem. One sees only masters of eloquence, but almost not a single orator" (1792, 311).[11]

At the same time, alternative performance options, which would be worthwhile testing, have been dismissed a priori because they were not recorded by one or another piece of "evidence" (Lawson and Stowell 1999, 24). It takes courage for musicians to openly acknowledge their deviations from the written record. Imagine a disclaimer in a programme warning concert audiences: "We know the texts say 'A,' but we shall nonetheless perform our own 'B' tonight."[12]

10 "Ist nun der Grund unser angezogenen Lehre, wohlgeleget, so ist denn nicht nöthig, sich mit so viel 100. special-Regeln zu quälen und dieselbe zu imprimiren, weil ein jeder selbst den richtigen Satz und progress erkennen wird, die vielen special-Regeln werden nur denen incipienten, oder denen so diese Lehre de proportionibus Musicus nicht verstehen, vorgeschrieben . . ."

11 "On a accablé presque tous les arts d'un nombre prodigieux de règles, dont la plupart sont inutiles ou fausses. Nous trouverons par-tout des leçons, mais peu d'exemples. Rien n'est plus aisé que de parler d'un ton de maître des choses qu'on ne peut exécuter: il y a cent poétiques contre un poëme. On ne voit que des maîtres d'éloquence, & presque pas un orateur. . . . tyrans qui ont voulu asservir à leurs loix une nation libre, dont ils ne connaissent point le caractère."

12 And yet, this very anti-*Werktrue* attitude has become widely accepted in the modern theatre (Balme 2008; Brunner and Zalfen 2011) and opera house (Nattiez 2019).

Too many texts?

In the "Age of Abundance" that is the early twenty-first century, it is no longer a scarcity of texts that seems to be at stake; instead, it is a lack of tools with which to retrieve the right information from the clouds of digitised materials that are spread all over the World Wide Web, via silos such as Google Books, Gallica, Archive.org, and so on. Music professors are increasingly complaining—justly or not—about students dismissing printed critical editions in favour of online freebies, irrespective of whether the latter scores are prepared by amateurs or digitised by world-class institutions to which an earlier generation had little or no access.[13] Music publishers are worried—justly or not—that open access may end the golden era of the urtext, edited facsimile, and critical edition.[14] Whereas earlier generations encountered difficulties in locating a copy of a trustworthy source at a library within travelling distance, current generations have a hard time picking the right source from a plethora of available materials (including digitised early prints and manuscripts) and in retrieving information from it. If something needs to be transmitted to young artists nowadays, therefore, it is the tools and skills to navigate their way through the textual jungle.

One such toolkit for text mining is offered by the library that occasioned this volume: the Ton Koopman collection at the Orpheus Instituut (Forment and Van der Linden 2021). The unique asset of this former private library consists of the thousands of handwritten indices the owner and user, a noted HIP musician, provided for the twenty thousand (or 350 running metres of) scores and books. Nearly every volume contains a list of keywords, followed by page numbers referring to passages our collector found noteworthy. Written on separate slips of paper in the case of old books, or directly into the front matter of modern exemplars, Koopman's indices map knowledge in intricate ways, translating textual, musical, and iconographic content into concepts that are not only surprisingly consistent but also comprehensible to modern musicians. Some keywords are straightforward topical terms, personal names, or toponyms, yet many others represent ongoing research questions in HIP: What to do with the fermata in Lutheran chorales? How to configure and set up a choir or orchestra for certain historical repertoire? What about the issue of overdotting? And so on. Each of the linked passages in the sources represents but one possibility in the eyes of a certain author; when brought together into a master index or a database, Ton Koopman's indices reveal a whole range of options for artistic practices that previously co-existed in a network of ideas and agents, and that can newly co-exist in a performed presence.

Koopman's indices do not merely enable artists and scholars to dive into the primary sources more easily; they also help them articulate their artistic choices vis-à-vis textual archives. For, like authors, musicians—within and outside the Western art tradition, HIP and other—are willy-nilly relating their artistic acts to texts, inserting their practice and the discourse around them into a polyphonic

13 Personal conversations with music educators and librarians, ca. 2016–present.
14 Unpublished presentation by Annette Thein of Bärenreiter, Barcelona, 13 February 2023.

texture of earlier "writings."[15] Whether adopting an attitude of compliance (children fulfilling their music teacher's instructions), allusion (citing or paying homage to another), summation (offering a "definitive" version), or outright subversion of norms, canons, or traditions, to create and perform music is to negotiate one's own artistry with existing texts, if not to converse with the dead.[16]

Performative acts and texts[17]

In the present volume, ten artist-researchers critically re-evaluate musicians' relationships with texts of various kinds. In which ways, each of them wonders, do texts (re)shape performative acts? Where to situate the limits of textual negotiation, with respect both to musical interpretation itself and to the extent to which texts encroach upon autonomous artistic choices?

The singer, choral conductor, and music theorist Niels Berentsen opens the debate with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities posed by lacunary compositions from the Middle Ages. While the goal of "reimagining" (i.e., reconstructing and performing) such pieces is to hypothesise complete originals, he argues that the lacuna or "gap" must remain a permanent feature of the musical "work"—the latter as understood, with Umberto Eco, in its full openness, serving as a unique place for creative engagement with the past. Reconstruction offers a tool to revalue the network of textual possibilities available to the historical composer.

Björn Schmelzer goes one step further, contending that the compulsive drive to fill in each and every gap left by the past is at odds not only with Eco's open artwork and the Renaissance *non finito* (whose very incompleteness completes the work) but also with music's potential engagement with the inseparably entwined actions of remembering and forgetting. Referring to the historical disposition of books in Aby Warburg's art-historical library, he proposes that the textual gap stages the emergence of a divided or fragmented subjectivity that appears to originate from an external source but is in fact intrinsic, creating an unsettling ambiguity that draws readers in and compels them to alter their intended course of investigation. Historical sources do not constitute descriptive testimonies of the past, for that matter; they are enigmatic, diagrammatic, symptomatic. Schmelzer consequently does not treat musical sources as parts of a complete historical narrative in productions by his own ensemble, Graindelavoix, but rather allows them to function as engines of alienation and disruption.

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15 I am here considering Kristeva (1969, 120), where she notes that "The literary text is inscribed in the corpus of texts: it is a replica-writing (function or negation) of (an)other text(s). By the way of writing, by reading the previous or synchronic literary corpus, the author lives in history, and society is written in the text" (my translation; Le texte littéraire s'insère dans l'ensemble des textes: il est une écriture-réplique (fonction ou négation) d'une autre (des autres) texte(s). Par sa manière d'écrire en lisant le corpus littéraire antérieur ou synchronique l'auteur vit dans l'histoire, et la société s'écrit dans le texte).

16 Already in his 1637 *Discourse on the Method*, René Descartes considered "that reading good books is like engaging in conversation with the most cultivated minds of past centuries who had composed them, or rather, taking part in a well-conducted dialogue in which such minds reveal to us only the best of their thoughts" (2006, 7–8).

17 The text-act dichotomy is evidently derived from the title and contents of Taruskin (1995).

What happens when music-textual artefacts are not merely completed, but released to a level on which, instead of a pre-existing work (or our imagination thereof), a historical *practice* provides an opportunity for *Werktreue*? Organist, pianist, and choral conductor Jonathan Ayerst explores this idea through improvisations on canonical repertoire by J. S. Bach (recordings of which can be listened to through the online companion to this volume). He argues that improvisation can yield many versions of a score that is taken as a point of departure. Discussing the implications of improvising in terms of cognitive processing, ontological beliefs, cultural situation, and skill development, he shows how characteristic features of a model can be reinterpreted as a repertoire of expressive functions and compositional devices.

Turning to printed textual objects and their typographical and physical characteristics, the soprano Elizabeth Dobbin investigates how late seventeenth-century French anthologies of songs evolved in terms of readability and manoeuvrability. Aesthetically pleasing and designed with the user's convenience in mind, these publications, dedicated to salon culture, open up broader cultural perspectives, especially when performed with historical decorum and affective economies in mind. Negotiating the gap between the printed music and performances in accordance with society's dictates, she argues, is a crucial consideration in the search for the lost art of salon song.

A second group of essays leaves the realm of early modernity to probe an area that is typically associated with canonical repertoire and, consequently, with stable musical texts: the nineteenth century. And yet, as the pianist Camilla Köhnken argues, performers' dealings with Great Works evolved notably even after the "Beethoven paradigm" or "work concept" (Goehr 2007) had emerged. Köhnken's scrutiny of memoirs, letters, reviews, printed scores, and other sources documenting the careers of Carl Czerny and his student Franz Liszt shows how the two composer-performers helped create the "Beethoven myth" while adopting alternative attitudes to the Great Composer's textual legacy. The story of Czerny and Liszt studying and performing Beethoven marks a notable transition in perspective for performer and listener alike—a shift in focus from performers' inspired *live* renderings of scores to dead composers' venerated legacies, mediated by humbled performers through *preconceived* interpretations.

Both perspectives have continued to persist up to this day, as the cellist, conductor, and musicologist George Kennaway explains. Deploying metaphors from biblical and legal exegesis, Kennaway distinguishes two fundamentally different attitudes in the realm of the urtext: while one seeks to discard textual accretions to a maximum extent but is faced with the challenge of multiple co-existing musical interpretations, another seeks to include as many textual supplements (a concept also investigated by Clare Lesser) as possible, thus necessitating careful curation by the performer. This dichotomy raises questions about discursive limits and control: Who has the authority to decide what is "extra-textual"? Is it beneficial at all to make a definitive choice between textual approaches?

The cellist and gambist Kate Bennett Wadsworth joins Köhnken and Kennaway in their archaeology of nineteenth-century performance texts. Her analysis of contemporary editions of, cadenzas for, and annotations to Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto shows the performer/composer bifurcation at work: whereas melodic and expressive portions of Schumann's composition were left intact in performances, experienced cellists typically overrode the original text in passagework, flourishes, cadenzas, and codas. The latter changes to Schumann's score have come to be seen as irreverent by posterity, yet they may be necessary to maintain a sense of vibrancy and freshness when performing this repertoire.

But do performers have to "interpret" at all? How much do they have to invest analytically or hermeneutically in a score before playing it? The conductor and musicologist Nir Cohen-Shalit paints a sharp, unidealised picture of nineteenth-century German orchestral practice in order to advocate "interpretation-free" performances, relinquishing fixed, preconceived ideas of how a musical work should go. Such a flexible style of orchestral performance, he argues, should be based on a spontaneous co-creation between the conductor and the orchestra, rather than on the former's centralised power and authority. Considered "under-rehearsed" from the modern perspective, such an approach is almost unthinkable in a world of polished, (over-)edited content, and yet it could potentially liberate Romantic scores from the tangles of concert-hall routine and encourage values of pluralism, curiosity, and exploration.

Xiangning Lin pursues an opposite way. In her chapter on Maurice Ravel's "Oiseaux tristes" (from *Miroirs*), which opens the third and last portion of this volume, dedicated to the twentieth century and its aftermath, the Singaporean pianist proposes a multi-layered artistic inquiry that incorporates intertextual analysis, musical interpretation, conscious performance practices, and autoethnography. Exploring the correspondences between Ravel's music and Edgar Allan Poe, she highlights the challenges of translation, translocation, and artistic ownership in the context of global connections and exchanges. Her multimedia production of "Oiseaux tristes" (which can be enjoyed through the companion website) serves both as a platform for expressing the latter challenges and as a demonstration of the potential of historical poetic ideals and modern creative agencies to contribute to the process of recontextualisation and translocation.

Clare Lesser brings the discussion on musical texts and acts full circle through her deconstruction of these very concepts, as well as notions of "supplement" and "repetition," through the cases of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Plus-Minus* and John Cage's *Four*[6]. Such scores, she argues, embrace undecidability by means of their experimental notation and thus encourage radical interventions by their interpreters. Each repetition occasions a new supplement, resulting in a process of decentring between text and act that generates future realisations and works—a continuum of genetically connected, but eventually idiosyncratic, performative progeny. Repetition undermines the centre as a fixed place, acting instead as a function that allows for the evolution of the line, maintaining supplementarity while creating new realisations. The blank cheque of per-

formance is a phoenix, Lesser concludes, with each new realisation rendering the previous one into ash, ready for the next iteration. The performative act remains virgin, therefore, even when repeated infinitely in a chain of play and supplement.

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Mind the Gap

Reimagining Incomplete Medieval Music

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Lacunary, incomplete, polyphonic compositions are a problem child in the family of musical texts. An example at hand is "Een cleyn parabel," a Dutch song surviving as a unicum in the so-called *Leiden Fragments* (figure 1.1; appendices A and B).[1] The composition is ascribed to Martinus Fabri (fl. 1400) whose name is written as a rebus with the musical syllable "fa."[2] The fragment contains a—mostly intact—*cantus* and the first half of a *tenor* carrying the same text as the upper voice. Both parts are written in choirbook format, one below the other. Since almost all pieces in the *Leiden Fragments* are in three voices, the missing right-hand page would, besides the residuum of the *tenor*, probably also have contained a *contratenor*. The first and only surviving strophe of the song's text presents a parable: the singer's vision of his lady carrying a small, adorable child—not his—and the alternating joy and pain he must endure on her account. I will return to this bit of unresolved metaphor in due course. For now, it suffices to say that, as is typical for lacunary pieces, this song until recently led a mere paper existence; it was left unperformed, unrecorded, and to a certain extent even ignored in scholarship.

Reconstruction is a good way of making such incomplete musical objects visible and audible. This compositional and scholarly act enables researchers and performers to discuss the merits of the reconstruction and the original, compare it with complete pieces, and insert the lacunary work into the discussion about a certain corpus, period, or style of music. In this particular case, it may rekindle the debate about the quality and character of Fabri's musical settings (Leech-Wilkinson 1992). More importantly, it enables the lacunary piece to assume a life beyond the critical edition, in performances and recordings. Yet reconstructions are also problematic: as "sounding hypotheses" they result from a walk on the tightrope between scholarship and musical

1 For an edition, see Biezen and Gumbert (1985, 73–75), as well as appendix B. I am grateful to Johanna-Pauline Thöne for allowing me to publish her digital photograph of the page in question. All references to manuscripts in this chapter take the form of RISM sigla.

2 On the biography of the composer Martinus Fabri, see Janse (1986); Wegman (1992, 193n30). Later cases of solmisation puns on composers' names in manuscript ascriptions include Guillaume Du Fay, Arnold and Hugo de Lantins, Pierre de la Rue, and Alexander Agricola (Hatter 2014, 51–53).

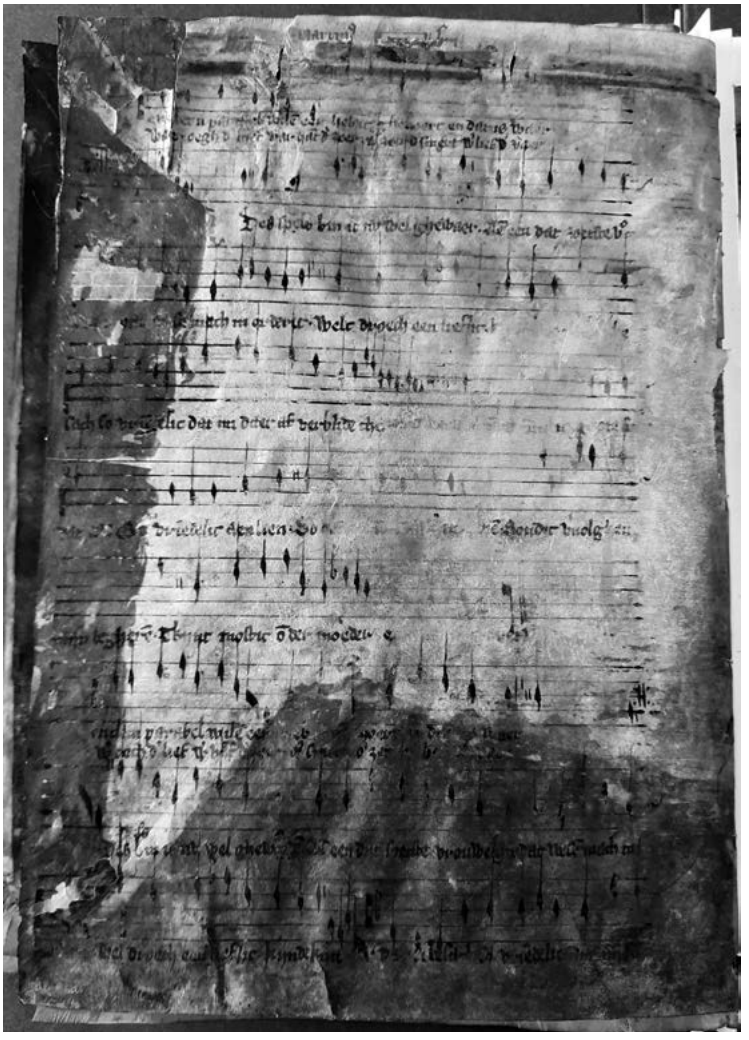


Figure 1.1.

creation. How far can we go in reconstructing such a piece? Also, is reconstruction only really defensible if we are likely to get close to a lost, inaccessible original?

From the point of manuscript conservation there can be little objection to reconstructing music, as no scholar will presumably be mad enough to interfere with the actual physical fragment. Unlike the restoration of an artwork, Marina Toffetti has argued, reconstructions of musical texts are "virtual" and reversible by definition (2013, 7).[3] Nevertheless, scholars of medieval music are often cautious in presenting reconstructions, doubtlessly because recon-

3 On the uses of virtual reconstructions of visual art, see Carrozzino et al. (2014); Pietroni and Ferdani (2021).

Figure 1.1. Martinus Fabri, "Een cleyn parabel" (NL-Lu 2720, fol. 10v).
Reproduced in colour as plate 1, p. 105.

struction tends to push the activity of "emendation" beyond regular practices of critical editing (Grier 1996, 72–73). Some would argue that reconstruction should be reserved, first, to cases in which a piece can be patched together from different fragments and, second, to pieces in which material can be borrowed from musical reprises, imitative statements, or cases in which the presence of pre-existing material (e.g., a cantus firmus) can be presumed.[4] This second type of (text-critical) reconstruction already involves a fair amount of speculation and is open to bias; experience shows that one can sometimes find solutions that work but nevertheless diverge from the original. In other words, even in taking a strictly philological attitude to reconstruction, one's choices may occasionally be "wrong," and they have to be accorded the status of hypotheses that can be emended and supplemented with other hypotheses. In some cases, further original data can still turn up, in a new concordance or through improved imaging technologies such as high-resolution photography or multispectral imaging, overriding earlier speculative readings (Janke and MacDonald 2014; Craig-McFeely 2020).

Opinions may also differ about *how much* of a lacunary piece or corpus of music should be reconstructed. The edition of the *Leiden* and *Utrecht Fragments* (NL-Uu 37.1) by Biezen and Gumbert offers a good case in point. The editors describe their reconstruction as "unscientific" and "pure guesswork," a kind of necessary evil dedicated "exclusively to render[ing] performance possible" (1985, 19). Hence, they take a "minimalist" approach, reconstructing mostly parts of pieces that survive relatively intact. Sections or pieces for which only one voice survives are deemed too problematic and are edited without completions or banished to the critical commentary (73–74, 76–78, 124–25). For example, "Een cleyn parabel" remains basically unperformable in the edition, despite Biezen and Gumbert's best efforts.[5] In what follows I will be arguing for a *maximalist* type of reconstruction, that—speculatively—attempts to reimage such damaged pieces in their entirety.

My involvement with incomplete medieval music, scholarly and artistic, has—besides the import and merits of individual lacunary works—also always been motivated by the challenge posed by the lacuna itself. More so than complete musical texts, the incomplete work has a way of drawing readers in: it invites them to reconceive a lost whole. Musical fragments, in this respect, share something with ruins, or even the consciously *non finito*, which likewise require an active, imaginative stance of the viewer to be interpreted.[6] In the

4 For an example of the first kind, see Margaret Bent's reconstruction of "O Antoni expulsor demonum" (Bent and Klugseder 2012, 154–56); for the second, see Biezen and Gumbert's version of "Ist mi bescheert" (1985, 103–5) as well as Jared C. Hartt's reconstruction of "Majori vi leticie . . . Majorem intelligere" (2018).

5 Their reconstruction is limited to the illegible (darkened) bits and lacunae of fol. 10v, chiefly towards the end of the *cantus* (bars 31 and onwards). No effort was made to reconstruct the end of the *tenor* nor a (presumptive) *contratenor* that would have been written on the opposing page. A performance of the first twenty-eight bars, with surviving *cantus* and *tenor*, is technically possible; however, it would be misleading in sonic terms because of the missing third voice.

6 The idea of purposely leaving an artwork (typically a sculpture) "unfinished" is often associated with Michelangelo (Mangone 2021; Barolsky 1994), see also Björn Schmelzer's chapter in this book. For a general overview of the role of the fragment in European art and aesthetics, see Hanabergh (2012).

case of lacunary music, someone with knowledge of the style and an aptitude for musical composition may feel the temptation to step into the shoes of the medieval musician and correct, so to speak, the deficiencies of manuscript transmission. The argument I will be putting forward is that the act of reconstruction can, in and by itself, be a valid way to explore the musical potential of incomplete compositions, enriching scholarship as well as the performance of medieval music.

To provide the reader with an insider's perspective into the process of reconstructing and performing pieces of incomplete polyphony, I will return to the example of Fabri's "Een cleyn parabel," of which I produced a reconstruction for *Hollandse Fragmenten: Early Dutch Polyphony* (2021), an album by Diskantores.[7] While this reconstruction was not originally intended as a piece of scholarship, but rather as material for performance, I feel it managed to contribute several interesting points about this song. In guise of a conclusion, I will offer a reflection on the nature of lacunary pieces and the reconstruction effort, seen through the lens of Umberto Eco's influential definition of the "open work."

"Een cleyn parabel"

As a preparatory step to reconstructing Fabri's song, I (re-)examined all the information left in the fragment and established a basic transcription thereof.[8] A second step was the identification of models—pieces that can be presumed to somehow look like the lost original. Here we can point to two pieces in particular: Fabri's "Eer ende lof" and Hugo Boy Monachus's "Genade Venus," found in the *Leiden Fragments* on fols. 9v–10 and 11v (Biezen and Gumbert 1985, 70–72, 76–78). Like "Een cleyn parabel," these two pieces have a middle-Dutch text, which is delivered in a largely syllabic and homophonic fashion, interrupted by longer or shorter passages in imitation. All three have a repeated opening section with alternating open and closed cadences, in the manner of a French ballade. "Genade Venus" is also incomplete, however; the partially extant *contratenor* on fol. 11v points to a three-voice setting as most likely for "Een cleyn parabel" as well. All the more instructive as a model is "Eer ende lof," which survives near-intact and which can be used to reimagine the musical textures of "Een cleyn parabel."

7 This project, involving a CD recording alongside lecture performances and regular concerts, was developed in collaboration with Eliane Fankhauser. Fankhauser was in the process of writing her dissertation on the Dutch fragments at the time and kindly shared many of her insights with me (Fankhauser 2014, 2018).

8 My transcription differed very little from the published edition (Biezen and Gumbert 1985, 73–75); however, I would like to signal a few disagreements on what can be deciphered of the *cantus* on fol. 10v (bar numbers refer to appendix A): in bars 1–2 the rests are strictly speaking conjectural and should be placed between square brackets; in bars 8–9 notation is partially legible and can be reconstructed from the repeat in bar 12; in bar 21 the initial (red) D is legible; in bars 19–20 there is a lacuna; in bar 37, G–F–D in (red) semibreves is legible. It is entirely possible that with the imaging methods available today (high-resolution photography, multi-spectral imaging, or infrared photography) more information could be recovered from the fragment.

Let us start our analysis with the passage presented in figure 1.2 (see appendix A for a translation). In bars 16–21 the surviving voices sing in homophony.[9] Comparison with "Eer ende lof" shows that the *contratenor* would have participated in the syllabic text delivery, filling out the sonorities of the two principal voices now above, then below the *tenor*. What follows in bars 22–25 is an echo imitation between *cantus* and *tenor*. Such echoes can also be found (or inferred) in "Eer ende lof" and "Genade Venus."[10] The imitation of the *cantus* melody in bars 22–23 enables reconstruction of the missing *contratenor* by borrowing from the *tenor* so that a repeated two-voice module emerges to the words "welc droegh een lieflic kindekijn." In bar 26 the homophonic writing resumes, and we can reconstruct the following passage in a way similar to bars 16–21. In short, to reconstruct this section we have employed two different methods: (1) borrowing from parallel places; (2) recomposition based on stylistic and contrapuntal considerations. In the imitative section the reconstruction stands a good chance of being "correct" and of corresponding literally to the lost original, whereas in the homophonic sections the general shape and texture of the composition may be recovered, but not so much the literal musical text.

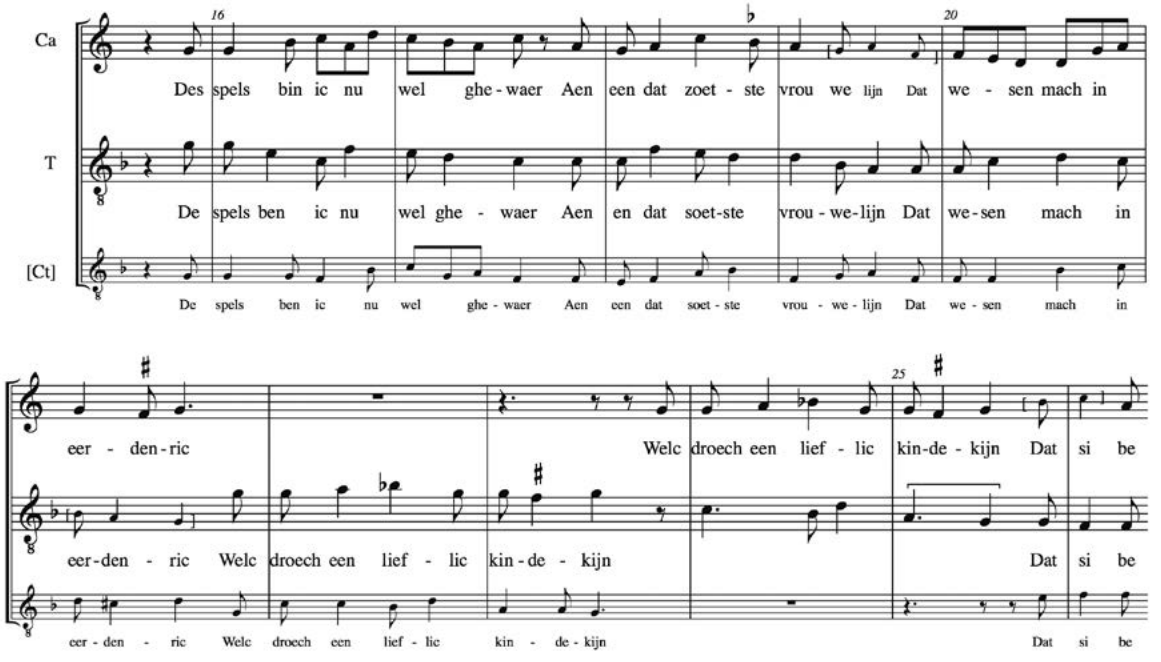


Figure 1.2.

9 The only lacuna is the illegible bit in the *cantus* (bars 19–20), which we can quickly determine to have been an (upwards) close to A, analogous to other phrase-ends (bars 17, 21, etc.).

10 See "Eer ende Lof" (Biezen and Gumbert 1985, 70–72), bars 16–18, 36–38, and 48–50, and "Genade Venus" (ibid., 76–78), bars 5–7 and 42–46.

Figure 1.2. "Een cleyn parabel," bars 16–27, reconstruction.

What about the second half of "Een cleyn parabel," for which only a—partially legible—upper voice survives? Can we propose credible hypotheses for this section's reconstruction as well? I would argue that this is possible in a broad sense, as the compositional fabric can be reimagined with fair certainty (figure 1.3). The turn to the (lost) right-hand page occurs in bar 28 in the *tenor*, during a syllabic section to the words "dat mi daer af verblide thert," which the cantus finishes on G after a short cadential melisma. For this section a stylistically plausible recomposition can be proposed. What follows in the *cantus* are rests (three semibreves and two minims), a clear indication that the tenor would have proposed an imitative statement here. Unfortunately, the reply of the *cantus* does not survive intact: only legible are the noteheads of the initial G and the final G–F–G close. What is legible of the text is "ic grote s," and I have followed Gumbert's reading of it as "[om haer so droeg]ic grote s[mert]" (I have suffered much for her; Biezen and Gumbert 1985, 75). Hence, while we cannot be exactly sure as to the lost music, an analogous reconstruction can still be proposed in the form of a repeated two-voice module similar to bars 21–28. As the rest of the *cantus* does not contain long rests, we can be fairly certain that the composition would have continued in a homophonic texture until the end.

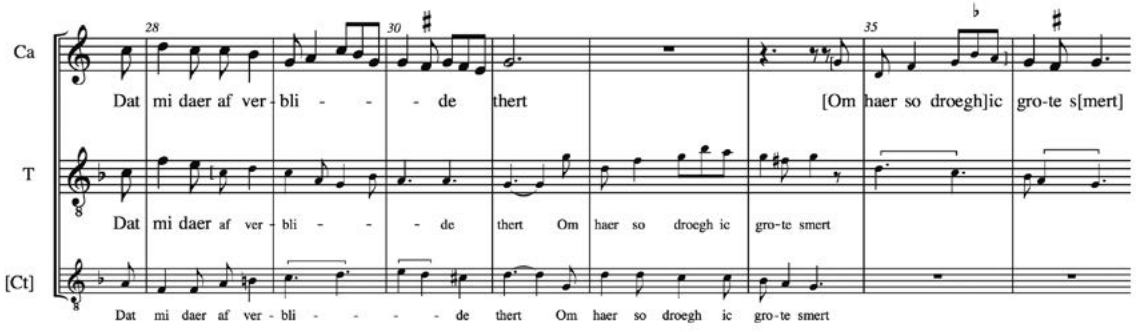


Figure 1.3.

An interesting phenomenon sometimes occurring during reconstruction is that two (or more) competing ideas can arise about how a certain passage may have looked.[11] Such was the case of the opening of "Een cleyn parabel" (figure 1.4). No rests are visible at the beginning of the *cantus*, which should clearly enter—as the published edition also shows—five semibreves after the *tenor*, with an echo imitation. A first hypothesis, based on what I had observed in the remainder of the piece, as well as the opening of the ballade "Adieu vous di" (NL-Lu 2720, fol. 6v), is that the *contratenor* would have accompanied the *tenor*'s opening statement, and then continued to serve as a "quasi *tenor*" when *cantus* or *tenor* are silent in bars 5–8 (figure 1.4, Ct 1).[12]

11 This process can be formalised and intensified by working in parallel with other reconstructors; it has been successfully explored, for instance, in the Lost Voices project (Freedman, Apgar, and Walter 2017). However, it may occur even when reconstructing by oneself.

12 For an edition of "Adieu vous di," see Biezen and Gumbert (1985, 56–57). On the role of the *contratenor* as "quasi *tenor*," see Sachs (1974, 127–28); Berentsen (2016, 106–11).

Figure 1.3. "Een cleyn parabel," bars 28–35, reconstruction.

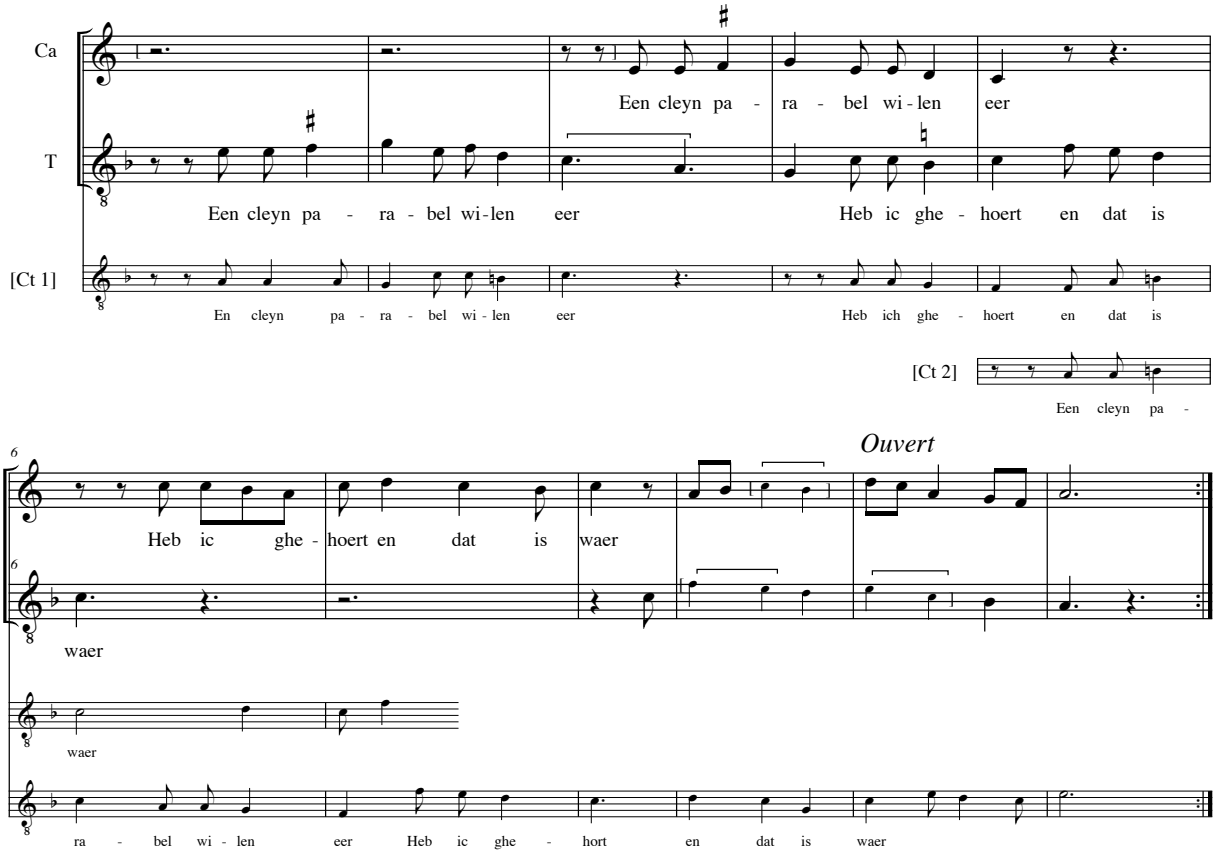


Figure 1.4.

While composing this initial version, however, I also noticed the possibility that the *contratenor* could enter in bar 5 with an imitation of its own, a fifth below the other voices (see figure 1.4, Ct 2). This kind of three-voice canonic opening, involving imitation at the unison and fifth, does not occur in any of the Leiden pieces, but I was familiar with it from Antonio "Zacara" da Teramo's "Gloria fior gentile," which—although geographically far removed from the Dutch fragments—is roughly contemporaneous with them.[13] Imitation at the fifth can be spotted in other pieces by Martinus Fabri, so it is at least possible he may have thought of such a procedure. This reading might also receive the benefit of the principle *difficilior lectio potior*: it is presumably more "difficult" to compose, and as such more likely to be original (West 1973, 51, 126, 148). Of course, the first version also works, and, moreover, it is more consistent with examples of imitation within the same repertoire. It would seem, then, that such principles of textual criticism may end up deadlocked. Producing a

13 For an edition of "Gloria fior gentile," see Fischer and Gallo (1987, 25–29).

Figure 1.4. "Een cleyn parabel," bars 1–11, reconstruction with two versions of a *contratenor.*

recording, one has to choose one version over the other, much like the editor of a critical edition (Grier 1996, 2–3). In the end I decided to use the second version because of the beautiful effect of the voices entering one by one, slowly filling the sonic space—an artistic rather than philological choice.

Performing the parable

The *Hollandse Fragmenten* project did not involve the reconstruction of lost lyrics. In the case of "Een cleyn parabel" this meant that only the surviving first strophe of the text was performed and recorded (appendix A). As mentioned previously, this text is rather enigmatic as it stands. The singer announces the retelling of the "little parable" he has heard previously (lines 1–2), but actually starts out with four proverb-like statements (lines 3–6), not all of which are easily explained in terms of conventional courtly amorous lyricism (lines 4–5 in particular). The ensuing narrative—probably the parable itself—presents a lady, described as "the sweetest woman that walks the earth," carrying a "small and lovely child" (lines 8–10). The singer fears that were he to follow his inclinations, he would "revere the child for its mother's sake" (lines 15–17). Is this a slightly unusual refashioning of the forbidden or impossible love trope, in that the singer must adore the child, even if it is not his, because he loves the mother? In this respect, would the song have been appropriate to honour Margaret of Cleves, who stood godmother to Fabri's son in 1396, as has been suggested (Wegman 1992, 194)? Another possibility is to read it as a Marian text: the Virgin is "beautiful above all others" (*super omnes speciosa*), and both "sweet" (*zoet*) and "lovely" (*lijflijc*) are routinely used epithets addressed to the Virgin and the infant Jesus in devotional poetry.[14] More speculatively, if the references to wounds and pain in lines 5 and 6 refer to Christ's stigmata, the singer's problem becomes not so much one of romantic jealousy but, rather, a theological doubt as to whether his adoration of the Virgin is not impeding (unmediated) devotion to Christ himself.

Whatever is going on here, "Een cleyn parabel" is quite literally a parable, the resolution of which disappeared with the right-hand page on which the piece was originally written. On the *Hollandse Fragmenten* album, it is followed by a plainchant *Salve regina*, which countertenor Andrew Hallock sang in our live performances from a church gallery to create a both acoustic and theatrical effect of distance and commentary. Without being overtly didactic, this kind of performative choice can alert listeners to the rich subtext of the song's lyrics, and the performing musician—as interpreter—can participate in the intricate intertextual games played in songs like "Een cleyn parabel."[15]

14 The first epithet finds its origins in the antiphon *Ave regina cælorum*. For an example of "sweet" (*soet*), see the song "Geghroet so si die maghet soet"; for "lovely" (*lieflic*), see "Adieu naturlic leven mijn" in B-Br Ms II 270 (Bouckaert et al. 2005, 7:4–5, 24–25).

15 Another such aspect is the use of the phrase "een vriendelic aensien" ("a friendly gaze"), written in red in the manuscript, that also appears in Hugo Boy Monachus's "Genade Venus." In other words, the composer-poets "look at each other" in both a musical and textual sense (Wegman 1992, 192–93n29; Biezen and Gumbert 1985, 119–20). One can easily presume a tight-knit circle of connoisseurs for whom such phrases held a special meaning.

The lacuna and the open work

As we have seen in the foregoing, a reconstruction of a lacunary text can offer certainty only very occasionally. It is the reflected vision of one scholar about the most likely way a network of possibilities could have played out in the mind of the composer. However, for all its uncertainties, the reconstruction process produces invaluable insights into the way in which elements of musical style are combined and recombined in a particular repertoire. The lacunary piece becomes nested in a network of references to other musical texts, which may engender different—complementary or contradictory—interpretations. More strongly even than in the foregoing case, I experienced this during work on Johannes Ciconia's lacunary *ballate*, for which painstaking and systematic analysis uncovered many parallel readings, each carrying its own implications for reconstruction (Berentsen 2022). In other words, more than producing a definitive, unified musical text, the reconstruction can be thought of as a way of mapping or navigating a network of possibilities and could be compared to twentieth-century pieces with an open (or polyvalent) structure, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* (1956; see Clare Lesser's chapter), which inspired Eco's definition of the "open work."[16] In fact, a number of elements from Eco's *Opera aperta: Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Open work: form and indeterminacy in contemporaneous poetics, 1962) are extremely useful for coming to grips with the problem of the fragmentary musical work and its reconstruction.

First, the kind of text described by Eco is not "open" in an absolute sense; it cannot be read in just any way. Various interpretations are the "actualization of a series of consequences whose premises are firmly rooted in the original data provided by the author" (Eco 1979, 62). In other words, valid interpretations of such a work have to operate "within the specific limits of a given taste, or of predetermined formal tendencies" of the original (ibid.). This implies both a great amount of care from the reader or performer for the original material and an acceptance of the constraints governing its style and form. This is exactly what happens in a close reading of a fragmentary piece, while going back and forth to several models to figure out ways in which to complete it. It may be the most thorough and "caring" way in which to approach such a damaged musical text. An editor who does not aim to reconstruct missing music may occasionally miss clues for a correct transcription of the notation surviving in the fragment. To cite just one example: whether two faint dashes in the source are the remnants of a sharp or two *longa* rests may not seem to matter much when transcribing a lone surviving part, but when one aims to also reconstruct the other voices, such details start to matter enormously.[17]

16 For an investigation of the open work in theory and practice in modernist music, see De Benedictis (2007).

17 This anecdote is drawn from the collaborative work on "Och lief gesel" (Uu-1846 IIBv) by Eliane Fankhauser and me. Evidently the initial error was corrected in print (Fankhauser 2018, 249–50). For a similar case, see Berentsen (2022, 55–56).

Second, and nonetheless, what justifies Eco in calling such texts "open" is the invitation authors extend to the reader to produce the work together with them, or indeed to "complete it" (1979, 62–63). In the case of a lacunary medieval piece, there has obviously been no such invitation in a literal sense; these works are incidentally, rather than intentionally, open. However, I would argue that in a musical culture in which works are not the absolute property of their authors, such an invitation may be implicit. In some small towns people keep their front doors unlocked.

In the semi-oral culture of music-making around 1400, compositions may be seen as particular instances or configurations of commonplace forms and materials, which—if anyone's—are the collective property of a community of musicians and listeners. Even though the emergence of something like a "work concept" can be observed in the later fifteenth century, as Reinhard Strohm has convincingly argued (2000), such pre-modern "works" are rather porous and fragile in nature, especially when compared with Lydia Goehr's (2007) description of the work concept around 1800. The fact that a piece such as "Een cleyn parabel" was ascribed to Martinus Fabri by no means implies a desire for the kind of authorial control typically associated with composers in the Western classical tradition. The few traces we have of late medieval performance practice in this regard, chiefly from Northern Italy, attest that musicians felt considerable freedom to reshape a composer's work—even in writing—by decorating upper lines and adding *contratenor* voices, all the while retaining the original title and authorial ascription.[18] More importantly, as we come to realise that a "true" revival of early music needs to be a revival of skills and creative practices—like those of ornamentation, the realisation of (un)figured basses, and improvised counterpoint on plainchant—that go beyond the literal, written musical text (Haynes 2007, 203–14), we may also become more receptive to a concept of reconstruction as historically informed co-composition.

Third, for Eco the network of constraints set by the original data ensures that the work—in its essence—remains the same in different structural configurations, even if this happens in a way the author did not foresee exactly (Eco 1979, 62). Reflecting, once again, on compositional and improvisatory practices in the late medieval period, we could state that the (lost) complete piece represented *only one* particular shape that the composition could have taken, fixated by the composer and/or the scribe at a certain point. Alternatives would have been open to them and, as the piece is formulaic to an extent, one building block can often (if not always) be replaced by another (Nettl 1974, 5–7; Berentsen 2016, 31–34). Hence, if we take the work to be more than the literal, exact configuration of a lost urtext we can perhaps accept reconstructions to

18 Two cases of musicians adapting compositions to their own taste and standards are the compiler of I-Bc Q15 and Matteo da Perugia (Bent 2007, 234; Memelsdorff 2010). Alternative, ornamented, upper lines exist for, among others, a Credo by Antonius "Zacara" da Teramo and Ciconia's "Merçe o morte" (Stone 1996, 78–81; Bent and Hallmark 1985, 152–56). For an extreme case of added voices, see "Esperance qui en mon cuer," which has no fewer than four distinct *contratenors* and a *triplum* in different sources (Cuthbert 2006, 314–16).

be faithful to the style and "feel" of the work, its *sensus anagogicus*—to borrow a term from Thomas Aquinas—rather than its *sensus litteralis*.[19]

Finally, there is the simultaneously definitive and provisional character of Eco's open work, which results from the fact that it needs to be enacted as "the work itself" in every performance or reading, without negating the validity of other performances (Eco 1979, 64). That is, one can—and must—be convinced of the version one is performing, without excluding the possibility for future different versions. Engaged in the task of reconstructing a lacunary piece we may often feel we are "right"—in finding a musically convincing solution, realising the imitative potential of the surviving material, or finding a parallel reading. However, even the most convincing hypothesis is still a hypothesis, whose verification must—if the occasion ever arises—lie in the discovery of the complete original. Until that day, the lacuna offers a unique place for deeper understanding of, and a creative engagement with, past musical practices and artefacts.

19 Aquinas's discussion of the "senses" of scriptural text can be found in the *Questiones Disputata*, *Quodlibet VII*, *Quaestio VI*, and *Articulus II*, see Aquinas ([1956] 2000).

Appendix A
Lyrics and translation of Martinus Fabri's "Een cleyn parabel"

1	Een cleyn parabel wilen eer	*I heard a little parable a while ago,*
2	Heb ic ghehoert end at is waer	*And it is true*
3	Waer oegh daer lyef	*Where the eye is, there is love;*
4	Waer hant daer zeer	*Where the hand is, there is the wound;*
5	Waer zeer daer smert	*Where the wound is, there is pain;*
6	Waer lief daer vaer	*Where love is, there is fear*
7	Des spels bin ic nu wel ghewaer	*I am now well aware how this game is played*
8	Aen een dat zoetste vrouwelijn	*Because of the sweetest lady*
9	Dat wesen mach in eerdenric	*Who ever walked the earth*
10	Welc droegh een lieflic kindekijn	*She carried a small and lovely child*
11	Dat si besach so vriendelic	*That she regarded so lovingly*
12	Dat mi daer af verblide thert	*That it gladdened my heart*
13	[Om haer so droegh]ic grote s[mert]	*I have suffered much for her*
14	Dat dede een vriendelic aensien	*Thus is the effect of a loving gaze*
15	So [vaer ic sout mi dit gesci]en	*I fear, therefore, this could happen*
16	Soudic vervolghen mijn begheren	*If I would follow my desire*
17	Tkijnt mostic om der moeder eren	*The child I would revere for its mother's sake*

Appendix B
Reconstruction of Martinus Fabri's "Een cleyn parabel"

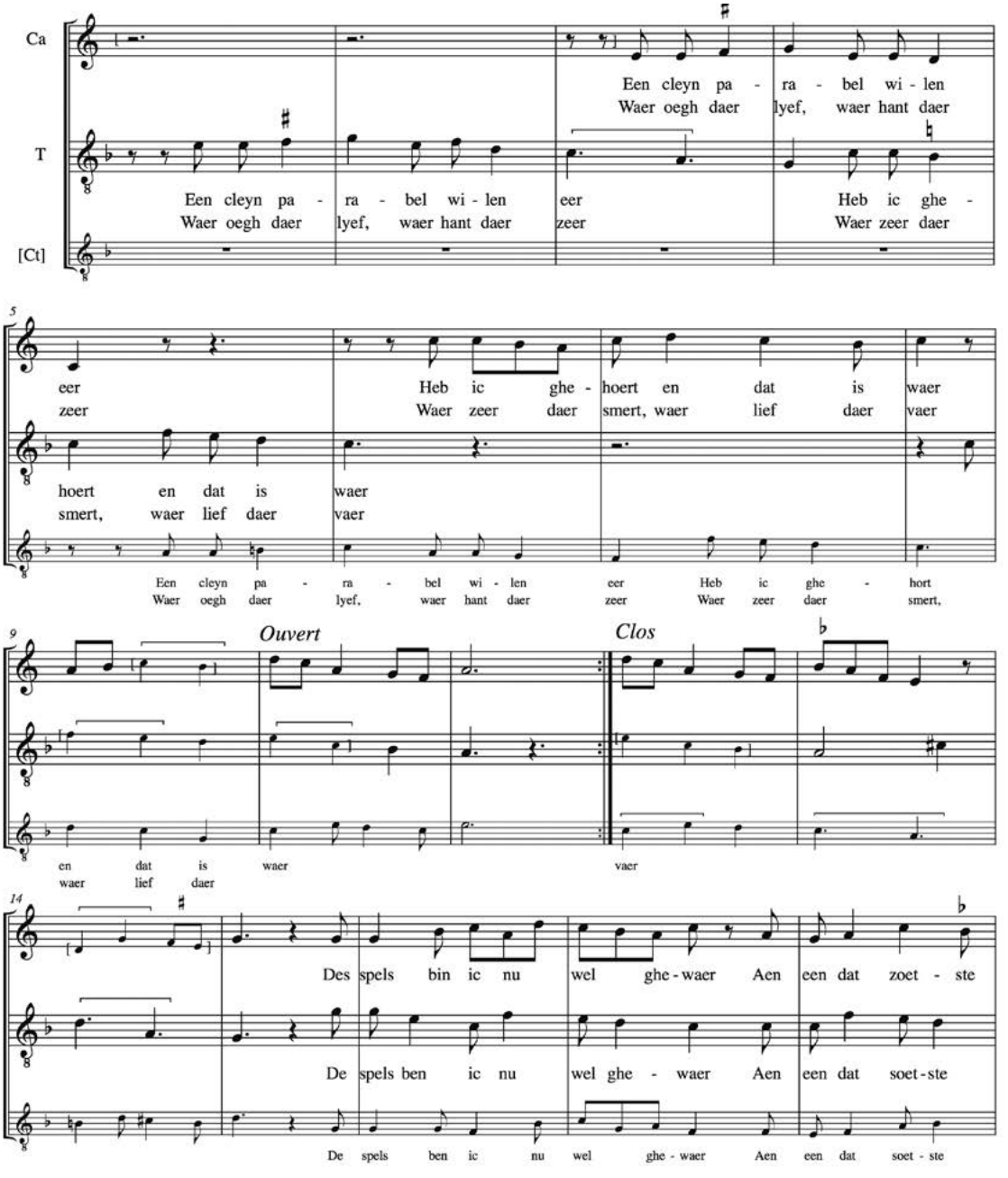
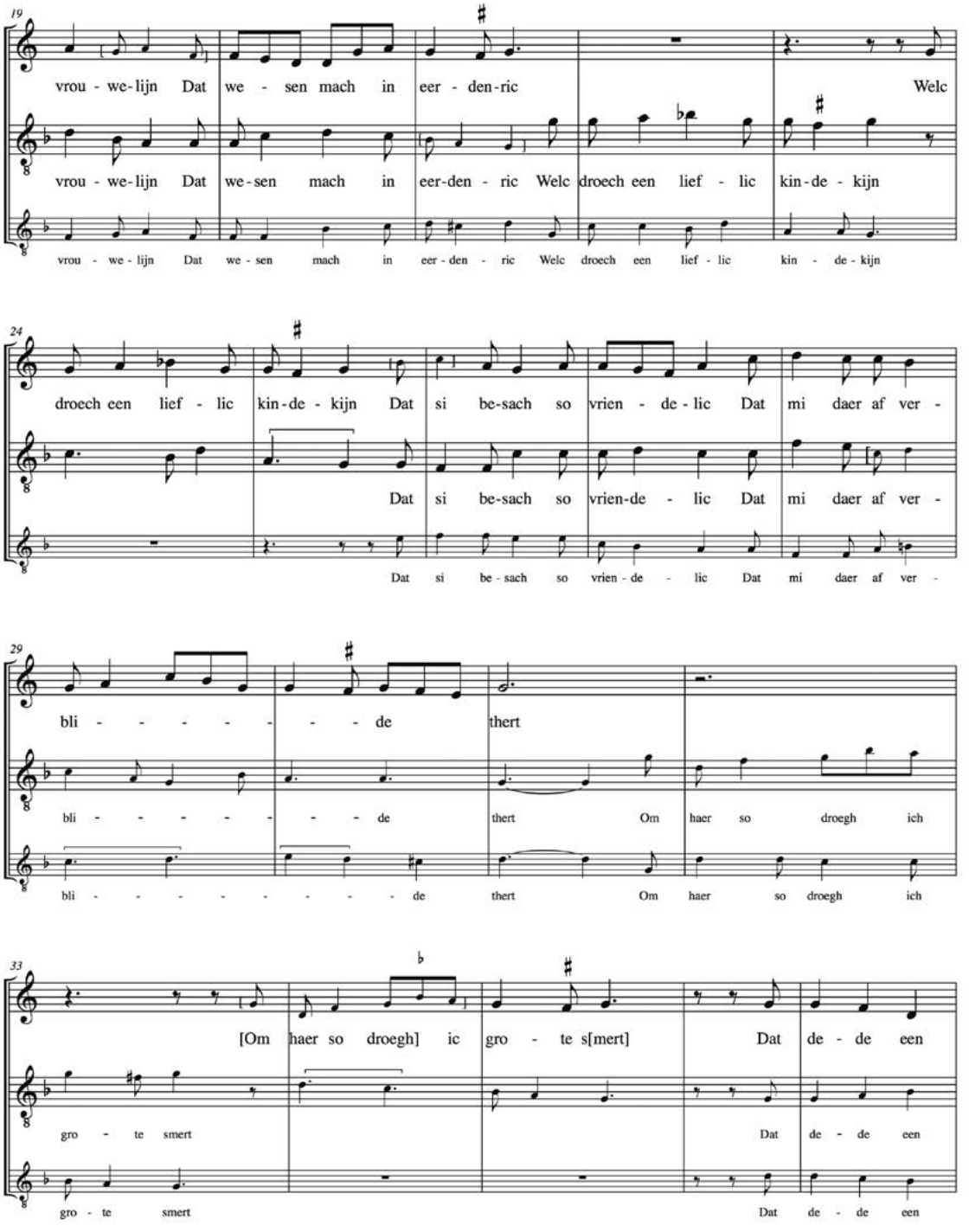


Figure 1.5a–c.

Figure 1.5a–c. Reconstruction of Martinus Fabri, "Een cleyn parabel" (NL-Lu 2720, fol. 10).


19
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24
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29
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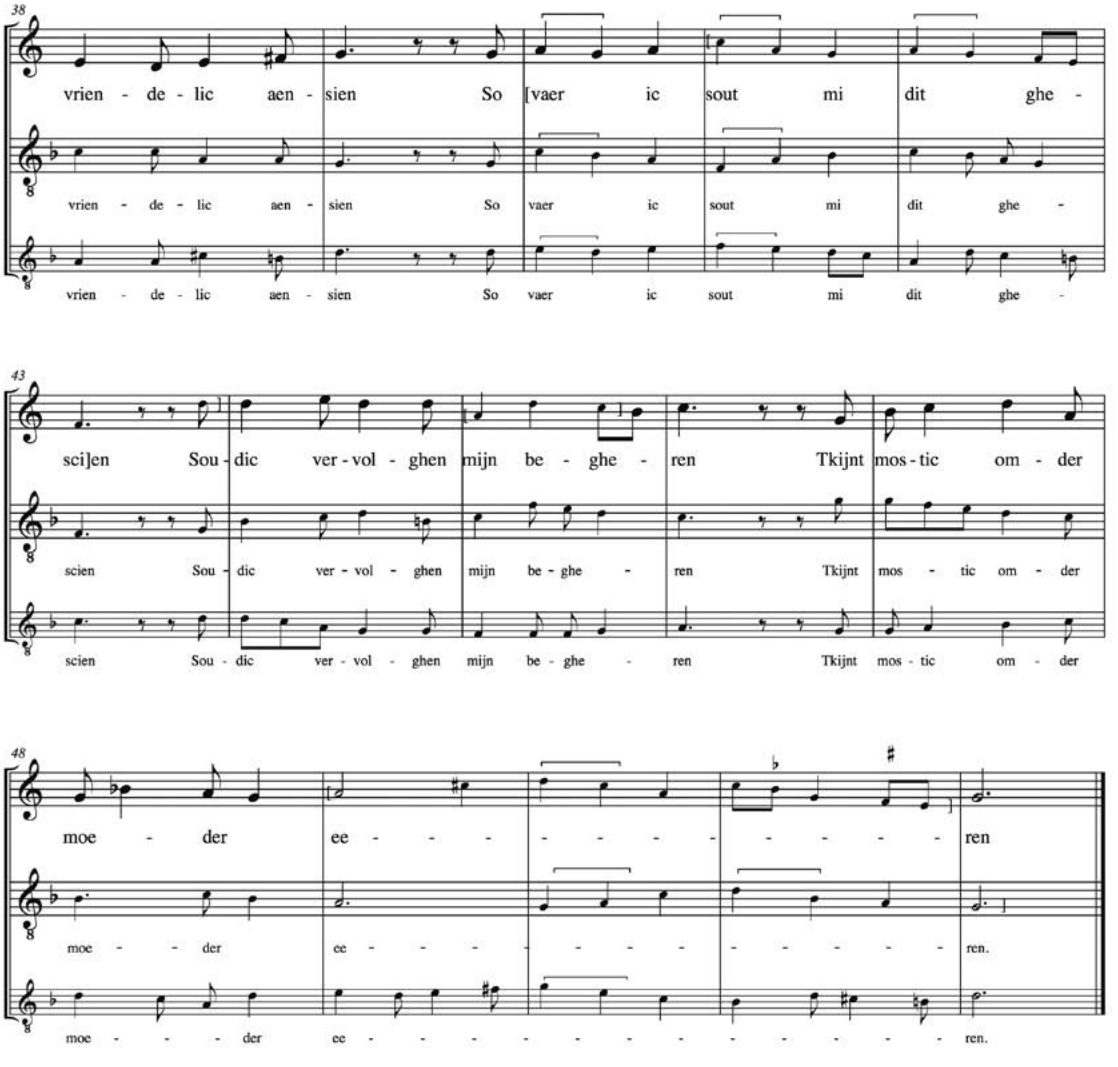
38
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43
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48
moe - der ee - - - - - - - - - - - ren
moe - - der ee - - - - - - - - - - - ren.
moe - - - der ee - - - - - - - - - - - ren.

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Performing by the Book (Next to the Book You Were Looking For)

or: Aby Warburg's "Good Neighbour"

Björn Schmelzer
Independent researcher / Artistic director of Graindelavoix

According to Wikipedia, bibliomania is "a symptom of obsessive–compulsive disorder which involves collecting or even hoarding books to the point where social relations or health are damaged." Furthermore, "bibliomania is characterized by the collecting of books which have no use to the collector nor any great intrinsic value to a genuine book collector. The purchase of multiple copies of the same book and edition and the accumulation of books beyond possible capacity of use or enjoyment are frequent symptoms of bibliomania" (Wikipedia 2023).

Internet psychology, then, tells us that bibliomania is a problem. "Normal" engagement with books is reduced to a matter of utility—one buys the books one needs—and any pleasure derived therein is tied to the usage of these. There is, in this view, no engagement beyond the pleasure principle, to put it with Freud. But what if, in reality, there is almost always something else at stake in the acquisition of books? What if, rather than being a problem, bibliomania is in fact a response—and a solution—to a different problem: the primordial angst that arises from our confrontation with visual and musical artworks, with their displacement and alienation, and with the lack or loss of a meaningful world, in which artworks are often regarded as remainders, souvenirs, or even fetishes? Is it not precisely this anxiety that formal legitimations of collecting—the premise of this volume, for instance, that books enrich our understanding of music and our musical performances—frequently seek to mask?

Do we need books to understand art? Do we need information to know how to perform repertoires from a distant past? Let me be clear from the start: I think we do, but with one key caveat. A library is the *creation* of a world, not the archive of a lost past. It is a subjective engagement with the world, the creation of a subjective encounter with a past full of contradictions and gaps (what we commonly call "history"). It is an encounter that makes us understand that there is no such thing as "early music," and that the historical Other

does not exist.[20] A library is one possible *mise en scène* of this, a concert probably another.

To briefly pursue this line of thought, the question here is where we locate our anxiety: in structural lack or historical loss? And, consequently, whether we collect books to compensate for the loss, or rather to deal with it artistically and articulate this structural lack? Believing that early music exists means contemplating a historical loss; disbelieving in its existence means affirming a structural lack.

We need to continue collecting books, all the while avoiding another, third, option: the so-called postmodern or pragmatic one, according to which we know we will never collect enough to bridge the gap, but we collect anyway to understand how a structural lack might even be constitutive of performance practice (if not the very condition of music itself, in its disappearing appearance).

However, collecting books does not necessarily lead to "better" performances, and so long as we keep believing that early music exists, as I claim, it never will. Perhaps it will suffice here to recall Adorno, the critical theorist who once tried to defend Bach against his devotees and aptly described the early music aficionado as a "resentment listener" (Adorno 1976, see 8–12, quotation on 10), claiming that a successful performance necessarily goes to the limit of subjectivity and is at the same time capable of articulating the contradictions of and in a score (Adorno 1967, 133–46).

This notion of subjectivity is somehow a problematic one in the world of early music performance, and it is another important trigger for anxiety. Let us recall one of the legends of early music's genesis: namely, that it was a reaction against a "Romantic" attitude to music. Such an attitude was understood as a purely subjective and, at the same time, a common-sense approach, disregarding the supposedly objective, historical truth of a specific musical repertoire from the past. Instead of regarding the critical potential of early music as subjective par excellence, in the sense that it offers a rupture with given, unquestioned traditions of performance practice, early music as a supposedly new, critical attitude substantialises the past and imagines a sort of historical Other, guaranteeing a "performance by the book." Is there a way to create an alternative horizon for early music through this notion of subjectivity, constituted in and through art practice—a negation that traces a rupture inside the historical artwork, splitting it, articulating contradiction through performance, producing the historical work as a work of art together with artistic subjectivity?

If accumulating books is not a guarantee of more interesting performances per se, maybe other, alternative ways of collecting them might help us imagine new relations between collecting and performance. When, for example, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jewish German art historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929) tried to transform art history into a full-blown "cultural science" (*Kulturwissenschaft*), not limiting historicism to the context of an art-

20 "The (big) Other does not exist" is a statement generally ascribed to Jacques Lacan and further elaborated by Miller (1988).

work but also integrating that which exceeds origin, intention, and context (which Warburg called the conditional *Nachleben* of images and artworks; see below), he was intuitively anticipating the stance of Proust (and Adorno) that art has first to die in its original context before it can acquire a new "afterlife": a transformation concretised in the construction of his own legendary library.[21] It is not surprising that the Warburg Library (Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg)—first a private collection, later a semi-private and para-academic one, and finally a purely academic library—is today receiving renewed attention due to its eccentric cataloguing system, which stimulates ambiguous and contradictory intellectual endeavours.

Why recall an art-historical library, when our interest here is the relationship between books and the performance of Western art music? For one thing, as the musicologist Laurenz Lütteken once bemoaned, the contemporary study of music history lacks a charismatic persona like Warburg—a complex, ambiguous father figure for art history and iconology, as much admired as reviled (Lütteken 2002). Besides, is it really unthinkable to transpose some of Warburg's ideas onto the realm of music history and early music performance?[22] Are not the ideas in his conceptual toolbox—which include *Pathosformel* (see below), the aforementioned *Nachleben*, resembling the Freudian concept of *Nachträglichkeit* or "afterwardness," *bewegtes Beiwerk* (accessories in motion), *Zwischenraum* (interspace), and *Wanderstrassen* (pathways of culture)—even more relevant for a time-based, conditionally performative art such as music than for the static world of imagery?[23] We should not forget that, in developing his semi-conceptual apparatus, Warburg considered music an integral part of his new *Kulturwissenschaft*. Perhaps it is telling that historical musicology today (followed by mainstream early music performance, willing to act as its servant by illustrating musicology's historicist claims) remains faithful to a limited and dead idea of historicism but is simultaneously unwilling to pursue this to its end, which would mean exploring its fundamental displacements, migrations, losses of origin, unconscious intentions, absences, and gaps—in short, its own horizon of virtuality and negativity. My intentions, however, are more modest: they are limited to considering Warburg's library as a particular way of collecting and organising books and, in the process, also sketching the contours of a potential new horizon for performance practice.

Gute Nachbarschaft

Upon his death in 1929, Warburg left behind both the library and another unfinished project, the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*; the former was relocated from Germany to London in 1933 in a bid to rescue it from the rise of Nazism. In a memoir added to Ernst Gombrich's authoritative Warburg biography, focusing

21 The best explanation of Warburg's concept of *Kulturwissenschaft* can be read in an essay by his collaborator Edgar Wind (1983); for Proust's idea of art's fundamental displacement, see Adorno (1967, 175–85).

22 Rare essays attempting to apply Warburg's concepts to music include Tomlinson (2004), Weigel (2006), and Assmann (2006).

23 For the conceptual relation between Aby Warburg and Sigmund Freud, see Didi-Huberman (2017).

specifically on the history of the library, Fritz Saxl, Warburg's assistant—who also organised the collection's transfer to London—explains how the idea of a private library came about (Gombrich and Saxl 1970). The trigger for Warburg was his confrontation, as a student, with two masterpieces by Botticelli: the *Birth of Venus* and *Primavera* (both in the Uffizi in Florence). The sheer enigma posed by these artworks made Warburg uneasy about applying a formal analysis to them, while the idea of a purely historical, contextual description seemed equally unsatisfactory. Instead, he deemed it critical to embark on an analytic endeavour of another kind: a hybrid collection of books and studies that would transgress both formalist art analysis and historicist contextual interpretation. For Warburg, this turn to interdisciplinarity, so often praised today, had nothing to do with a kind of actor–network theory *avant la lettre*, nor with culturalist-historicist pragmatics; rather, it was caused by his discomforting confrontation with the impossible closure of an artwork. How could a work of art be studied without domesticating its ambiguous, anxiety-laden lure, and through a negotiation with—rather than disavowal of—the conditional void in the artwork?[24] As Saxl writes,

> Warburg, in his burning desire to unriddle the mystery of the pictures, went from one of these seminar libraries to another, pursuing his clues from art to religion, from religion to literature, from literature to philosophy. To give the student a library uniting the various branches of the history of human civilization where he could wander from shelf to shelf was his resolve. The Government would, in his opinion, never be willing to create such an instrument. The initiative must come from the private sector and he persuaded his family to accept financial responsibility for this novel and costly enterprise. (Gombrich and Saxl 1970, 326)

What Warburg had in mind was no "ordinary" interdisciplinary collection, no mere accumulation of the "right" books. Instead of adopting a conventional organisation for his library, Warburg wanted any encounter with the collection's books to convey the very alienation embodied in his own reaction to Botticelli's masterworks (figure 2.1).

It is this alienating encounter that enables the subject to emerge (and subjectifies the artwork as much as the onlooker); without it, the encounter would either regress into a purely historicist or culturalist description or disappear in favour of a functional or mechanical relation. Warburg explores the alienating encounter via two major concepts: *Nachleben* (afterlife, survival, or afterwardsness) and *Pathosformel* (pathos formula). *Nachleben* points to the intrinsic displacement of artworks, to their fundamental anachronism and alienation, to a meaning that exceeds the time of their origin and their shift to the future, instead representing a rupture with the symbolic order from which they emerge. *Pathosformel* points to what is intrinsically alien in the artwork—to the thing that does not seem to belong, that comes from another place but is nevertheless integrated into the whole of the artwork, making it impossible to close

24 This question already seems to be the main subject of Warburg's aphorism "Du lebst und thust mir nichts" (You live but do me nothing), written at the beginning of his unpublished manuscript "Foundational Fragments for a Monistic Psychology of Art" (1888–1903) (Warburg 2015, 5).

Figure 2.1.

the artwork as a self-contained entity. Tracing, capturing, and categorising these pathos formulae was an essential task for Warburg.[25]

The principle by which his library "regulated" the primordial anxiety arising from the artwork's alien element—its impulse and *conditio sine qua non*—Warburg called *das Gesetz der guten Nachbarschaft* (the law of the good neighbour). *Gute Nachbarschaft* should be understood as another expression of Warburg's ironic dialectics, declaring the unavoidable necessity of anxiety caused by the alien thing, inside but out of place, and "good" merely because of its conditional and productive status. Such an expression is similar to Warburg's motto "the good God is in the detail," an ironic deviation of the much more famous "the devil is in the detail," and of his other epigram "You live but do me nothing."[26]

In Saxl's memoir we read the following description of Warburg's disquieting shuffling and reshuffling of books:

> The arrangement of the books was equally baffling and [a visitor] may have found it most peculiar, perhaps, that Warburg never tired of shifting and re-shifting them. Every progress in his system of thought, every new idea about the inter-relation of facts made him re-group the corresponding books. The library changed with every change in his research method and with every variation in his interests. Small as the collection was, it was intensely alive, and Warburg never ceased shaping it so that it might best express his ideas about the history of man. (Gombrich and Saxl 1970, 327)

25 The best-known and most developed pathos formula in Warburg's research is without doubt the figure of the *ninfa*, which he encountered for the first time through Ghirlandaio's frescoes in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (see Warburg and Jolles 2010).

26 Gombrich claims that Warburg used the latter line as a motto during his first seminar in Hamburg, in 1925–26 (Gombrich and Saxl 1970, 14).

Figure 2.1. The reading room of the Warburg Library at its original location in Hamburg, 1926. Photograph by Carl Dransfeld and Adolf Dransfeld. Courtesy of the Warburg Institute. Reproduced in colour as plate 2, p. 106.

In the next paragraphs Saxl mentions the law of the good neighbour:

> Most libraries, even those which allowed the student open access (as for instance Cambridge University Library), had to make concessions to the machine age which increased book production from day to day and to give up grouping the books in a strictly systematic order. The book-title in the file catalogue replaced in most cases that other and much more scholarly familiarity which is gained by browsing.
>
> Warburg recognized this danger. He spoke of the "law of the good neighbour." The book of which one knew was in most cases not the book which one needed. The unknown neighbour on the shelf contained the vital information, although from its title one might not have guessed this. (327)

The law of the good neighbour was, therefore, a way of ordering that avoided domesticating the reader's fundamental encounter with what comes from the outside; a law infecting the book collection with an intrusive stain—directing readers away from what they were focused on or heading towards, in favour of what lay contiguous to it. This is the opposite of a nice, creatively interdisciplinary juxtaposition of books, dedicated to unravelling the marvels of art. What Warburg stages here—a dialectical dramaturgy indeed—is the appearance of the divided or split subjectivity in all art research: something that is inside, yet seemingly comes from the outside, attracting the reader in all its alienating ambiguity, forcing them to change the path and topic of their investigation. As if warning users of his library's detours, one can imagine Warburg offering the following caveat: *Beware, next to the book you need and want to read, which you thought indispensable for a balanced and harmonious study, is another book, what I like to call (in all irony) "the good neighbour," which will destroy forever the trust and security you had when finding your answers in the book of your first choice . . .*[27]

As Saxl points out, the Warburg Library was profoundly linked to its eponymous founder because of his own personal choices—a situation that complicated its continued existence when Warburg was forced to step away from it in 1920, after falling gravely ill:

> What the Library was, it had become through Warburg's genius, every book had been selected by him, the systematic arrangement was his, his the contacts with a wide circle of scholars. The problem was to develop the heritage of an absent master and friend and to develop it without his guidance into something new. (330)

I would argue that Warburg's choices were connected less to what he seemed to need than to his own anxiety when confronted with the fundamental dislocation of artworks. As these choices played out inside the library, they very soon became a real impediment to its further academisation, as Saxl explains

27 My interpretation of Warburg's good neighbour is profoundly inspired by Freud's analysis (1966) of the *Nebenmensch* (neighbour), revealing what he called *das Ding*: the unknown, excessive, uncanny element in the neighbour, situated next to what the subject seems to recognise or can identify with. For a recent, important analysis of Freud's concept of the neighbour and its relevance for psychoanalysis and culture, see Žižek, Santner, and Reinhard (2005).

(his own position being that the only way to make the library suitable for academic use was to disavow its anxious foundations):

> In every corner of the Library there were small groups of books indicating a special trend of thought—it was just this extreme wealth of ideas which on the one hand made it the delight of the scholar but on the other hand made it difficult for him to find his way about. When Professor E. Cassirer first came to see the Library he decided either to flee from it (which he did for some time) or to remain there a prisoner for years (which for a certain period he enjoyed doing in later years). Warburg's new acquisitions had, of course, always an inner coherence, but there were many tentative and personal excrescences which might be undesirable in an institution destined for a wider public. (331)

A fundamental question here seems to be whether the subjectivity embodied by the collection is Warburg's own, in all its idiosyncrasy, or whether his intuition gives way to a more universal embrace of subjectivity as an unavoidable principle in art research. Saxl clearly affirms the former in order to repudiate the latter, writing that "the first and most urgent task in stabilizing the Library seemed . . . to 'normalise' Warburg's system as it was in 1920 by enlarging it here, cutting it down there" (331). He continues:

> The second point was to normalize the contents of the Library. No single person's learning and interests, not even Warburg's, are as wide as those of a group of anonymous users of a collection, and their wishes are certainly legitimate. In 1920 the Library possessed perhaps about 20,000 volumes; certain parts were almost fully developed, others just begun. Thanks to the fact that the funds came partly from members of the family living in the U.S.A., and that there was inflation in Germany, we were in a position to continue buying books and to take care that gaps should be filled. (331)

Saxl's ideas about normalisation and stabilisation are neatly expressed in the acquisition of ever more books to "fill the gaps" in the collection, as he saw it. However, would it not have been better to follow Warburg's logic and consider these gaps not as lacunae—holes that needed to be filled—but rather as key to a necessarily non-accumulative library, in which the gap constituted the condition of the emergence of subjectivity in the research process—a logic annihilated by Saxl's wish to produce a functional library for "anonymous users"?

As against an institutional library, such gaps, resulting from Warburg's dialectical association of books, guarantee its openness or incompleteness. No surprise, then, that Warburg, having finally recovered from a serious psychotic breakdown and a nearly four-year-long stay in an asylum, during which time his assistants and pupils normalised his library, would immediately engage in his notorious, unfinished *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (Warburg 2020). The latter project, exploring the dynamic dialectic of images, was clearly a continuation of the library system's logic, though now transposed to the images themselves; here, the difference between a dialectical collection of books/images *à la Warburg* and postmodern digital-image collections with an accumulative logic of juxtaposition—such as Google Images—becomes apparent.

Through his own adaptation of the Warburg Library, Saxl gave the collection's very openness a postmodern twist *avant la lettre*, openness being no longer considered radical or fundamental but rather pragmatic—a reflection of the ultimate impossibility, on a human or physical level, to collect all the books needed to acquire full understanding or knowledge. In this view, books are neutrally juxtaposed, in that all are equally important; to slowly get to the truth, it is just a matter of collecting long enough. As Saxl seems to suggest, the more we collect, the more we gain; the more we inform ourselves, the more we accumulate knowledge, our picture of the past gaining in veracity and the context or background of the artworks giving us access to the artworks themselves. Clearly such an accumulative logic is completely at odds with Warburg's own approach.

Non finito

Saxl's historicist stance treats the past as potentially knowable. Owing to our distance from historical artworks, the destruction of sources through time, and our limited archaeological and archival tools—vis-à-vis period access and knowledge—our historical perspective is restricted and should be compensated by the maximal accumulation of historical information. But this position does not account for the fact that, even for a "period" eye or ear (to use the terminology of Baxandall [1972]), historical artworks cannot be accessed and understood per se. The past is only partially knowable not because we are distanced from it but precisely because it can be known only through that distance.[28] What the historicist cannot conceive or accept are the constitutive gaps and lacunae in the past itself—in its materiality and in period perceptions or symbolic cultures. When taken to its limit, a truly historicist position would include the negativity that itself forms the virtual horizon of every past period.

One of the most problematic aspects of historicism is its anti-dialectical presupposition of the past, of a pre-modernity defined by habit, affirmation, and positive self-identity.[29] Warburg, by contrast, considered artworks as privileged objects of the past through which negativity was played out and articulated. This intuition or conceptualisation saw negativity not as a crucial feature of modern art alone but equally of art that is commonly called "premodern." One might say that various historical periods have organised and anchored their stance towards this negativity in different ways. Following this idea, one might also invert Bruno Latour's famous dictum "We have never been modern" (1993) and argue that, in the new light such a position casts on historical artworks, we have always been modern.[30]

28 Warburg's whole endeavour could probably be read as a cultural history of distance and its importance for art history and civilisation in general (see Lütticken 2005; Rabaté 2016).

29 See Benjamin (2003); for a recent relevant critique of historicism, see McGowan (2017).

30 Also, as Rousselle (2018) writes in his essay on Baudelaire: "Charles Baudelaire believed that modernity was a moment of profound subjective emergence, and not, as it were, a unique and definite period of time to be catalogued within art history: 'Il y a eu une modernité pour chaque peintre ancien; la plupart des beaux portraits qui nous restent des temps antérieurs sont revêtus des costumes de leur époque.' In other words, he believed that there was a modernity for every period and for every artist, which amounts

A concrete way of exploring this negativity might be through the resonance between Warburg's approach and the Renaissance aesthetics of the *non finito*, according to which a visual artwork is basically constituted by and engaged with a fundamental incompleteness and openness (see also Niels Berentsen's chapter). Or, to put it more simply: what completes the artwork is its very incompleteness. As Freud (and many others) has shown, there is a clear link between Leonardo da Vinci's near-pathological procrastination and the later formalisation of such procrastination in the aesthetic category of the *non finito* or unfinished (as finished) artwork. As a writer and researcher, Warburg himself seemed to be affected by such procrastination.[31] Indeed, there is something so fundamentally unfinished, so lacking or "leaking" in artworks of the past, apart from their continuously shifting meaning, that it is impossible for one's own approach towards images and historical artworks not to be contaminated by a sense of the non finito. Transposed to musical performance, what completes the music in the score is the conditional incompleteness of its performance. By this logic, a performer is focused on realising or affirming this incompleteness (without, of course, actually ruining the artwork) to complete the artwork, rather than focusing on performative perfection as a phantasmic double of the virtual perfection of the musical work as simply a score.

But is a non finito approach only possible for visual artworks and images, or might it also be extended to musical works and their performance? As I suggested, there is something yet more radically unfinished in musical works than in visual ones: indeed, that this unfinishedness provides the very condition for performing (and thus finishing) the former. Moreover, music has its own specific difficulties, and the staging, performance, and experience of musical works go hand in hand with a complex and intriguing complicity, with the modern performer not just serving as a medium of the musical work but essentially becoming a complicit part of it.

The basic anxiety provoked by the floating, alienating, anachronistic character of images—their afterlife and inner pathos formulae, to return to Warburg—is not the whole story as far as music is concerned. There is a further complication: namely, the impossibility for any performer to be unbiased and subjectively removed from the presentation or perception of the musical work. The paradox of this bias is that the more one tries to reduce or minimise personal involvement, the more it infects proceedings. A common cliché asserts that the performer is a mere medium or instrument of the composition or of the "intention" of the composer; in fact, as Adorno argues, genuine universality in musical interpretation is only guaranteed through a performance favouring the greatest subjectivity:

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to the following proposition: modernity is a name for the inauguration of a new form of art that breaks from the repetition of previous historical forms and lays the foundation for the elevation of the subject."

31 Heinrich Emden, the Warburg family doctor, alluded to Warburg's deadline anxiety or *Terminangst* (Binswanger and Warburg 2007, 261).

> The form of reaction to historicism denies historicism's own content—its objectivity is a mere mask for subjectivity, whereas true objectivity traverses that very subjectivity. Usually, to be sure, the present objectivism is merely a manifestation of regression, the musical reflex of an anthropology that liquidates the subject because—and by the fact that—there is *no* society. Therefore, historico-philosophically, the aspect of resentment in objectivism. It reflects the untruth of the collective. The schema of the youth movement. (Adorno 2006, 50)

As previously explained, practitioners of early music, stricken with anxiety at the idea of the performer's biased engagement, instead minimise, circumvent, or bluntly disavow the artist/performer's crucial role.

How should we engage with this contradiction? If traditional historicism, as previously stated, does not go far enough, could a radical historicism help us here—one that recognises both historically split or divided performers and an equally contradictory musical art that is transmitted and negotiated through equally divided and dialectical libraries? Instead of developing this idea theoretically, I shall try to explain it with three examples: Leonardo da Vinci's musical anxiety and the Renaissance *paragone* between the arts; the *parergon* (Warburg's *Beiwerk*) and how it relates to the *ergon* (work), specifically in how we might think differently about ornamentation; and how a theological concept (*kenosis*) expressed in emblematic images such as the mystical winepress might abet a peculiar historicism concerning subjectivity in music performance, leading to a "squeezing out" of the score.

To turn to the first point: in his notes—laying the ground for the so-called *paragone* or investigation of "good neighbourliness" between the arts—Leonardo explores the similarities and differences between painting and music. Both create images, visible or invisible, and showcase a simultaneity (Leonardo cites polyphonic music with its multiple voices); but in the end, he argues, it is painting that has an enduring and permanent status, while music, as he famously states, dies while being born.[32] Leonardo thus bolsters the idea that music, in its intrinsic instability and afterlife, is physically very close to Warburg's idea of the work of art. A counterargument might be that Leonardo understands music's instability as a fundamental failure, to be contrasted with both the permanence and endurance of painting; yet perhaps things are not so clear-cut when it comes to practice. If one thinks of Leonardo's own artistic production and the anxiety accompanying it, of the fact that, as an emblematic procrastinator, he left so many works half-finished, it seems to point to a much more dialectic engagement between the finished and the unfinished. One is almost tempted to conclude that his (disavowed) aesthetic ideal followed that of Walter Pater, who wrote that "all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" (1877, 528).

32 Leonardo here alludes to the physical observation that music is necessarily a continuous repetition, its material continuously emerging and fading away so that, dying out in the same instant it is produced, music must continuously produce to go on (see Farago 1992).

Leonardo's approach finds an unexpected ally in the performance of early music repertoires. According to the prevailing traumatic logic, musical works of the past are somehow lost, and we can never encounter them as they sounded—only in a kind of surrogate or ruined form. But this argument does not account for the structural, physical loss of music itself, the fact that its repetitive character is the condition of its existence: loss is part of music itself, and music the performance of loss. This aspect of loss functions as a sort of "arche-pathos formula," structuring music as such and giving rise to all kinds of more specific pathos formulae, some of which—such as ornamentation—can only be articulated in performance.

Historically informed performance does not accept the ahistorical performance of early music repertoires based on trans-generational handover (the Romantic tradition as we generally call it), habit, or simply subjective taste. There is an almost postmodern "death-of-the-composer" element at play here, together with the death or, better, inexistence of the (pre)modern artwork, presupposing that both composer and work only emerge as alienated subjects with the birth of modernity in the nineteenth century. The horizon of such presuppositions is a full historical identification with musical works and practices and with the symbolic cultures from which they emerge. But instead of engaging with this fundamental loss, historically informed performance disavows it, convinced that a partial or almost full return to the original is somehow possible. This fantasy warps a structural lack into a historical loss.

Secondly, ornamentation in visual art and music is generally seen as a superfluous, non-essential addition to an artwork. In this view, structure and ornament are radically separate and opposed to one another. Anxiety, moralisation, and normalisation have always accompanied the discourse around ornament, especially when the opposing terms essence and accident become blurred. But what if the problem is precisely this opposition itself? And what if ornamentation is just another name for the coming-into-being of the artwork itself? Imagine that there would be no artwork without its essential mediation through what is called ornamentation—the becoming plastic of an essence, the "becoming-into" a concrete form. What the common-sense view perceives as adding things to a prefabricated structure or substance is in fact the shaping and changing of the very material itself.

Ornamentation is not an addition, therefore, but a taking away, a sculpting, or hollowing out. Let me give two random examples, beginning with the Gothic pinnacle or tower. It is impossible to perceive such a construction as a Euclidean volume to which one adds ornaments to cover the basic structure. On the contrary, such structures witness, in ornamentation, a dematerialising process of hollowing out, of building gaps and holes—a becoming-void, so to speak. An interesting musical example can be found in a letter by the Renaissance musician Luigi Zenobi.[33] Zenobi argues that simple song or simple form (i.e., undivided by diminutions) has to include all kinds of micro-manipulations and

33 Zenobi's letter, alongside an English commentary and translation, can be found in Blackburn and Lowinsky (1993).

the bending of the tones themselves. *Gratia*, *trillo*, *tremolo*, *ondeggiamento*, and *esclamatione* are not even conceived as alternating ornamentation, but as part of the rendition of the material proper. Ornamentation is the externalisation (*Entäußerung*, as Martin Luther translated the theological notion of *kenosis*; see below) of the score, its concrete squeezing out in actual performance: the "subjectivation" of the musical material and the score itself.

To connect this principle with Leonardo's idea of music as a physically disappearing art: ornamentation is the articulation (emphasising, working out, bending, stretching, slowing down) of music's essentially fugitive character into a "plastic" art of disappearance. Ornamentation is always related to the fragile material of music itself, to its uncertain state, to its infinite ending or continuous decay. Perhaps ornaments are endless endings and ornamentation a direct recognition of the fact that music is innately loss. Early music apparently struggles to find an alternative to its fetishist denial of this loss through overly compensating performances or in the falsely modest or frustrated claim that no performance can ever actually realise the lost origin. In both cases, the library is viewed as an instrument to compensate for the lack of or gaps in performative musical knowledge. Here, too, the common-sense view is that accumulating greater knowledge might lead to better or more adequate performance practice, or at least give the illusion of this. However, in such an approach, one's personal involvement in reconstructing an image of the past has to be denied and the substantiality of the past has to be affirmed, as if this past were an undivided world to which books in the collection belong in an immediate and completely identifiable way.

Are there historical metaphors or allegories for such a view? In other words, have not historical music scholars just been incoherent historicists, ignoring such allegories of negativity? One of the earliest and most legendary images that springs to mind here is that of the mystical winepress (figure 2.2). This emblem appears from the early Middle Ages through to the late Baroque period; it represents Christ as a bloody man of sorrows, His body about to be squeezed in a winepress (often operated by small angels), with the aim of capturing its essence. This is the visualisation of what, in theology, is called *kenosis*: an emptying out as the essence of Christian Incarnation (God becoming man).[34] We would have to wait for twentieth-century art—say, Marcel Duchamp's *objets trouvés*—to understand the logic of this reversed sublime as substance becoming a piece of trash.

34 For a recent engagement with the concept of *kenosis*, see Dubilet (2018).

Figure 2.2.

Conclusion

What might be the function of the library after the recognition that early music does not exist, at least not as an entity complete by itself, and after we have given up believing in what the historical Other is supposed to know? Historical sources, or any remnants whatsoever from the past, can never be labelled as mere additional parts belonging to a historically affirmative totality. We can never just apply them as though they were descriptive testimonies of something that has happened; to do so would be to completely deny their dialectical nature, as Warburg intuitively recognised. Historical books and sources are basically hieroglyphic, meaning that they are just as enigmatic for us as for the historical figures who produced and identified with them. Further, they are diagrammatic, meaning that they are neither prescriptive nor descriptive but rather catastrophic—to use Deleuze's definition of the diagram (2003, 102)—producing chaos and disruption; or, as Adorno's "late style" has it, articulating the cracks and breaks in an all too synthetic, harmonious historical discourse ([1993] 2002, 567). Finally, they are symptomatic, books being symptoms, or

Figure 2.2. Jesus in the mystical winepress, manuscript illumination, Cologne, 1450–1500. Courtesy of the Collectie Universiteitsbibliotheek Radboud Universiteit. Reproduced in colour as plate 3, p. 107.

good neighbours, that appear as events or intrusions into our common-sense notions concerning culture and history; at the same time their real meaning is always elusive, making them the counterpart of illustrative symbols.

Such a logic—of the library and of the historical knowledge it provides—should be transposed to historical performances themselves so that the latter do not just seek to offer us "knowledge of the past" but rather provide enjoyment. Just as knowledge is divided through the Warburg Library's forced segue from the book one was seeking to the book next to it, this enjoyment is not one of identification, but a type of contact with something that is utterly strange, hitherto unheard, and confrontational; in other words, it is the enjoyment of art proper, in this case not to be found in the new and now, but in what Benjamin called the oppressed past—the necessarily excluded—on whose behalf history could represent itself as a false universal (Benjamin 2003, 396). In this way, musical performance might be seen as the expression of a real dialectical image, not only exploding historical representation but also urging us to re-engage with the inseparably entwined actions of remembering and forgetting.

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Pluralising the Musical Text

Improvising on Canonic Repertoire

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This chapter grew out of a long-term autoethnographic study in which I learnt to improvise on various Baroque models over a period of six years (Ayerst 2021). During this time, I noticed significant qualitative changes in my musical knowledge and perspectives as I changed from an interpretive musician to an improvising one—changes that were particularly noticeable as I began to use canonic works as models to guide and inspire my own creativity. Initially even the idea of improvising on a work of Johann Sebastian Bach seemed impossible: How could I change the notes and still stay in touch with the original? Which notes should I change? How could I make creative decisions like Bach? What were the criteria for my choices? What worked well and what did not? Tackling these questions (which functioned as barriers to my engagement in improvising) pushed me to critically examine my habitual beliefs about musical practice, to more objectively understand the culture of classical music within which improvisation has typically been marginalised as the rare preserve of a few individuals, and to confront the seeming incompatibility of my own cognitive processing with the task. The answers I discovered are addressed throughout this chapter as I describe the development of an "improvisational knowledge" that is based on the perception and abstraction of musical features and underlying functions, used conceptually to guide one's improvisation within the confines of a particular historical style.

Understanding the *Werktreue* approach to the musical text

Clearly, through long training as an interpretive performer, I had acquired a knowledge of music that made even the idea of improvisation very difficult. I first encountered the expression *Werktreue* in Lydia Goehr's seminal *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (2007). In this work I seemed to read the story of my own thinking as a musician, particularly in the detailed historical analysis of the aesthetic and sociocultural changes affecting musical practice through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, changes that resulted in attitudes of reverence towards musical scores as perfected works

and in a division of labour between a composer/creator and a performer/interpreter:

> Thus, given aesthetic attitudes of the time, musical works as abstract constructs *required* adequate realization in performance if they were to prove themselves worthy of being called "works of fine art." Adequate realization depended upon there being interpreters of works devoted to the task of realizing works through the medium of performance. The ideal of *Werktreue* emerged to capture the new relation between work and performance as well as that between performer and composer. Performances and their performers were respectively subservient to works and their composers. (Goehr 2007, 231, italics original)

An important aspect of *Werktreue* reverence and subservience to the score was the belief that the score *itself* contained a transcendent spiritual message—"meaning-like qualities that survive substantially intact, over time, inherent in the relations between their notes" (Leech-Wilkinson 2012, paragraph 1.5). Thus, in a *Werktreue* doctrine, the role of the interpretive performer becomes that of communicating the encoded message through an exact replication of the notes of the score—the transmutation of "silent, symbolically coded prescriptions" into sounding matter, as the introduction to this volume puts it (8). Naturally this caused a huge problem for my improvising because, according to this belief, if I changed any of the notes by improvising a new version, the meaning of the music would be lost or corrupted in some way. Worse still was the sense of wrong-doing that accompanied my initial attempts—the idea that I was doing something embarrassing or perverse, outside what was accepted by my musical colleagues and friends.

The culture of *Werktreue* in classical music

Although I could situate my own musical outlook in the *Werktreue* approach described above, could I also describe other performers in the same way? Is it viable to talk of a typical "interpreter's attitude" or a universal "improviser's knowledge"? To do so would mean looking beyond the considerable variation at an individual level to the cultural practices that create shared perspectives, values, and beliefs—sociocultural knowledge that "allows us to meaningfully act, interact and communicate with other members of the same culture" (Dijk 2008, 222). This knowledge, obtained through immersion in a particular culture and social group, clearly results in ontological beliefs about what music *is*—that is, the text or score—and consequently what one "does" with it (the text or score) as a musician. Which is to say that much of what we learn about music is culturally situated: *what* we learn and *how* we learn it regulates and shapes our behaviour as a musician.[1] Nor, according to the anthropologist

1 Thus, Louis Althusser (1971, 132): "What do children learn at school? They go varying distances in their studies, but at any rate they learn to read, to write and to add. . . . Thus they learn 'know-how.' But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for."

Clifford Geertz, should we underestimate the role of cultural knowledge in shaping individual perceptions of the world:

> As our central nervous system—and most particularly its crowning curse and glory, the neocortex—grew up in great part in interaction with culture, it is incapable of directing our behaviour or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols. . . . To supply the additional information necessary to be able to act, we were forced, in turn, to rely more and more heavily on cultural sources—the accumulated fund of significant symbols. Such symbols are thus not mere expressions, instrumentalities, or correlates of our biological, psychological, and social existence; they are prerequisites of it. Without [people], no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no [people]. (Geertz 1973, 49)

Therefore, if we want to understand the construction of general attitudes towards improvisation among classical musicians—for example, attitudes of non-identification, suspicion, and marginalisation (Sarath 2015; Biasutti 2017); attitudes of prejudice, with the assumption that improvised music is of lower quality than composed music (Hill 2017); attitudes of fear, embarrassment, and anxiety when asked to improvise (Dolan 2005; Woosley 2012)—then we have to critically examine Western classical music as a set of cultural practices identifiable through a highly distinctive set of norms, values, and beliefs. As Rabinow suggests:

> We need to anthropologize the West: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been; emphasize those domains most taken for granted as universal (this includes epistemology and economics); make them seem as historically peculiar as possible; show how their claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world. (1986, 241)

Thus, for musicians like myself, born as it were into a pre-existing cultural milieu in which one struggles to find one's creative voice and the mental freedom to improvise, I think it necessary to distance oneself from the practice until the moment it appears distinct and idiosyncratic: as one way of making music among a multitude of possibilities presented by global cultures. At this moment one begins to notice how, in Western classical music, highly specialised mental models and representations of music are continuously recreated and reinforced, revealed particularly through the words people use to describe themselves as musicians and their attitude and approach towards music—the "discourse strategies that typically influence socially shared beliefs" (Dijk 2008, 223).

With space limited, one example will suffice. When the pianist András Schiff, in a 2013 interview with Jeff Spurgeon on WQXR, New York's classical music radio station, was asked about his experience in performing the music of J. S. Bach, he offered the following comments:

> We are now servants of great composers. Not at all unimportant, but we have to know our place. The composer is . . . it's all the composer. (Schiff and Spurgeon 2013, 42:02)
>
> You never play a note without this divine connection. If you don't feel that, you don't play. You cannot betray that. This is what I feel with Bach . . . with every note . . . when I play Bach I must get on his spiritual wavelength, and that is omnipresent. (43:06)

To begin with, Schiff's words seem quite innocuous: few would question that it is, after all, good to be responsible in one's work, to be humble in one's practice, or to respect another's work. Yet it is worth examining the unspoken implications: first, that modern musicians are, by default, interpreters, separate and distinct from a historical practice of creativity; second, that in this day and age, an interpreter is a lesser mortal, a servant of the composer. Why? Because composers possessed innate gifts and spiritual insights presumably denied to modern musicians—"we have to know our place." Following this is the emphasis on every note in the score—"you never play *a note* without this divine connection" (my italics)—a concept that is closely associated with integrity and responsibility—"if you don't feel that, you don't play. You cannot betray that." Thus Schiff asserts that the performer has a *sacred* obligation to honour the written score; and that, by adopting an attitude of extreme humility, even religious fervour, one seeks spiritual communion with the composer—"I must be on his spiritual wavelength." In this way the behaviour and attitude of the (ideal) performer is reinforced within extremely narrow limits by an authoritative source within the culture.[2] What if a different attitude were adopted? One, for example, in which the individual does not feel that every note is divinely ordained? Such an attitude would constitute a "betrayal," an act habitually associated with the basest human motives and one invoking the severest punishments. In this way Schiff (and others) reproduce a "noble struggle" marked by "guilt and insufficiency" (Botstein 2001, 591) between the contemporary performer and the historical text: composers and their music represent "other" beings, removed from normal everyday humanity by virtue of their gifts, a race of Gods and heroes to be approached only with excessive humility, caution, and a correct reverence.

Needless to say, such an attitude makes improvisation an impossibility. Nor, I believe, is it possible for improvisation to occur within the institutions and sociocultural circles founded on *Werktreue* beliefs. To improvise, one must first fundamentally challenge such views, by understanding them as modern constructions that are grounded in implicit ideologies.

2 Dijk refers to figures of authority and influence within a cultural practice as "the elites." As he writes, "the elites, defined in this way, are literally the group(s) in society who have 'most to say,' and thus also have preferential 'access to the minds' of the public at large. As the ideological leaders of society, they establish common values, aims, and concerns; they formulate common sense as well as the consensus, both as individuals and as leaders of the dominant institutions of society" (2008, 106–7).

In the following section, I describe a different approach: one in which a historical figure such as J. S. Bach, however "gigantic" the cultural status and musical achievements, is recreated as a more human, "everyday" figure. This reconstruction, which bypasses the aesthetics of intervening eras, seeks to restore Baroque practices of modelling and copying from others' works, treating the composition as an exemplar for one's own music. But it also draws on a different philosophical approach from that of *Werktreue*: one that places the contemporary practising musician (be it performer, composer, musicologist, etc.) at the centre, as a creative agent able to take possession of the music as a language to manipulate at will. This is a far step from "knowing one's place"; yet it is also, I would propose, far from the arrogant or presumptive position in which one places oneself on an equal footing with historical figures of genius. Perhaps it is a change of emphasis better explained through the ideas of the social philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who was anxious to portray individuals engaged in everyday creative acts, fully accepting themselves as positioned at a unique moment in time, rather than acting through the timeless abstraction of roles—genius, performer, improviser, and so on. As Courtney Bender reflects: "Bakhtin finds both aesthetic and theoretical thinking problematic precisely because they abstract what they imagine to be 'important' from actual events located within real time and space" (1998, 187). In this way the emphasis of musical creativity is shifted from theoretical abstractions, such as the imaginary legacy of great composers and their canonic works, to a more everyday dialogue between individuals and their contemporary social situations. The improvised music comes from within the individual—in this case, the improviser—constructed through participation with real (or imaginary) listeners in lived time. Thus, as an improviser, one learns to overcome the sense of moral fallibility raised through *Werktreue*'s enthralment to history by focusing more on the reality of the moment:

> *this* sky and *this* earth and *these* trees . . . and the time; and what is also given to him simultaneously is the value, the actually and concretely affirmed value of these persons and these objects. . . . and he understands the ought of his performed act, that is, *not* the abstract law of his act, but the actual, concrete ought conditioned by his unique place in the given context of the ongoing event. (Bakhtin 1993, 30)

In this way, through constructing our music in the moment-to-moment act of creatively improvising I believe it *is* possible to reconstruct an approach that is historically *situated*, rather than historically *dominated*, and thereby to glimpse something of the original composer's perspective of the task.

Describing an improviser's knowledge and mental representation of musical elements

When I first started learning to improvise, my friend the composer and improviser Wolfgang Mitterer advised me simply to "not turn the page"; and it is true that taking a sonata and not turning the first page forces one to confront

exactly the limits of one's knowledge about a particular composer. However, at the same time, Mitterer's advice is too radical to be of practical use, for, by not turning the page, one confronts all aspects of musical creativity and construction in one go! Discussions of improvisation treatises from the eighteenth century (Berkowitz 2010; Callahan 2010; Sanguinetti 2007)—an era of widespread improvisational practice—demonstrate that a great deal of stepwise, preparatory work in the form of patterns, formulae, and rules were inculcated in the novice improviser before whole forms were attempted. It is these formulae and patterns that underlie the improviser's skill and give a clue to the cognitive processes involved. Because each pattern serves as an abstract, skeletal structure that can be realised in many different ways (for example in different keys, with more or fewer embellishments, diminutions, etc.), it is possible to understand the improviser's knowledge as essentially *conceptual* in nature—that is, as a mental structure that, while clearly represented and defined within the improviser's imagination, is not specific to a particular arrangement of notes but instead can be realised in an infinite number of different ways. An example of this might be a cadence, but mental structures can also be applied to concepts such as chord sequences, "opening moves" of a particular genre or form, or even the idea of musical "form" itself. Thus, practising the acts and exercises of improvisation (especially repetition, transposition, and elaboration of basic formulae and patterns within a particular style) results not only in physical skills but also in a specialised kind of knowledge—a way of perceiving and interpreting musical structure—which is suitable for improvisation because it is fundamentally conceptual in quality.[3]

Acquiring an improviser's knowledge and using *Sei gegrüsset Jesu Gütig* as a model for improvisation

My own acquisition of basic conceptual formulae and patterns was acquired as I tried to improvise (in a rather generic way) Baroque-style preludes. Over the course of a year, I pieced together four-part textures in diatonic tonalities, avoiding parallel motions in fifths and octaves, gradually gaining fluency in performing chains of sequences, opening phrases, and cadences. A considerable breakthrough was achieved through the discovery of Johann Joseph Fux's rules of motion and categorisation of consonance-dissonance in the introduction to his 1725 *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Fux 1965, 20–22; figure 3.1).

3 The neurobiologist Gerald Edelman writes: "in forming concepts, the brain constructs maps of its *own* activities, not just of external stimuli, as in perception" (1992, 109). Edelman's descriptions of the conceptual nature of perception arising *through* action within an environment are fundamental to his writings. I found his insights into human cognition and learning to be inspirational, and especially applicable to the knowledge arising through my increasingly competent and directed actions within a musical "environment" created through improvisation.

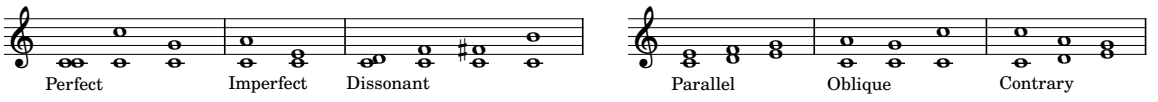

Figure 3.1.

Fux categorised the intervals as "perfect" (unison, octave, and fifth), "imperfect" (sixth and third), and "dissonant" (second, fourth, tritone, and seventh), explaining their use in musical textures with respect to three different kinds of motion: parallel, oblique, and contrary. Perfect intervals, for example, cannot appear successively in parallel and must be approached obliquely or through contrary motion. Thirds and sixths, however, can appear in parallel motion, and it is a characteristic of the Baroque style to have passagework in parallel sixths and thirds. These rules facilitated the speedy categorisation of intervals and so reduced the amount of time spent in calculating forwards. They also reduced retrospective assessment (i.e., was that a good or bad move?) as I now felt guided by clear rules towards what was effective, permitted, and expressive. Having acquired these basic conceptual formulae and patterns and assimilated them as skills, I was able to focus on the more specific conceptual language and features of specific models such as the chorale partita.

So far, my analyses have been quite theoretical: I have described a cognitive model of improvisation—in which the basic patterns and elements of musical structure come to be conceptually represented—in comparison with that used by the trained interpreter of scores who represents one version of musical events more literally. I now discuss how improvisers come to manipulate the communicative functions and events of music as a language as constructed in the moment. Progressing beyond the construction of basic patterns and formulae towards concert performance, specific genres, and complete musical forms, improvisers now "enter upon the stream of verbal communication; indeed, only in this stream does their consciousness first begin to operate" (Vološinov 1973, 81). This new consciousness or knowledge is also shaped by behavioural and social influences on musical decision-making that occur within "the field," that is, the social contexts in which improvisation occurs. For example, it should be remembered that the act of improvising variations on a chorale theme commonly occurs within a church setting where the chorale is sung immediately following the organist's *Vorspiel*. This means the improvisation serves to introduce the melody to the listeners, who benefit from many repetitions of the theme appearing in different guises. As a result, the improviser is constrained to choose clarity over complexity, especially at the beginning and end of the form, for the social purpose of the partita is, as my teacher Jürgen Essl remarked to me during a lesson, "to encourage people to sing," that is, to teach them the melody and inspire them towards active participation once the improvisation is finished.

Figure 3.1. The classification of consonant and dissonant intervals and their permitted motions as proposed in Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

Additionally, it is known that, within the Protestant community since the eighteenth century, the practice of improvising on chorale melodies has been widespread among professional organists and continually specified as a requirement in auditions for church positions until this day.[4] Thus, it was quite natural for organists to be aware of and draw on a shared library of resources, techniques, "scripts"—that is, customs and ways of treating the theme that both informed and extended the common language of the partita as an improvised event. Likewise, listeners in the Protestant faith could be expected to be aware of the conventions of a chorale partita through regular church attendance and immersion in the music of their culture. We can therefore view the improvisation as an ongoing dialogue between organist and congregation, with musical decision-making being led not only by theory and form but also through an exchange of meaning with the listeners—that is, ascertaining which decisions listeners most value and respond to, which in turn motivates the improviser to attempt new tasks, avoid others, and to construct the music in step with the listeners' reactions. As Shotter and Billig (2008, 24) describe: "The kind of understanding indicated here is not of a cognitive, representational-referential kind, but is a practical, dialogical kind of understanding, a kind of understanding that is 'carried' in our ongoing languaged-activity, and is continually updated, utterance by utterance, as it unfolds."

Improvising the chorale partita

The theme chosen for this demonstration is given in figure 3.2.

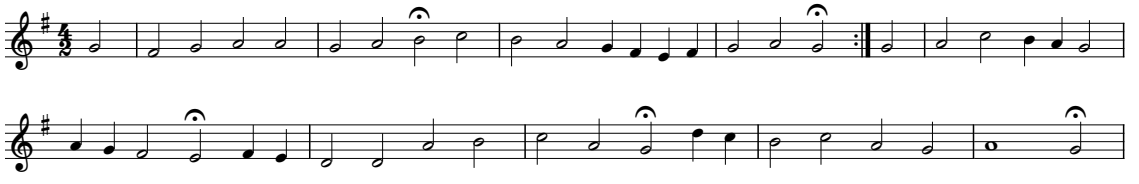

Figure 3.2.

The improvisation begins with an initial presentation of the theme. It is harmonised in a simple fashion (MF3.1),[5] leaving many possibilities of modulation and chromaticism to be explored later on. During the theme one establishes a

4 Johann Mattheson, in his *Grosse General-Bass-Schule*, describes one of the several requirements for improvisation when auditioning for a cathedral appointment at Hamburg in 1725: "To improvise no longer than six minutes on the chorale, *Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut*. The improvisation should specifically use two manuals with the pedal in a pure three-voice harmony, without doubling the bass, so that the feet do not know what the hands are doing, yet that each voice sounds optimal with the other voices" (Mattheson 1731, 34, as translated in Ruiter-Feenstra 2011, 3; Den Choral: *Herr Jesu Christ du höchstes Gut* u[nd] auf das beweglichste doch nicht über sechs Minuten lang zu tractieren: absonderlich einmahl auf zweien Clavieren mit dem Pedal in einer reinen dreistimmigen Harmonie ohne Verdoppelung des Basses so daß die Füsse nicht wissen was die Hände thun; noch diese mit jenen eine weiter als wolklingende Gemeinschafft haben).

5 Media files for this chapter can be accessed in the virtual companion to this book at https://sonus.orpheusinstituut.be/publication/publication/performing-by-the-book-musical-negotiations-between-text-and-act/pluralising-the-musical-text-improvising-on-canonic-repertoire.

Figure 3.2. Discant of the chorale *Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir.*

basic harmonic plan (involving memorised movements for voice-leading principles, cadences, etc.) that serves as a conceptual structure for the subsequent variations. This means not only that the harmonic plan can be realised in a multitude of different ways through the different diminutions, rhythms, and textures characterising each variation but also that certain elements of the plan can be altered (for example using a different cadence) without changing the essential mental representation.

This procedure can be seen immediately in the first variation, which presents the following distinctive features: a series of running sixteenth notes in the left hand (MF3.2); an embellished version of the chorale theme in the right hand (MF3.3); and imitative sequences forming episodes between each right-hand phrase (MF3.4).

Of course, the performance of these selected concepts in the context of the chorale prelude rests on the foundation of the generic, basic, voice-leading movements and principles described above. In this stylistic improvisation one's basic formulae and patterns (which realise these voice-leading movements almost without thinking) are drawn on automatically as a resource to be steered and shaped towards the distinctive features of the variation. As one gains in experience, the procedural knowledge used can be continually refined to bring one closer to the model. In effect, this process of refining multiplies the number of concepts used but also facilitates their selection, as is noted in skill-learning literature: Anderson (1982), for example, describes a hierarchical organisation of routines and subroutines all serving a common goal state and also explains how new solutions grow in "specificity and strength" (373) by making them more readily available in the moment of performance. To return to our example of the first variation, particular ways of embellishing the theme or of executing the left-hand sixteenths to make a smooth transition between the right-hand phrases or to give a pleasing rise and fall to the phrase are discovered and rehearsed in multiple ways until a new mental representation emerges. With many conceptual resources at one's disposal, the improviser can respond to any suitable chorale theme with a variation of this character.

I have already mentioned that the opening harmonisation leaves many possibilities unexplored. My experience as an improviser suggests that these possibilities now unfold through variations that increase in complexity as both improviser and audience become more attuned to the theme and its harmonic possibilities. Certainly, in *Sei gegrüßet* all the subsequent variations gradually gain in complexity and chromaticism, beginning with several variations using only two or three parts, in which the theme generally appears in the upper voice before sounding in the bass (MF3.5), alto (MF3.6), and tenor (MF3.7) lines, and becoming increasingly adventuresome in the use of chromaticism and contrapuntal devices (MF3.8). After analysing, selecting, and abstracting features from many different chorale partitas, I would further propose that all the possibilities can be reduced to three rules or guidelines that will serve to construct a variation:

- *Texture* is restricted to two, three, or four parts (more voices than this represents an unusually rich texture—see, for example, the final variation of *Sei gegrüßet Jesu Gütig*), with the chorale theme appearing in any of these parts;
- *Metre* is in duple or triple time (note that 2 can also yield 4 and 8; 3 can yield 6 and 9);
- *Constructive devices* are those commonly used, including distinctive melodic and rhythmic motifs, characteristic organ registrations, contrapuntal imitation, and so on.

Conclusions

A thread that runs throughout this volume is how to overcome the tyranny of the historical "text" in classical music by instead creating new relationships, new ways of perceiving canonic works. Improvisation emerges as one of several methods to establish a new musical practice, one in which historic texts, despite their undeniable stature and the achievements they represent, serve as models for an unlimited amount of new music. In discussing the practice of improvising new versions of a canonic work I have touched on several areas including musical analysis, cognition and mental representation, sociocultural context and knowledge (also sociocultural criticism), and music as a language constructed dialogically in the moment. Throughout I have compared the cognitive perspective of the interpretive performer with that of the improviser, and many of these insights arise from my own experience in both roles. Clearly, as a convert to improvisation, my preference is for the improviser's perspective, which, in the plurality of its conception, seems to me a more natural, creative, and truthful way of making music. But what do I mean by "truthful"?

Certainly, through improvising we recreate a truer historical practice, documented by sources such as treatises and eyewitness reports. As mentioned above, Baroque organists not only improvised chorale partitas but also notated versions of their improvisations, the latter serving as models for new improvisations and new scores; thus, plurality of text was intrinsic to a practice that seemed more preoccupied with day-to-day craftsmanship than encoding a "definitive" version.

There is also a more truthful musical knowledge to be created through improvisation: by inserting itself into the living language of the musical style, by trying to speak in this style, by manipulating and solving the problems and constraints of the language in a similar way to the original composer, the improviser recreates a similar cognitive experience. As Baily remarks: "the structure of the music comes to be apprehended operationally, in terms of what you *do*, and by implication, what you have to *know*" (2008, 122). This also means that, as an improviser, one can perform and interpret the original text with "inside" knowledge.

Lastly, I propose that the *Werktreue* belief that meaning—*a* meaning, *any* meaning—can be woven into the text as interpreted and/or communicated by the performer is fundamentally false, ideological in nature, and thus untruthful: "a pure dream," "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real

conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971, 160, 162). And I offer this proposition despite my admiration for the undeniable achievements of interpreters who focus so intensively on single texts. The improviser's attitude of plurality emphasises the potential of music as a shared and living language, manipulating its forms and expressions in order to create a unique dialogue with present conditions and contexts: acoustic surroundings, audience expectations, instrumental characteristics, and so on. It is this potential that recreates the text (even one from the classical canon) as a more relevant, everyday, moment-to-moment aesthetic experience. Whatever relationship exists between an improvised version and the score-as-model, the former is always in search of something new, as Bakhtin states: "an utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing and outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable" (1986, 119–20).

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À la recherche du chant perdu

The *airs sérieux* in the *Recueils d'airs sérieux et à boire de différents auteurs* (1695–99) as a Lens on Vocal Practices in the Seventeenth-Century Parisian Salon

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The present collection of essays deals with artists' negotiations between text and act, and addresses the way performative attitudes are shaped by textual sources.[1] In this chapter, I will use the *Recueils d'airs serieux et à boire de différents auteurs*,[2] published by the Ballard printing house in Paris at the end of the seventeenth century, as a lens through which to explore these questions. Deemed worthy of publication in a collection for which there was an appetite month after month for several decades, the *airs sérieux*[3] found in the *Recueils* constitute a neglected repertoire of which there is no sonic trace and that has not featured widely on professional recordings or in academic writings (Gordon-Seifert 2011; Goujon 2010; Goulet 2004). As examples of a genre to which some of the finest composers of the day turned their hand, the songs in the collection warrant detailed investigation.

The design and layout of the *Recueils* have not previously received academic attention. Taking inspiration from the physically impressive size and materiality of the Ton Koopman collection, I will therefore firstly examine the *Recueils* as physical, forensic objects. I will also describe the musical characteristics of the *airs sérieux* contained within the Ballard volumes from the years 1695 to 1699.

1 Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

2 The volumes published in the years 1695 to 1699 that are the subject of the present study will hereafter be referred to as *Recueil* or *Recueils* as context dictates.

3 *Airs sérieux* are brief, binary-form songs typically consisting of one or two verses dealing with love and its sufferings. Progeny of the *air de cour*, which evoked both noble and bacchanalian themes, the term *air sérieux* appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century. As the century progressed, music editors took increasing care to classify the works in their publications according to genre; references to *airs de cour* thus diminished and were gradually replaced by references to *airs sérieux*, *airs à boire* (lighter songs with drinking references), *chansonnettes*, and *airs à danser*, among others. All these genres appear in the *Recueils*.

In presenting the material aspects of the *Recueils* together with the musical features of these airs, I will seek to indicate the way in which the interpretative practices of those who performed from these books may have been shaped by their format and will aim to build up a picture of the vocal profile and technical abilities of those for whom the songs were destined.

I will then turn from the physical to the intangible, and from the "written" to elements of the "unwritten." Recent musicological work has attested to the fact that the airs in the *Recueils* were performed in a variety of fora, notably the worldly gatherings of cultured society that flourished in seventeenth-century Paris and that in modern scholarship have come to be known as the "salon" (Goulet 2004). Famously presided over by the Marquise de Rambouillet[4] in the *chambre bleue* between 1610 and 1650, but also continuing at least until the start of the new century, the activities at these convivial gatherings included games, songs, poetry recitation, sight-reading of the latest airs, the creation of text and music for new ones, and gallant conversation. The sung and the spoken word intermingled, with *airs sérieux* or extracts from them being performed as an ornament to conversation or to reinforce one's point of view within a conversation.

In the second part of this chapter, I will outline the social codes and values that governed polite interaction between members of the cultured classes at these events, pointing to ways in which the singing of an *air sérieux* from the *Recueils*, when performed strictly "by the book" and in accordance with these social strictures, may have transformed the printed words and music, creating a unique salon vocal practice.

Introduction to the *Recueils*: physical features and format

From 1695 to 1724, the Ballards created what was to become a vast collection of vocal works that would bear witness to patterns of musical taste in Paris, developing and thriving for nearly thirty years.[5] The *Recueils* represented a new approach for Ballard. In a departure from its long-running predecessor, the *Livre d'airs de différents autheurs*, the *Recueils* were a monthly rather than annual publication and an eclectic collection in which *airs sérieux* were printed alongside *airs à boire* and other categories of song.

Written in binary form for solo voice and continuo accompaniment, the air in figure 4.1a–b can be considered representative of the *airs sérieux* from the collection in many respects. Its eight lines of verse typify in their simplicity the lyric texts that recur throughout the *Recueils*. Although evoking a range of emotions such as love, betrayal, and loss, the expressive palette of this air, as with countless others, remains nevertheless restrained; the most vehement emotion (hatred) is explained away in an almost self-deprecating manner to be a

4 For an overview of the history and evolution of the salon, see Goulet (2004, 588–92).

5 "Ballard" refers to Christophe Ballard before 1715, Jean-Baptiste Christophe Ballard after 1715, or the publishing house in general, according to context. For more information on the life of Christophe Ballard and the Ballard publishing house, the reader is referred to Guillo (2022).

result of the narrator's emotional confusion and the text rapidly moves back to an avowal of love. As we shall see below, outbursts of excessive emotion were frowned upon in the polite, worldly exchanges of the salon, and uncomplicated texts such as this one were apt material for the musical moments that were an integral part of these settings, lending themselves to the simplicity, naturalness, and uncontrived delivery that were so prized.

Whereas the *Livre d'airs* had been presented in octavo (approximately 210 mm high and 148 mm across), Ballard adopted the larger (in-)quarto format (approximately 190 mm high and 242 mm across) for the monthly *Recueils*.[6] Although speaking of another publication in the Ballard collection, the publisher observes in the "Avis au lecteur" (Advice to the reader) in the *Airs sérieux et à boire de différents autheurs, pour les mois d'octobre, novembre et décembre 1694* (3) that the quarto format was produced "for the convenience of those playing the instruments" (pour la commodité de ceux qui joüent des Instruments). With user-friendliness at its heart, this format was evidently deemed successful by Ballard, as it was retained throughout the thirty-year lifespan of the *Recueils*.

In practical terms, beyond benefiting the accompanying instrumentalist, an oblong, quarto edition represents a significant "readability" advantage for all performers, providing a larger score with a longer line of musical material to read, with fewer system changes for the eye to negotiate, and with fewer page turns. The quarto format represents an increase in size from the smaller dimensions of the upright, octavo *Livre d'airs*. With the larger page size, the characters in the *Recueils* were also bigger and therefore easier to read. As has been previously noted, the quarto format also sits more easily on the music stand of a harpsichord (Goulet 2004, 41).

A review of various Ballard catalogues reveals that for some of the other vocal collections that were published concurrently with the quarto *Recueils*, Ballard persisted with the octavo format. The fact that the quarto format used for the *Recueils* was not adopted by the publishing house across the board for its vocal music reveals that printing size was evidently determined on a publication-by-publication basis and that, in the case of the *Recueils*, Ballard consciously chose a larger format that lent itself to practical usage.

In his article on text and image, Alain-Marie Bassy (1990, 148) comments that the format of a book is one of the most pertinent indicators of the way it functions; large folio and quarto formats were traditionally used for publications that became objects in themselves, aspiring to continuity and monumentality, with longevity in mind. The *Recueils* certainly achieved continuity and longevity: the publication spans thirty years, and the Ballard catalogues examined show the *Recueils* to have been offered for sale until at least 1731.

Bassy (1990, 148) also noted that publishers benefited from certain book sizes through economies in the cost of production; larger formats such as the quarto *Recueils* were more expensive to produce, while small formats were often favoured by publishers because of the reduced cost involved. The decision to produce the *Recueils* in a large and expensive format, replete with decorative,

6 These measurements were taken from the leather covers when bound in their annual format.

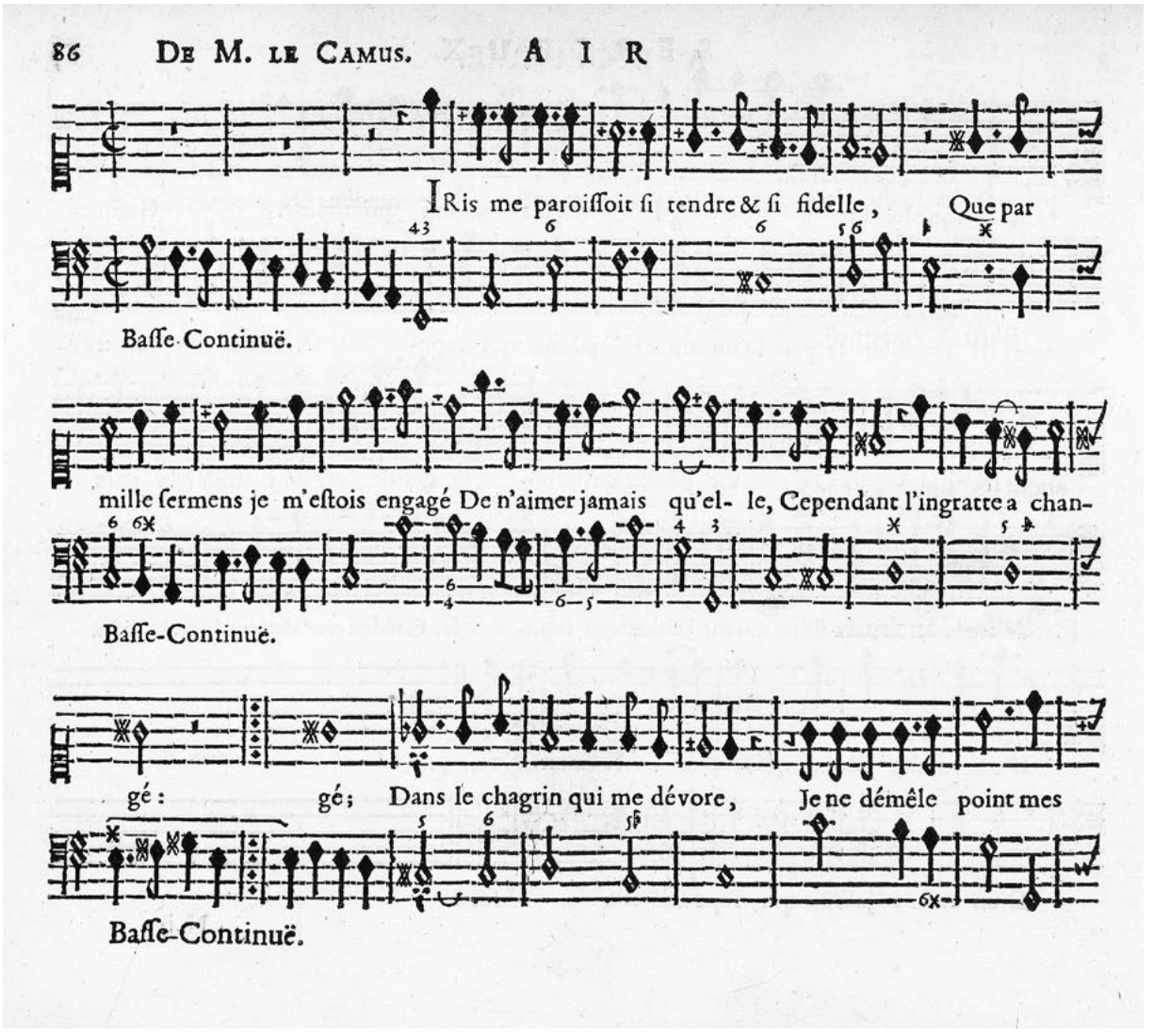
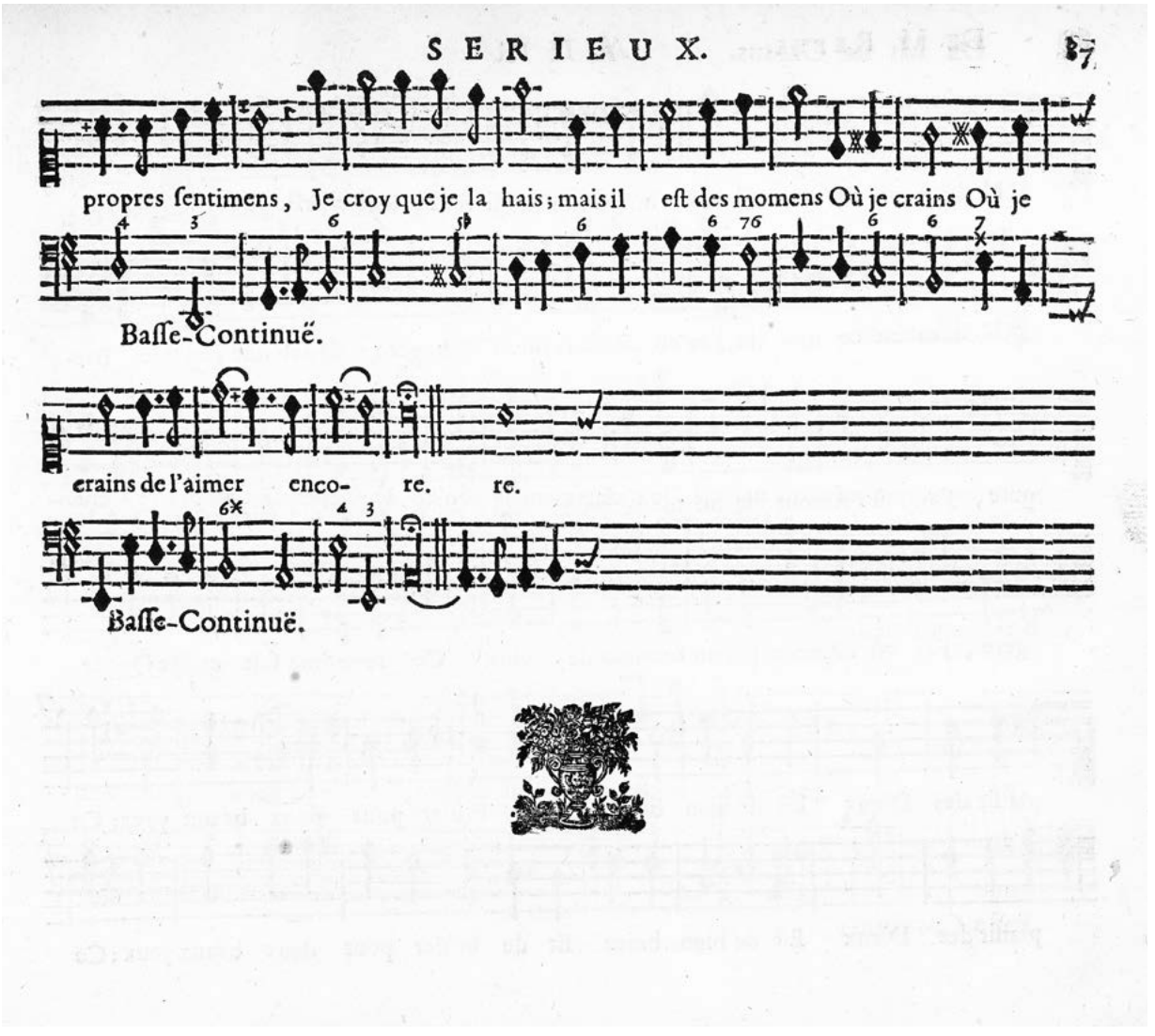


Figure 4.1a–b.

non-essential, printed adornments, must have satisfied a commercial logic, testifying to the popularity of and public appetite for this publication.

Although engraving was in use for reproducing music in France already in the 1660s, the *Recueils* that form the subject of this chapter are all printed in moveable type, using characters that were fiercely guarded by the publishing house (Guillo 2003, 1:208) as a practical means of enforcing its monopoly over the printing of music. Engravers had acquired great skill in reproducing ornaments, phrase marks, large numbers of fast notes, dots, and complex notation such as *doubles*, producing a sort of published manuscript (ibid., 1:3). Viewed alongside engraved music, with its growing competitive presence on the

Figure 4.1a–b. M. Le Camus's "Iris me paroissoit si tendre & si fidelle" in the *Recueil* of May 1695. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



French publishing landscape, the presentation of the music of the pages of the *Recueils* must have seemed somewhat outmoded even in its own time.

The airs of the *Recueils* are presented in score format, with the bass part printed immediately underneath the melody and, in the case of multi-voiced airs, with all vocal parts vertically aligned. Bar lines are present in all airs.[7] Ensemble members no longer had to assiduously count rests, as is inevitably required with part-book singing. Score format greatly facilitates the sight-reading of music, since it allows performers to follow the other parts to find their

7 Score format and bar lines had been introduced into the *Livre d'airs* in 1685.

entries. It also makes a piece ready to be performed sooner and with increased ease, consistent with the salon appetite for making music with others. Whether the introduction of score format meant that the *Recueils* definitively moved their ambit towards a musical "everyman" is not clear, but it is consistent with such a trend.

Each page of the *Recueils* can accommodate three two-line systems of music; where the placement of music on the page would otherwise leave a void at the end of an air, Ballard habitually fills this space with ornamental motifs of varying sizes such as the one seen at the bottom of figure 4.1b. Other examples of these motifs are floral arrangements with grotesque, lavish arrangements of fruits and flowers in urns supported by cherubs, baskets of flowers flanked by insects, diamond-shaped floral ornaments, and triangular vignettes (*culs-de-lampe*). Decorative elements are also present in airs printed with multiple verses; even where the existing spacing between each verse would have been sufficient to delineate one verse from another, Ballard often chooses to insert floral motifs.

The words of the song texts are generally printed under their corresponding notes, affording the singer a certain facility and ease when reading and performing. For longer words or passages in which space would not allow words to be placed under their corresponding notes, Ballard abbreviates the text, giving precedence to maintaining this facility for the singer. Verses subsequent to the first that are not set to *doubles* are generally printed in a block at the end of the first verse, immediately below the score, although, where space allows, the second verse is occasionally printed in the score itself, underneath the text of the first verse.

Spacing appears ample rather than compact, and Ballard's policy seemed to be one of generous enhancement, in which the aesthetics and readability of the composition take priority over economies of publication.

Musical characteristics

There are no explicit dedicatees to be found in the collection. However, Ballard implicitly refers to his target market on several occasions. For example, he announces that the *Recueils* will cater "to the public" (Au Public) in the foreword to the *Recueil* of January 1696 (3) and in the *Avertissement* to the *Recueil* of June 1698 (n.p.), to "lovers of music" (amateurs de la musique) in the foreword to the *Recueil* of January 1696 (3) and, a year earlier, to "everyone who loves music" (tous ceux qui aiment la Musique) in the foreword to the *Recueil* of January 1695 (3). In the absence of dedicatees, a study of the voice-types implied by the choice of clefs provides an approximate profile of the intended consumers and performers of the airs, indicating two attributes. First, there was a predilection for solo song accompanied by continuo: almost 88 per cent of the airs examined are for solo voice and continuo, representing a departure from the multi-voice songs dominating the *Livre d'airs*. Second, the overwhelming majority of the *airs sérieux* under consideration are for the female voice. Settings for solo *bas-dessus* (a lower soprano voice using the lower-line C clef) and continuo are

the most numerous in the collection, followed by settings for *dessus* (a slightly higher female range, indicated by the second-line G clef) and continuo. The female voice also features in the multi-voice airs, with a preponderance of duets set for *bas-dessus* and *basse-contre* (bass), followed by duets for *dessus* and *basse-contre*. Of the male voice-types, *haute-contre* (high tenor) and *basse-contre* are the most prevalent.

It is not clear whether the predominance of airs for female voice reflected an existing musical practice in which women were the predominant performers or whether Ballard, in potentially transposing the airs to suit gender and tessitura, helped create this practice. Although the clefs used in the *airs sérieux* in these songbooks suggest a prevalence of female singers, a reading of the poetic texts implies the contrary: the first-person poetic voice dominates the texts studied, but in the vast majority, the voice is explicitly or implicitly male. However, there is no doubt that women sang profane airs such as the *airs sérieux* that are the subject of this study. The disjuncture between text and music should be viewed against the backdrop of the prevailing salon values of *politesse* (politeness) and *bienséance* (decorum); casting women as men created a safe space for the expression of emotions that the requirements of modesty would otherwise have silenced (Pelous 1980, 14).

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, theoretical writings on ornamentation for instruments and voice flourished as theorists tried to codify *agréments* (embellishments). However, symbols and nomenclature differed from theorist to theorist and the notation of ornaments in the early years of the *Recueils* mirrors this diversity. Several airs have no ornaments marked, reflecting the practice of the first years of the *Livre d'airs*.[8] In some airs, ornamentation is solely indicated by the symbol +, denoting that an ornament should be performed over that note, with no further specification of the ornament intended. In other airs, *ports de voix* (portamentos), *coulades* (runs), and *appuys* (appoggiaturas) are written out in "longhand" note form.

Yet another approach appears in the *Recueil* of September 1695, where symbols are used to indicate the *appuy* (appoggiatura), *port de voix* (portamento), and *accent* (the slight raising of the pitch at the end of a long note). These symbols make their debut in an air by Pierre Berthet and are the subject of specific explanation in a small table of ornaments included by the composer on the final page of his treatise of 1695 (47). Berthet's symbols appear regularly in the collection thereafter.

This diversity of approach persisted throughout the early years of the *Recueils*. There are several possible reasons for Ballard's silence on the question of ornamentation. In his *Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter* (1668, 135), the celebrated vocal theorist and pedagogue Bénigne de Bacilly attributes a paucity of ornamentation markings in vocal music generally to typographical limitations and to the fact that too many markings can hinder and obscure the clarity of an

8 Goulet (2004, 111) notes that, in the *Livre d'airs*, no ornament markings are present until 1667, when the + indication appears.

air, causing confusion.[9] In airs printed with few embellishments, Ballard was possibly following Bacilly's advice on clarity, making the performance of the airs an attractive prospect for an amateur singer whose technique might not have allowed the execution of ornate passages. It is also conceivable that the time constraints associated with the process of selecting airs and publishing the collection monthly meant that Ballard was content to publish the airs in the state in which they were submitted to him, without further editorial work.

The absence of or lack of specificity in printed ornaments does not mean that the airs would have been performed unembellished. On the contrary, the practice of ornamenting a vocal line had been accorded an almost sacred status by many theorists. In a comment directly addressed to the singing public three years before the launch of the *Recueils*, Ballard, too, attests to the importance of ornamentation in creating pleasing movement from one note to the next.[10] Ballard's minimal approach could, indeed, be interpreted as giving latitude to singers to imagine and invent or to showcase their abilities to ornament appropriately. On this reading of the matter, the sparsely ornamented airs of the *Recueils* would not be discounted by highly skilled singers but might rather have been viewed by them as a blank canvas on which to demonstrate their inventiveness.

In the *Recueils* published between 1695 and 1699, twenty-two airs provide a realised *double* (variation) for their second or a subsequent verse. Although they are not printed with any regularity (four in 1695, seven in 1696, six in 1697, two in 1698, and three in 1699), the airs examined that contained variations were all for female voice (*dessus* or *bas-dessus*). The singing of variations and extended passages is technically challenging for the singer, requiring suppleness and speed of voice and knowledge of and sensitivity to syllabic quantity (Bacilly 1668, 209). The presence of elaborate embellishments of this nature in the *Recueils* supports the conclusion that the collection was, at least in part, directed at and patronised by the skilled practitioner.

In the *Recueils* under investigation, one of the consistent features of those *airs sérieux* (both solo and multi-voice) that have a separate, untexted bass line is the presence of the marking *basse-continuë*. Usually, although not always, the non-texted bass line is accompanied by figures that are most often placed vertically above the bass notes in descending order and generally with the largest intervals at the top. This reflects the fundamental accompanying practice of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Zappulla 2000). It also reflects a wider trend, in which figured bass came to replace tablature accompaniments, a trend discernible as early as 1647 in French printed sources. Tablature, it was recognised, had been an obstacle for playing in ensembles, whereas a continuo bass minimised confusion and allowed all ensemble members to "speak the same language" (Perrine [1679?], 15). A figured bass also facilitated transpos-

9 That the printing of *passages* or diminutions was challenging in the seventeenth century has been discussed in relation to the *Livre d'airs* by Goulet (2004, 59).

10 *XXXV. Livre d'airs de differents autheurs à deux et trois parties* (C. Ballard 1692, 79). Ballard explains that his reason for including ornaments supernumerary to the beats in a measure is to make known to the singer what the voice must do to pass pleasingly from one note to the other.

ition, which was considered a required skill for accompanists and was the subject of regular instruction and advice in the many continuo accompaniment treatises published around this time (Lambert 1669, 2).

Of the more than approximately three hundred solo airs from the collection in which the words *basse-continuë* appear under the first system, the bass line is figured in all but eleven. The facility afforded the accompanist by the predominance of figures and the ample supply of continuo accompaniment treatises promising fast results for diligent students suggest that Ballard was catering to the needs of the amateur as well as the proficient continuist, for whom these figures would have been largely superfluous. Again, we see Ballard adopting an inclusive policy in this publication, which was geared towards an audience with a wide ambit of musical proficiencies.

Regarding which instruments were likely used to accompany the *airs sérieux* of the *Recueils*, the starting point must be Bacilly, who expresses a clear preference (at least when accompanying the solo voice) for the theorbo over the harpsichord and viola da gamba because of its commodiousness and sweetness (1668, 17) and because it would not obscure or overpower weak and delicate voices. Certainly, in performing the *airs sérieux* in the context of the salon, the preference expressed for the theorbo makes practical sense: this instrument was portable and, especially in contrast to the harpsichord, relatively small, meaning that it could be moved with some ease around the physical spaces associated with the sociable gathering of the salon—from room to alcove to alley (*ruelle*).

Self-accompaniment on the theorbo was envisaged, too (Boyvin 1700, 8). Bacilly (1668, 19) encouraged singers who wished to perfect themselves in the vocal arts to learn the theorbo, and in at least one literary account of a salon by the *salonnière* and author Madeleine de Scudéry (1686, 2:634), a young girl is described who takes up the theorbo to self-accompany, reflecting Bacilly's preference. Literary accounts evoking salon gatherings reveal that unaccompanied singing in the salon was also common.

Salon comportment and performances "by the book"

In the third chapter of his lengthy book on sociability, *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528), Baldassare Castiglione sets out the characteristics of an ideal courtier (see Castiglione 1967). His views have been shown to have held considerable sway with seventeenth-century French thought (Fader 2003, 10). The influence of those views in the many French conversation and etiquette manuals of the seventeenth century (e.g., Bellegarde 1698; Courtin 1696; Méré 1677; Vaumorière 1701) and in the fictional representations of singing in the literary works of Scudéry (who speaks to us from the unique vantage point of both writer and salon hostess) shows the impact they had on sociable interaction such as that practised in the salon and, by extension, on the singing that took place as an integral part of that sociable exchange.

Through the mouthpiece of the Count of Urbino, Castiglione instructs his readers that the ideal courtier is one whose grace makes his words, gestures, and

actions universally pleasing and who practises a certain effortlessness (*sprezzatura*). This effortlessness conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and thereby natural. It is by concealing artfulness that the courtier avoids the appearance of affectation and shows grace. For him, exaggerated concentration and effort are to be avoided. The courtier should ideally stick to simple tasks rather than difficult ones in which his labour and effort are apparent. Graceful and intentional minor imperfections are allowed (although these should not be exaggerated, presumably because such exaggerations would be affectations in themselves), with perfection occasionally giving way to imperfection. Effortlessness and excellence in performance were therefore not considered incompatible; it was nonchalance that distinguished the aristocratic or worldly performer from the professional.

Castiglione's *sprezzatura* was translated into the French context through the interrelated concepts of *politesse*, *honnêteté*, *bienséance*, and *grâce* or *négligence* (Fader 2003, 11).[11] These values informed all aspects of ideal worldly comportment and interaction and permeated, equally, aesthetic judgements, including judgements of vocality. So fundamental were these values to singing that one commentator states that beauty of voice and vocal talent would not suffice to win admiration. To be esteemed as a singer, the possession of *honnêteté* was essential. So important was this quality that, as long as it was present, it was of no import that the singer knew little of music (Méré 1677, 39). A lack of affectation was held up as ideal and portrayed as an essential ingredient of politeness. The need to shun affectation, effort, and too studied a manner is reiterated throughout the conversation manuals reviewed (Scudéry 1680, 1:30; Bellegarde 1698, 355; Vaumorière 1701, 5, 11; Courtin 1696, 85; Méré 1677, 25).

In Antoine de Courtin's 1696 manual on civility and decorum, the author prescribes what is considered good and bad etiquette in relation to music. As can be expected in a social climate that prized modesty and a lack of contrivance, he stipulates that one's talents for singing, music, or writing verse should remain hidden. If one's talents are discovered and one is asked to sing or play, then *honnêteté* dictates that one should first decline by politely excusing oneself. Only after being pressed to do so should one acquiesce (Courtin 1696, 158–59). To avoid affectation, Courtin also indicates that one should not spend too long tuning one's guitar or lute (158–59). In commenting about the correct way of speaking, Courtin counsels his readers against making big hand gestures (59), and one can imagine that this would apply equally to members of polite society engaging in song.

The emphasis on restraint equally necessitated constraining excessive emotion. Indeed, anything that could shock should be avoided (Scudéry 1680, 1:29–30; Courtin 1696, 94). The volume of the voice and the tone of voice should

11 This interrelated set of values is recurrent in the literature and etiquette manuals discussed in this section. In the seventeenth century, these terms encompassed a complex of meanings that are not always evident from their English cognates. For the purposes of this chapter, I will adopt the following translations: *politesse* can be translated as politeness or virtuousness, and implies the concealing of effort and artifice behind a pleasant, natural facade; *honnêteté* can be defined as grace, modesty, and genuineness; *bienséance* as decorum and appropriateness to one's social rank and context; and *grâce* or *négligence* as simple effortlessness with a lack of interest in achieving perfection.

be moderated to take account of the subject and circumstances (Méré 1677, 16–17, 88; Courtin 1696, 69), in order to match one's words with the occasion (Méré 1677, 70). However, this stricture on excess was also itself tempered with considerations of decorum (*bienséance*) and proportion; thus tears, laughter, and even anger were, in fact allowed, provided they were proportionate to the discussion surrounding them.

Moderation was said to be an essential character of an *honnête homme*, who avoids impulses of prejudice, instinct, and passion; and *honnêteté* was an essential component of good singing. Talent for singing, politeness of language, and the ability to converse in polite society distinguished the *honnête homme* from the disparaged and morally dubious professional singer, according to Bacilly (1679, 5).

Literary accounts of the salon are a further source of information on social and behavioural strictures that would have affected and shaped vocal practice. We see from these that a salon participant had to prioritise pleasing his or her listeners (Méré 1677, 15; Scudéry 1680, 1:8), and commendations are given throughout the literature to characters who manage to speak in a way that neither angers nor displeases (Scudéry 1684, 1:122). An easy, flowing expression (Méré 1677, 23) and a natural, noble air were required (Méré 1677, 25), balancing cheerfulness with seriousness in order to remain modest and to not fall foul of the rules of decorum (Courtin 1696, 95). A review of Scudéry's idealised conversations shows that the latter was a recurrent concern; the characters are frequently said to converse pleasantly (*agréablement*), while smiling (*en souriant*) and laughing (*en riant*), even when at odds on philosophical matters.

Modesty and restraint of expression were salon values upheld by Tallemant des Réaux, too, who recounts with apparent horror the contortions and intense expressions of a salon host reciting a sonnet ([1834–35] 1960, 2:901). Decorum in one's conversation and conduct also required proportionality of gesture.

How did these largely unwritten social codes affect performance of the written text and music of the airs in the *Recueils*?

In the first place, they guided sung pronunciation. Bacilly famously champions correct pronunciation when singing. He laments the fact that women (whom he claims are the main transgressors) are firmly opposed to any pronunciation that would seem to change the normal formation of the mouth in speaking, as they perceive any and all changes as ugly grimaces (Bacilly 1668, 267).

Bacilly expressly identifies certain of his rules as being susceptible to this corruption in the spoken context. First, Bacilly notes the tendency to pronounce the -e, -es, or -ent of a feminine-ending word in a manner that is too open. He cites two examples, *extrême* and *inévitable*, complaining that these are often pronounced *extrêmea* and *inévitablea*. The antidote Bacilly suggests (to pronounce the feminine endings as an *eu*, with the lips in almost the same position as this digraph) is seemingly no antidote at all, because, according to Bacilly, even with this digraph, many singers fail to bring the lips close enough together. Second, Bacilly asserts that the same problem exists with the *ou* sound (in which people tend to pronounce only the *o* of the digraph). Bacilly cites an example of people

incorrectly pronouncing the word *douceur*, which is made up of two digraphs, and only giving half the sound of each. Another common fault occurs, again particularly among women, when they smooth over the *o* vowel, going so far as to pronounce *comment* as *quement*, supposedly in an attempt to make the sound more delicate (Bacilly 1668, 275). He notes with disapproval that pupils in search of a singing teacher were attracted by an instructor's ability to sing without making faces, suggesting that corruptions of spoken pronunciation in order to avoid grimaces and maintain a pleasant, natural demeanour were common faults in singing, too.

In the second place, these strictures demanded a diluted expression of the passions. Bacilly remarks that women who sing never acquire the passion and expressive ability associated with the concept of *mouvement* (expressive energy) (1668, 200). He explains that the reason for this is that they deem such emotionalism as unseemly to the modesty of their sex. However, while Bacilly freely voices his complaints against dispassionate performance and corrupted pronunciation, he is nevertheless careful to state that overblown and unduly affected performances are also to be avoided (1679, 11–13).

The present author's own artistic practice, in which the social strictures and mindsets described above were applied to singing the *airs sérieux* from the *Recueils*, resulted in the following observations, which can only be briefly touched on here. The salon singer's imperative to maintain a pleasant face and smile has a significant impact on the vocal apparatus, forcing the tongue to rest in an elevated position and therefore brightening the vowels. The necessity to remain congenial and avoid excessive emotion dilutes expressions of passions such as anger and hatred, creating a serene and regulated interpretation of even the most passionate airs. Bacilly's concept of forcefully doubling initial consonants on expressive words (*gronder*), one of the hallmarks of his writings (1668, 307), is all but extinguished in a salon performance, giving way to a more mellifluous and flowing rendition. The absence of gesture, which enables the singer to reinforce expressive consonants in a percussive way, contributes to this effect. Recent years have seen an increased interest in the study of rhythmic and tempo freedom, notably when singing, as a manifestation of changing passions or emotional ambiences (e.g., Wentz 2010). Needless to say, in the salon context, the moderated and pleasing form of expression inherited from Castiglione's writings resulted in the opposite effect—an increased regularity of tempo—since for the cultured member of polite society, taking time to express intense passions such as sorrow would have seemed affected and immodest.

Finally, in the author's experience, one element of singing as practised by professional singers that was highly-prized by the theorists remained present (albeit to a limited extent) even when performing according to the social strictures inherited from Castiglione's book—syllabic accentuation. Bacilly's insistence on the observance of the rules of syllabic quantity as an aid to the clear communication of the affective message echoes the interest in this same subject found in the writings of Mersenne ([1636] 1965) and, later, Grimarest (1707), among others. Bacilly frequently analogised speech with song and asserted time and again that song is actually "une espèce de déclamation" (1668, 328; a type

of declamation). In a similar vein, Grimarest stated that a song consists of "paroles mises en musique" (1707, 73; words set to music) and instructs the singer to "pronounce" rather than "sing" each syllable at whatever pitch the composer has stipulated (217). Declamation was considered to be at the heart of correct singing and part of the professional stage-singer's tool kit. In the salon context, where song and the spoken word were often interwoven, and where reading aloud, recitation, and the art of gallant conversation were integral activities, it is hard to imagine this text-centric approach not persisting, although diluted and moderated to suit the smaller confines of the conversation circle of the *ruelle* or alcove. In fact, the observance of the rules of quantity in the primarily syllabic text settings of the airs from the *Recueils* studied creates the same lilting inflections redolent of the concept of *inégalité*, which was the subject of more than thirty treatises of the day (see further, Hefling 1993).

Conclusion

Representing a considerable evolution from the *Livre d'airs* in terms of readability and manoeuvrability, an examination of the physical format of the *Recueils* has shown them to be a collection with user convenience at its heart. Considerable effort was invested to make these volumes beautiful, too, revealing them to be aesthetic objects that disseminated the newest vocal works among an avid public. The elaboration of musical trends month after month created a vast document, apt for use in the convivial environment of the salon and with solo song for high female voice as its fundamental genre.

However, for inhabitants of this world, steering one's course through the voluminous etiquette codes dictating decorous behaviour must have been a perilous task. For if in one ear they heard echoes of Castiglione's ideal courtier, in the other they heard the railings of the theorist-pedagogue Bacilly, who advocated affective representation of text and music when singing. His criticism of incorrect pronunciation brought about by resisting the proper formation of the lips is proof of the existence of such practices, which created a new demographic- and context-specific performance style. Negotiating the gulf between the written text, the music, and the unwritten rules of how to perform "by the book" in accordance with the dictates of society is a fundamental consideration in the search for the lost art of salon song.

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From Beethoven Performance to Beethoven Interpretation

Carl Czerny and Franz Liszt's Evolving Relationship, 1822–57 *

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Over the last fifteen years, and especially since the 150th anniversary of his death, Carl Czerny's (1787–1857) diverse merits have come under closer scrutiny (Gramit 2008; Loesch 2009), with Czerny's famous mentoring of the young Liszt during the years 1822–23 attracting particular attention. These fourteen months of intensive study have often been reduced in Liszt hagiography to two specific components, namely pianistic discipline —"when Czerny was finished schooling [Liszt's] fingers, the boy was an artist" (Ramann 1880–94, 1:38, as translated in 1882, 1:60)[1]—and the act of convincing Beethoven to receive the boy—"finally [Beethoven] allowed himself to be persuaded by the indefatigable Czerny, in the end saying impatiently: 'In God's name, then, bring me this rascal!'" (Horowitz-Barnay 1898, 83, translation based on Walker 1987, 83).[2]

Because Liszt's meeting with Beethoven has in the meantime been relegated to the realm of biographical myth-making (Schröter 1999; Knittel 2003), current scholarship focuses primarily on Czerny's approach to pianistic education, often through the lens of contemporaneous piano virtuosity—either by situating the short master–apprentice period in a wider sociocultural context of virtuosity (Deaville 2008) or, in the rare instances that consider the longevity of the two musicians' connection, by ascribing Liszt's subsequent virtuosic

* This research developed during my time as a post-doctoral fellow in Tom Beghin's research group, Declassifying the Classics, at the Orpheus Instituut. I thank Tom for many enriching discussions and for his advice on this chapter.

1 The original-language versions of all translated quotations are included in the online version of this chapter in the virtual companion to this book at https://sonus.orpheusinstituut.be/publication/publication/performing-by-the-book-musical-negotiations-between-text-and-act/from-beethoven-performance-to-beethoven-interpretation-carl-czerny-and-franz-liszts-evolving-relationship-1822-57.

2 This excerpt has a complex history. Walker (1987, 84n35) cites the 7 July issue of the *Neue Freie Presse* (1898, 7) as his source; there, an article quotes extensively from "Im Hause Franz Liszts" by Ilka Horowitz-Barnay (1898, 83), which had appeared recently in the *Deutsche Revue*. See Keiler (1984, 382–85, especially 385n25).

advancements to these formative months: "Czerny, the technique builder, and Liszt, the executant of that technique," as Liszt scholar Rena Charnin Mueller (2009, 147) puts it.[3]

Little attention, however, has been paid to the fundamental musical approaches that Liszt adopted from Czerny regarding the interpretation of the "classics," even though these persisted throughout Liszt's career as a celebrated Beethoven (and also Bach) performer, frequently evoking objections from critics and fellow musicians. Stereotypes of a dry pedagogue—the "leathery [*ledern*] and pedantic" Czerny (Frimmel 1906, 95, my translation) contrasted with the flourishing, charismatic Liszt—hold strong to this day and seem to prove the two musicians' profound incompatibility, resulting in the still prevalent notion that Czerny merely crossed Liszt's early life briefly and with limited benefit, although the two musicians' friendship actually lasted for several decades.

Indeed, even though Czerny was twenty years older than Liszt and their careers were shaped by two vastly different personalities in two different eras, historical evidence shows they were strongly connected by shared musical practices and objectives. Both pianist-composers developed a profound devotion to Beethoven; Czerny was able to express his esteem personally to the composer before becoming trustee of Beethoven's oeuvre, while Liszt demonstrated his through organising posthumous tributes, such as the Bonn Beethoven memorial of 1845, and through his (in)famous Beethoven interpretations, first at the piano and later as conductor and as teacher. Both introduced little-known Beethoven repertoire to wider audiences, often using transcription as a way to disseminate orchestral or chamber music works (Christensen 1999; Schröter 1999, vol. 1). Beyond their advocacy for Beethoven, moreover, three pillars of Czernyian practice were arguably at the heart of Liszt's success as touring virtuoso (1835–48): improvisation on a given theme; arranging orchestral or operatic works for the piano; and, finally, playing by heart in public.[4] Improvisation and the craft of paraphrase extended a tradition of eighteenth-century pianism, but playing by heart was a new and emerging practice that, through Liszt, would be linked inextricably with the image of a concert pianist up until our time. All three aspects are especially relevant to Czerny's and Liszt's interactions with the music of Beethoven; indeed, in improvising, a practice that would quickly vanish during the second half of the nineteenth century, Liszt's prowess proved worthy of Beethoven himself, as Czerny affirmed.[5]

This chapter traces biographical intersections between Czerny and Liszt over thirty-five years against the backdrop of the following questions: Might Liszt's embellishments of Beethoven pieces—flamboyant at times—actually have been rooted in Czerny's "old-fashioned" musicianship? How did their

3 Mueller (2009) anticipates the present chapter in several ways, stressing Liszt's lifelong esteem for Czerny and noting Czerny's influence on "the virtuoso Liszt's recital life" (152). However, links with Beethoven are evident only in her discussion of Liszt's 1852 letter to Czerny (164).

4 Czerny himself confirms his natural skill for playing by heart: "I had so thorough a musical memory that I played all Beethoven's piano compositions (quite apart from other composers' works) entirely by heart—a natural gift that hasn't yet left me" (Czerny [1842] 1968, 19, translation based on 1956, 19).

5 "Regarding his brilliance and his ingenious freedom [*Freizügigkeit*] nobody could match [Beethoven], and even today nobody except Franz Liszt can be compared to him" (Czerny [1842] 1968, 45, my translation).

joint construction of the future Beethoven myth and canon correlate with a general change in performing ideals? And, lastly, how did their musical initiatives employ "different means" in piano performance, which both perceived to be necessary in the face of "different times and tastes" (Czerny [1846], 34, my translation)?

1. Laying the foundations: the teacher–student period (Spring 1822–May 1823)

In 1822, Adam Liszt moved with his wife and son to Vienna into living quarters arranged by Antonio Salieri near Czerny's home (Bertagnolli 2022, 14). For the following fourteen months, the eleven-year-old Franz would spend the mornings studying general bass, score reading, and composition with Salieri, while Czerny taught him piano "almost every evening" (Czerny [1842] 1968, 28, as translated in 1956, 315). In his 1842 memoir, after expressing his admiration for the boy's natural talent and personal eagerness, Czerny described his pedagogical approach for the young Liszt:

> Since I knew from some experience that geniuses whose mental gifts are ahead of their physical strength tend to slight solid technique, it seemed necessary above all to use the first months to regulate and strengthen his mechanical dexterity in such a way that he could not possibly slide into any bad habits in later years. Within a short time, he played the scales in all keys with all the masterful dexterity that his fingers, which were especially well suited to piano-playing, made possible. Through intensive study of Clementi's sonatas (which will always remain the best school for the pianist, if one knows how to study them in his spirit), I instilled in him for the first time a firm feeling for rhythm and taught him beautiful touch and tone, correct fingering, and proper musical phrasing, even though these compositions at first struck the lively and always extremely alert boy as rather dry. (Czerny [1842] 1968, 28, translation based on Walker 1983, 315)

Czerny adhered to this programme of study (first scales, then Clementi sonatas) in all his pedagogical publications even when contemporaneous techniques had changed. For instance, the adherence to "correct fingering," which Czerny asserts is a basic element of any pianistic education, is a concept that had already become associated with an older school of keyboard-playing that slowly gave way to more hand-specific or effect-related approaches during the nineteenth century. Czerny himself acknowledged in 1846, referring to Beethoven's late compositional style, that the composer did not care much about these rules anymore (Czerny [1846], 33);[6] similarly, Liszt would later be famous for his irregular (or innovative) fingerings.[7] The importance of scales is also explained more playfully in Czerny's *Briefe über den Unterricht auf dem Pianoforte vom Anfange bis zur Ausbildung als Anhang zu jeder Clavierschule* ([1837]

6 "Beethoven (particularly in his latter days) paid little attention to a comfortable way of playing, regular fingerings, and the like" (Czerny [1846], 33, translation based on [1847], 31).

7 "Through a very peculiar fingering, in which the thumbs assume the most diverse roles, . . . he indeed produces the most stupendous effects" (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1838, 322, translation based on Ramann 1882, 2:316).

a), in which the fictitious piano student Caecilia complains: "*Ah! the scales!* . . . *that* is truly a boring story! Are these things really as necessary as my teacher says?" Whereupon the teacher replies: "Yes, Miss Cecilia, these scales are the *most necessary point of all* . . . ; and, indeed, the most expert players do and must constantly have recourse to practise them" (Czerny [1837]a, 13, translation based on [1837]b, 12–13, italics original to the translation). And, in a letter written to Czerny on 29 July 1824, Adam Liszt confirms that his son continues to "play scales and etudes using the metronome" and that "[we] adhere to your principles because success shows me that they are the best" (Lipsius 1892, 249, translation based on Williams 1990, 22).[8]

Clementi's importance is confirmed in Czerny's chapter "On the Proper Performance of Beethoven's Complete Works for Piano Solo," in which Czerny again places Clementi first in the order of composers to be studied before attempting Beethoven compositions (Czerny [1846], 33). But already in 1816, Czerny's unwavering esteem for Clementi's sonatas in teaching pianistic fundamentals was reflected in a conversation with Beethoven concerning Beethoven's nephew Karl, as recorded by Czerny himself in 1845:

> "You must not think that you do me a favour by letting him play my pieces. . . . Give him what you think is good for him."
>
> I mentioned Clementi. "Yes, yes," he said, "Clementi is very good." Laughing, he added, "For the present, give Karl the regular things, so that he can later come to the irregular." (Czerny [1842] 1968, 37, translation based on Thayer [1967] 1970, 680)

That young Liszt embraced the importance of Clementi's works is evidenced in his first publication, an 1828 edition of Clementi's op. 43 *Préludes et exercices doigtés dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs pour le piano-forte en deux livraisons; Édition corrigée et marquée au métronome de Maëlzel par le jeune Liszt, suivi de douze de ses études* (Clementi [1828]).[9] When Liszt was his student in 1822–23, Czerny's pedagogical course of action proceeded from scales and Clementi sonatas to music by Mozart, Hummel, Ries, Moscheles, Steibelt, and Dussek. Only after acquaintance with all these composers' music did he find the time right to introduce the boy to Bach and Beethoven—enabling a focus on the "spirit" (*Geist*) and "character" (*Charakter*) of the music instead of wrestling with technical problems (Czerny [1842] 1968, 28, as translated in 1956, 315). Indeed, we may ask how much of Beethoven's piano music the young Liszt would have studied during his fourteen months of intense instruction with Czerny and with Salieri, who (according to Frimmel 1906, 95) also introduced him to Beethoven but whose lessons most likely focused on orchestral repertoire. Czerny (1956, 315) reports that they progressed to Beethoven and Bach "a few months later" in their altogether short study period. Since Liszt was also preparing the reper-

8 The publication history of this source is again complex. Adam Liszt's six letters first appear in German in Pohl (1869); they were translated into English in Pohl (1871, 1872). They were republished in German in Lipsius (1892), together with additional material, and that is the source that is cited by Williams and most other recent authors.

9 The Liszt edition appeared both in Paris (issued by Janet et Cotelle) and in Marseille, where it was printed by the publisher and salesman Jean-Louis Boisselot, with whose family Liszt would entertain close ties throughout his whole life.

toire for two public concerts that took place during this period,[10] we can infer that there would not have been time either to learn many pieces by Beethoven or for in-depth studies of them. Still, two clues indicate that the young Liszt must have been initiated into Beethoven's music on some level. First, we know from Beethoven's conversation books that an attempt was made to introduce Liszt to the composer. Surely, in preparation for such an encounter Czerny would have introduced him to the composer's oeuvre to some degree, even if only in a general overview.[11] Second, in a letter to Czerny one year later, Adam Liszt reports that his son was playing Beethoven sonatas to the nobility of Paris: "Little Putzi [a nickname for Franz] . . . is very industrious and I can assure you that you would be entirely satisfied with how well and nicely he plays sonatas by Dussek, Steibelt, or Beethoven. We often have visitors from the highest aristocracy, who get him to play them a Beethoven sonata" (Lipsius 1892, 252, translation based on Williams 1990, 22). Adam Liszt's allusion to Czerny's presumed satisfaction implies that the latter would actually have heard Franz play Beethoven's music early on in Vienna.

Apart from the teacher–student relationships, a more circumstantial connection arose between Czerny, young Liszt, and Beethoven: the Diabelli Variations project (Beethoven [1823]a; Vaterländischer Künstlerverein [1824]). This was the first of two joint composition projects between teacher and student organised by Czerny, and it produced Liszt's first published piece in 1824.[12] On 16 September, Czerny sent a copy to Liszt's father with a tongue-in-cheek reference to Beethoven's nickname for Diabelli: "You find . . . the 50 variations of different composers on the famous Diabolinical waltz [über den berühmten Diabolinischen Walzer], among which one by Putzi is featured, quite honourably so" (Lipsius 1905–6, 24, my translation).

Liszt's studies—his only period of methodical instruction—were terminated in May 1823, to Czerny's disapproval: "Unfortunately, his father wished for great pecuniary gain from him, and just when the child was studying best, just when I was starting to instruct him in composition, he went on tour, at first to Hungary and ultimately to Paris and London, etc." (Czerny [1842] 1968, 26, translation based on 1956, 316). The importance of this intense tuition at a very impressionable age cannot be overstated: it was under Czerny that Liszt made his entry into the Viennese circle, was initiated in Beethoven's music (apart from the question of whether he met him personally), and was introduced to a solid piano technique and to a mindset that any pianistic goal could be reached

10 Liszt performed Johann Nepomuk Hummel's Piano Concerto op. 85 in A Minor and a free fantasy in the first concert (December 1822) and Hummel's Piano Concerto op. 89 in B Minor and Ignaz Moscheles's *Grandes variations sur une mélodie nationale autrichienne* in the second concert, closing again with a free fantasy (April 1823).

11 The attempts to convince Beethoven to attend Liszt's second concert, made by Anton Schindler, can be traced in Beethoven's *Konversationshefte* ([1822–23] 1983, 3:186–88). As already mentioned above in the introduction, Schröter (1999, 34), among several other scholars, explains why it is highly unlikely that this or any earlier attempt succeeded. The primary evidence is that Beethoven asked after the second concert whether it was well attended and what hair colour the boy had (Beethoven [1822–23] 1983, 3:189).

12 Fifteen years later, with *Hexaméron* (Liszt et al. [1839]), the organisational initiative would be the other way around.

through hard work. All these components continued to shape Liszt's entire musical career.

2. Liszt's four years as touring prodigy and Czerny's "Kreutzer" transcriptions (1823–27)

In September, the Liszt family left Vienna for good, first travelling west through Munich, Augsburg and Stuttgart, then Strasbourg, and continuing on to Paris from where father and son undertook various concert tours to England and the French provinces. In his memoirs, Czerny described the strong bond that had formed between himself, his parents, and the boy:

> The young Liszt's unvarying liveliness and good humour, together with the extraordinary development of his talent, led my parents to love him as a son and I, as a brother. I not only taught him completely free of charge but also gave him all the necessary music scores, which included pretty nearly everything good and useful that had been written up to that time. (Czerny [1842] 1968, 28, translation based on 1956, 316)

The letters that Adam Liszt started writing to Czerny after their departure, which updated him on his son's successes (as well as the exact monetary gains and conditions), confirm that the feelings were mutual and show that Adam tried to repay Czerny's generosity by spreading the latter's reputation both as teacher and as composer, even brokering the publication of one of Czerny's compositions.[13]

In preparation for the Liszts' first trip to London at the end of June 1824, Czerny in a letter dated 3 April reminded Adam what in his opinion mattered most for his son's development:

> Meanwhile, he [Zisy] should continue to study with redoubled effort and not be confused by exaggerated praise (which is always more dangerous than criticism). He should remember that, even though one can arouse momentary enthusiasm through youthful fire and striking improvisation, the masterful, finished, *rhythmically secure* [*taktfeste*] performance of classical compositions grants a much more lasting, persistent fame that the world will not weary of nor grow accustomed to. He should foster his compositional talent as much as possible and not neglect the *metronome* when practising. (Lipsius 1905–6, 22, emphases Czerny's, my translation)

After the departure of his outstanding student, Czerny continued his busy teaching schedule in Vienna as well as his prolific composing and arranging activities, many of which were applied to works by Beethoven. The latter had first asked him in 1805 to transcribe his *Leonore* for piano.[14] "It is owing to the

13 Adam Liszt first asked the editor Thomas Boosey Jr in London to publish Czerny's *Rondos di bravura*, but Boosey found the price too high; his next attempt, with the publisher Madame Bonnemaison in Paris, however, was successful. See Liszt's letter of 3 September 1824, in Pohl (1869, 200) (also in Lipsius 1892, 251), translated in Pohl (1872, 5).

14 The arrangement was published in 1810 by Breitkopf & Härtel without mentioning Czerny's name (Beethoven [1810]); later, in 1849, Liszt also transcribed two songs from Beethoven's opera for Breitkopf & Härtel as part of his collection *Beethoven's Lieder für das Pianoforte* (Beethoven [1849]).

suggestions he made while I was working on this project that I acquired my skill as an arranger, which later became so useful to me," Czerny recalled in 1842 ([1842] 1968, 20, translation based on 1956, 310).

From 1823 to 1856 Czerny published no fewer than four arrangements of Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 9, op. 47 ("Kreutzer"), starting with the second movement alone, issued as *Variations brillantes tirées de l'Œuvre 47* for piano solo (Beethoven [1823]b; see figure 5.1). This was followed in the same year by the whole sonata in a four-hand version, titled *Grand duo brillant, arrangé d'après la Sonate oeuv 47* (Beethoven [1826], figure 5.2), a complete version for piano solo (Beethoven [1837]), and, finally, a transcription of the violin part for cello (Beethoven [ca. 1855]).[15] These arrangements provide insights into Czerny's development in handling piano adaptations of Beethoven's music, and they may also represent examples of Beethoven's performance practice as absorbed by Liszt in 1823.[16] It is not far-fetched to imagine that Czerny read through his new and demanding four-hand arrangement of op. 47 with his talented young student.[17] Indeed, this very sonata became one of Liszt's earliest Beethoven signature pieces, with the first public performance occurring in Paris with violinist Christian Urhan in 1834.[18]

Figure 5.1.

15 Many thanks to Stefanie Kuban, librarian at the Beethoven Archive in Bonn, for help sorting out the different versions and their publication dates.

16 In his essay "Czerny the Progressive," Clive Brown (2023) discusses Czerny's additional embellishments in the solo and duo transcriptions to highlight the composer's progressive handling of Beethoven's music. Brown concludes that Czerny's transcriptions "clearly demonstrate that his teaching in 1839 was at odds with his earlier understanding of Beethoven's expectations" (34–35) and that "his [Czerny's] teaching and his published compositions were at the forefront of instrumental developments and aesthetic change" (35–36).

17 Oswin (2013, 86) concludes that "Czerny very likely created it for his more proficient students, so that they could experience one of Beethoven's most transgressive chamber works for themselves without needing to find a sufficiently skilled violinist; it is possible that Czerny himself might have read it with them, in a classic master-apprentice scenario."

18 Urhan, however, opposed any additions to Beethoven's text. Liszt continued to play the "Kreutzer" Sonata throughout his life, performing it for the final time in 1885 with a young violinist called Ms. Harkneß (see Schröter 1999, 2:106, 121).

Figure 5.1. Carl Czerny's arrangement of the second movement from Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 9, op. 47 ("Kreutzer") for piano solo, published by Cappi & Diabelli (Beethoven [1823]b). Courtesy of the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn.

Figure 5.2.

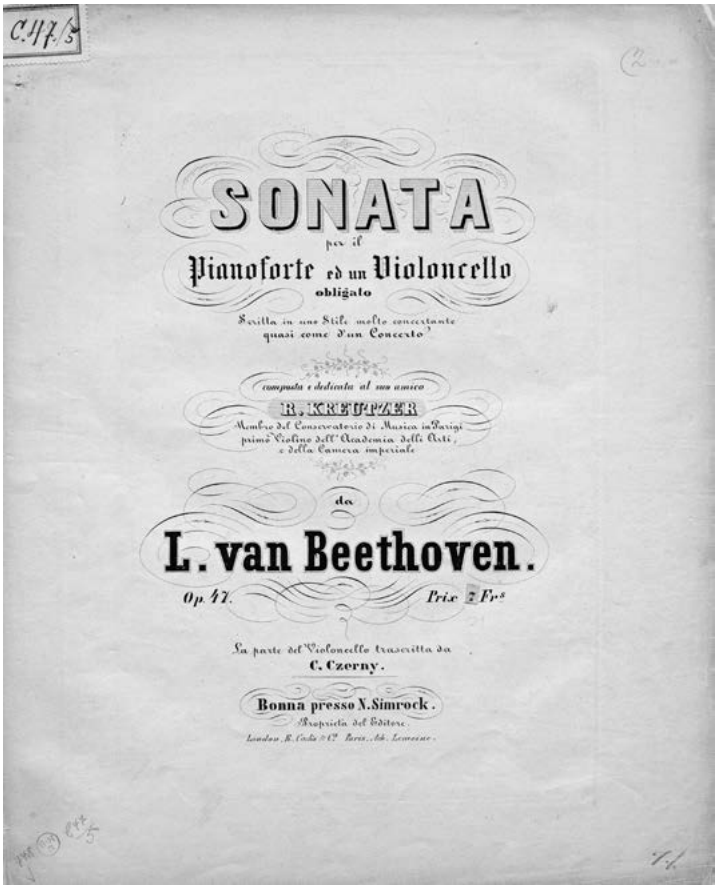

Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.2. Carl Czerny's arrangement of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 for piano four hands, first published in Vienna in 1823 by Cappi & Diabelli; despite the pencil annotation "[1823]," the figure shows the second edition of 1826, published by Diabelli & Comp (Beethoven [1826]). Reproduced with permission of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv (call no. Mus. O. 17651).

Figure 5.3. Czerny's arrangement of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 for cello (and piano) published by N. Simrock (Beethoven [ca. 1855]). Courtesy of the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn.

The title page of the four-hand arrangement (figure 5.2) distinguishes itself by its choice of words (arranged "after" Violin Sonata op. 47) and also by the fact that Czerny's name is printed in larger type than Beethoven's. This differs greatly from the title page of his third arrangement (figure 5.3), on which Beethoven's name is written in large boldface type and the "transcriber's," at the bottom of the page, is in a much smaller font.[19] It suggests that, for the first two versions, Czerny took ownership of the transcription process—justified, perhaps, by the artful imitation of characteristic violin techniques on the piano—while, in the third arrangement, for cello, the message is that his contribution was more modest, making Beethoven's music accessible to cellists without adding anything of his own (unlike, for instance, the piano version, in which he expressed violin portamenti by adding grace notes and so on).

The original violin sonata features several fermatas that, when premiering the piece with Beethoven, the initially intended dedicatee, George Bridgetower, exploited for spontaneous improvisations that famously pleased the composer.[20] While Beethoven did not reproduce those violin embellishments, he did write out one such improvisatory passage for the piano (figure 5.4).

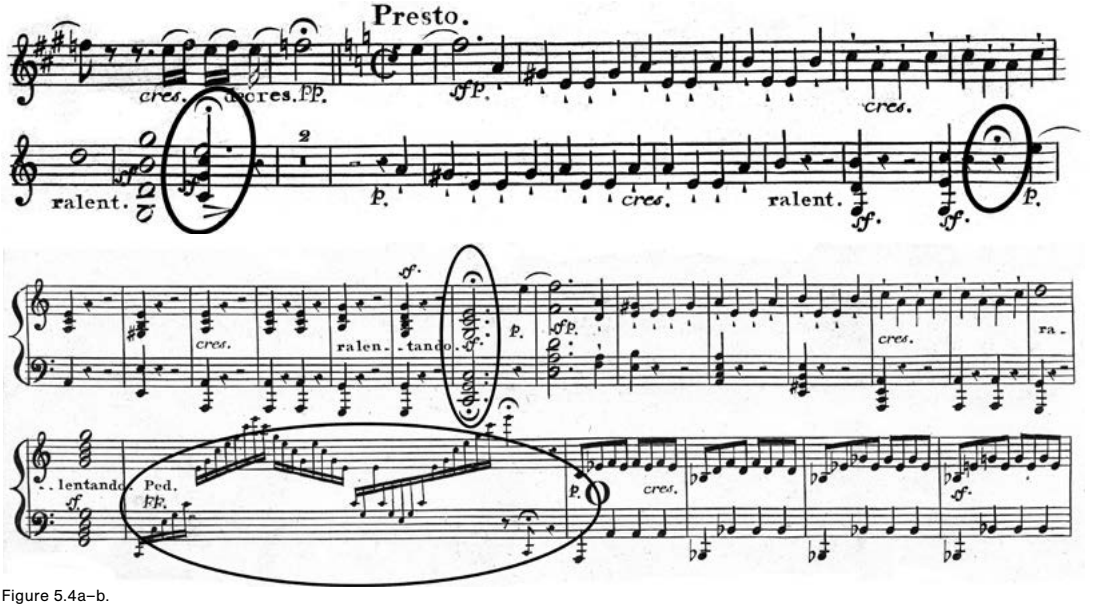

Figure 5.4a–b.

19 Another interesting phrasing can be found on the cover of Czerny's transcription of Beethoven's Trio op. 97: "Exactly translated according to [Beethoven's] original trio for pianoforte, violin, and cello" (Beethoven [1838], my translation). Deep reading of historical title pages constitutes its own branch of socio-musicological scholarship—for instance, Green (2019, 33–36) explains how the layout carries important information regarding the social and professional status of the represented persons.

20 Beethoven allegedly embraced Bridgetower when the latter spontaneously inserted an improvised embellishment on one of the fermatas. Brown and Peres Da Costa (2021, 113) discuss Alexander W. Thayer's "problematic" account of Bridgetower's initiative, pointing out inconsistencies about which of the fermatas was embellished and at which occasion the famous embrace might have happened—a rehearsal or the premiere.

Figure 5.4a–b. Violin (above) and piano (below) parts of the opening movement of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47, in its first edition, published by N. Simrock (Beethoven [1805]): beginning of the Presto. The two bars with fermatas (bars 28 and 37) are circled. Images courtesy of Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer.

In Czerny's version for piano four hands (figure 5.5), the second fermata (the one with Beethoven's notated improvisation) is extended to a coordinated passage between the two players, separated by a tenth, covering a range of four instead of three octaves, and doubling the length. Czerny also adds the indications *prestissimo* and, on the concluding bass note, *fortissimo*. This new passage thus represents virtuosic interventions by both violinist and pianist by circling four times around the highest note and increasing both volume and tempo. In his 1837 solo-piano arrangement, Czerny reduces the elaboration somewhat, now having the left hand join only towards the end, still separated by a tenth (figure 5.6).

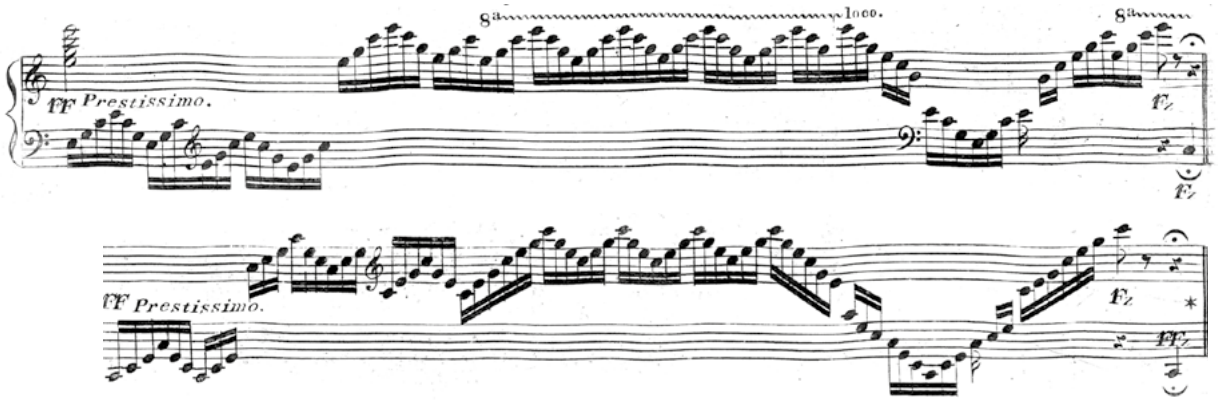

Figure 5.5a–b.

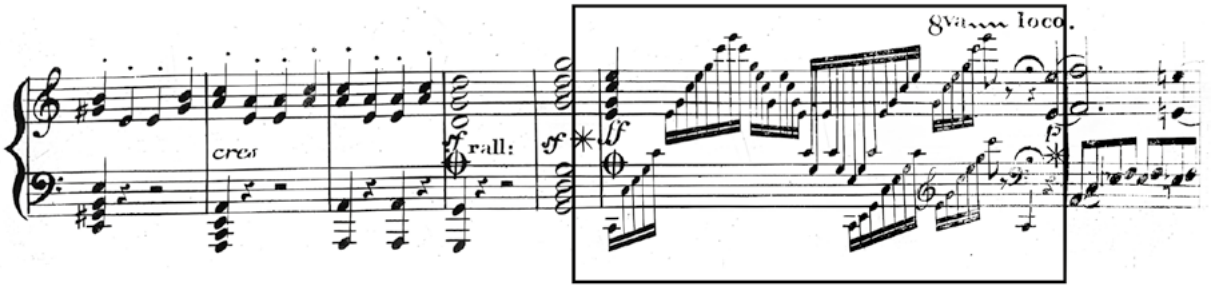

Figure 5.6.

An embellished fermata appears in the second movement (Andante con variazioni) as well, in bar 196. While Beethoven merely writes a short upward arpeggio on the dominant seventh chord, followed by a brief transitional figure for the violin (see figure 5.7), Czerny again offers different alternatives. In the four-hand version he considerably lengthens the embellishment, assigning it to the *primo piano* only (figure 5.8). In the solo transcriptions of 1823 and of 1837, Czerny only slightly extends the original passage (figure 5.9). However, in both the four-hand and the solo versions, he expands the keyboard range from five octaves to six.

Figure 5.5a–b. (a) *Primo* (above) and (b) *secondo* (below) parts of Czerny's four-hand arrangement of the first movement, bar 37, of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 (Beethoven [1826]). Printed with friendly permission of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, shelf mark Mus. O. 17651.

Figure 5.6. First movement of Czerny's solo-piano arrangement of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 (Beethoven [1837]), bars 30–36, with the point when the left hand joins at the interval of a tenth marked (bar 35).

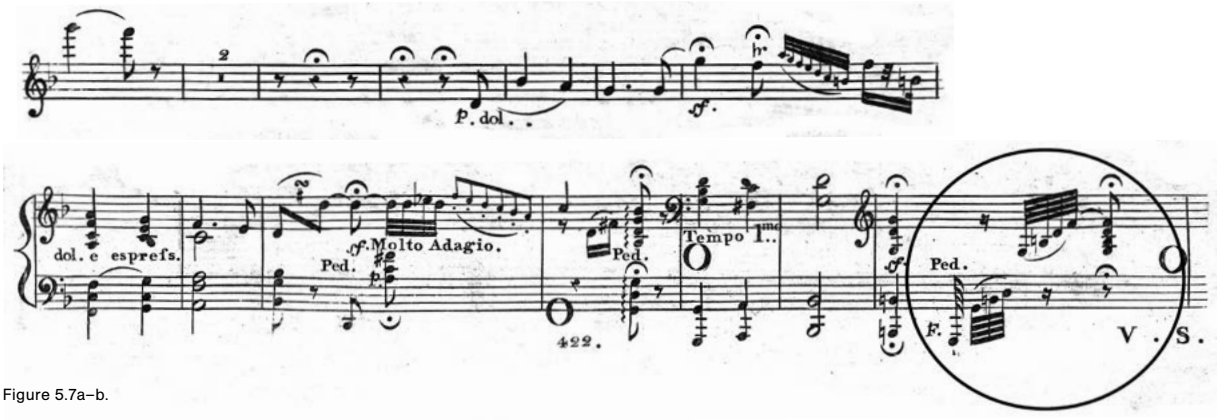

Figure 5.7a–b.

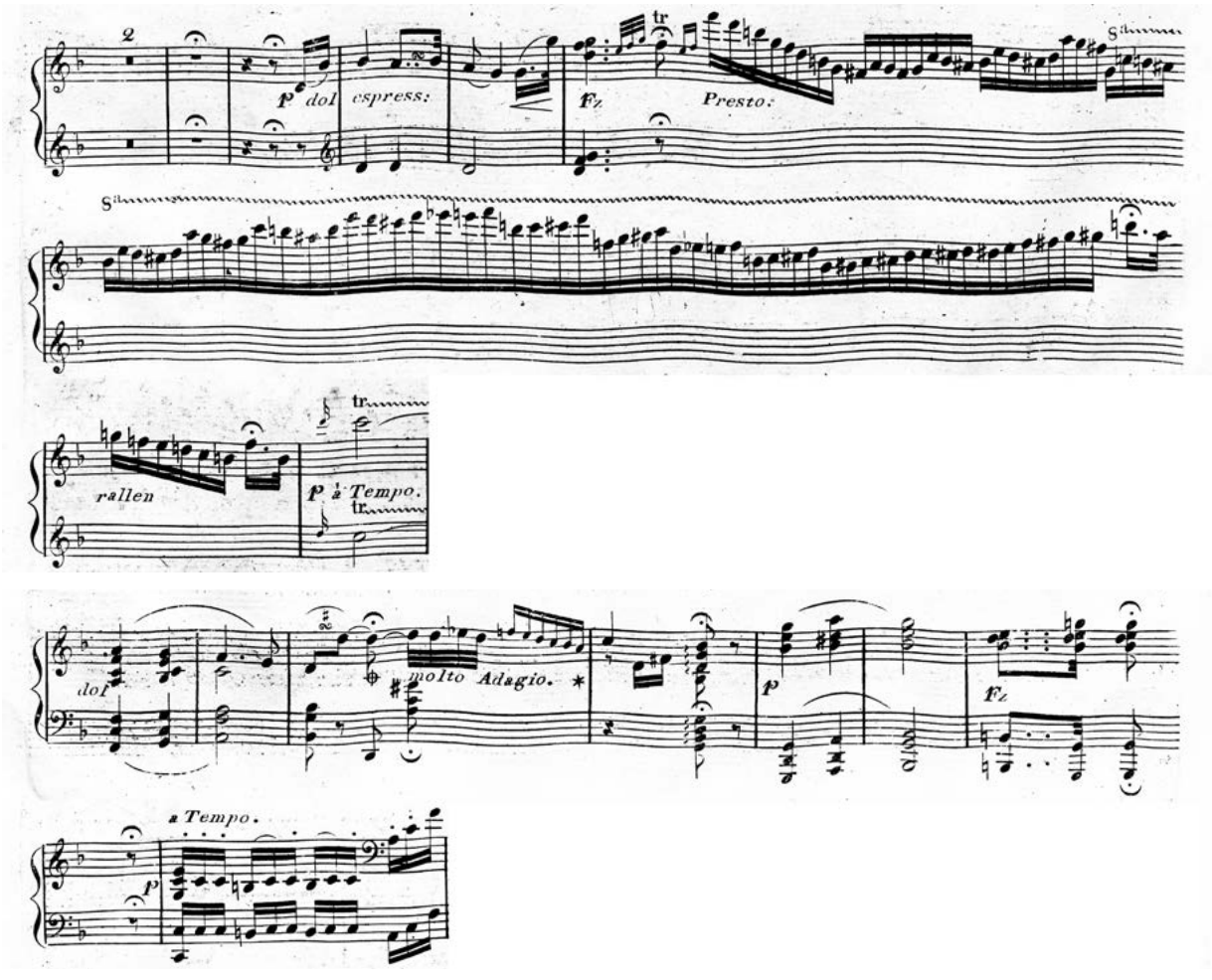

Figure 5.8a–b.

Figure 5.7a–b. First edition of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 ([1805]): second movement, fourth variation, with the embellished fermata in bar 196 circled. Images courtesy of Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer.

Figure 5.8a–b. *Primo* and *secondo* parts from the second movement of Czerny's four-hand arrangement of Beethoven's Violin Sonata op. 47 (Beethoven [1826]), bars 190–97, with embellished fermata in bar 196. Reproduced with permission of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv (call no. Mus. O. 17651).

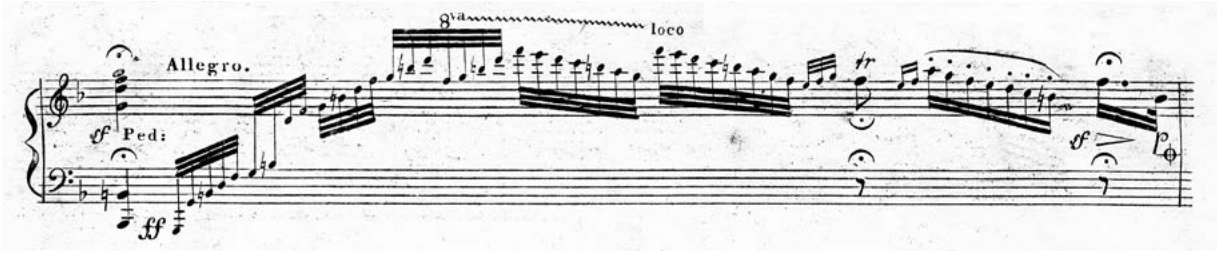

Figure 5.9.

The fact that Czerny's embellishments appeared during Beethoven's lifetime suggests that he felt sure of the composer's approval (compare Brown and Peres Da Costa 2021, 128). Since this was also the period in which he was teaching the young Liszt, his additions raise intriguing questions about the kind of Beethoven performance practice he actually imparted to the child. Czerny's most widely known verdict on the matter appeared later: "In the performance of [Beethoven's] works (and generally those by all classical authors) the player must by no means allow himself to alter the composition, nor to make any addition or abbreviation" (Czerny [1846], 34, translation based on [1847], 32). But how much of this strict adherence to the original score—which, in hindsight, is often taken to be Czerny's only stated position—had guided the thirty-two-year-old Czerny's Beethoven interpretations in 1823, when Franz Liszt was his pupil?

In 1816, just six years before teaching young Liszt, an oft-quoted incident took place in which Beethoven admonished Czerny for playing his Quintet op. 16 in "the brilliant style" (Czerny [1839]a, 3:72; as translated in [1839]b, 3:99) by making passages more difficult or adding higher octaves. Alexander Thayer (1879, 382, my translation) reports that Beethoven lashed out at Czerny in public—"He should be ashamed; people do know the piece!"—and also relays Beethoven's apologetic letter of the next day, in which he wrote: "You must pardon a composer who would have preferred to hear his work exactly as he wrote it, no matter how beautifully you played in general" (Thayer 1879, 381, translation based on [1967] 1970, 641).[21] Czerny later explained that this letter had a profound impact on his approach to Beethoven performance; he remembered in 1845 that it "did more than anything else to cure me of my addiction [*Sucht*] to making changes in the performance of his works" (Czerny [1842] 1968, 35, translation based on Thayer [1967] 1970, 641).[22] It is important, however, to note that this recollection is by a man in his mid-fifties, a man who by then had long since become the leading Beethoven specialist in Vienna.

21 There appears to be some uncertainty about the authenticity of the first quoted remark. In Thayer (1879, 382) it is attributed to an unspecified text by a daughter of the Giannatasio family; in translating and abridging Thayer's account, Elliott Forbes ([1967] 1970) chose to omit it, though he includes the letter of apology (641).

22 Forbes (Thayer [1967] 1970, 641) translates *Sucht* as "desire"; Fuchs (2008, 103), as "passion"; Barth (2008, 125), as "craze."

Figure 5.9. Czerny's solo arrangement of the second movement in the separate *Variations brillantes tirée de l'Œuvre 47* (Beethoven [1823]b). The embellished fermata in bar 196 is identical to that in the later complete arrangement for solo piano (Beethoven [1837]). Image courtesy of Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer.

The term "addiction" is a striking and radical characterisation of a practice that, at the time, was valued as a sign of professionalism: changes to and embellishments of notated music by any eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century musician were situated in an accepted framework of "beautiful" (professional) versus "correct" (but amateurish) performance. Indeed, this would have been taken for granted in Czerny's own musical education with Beethoven himself, who used C. P. E. Bach's treatise in Czerny's lessons (Czerny [1842] 1968, 15; 1956, 307). Two years after young Liszt's departure, the continued relevance of this two-level concept still continued, as exemplified in the eighth edition of August Eberhard Müller's *Grosse Fortepiano-Schule*, which Czerny revised and greatly expanded in 1825. Czerny did not author the relevant passage—"beautiful performance allows the player much freedom over the work, even prompting him to make bigger or smaller changes to it" (Müller [1825], 240)[23]—but apparently did not deem it necessary to modify or update it. Four years later, however, Czerny began to differentiate between classical works (with no room for freedom) and music in the brilliant style (which allowed for elaboration), first in his *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte* ([1829]) and, later and even more decisively, in his own *Pianoforte-Schule* ([1839]a, [1846]). This shift of focus from the *piece* to the *composer* is documented in the *Systematische Anleitung* when he states that the *nature of a piece* prompts additions: "In profound works of a serious character (e.g., Beethoven's Sonata in D Minor op. 29 [now op. 31, no. 2]), any kind of elaboration would be ill-advised. On the other hand, in compositions that are primarily suited to a brilliant, delicate, or sentimental performance, . . . there are frequent moments in which such small embellishments are appropriate or even necessary" (Czerny [1829], 22, my translation). Later, in 1846 he deemed the *nature of the composer*—that is, whether the composer is "classical" or not—to be crucial for deciding whether any additions at all are permitted (Czerny [1846], 34, see above, p. 90). This paradigm shift is mirrored by Johann Nepomuk Hummel's remarks on the topic of the final fermata in concertos or solo pieces in his *Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel* (1828a, 65n), where he explains that in earlier times the elaboration of such a fermata was at the *performer's* discretion, while in contemporary pieces the *composer* determines the details of the embellishment or "cadenza"—if, indeed, one is desired at all.[24]

The gradual handover of detailed elaboration from the realm of professional performance to that of the composer reflects the canonisation process; but, earlier, when Czerny was a much younger performer (and Liszt's teacher), might he have been more open to "bigger or smaller changes" in *all* musical styles? This would only have been consistent with his own eighteenth-century professional music education, in which the performer's responsibility lay in

23 The passage first appears in the sixth edition of Georg Simon Löhlein's *Klavierschule* (1804, 300), which Müller edited; later editions were retitled, with Müller and eventually Czerny given authorial or editorial credit.

24 "When such a pause is met with in Sonatas or variations of the present day, the Composer generally supplies the player with the required embellishment" (Hummel 1828a, 65n, as translated in [1828]b, 66n). See also Martin Edin's analysis of this development in his essay "Cadenza Improvisation in Nineteenth-Century Solo Piano Music according to Czerny, Liszt and Their Contemporaries" (2011).

conveying the best possible version of a piece to the audience, rather than in absolute faithfulness to the score and its author.[25]

Once Czerny's personal journey from a young pianist in 1816 to the guardian of Beethoven's legacy in 1845 was complete, he might have felt it necessary to brush off his own brilliant additions to Beethoven's Quintet op. 16 as mere youthful foolishness. But the question stands: in 1823, how far would he have departed from a deeply rooted practice while teaching young Liszt? Can we discern some shades in the canonisation process that Czerny heeded by observing the chronology of small decisions that eventually led to the absolutist fundamental statements for which he is best known?

3. Liszt's coming of age as a "Beethoven specialist" and Czerny's visit to Paris (1828–37)

During the 1830s, Beethoven's music offered young Liszt a vehicle to escape his past as a child prodigy and to re-establish himself in Paris as a serious *artiste* (compare Gooley 2004, 53). As early as 1828, Liszt prepared what would later become one of his most celebrated Beethoven showpieces: the Fifth Piano Concerto, op. 73 ("Emperor"), which provides us with examples of his changing attitudes toward interpretation in Beethoven repertoire during the 1830s and 1840s. On certain occasions, he played the concerto without "any addition or abbreviation"; on others, he performed it giving full rein to his personal views of a performer's freedom. A passage in the memoirs of English pianist and conductor Charles Hallé reflects the increasing rejection of the old practice and the canonisation then in progress:

> I had chosen Beethoven's E flat concerto [for a concert at the Conservatoire in 1844], my interpretation of which met with almost general approval. I say "almost" because after the performance, a much respected member of the orchestra, Urhan, the principal viola, apostrophised me with: "Why do you change Beethoven?" I had not really *changed* anything in the text, but, misled by the example of Liszt, I used then for the sake of effect to play some passages in octaves instead of in single notes, and otherwise amplify certain passages. . . . I think Liszt must have felt equal scruples, for when, on the occasion of the unveiling of Beethoven's statue at Bonn in August, 1845, he played the same concerto, he adhered scrupulously to the text, and a finer and grander reading of the work could not be imagined. (Hallé 1896, 85)

In 1823, Liszt may have simply expanded on a practice he absorbed from Czerny; but in 1841, Urhan and Hallé deemed his "example" to be "misleading": changing Beethoven had begun to be perceived as a sacrilege. Yet several testimonials attest to a paradoxical element in Liszt's attitude toward Beethoven's

25 Compare Grete Wehmeyer's (1983, 134) analysis in her pioneering Czerny study: she describes the rise of famous virtuosos such as Paganini or Liszt, who started to develop a novel relationship between the performer and large audiences, while the academic middle class, led by criticisms such as Eduard Hanslick's condemnation of "shallow virtuosity," shifted its focus from the performer's art (and additions) to the alleged intentions of the composer. Thus was established a new concept—passively "interpreting" a definitive, set-in-stone composition—that actually contradicted the glamour and enchantment formerly expected of a virtuoso.

music at the beginning of the 1830s, one that also stemmed from Czerny's education: a great and almost exaggerated humbleness, which connected him with musicians like Urhan and which must have guided their previously mentioned performance of the "Kreutzer" Sonata in 1834. Swiss pianist-composer Caroline Boissier even reported Liszt's dictum in 1832 that he "was as yet unworthy of executing [Beethoven's and Weber's] works" (Boissier [1832] 1928, 26, as translated in 1973, xiv), while Joseph d'Ortigue wrote in his biographical essay of the young pianist: "Beethoven is for Liszt a God before whom he bends his head" (d'Ortigue 1835, 202, as translated in 2006, 325).

On one hand, then, Liszt's interpretations of Beethoven repertoire reflected what he had absorbed from Czerny in 1822–23 and what also harmonised with his own musical personality: to change or add to the score, occasionally carried to an extreme on the spur of the moment or in reacting to an audience. On the other hand, his devotion to Beethoven, also imparted by Czerny, along with generally shifting musical conventions, led to a new, stricter adherence to the notated score—and to a number of piously *unaltered* renditions of Beethoven's compositions by Liszt during the same period.

In 1830, Liszt heard Paganini and withdrew from the stage in order to elevate his pianistic abilities to a comparable level through an extreme regimen of practice. His reliance on hard and persistent practice to overcome pianistic barriers was likely also rooted in his formative time under Czerny, whose comment on the difficulties in Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata, op. 106, especially the extremely fast metronome marking, may serve as one example for his well-documented belief in perseverance and mindful piano practice: "All single difficulties are matter for attentive practice. . . . The comprehension of the entire, grand first movement . . . develops with frequent playing, after it has been properly studied in an appropriate tempo" (Czerny [1846], 66, translation based on [1847], 64). Tom Beghin (2014, 81) explains that pianistic "'diligence' (along with its synonym 'industry') indeed became a buzzword in early nineteenth-century piano pedagogy," being cultivated also by Friedrich Kalkbrenner.

It was the (hitherto virtually unknown) "Hammerklavier" Sonata with which Liszt made his sensational debut as a Beethoven specialist at the Salle Érard on 18 May 1836, playing the work so that "not one note was omitted; not one, added" (Berlioz 1836, 200, as translated in 2014, 235).[26] Once established as a Beethoven interpreter, Liszt continued to build his reputation as a Beethoven advocate: from January to April 1837, he organised a series of chamber music matinees in Paris, all prominently featuring Beethoven pieces. Czerny arrived in Paris in spring 1837 for a visit of almost a year, and he probably attended at least the final concert featuring the Quintet op. 16. Czerny himself had hosted a series of matinees focusing on Beethoven's music in Vienna; spread across 1816 to 1820, they served both as a performance platform for his students and

26 At a private performance of this sonata in 1858, Liszt's (possibly habitual) preluding was documented by a young musician who visited him in Weimar: "Liszt began to prelude, first as the fancy took him and then more and more in the manner of Beethoven, until at last the principal theme of the opening movement boomed forth in all its splendour" (Weißheimer 1898, 17, translation based on Williams 1990, 342).

as an opportunity to disseminate Beethoven's music, the composer joining the audience frequently.[27]

At the beginning of Czerny's stay in Paris, a second joint compositional project took shape that Rena Mueller (2009, 161) describes as "one of Liszt's most vibrant acknowledgements of his teacher." *Héxameron*, a series of variations on a theme from Bellini's *I puritani*, was commissioned by the Princess Cristina Belgiojoso and realised by six different composers between 1837 and 1838 under Liszt's leadership; in addition to Czerny and Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg, Johann Peter Pixis, Henri Herz, and Frédéric Chopin supplied contributions. While Czerny's variation style remained remarkably similar to that which he had delivered for the Diabelli project, Liszt's compositional approach had of course evolved. Another musical outcome of this journey—one of the very few that Czerny undertook in his entire life—was his *Souvenir de mon second voyage: Mon séjour à Paris*, op. 471, which he dedicated "à monsieur François Liszt" (Czerny [1837]c, cover).

In 1842, Czerny summarised this first encounter with his former student after fourteen years as follows:

> It is true that he made a great deal of money in Paris, where he and his parents settled, but he lost many years during which his life and his art became misdirected. When sixteen years later (1837) I went to Paris I found his playing rather wild and confused in every respect, the enormous bravura notwithstanding. The best advice I felt I could give him was to travel all over Europe, and when the following year he came to Vienna his genius received a new impetus. Showered with the boundless applause of our sensitive public, he developed that brilliant and yet more limpid style of playing for which he has now become so famous throughout the world. (Czerny [1842] 1968, 29, as translated in 1956, 316)

He closed his reflections by restating his regrets that the boy started touring prematurely, touching specifically on Liszt's controversial accomplishments as an original composer: "I am convinced that, had he continued his youthful studies in Vienna for a few more years, he would now likewise fulfil in the field of composition all the high expectations that were then rightly cherished by everyone" (Czerny [1842] 1968, 29, as translated in 1956, 316).

By the time he wrote his memoirs, Czerny is likely to have seen Liszt's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (first version, 1833–34, see Liszt 1835) and *Album d'un voyageur* composed 1834–38;[28] however, this compositional output does not seem to have fulfilled the high expectations he held for his young student. Nevertheless, he must have been aware that Liszt was following in his footsteps as a Beethoven arranger with his first solo *partitions de piano* of Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, which Liszt finished in July 1837 while Czerny was still in Paris. Czerny himself transcribed all Beethoven's symphonies for piano four

27 Czerny described these events in his contribution to Robert Cocks Jr's journal *Cocks's Musical Miscellany* (as cited in Czerny [1842] 1968, 45). Another, much later example of a deliberate dissemination effort of Beethoven's chamber music are the six matinees that Liszt's student Giovanni Sgambati organised in Rome in 1868 (Schröter 1999, 1:329).

28 Precursor of his *Années de pèlerinage I*, the pieces in the three books of Liszt's *Album d'un voyageur* were first published between 1836 and 1841, but only issued as a collected edition in 1842 (see Liszt [1842]).

hands but focused on as faithful as possible a translation of orchestral detail—often leading to cumbersome pianistic results—while Liszt opened up a new realm of piano sonorities, mimicking the orchestra with innovative piano techniques.[29]

4. Colleagues in Beethoven advocacy: Liszt's concert series in Vienna, the Bonn Beethoven memorial, and Liszt's and Czerny's Beethoven piano sonata editions (1838–57)

As Czerny recounts in his memoirs, after fifteen years of absence Liszt returned to Vienna in April 1838, where he performed Beethoven's Piano Sonatas op. 26 and op. 27, no. 2 ("Moonlight"), and accompanied *Adelaide*, op. 46, a work he would transcribe for solo piano just one year later. In addition, he introduced his highly praised piano transcriptions of Schubert songs (Schubert [1838]). A review proves that Liszt continued to perform pieces by his teacher Czerny—who the reviewer categorised as a "virtuoso" as opposed to a "master"—and also gives a vivid impression of how his Beethoven playing was perceived:

> In Vienna, Liszt played works by masters like Beethoven, Hummel, and C. M. Weber and by virtuosos like Moscheles, Czerny, and Thalberg, as well as products of the new French school to which belong Chopin's and Berlioz's rhapsodies and also his own études. These different pieces he conceived according to their individual characteristics, not without witty changes and additions prompted by the moment and which often made the works of other artists seem like his property. Strange was his performance of some *Allegri* by Beethoven wherein, without obliterating [*verwischen*] the spirit, he increased the tempo in racing exuberance [*brausendem Uebermuthe*] up to *prestissimo*, driving to despair old, seasoned musicians who were barely able to follow the well-known passages. (*Die Warte an der Donau* 1838, [3], my translation)

His "changes and additions" (octave doublings in Hummel's Septet are documented in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1838, 324) may also have applied to his Beethoven performances, although only the unusually fast tempos of the allegro movements are mentioned. From the reviewer's phrasing it is not clear whether the "seasoned musicians" were unable to cope with these as chamber music partners or as orchestra members.[30]

29 There is an astonishing overlap between Czerny's and Liszt's transcriptions. Both also arranged the Septet, op. 20, *Adelaide*, op. 46, the overtures to *Egmont*, op. 84, and *Coriolan*, op. 62 (Liszt's are both lost, however), and *Die Ruinen von Athen*, op. 113. Czerny's transcriptions are mostly for four hands, while Liszt's are for solo piano—an exception being Beethoven's piano concertos, which Czerny arranged for solo piano and Liszt (nos. 3–5) for two pianos (with both parts equally important).

30 On 29 April, he played the "Archduke" Trio, op. 97 (which contains two *allegri moderati*) with Joseph Mayseder and Joseph Merk in a private concert at Tobias Haslinger's music shop "more beautifully than 'beautiful,' truly serving the original" (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1838, 323, my translation); there is no evidence of other Beethoven performances with instrumental accompaniment during this stay.

In the following year, the balance in the relationship further shifted. Now Czerny's transcriptions followed Liszt's initiatives; for example, Czerny's adaptations of Schubert songs for piano seemed to continue his former student's successful transcriptions from 1838: "In outward appearance, [Czerny's] edition is exactly like the first [volume] of songs transcribed by Liszt. . . . The inner sense [*Wesen*] of the transcription is no less faithful to the model [than is Liszt's], as deft and expert as one can expect from Czerny" (Fink 1839, 949, my translation). Indeed, every component of Czerny's Schubert transcriptions was compared to Liszt's: "Following his predecessor [Liszt] as faithfully as possible, he chose songs by the same composer"; and "even in the requisite bravura, [Czerny] falls in line with Liszt completely" (ibid.). Here, indeed, we find the former teacher commended as if *he* were *Liszt's* apprentice.

In the autumn of 1839, Liszt started campaigning actively for a Beethoven memorial in Bonn. Soon after, he returned a second time to Vienna, this time playing a larger group of Beethoven pieces (Schröter 1999, 2:107). Two years later, he gave two benefit concerts for the Beethoven memorial in Paris (ibid., 2:108–9). Meanwhile, Czerny did his part by writing his Nocturne op. 647 for a Viennese publication that aimed at "contributing to the cost of the Beethoven monument in Bonn": the *Album-Beethoven* containing *Dix morceaux brillants pour le piano*, for which Liszt transcribed the funeral march from Beethoven's Third Symphony (Mechetti [1842], title page). The solemn inauguration of the memorial at the first Bonn Beethovenfest in August 1845 produced a second *Beethoven-Album*, which again united the names of Czerny and Liszt. Published by Gustav Schilling in 1846, it encompassed a large and diverse compilation of texts and compositions, among which were an Andante religioso by Czerny and a Maestoso (Klavierstück S507) by Liszt (Schilling [1846]).[31]

In 1846, Liszt gave a second, truly triumphant concert series in Vienna, in which the repertoire ranged from J. S. Bach to contemporary composers. No fewer than fourteen pieces by Beethoven were included, starting with his warhorse "Moonlight" Sonata, op. 27, no. 2 (in the first concert in March) and finishing with the Fifth Piano Concerto (at the farewell concert in May, after Czerny's Variations op. 73 on "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser"). Liszt also participated in a concert featuring Beethoven's Mass in C Major, op. 86, playing the organ. Although reviews were mixed on his renderings of Beethoven sonatas, it was mostly agreed that they were ingenious—yet not recommended for imitation. An especially noteworthy event in this series was the "Beethoven-Soirée" at Haslinger's on 25 March, during which Liszt played the second of his only two public performances of the complete "Hammerklavier" Sonata. Another piece that evening was of particularly symbolic interest: the Seventh Symphony's first movement, in an arrangement for two pianos, was played by Liszt and Czerny together—the only documented occasion of the two musicians uniting for a public Beethoven performance.

31 The full title of the album reads: *Ein Gedenkbuch dankbarer Liebe und Verehrung für den grossen Todten, gestiftet und beschrieben von einem Vereine von Künstlern und Kunstfreunden aus Frankreich, England, Italien, Deutschland, Holland, Schweden, Ungarn und Russland.*

In the same year, Czerny published his most influential contribution to Beethoven interpretation, the *Supplement* to his *Große Pianoforte-Schule, op. 500* (Czerny [1846]).[32] Its fourth part contained the famous chapters "Ueber den richtigen Vortrag der sämmtlichen Beethoven'schen Werke für das Piano allein" and "Für das Piano mit Begleitung," with metronome indications for all pieces. More than thirty years later, another devotee of Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, would acknowledge Czerny's achievement in a passage addressed to Clara Schumann: "I certainly think Czerny's great *Pianoforte-Schule* is worthy of study, particularly in regard to what he says about Beethoven and the performance of his works, for he was a diligent and attentive pupil. . . . In fact I think that people today ought to have more respect for this excellent man" (Brahms [1878] 1927, 2:136, translation based on [1927] 1973, 2:29).

Czerny was, however, more than just a "diligent pupil"; his advice about "modernised" versions, which reflected changes in instruments and audience expectations, was often interwoven with accounts of how Beethoven played his own compositions. The "different means" he deemed necessary to express "a different view of the spiritual conception" of Beethoven's music in response to "different times and tastes" (Czerny [1846], 34, my translation) are reflected in his alterations of phrasing marks (Skowroneck 2019, 511) or in the updated tempo indications in his edition of the Second Sonata as published by Simrock (Beethoven [1856–58]). Liszt, likewise, explicitly demonstrated his awareness of the new affordances of instruments and the new expectations of contemporary audiences, although with an example taken from Bach. The artist Jean-Joseph Bonaventure Laurens, who painted Liszt's portrait in 1844 in Montpellier, asked him during the session to play an organ fugue from which the following conversation unfolded:

> "How do you want me to play it?" [Liszt asked]
>
> "How? . . . But, the way it ought to be played." [Laurens replied]
>
> "Here it is, to start with, as the author must have understood it, played it himself, or intended it to be played."
>
> And Liszt played. And it was admirable, the very perfection itself of the classical style exactly in conformity with the original.
>
> "Here it is a second time, as I feel it, with a slightly more picturesque movement, a more modern style and the effects demanded by an improved instrument." And it was, with these nuances, different . . . but no less admirable.
>
> "Finally, a third time, here it is the way I would play it for the public—to astonish, as a charlatan."
>
> And, lighting a cigar which passed at moments from between his lips to his fingers, executing with his ten fingers the part written for the organ pedals, and indulging in other *tours de force* and prestidigitation, he was prodigious, incredible, fabulous, and received gratefully with enthusiasm. (Stinson 2006, 198–99n15, as translated in Rosen 1995, 510–11)[33]

32 Eliminating a common uncertainty about the year in which this much-cited treatise was first published, Beethoven-Archiv librarian Stefanie Kuban has now definitely dated it to 1846 (see Beethoven-Haus Bonn 2023).

33 Stinson (2006, 106), quoting Eigeldinger (1973, 176–77), attributes this dialogue to the recollection of Laurens's brother, writing around 1884.

The "spiritual conception" of a musical work is thus seen as independent of the means of its realisation; it is even *in need of* modernisation when encountering different instruments or tastes. George Barth (2008, 127) uses Czerny's rich additions to his edition of Beethoven's Rondo, WoO 6 (Beethoven [1829]) as an example of Czerny's intention to create a good reception for the early piece by a contemporary audience—manifesting the "original" intention of the composer by completing it. Barth understands Czerny's perception of tradition as "one in which the primary vessel is the person who embodies 'the spirit of the work,'" rather than the notated score (Barth 2008, 136).

During the next decade, until Czerny's death in 1857, several threads of the two musicians' friendship came together. In 1851, Liszt honoured Czerny with the dedication of his *Études d'exécution transcendante* (Liszt [1852]), the third version of a cycle that he had begun at age thirteen and first published in 1827. The original title—*Étude pour le piano-forte en quarante-huit exercices dans tout les tons majeurs et mineurs*, of which however only twelve of the promised forty-eight exercises appeared (Liszt [1827])—was changed to *Grandes études* in 1839, a publication that already bore the dedication to Carl Czerny (Liszt [1839], cover). In the dedication of the last revision twelve years later—now called "transcendental" études and furnished with poetic titles—the composer emphasised his relationship with Czerny: "as a testimony of appreciation, respect, and friendship / [from] his student F. Liszt" (Liszt [1852], dedication page).

Czerny returned the favour in 1857 with the dedication to "Herrn Dr. Franz Liszt" of his op. 856, *Der Pianist im klassischen Style*, a cycle that *did* consist of forty-eight preludes and fugues through all twenty-four major and minor keys, announced on the cover as "preliminary studies for a perfect performance of all classical compositions" (Czerny [1857], my translation). The concept certainly derives from Czerny's deep involvement in editing Bach; and, since young Liszt had studied Bach's works with his teacher in 1823, the concept might also have been reflected in Liszt's planned structure in his initial cycle of *Quarante-huit éxercices dans tout les tons majeurs et mineurs*.

At about the same time, in the 1850s, Liszt started his famous Weimar masterclasses, which he would continue to give without any charge until his death, sometimes even subsidising young pianists in honour of the treatment he had received from Czerny.[34] From the first group of students, it was Hans von Bülow who later assumed the role of Beethoven specialist; in 1851, the foundations were laid when Liszt taught him the "bigger Sonatas of Beethoven . . . to make such a *répertoire* for myself as not every pianist, or indeed no pianist, can show" (Raab 1994, 182, as translated in Bülow [1896], 86)—works that later became Bülow's core repertoire, such as the "Hammerklavier" Sonata and the Diabelli Variations. Many traces of this study period with Liszt can be found in the influential, instructive edition of Beethoven piano works that Bülow began to distribute in the early 1870s (Beethoven [1872?]).

34 Liszt's undertakings for Beethoven historiography also fall into his first Weimar period: in a letter of 1852, he asked Czerny to receive a young historian, Otto Jahn, who was collecting material from contemporaries of the composer. This was later used by Thayer and Pohl (see Czerny [1842] 1968, 59).

This edition followed Czerny's and Liszt's own editions of the same music, issued towards the end of the 1850s, which constitute their last Beethoven-related parallel activities. Czerny published his new edition of Beethoven's piano works in 1856, one year before his death. In promoting the edition, the publisher Simrock listed its main virtues: correction of doubtful text variants, precise metronome indications and the "most practical fingering" (*zweckmässigster Fingersatz*)—as opposed to the "correct fingering" (*richtigster Fingersatz*), which Czerny taught young Liszt in Clementi's tradition (Simrock 1856, my translation). Simrock continued with a paragraph on Czerny's long relationship with Beethoven and closed with a unique selling point: "The number of people who knew Beethoven in his heyday and in possession of his full powers, heard him play, and witnessed the first performances of his immortal works, decreases steadily. Therefore, let all reliable accounts from this era be preserved for posterity!" (ibid.).

One year later, Liszt started working on his own edition of Beethoven's piano works. He adopted a philological approach, comparing first editions (where available) with Breitkopf & Härtel's edition, adding barely any fingerings or metronome markings but sometimes strengthening dynamics or changing phrasings (Köhnken, forthcoming). The edition was published from 1858 onward as part of *Ludwig van Beethoven's sämmtliche Compositionen: Erste vollständige Gesammtausgabe unter Revision von Franz Liszt* by Ludwig Holle (Wolfenbüttel), whose marketing strategy can be revealingly compared with Simrock's: "Anyone who has heard Beethoven's sonatas played by Franz Liszt, who has heard the symphonies conducted by him, will recognise the significance imparted to a Beethoven edition specifically prepared under his leadership, since he is unsurpassed in his comprehension of this genius" (Schröter 1999, 1:287, my translation).

Thus, in the 1850s, Czerny was already seen as one of the last living links to Beethoven's own interpretation, valued as a contemporary witness but without much personal profile. Liszt, in contrast, was perceived as an unsurpassable Beethoven interpreter by virtue of his own genius, while his (fabricated) personal link to Beethoven and his study time with Czerny were more and more eclipsed.

Conclusion

During his public career as a piano virtuoso, Liszt was often scolded for the textual freedoms he allowed himself in Beethoven's (and other composers') music. The seeds for this practice might have come from a quite unexpected source: Carl Czerny, who is often perceived as a twentieth-century stylistic advocate of strict adherence to the notated score but who actually had one foot (or hand) still in the eighteenth century—only over time growing into his eventual role as a venerable Beethoven exegete. Indisputable are Czerny's and Liszt's equally important contributions toward building the Beethoven myth: their celebration, imitation, commemoration, and promotion of the great composer and his oeuvre, all of which shaped a perception of Beethoven's music that is still rel-

evant today. Their mutual engagement with Beethoven, however, contained the seeds of an even deeper layer of lasting influence. Czerny's profound impact on Liszt's two-fold career—as an active virtuoso and as a teacher of a new generation of Beethoven interpreters like Hans von Bülow, Frederic Lamond, and Eugen d'Albert—set in motion a fundamental change: the transition from a sometimes turbulent two-way communication between virtuoso-improviser and audience to static, one-way renditions in which performer-interpreters delivered their readings before a largely passive audience. The construction of the Beethoven myth by Czerny and Liszt was thus central in triggering the music-historical transition from performances emanating from an appropriate "spiritual conception" of the music in question, embodied by an experienced musician ("does the piece call for an embellishment or cadenza?"), to those emanating from preconceived notions of musical exegesis ("what is or is not allowed in the music of a 'classical' composer?"). It heralded the shift in modern performers' allegiance away from their living audiences and to dead composers, whose scores must be interpreted religiously and listened to humbly.

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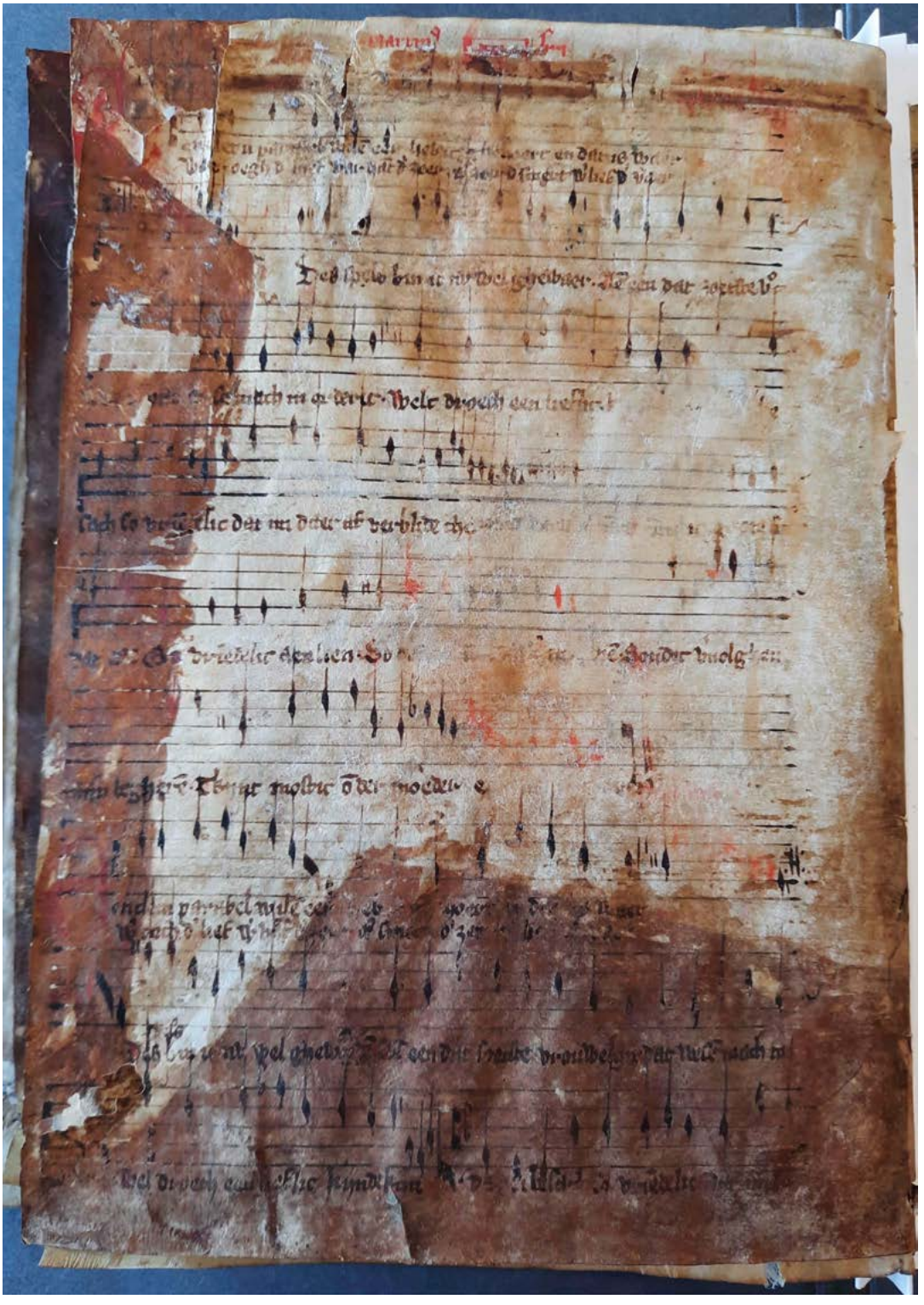

Plate 1

Plate 1. Martinus Fabri, “Een cleyn parabel” (NL-Lu 2720, fol. 10v). See p. 20.

Plate 2

Figure 2.1. The reading room of the Warburg Library at its original location in Hamburg, 1926. Photograph by Carl Dransfeld and Adolf Dransfeld. Courtesy of the Warburg Institute. See p. 41.

Plate 3

Figure 2.2. Jesus in the mystical winepress, manuscript illumination, Cologne, 1450–1500. Courtesy of the Collectie Universiteitsbibliotheek Radboud Universiteit. See p. 49.

Plate 4

Figure 10.2. John Cage's *Four*[6]: "art" version, showing the wet canvas immediately after the performance, New York University Abu Dhabi, April 2018. See p. 189.

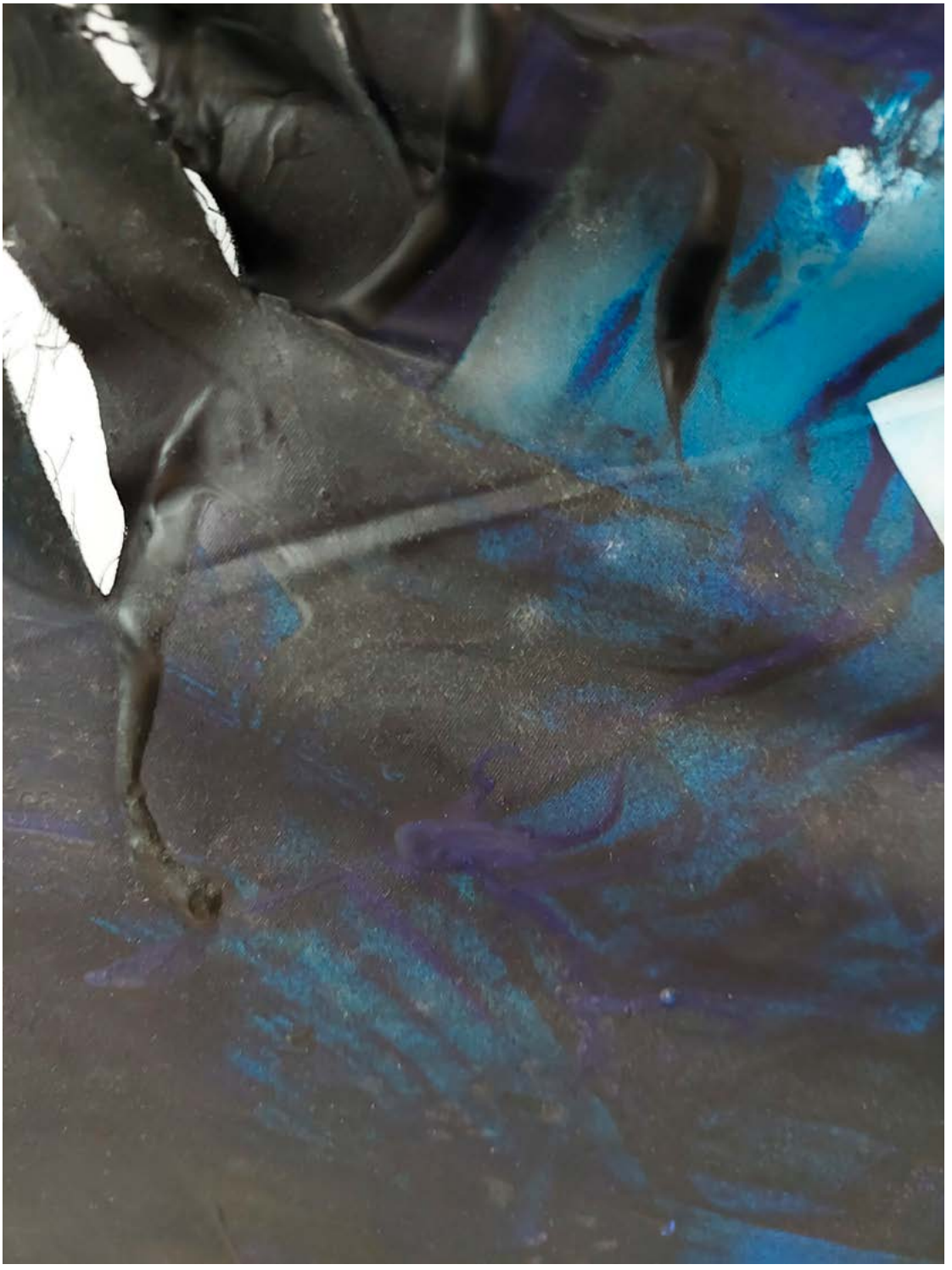

Plate 5

Figure 10.3. Canvas showing dust and mould spots, December 2022. See p. 190.

Plate 6

Figure 10.4. Cage's *Four*[6]: end of performance "remains" (Nick Drake's LP), New York University Abu Dhabi, 19 April 2019. See p. 190.

Nineteenth-Century Texts in the Twenty-First Century

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There are, broadly speaking, two basic approaches to the notated texts of musical works. For the purposes of this chapter I shall call them the "Protestant" (PRT) and the "Roman Catholic" (CTH) versions; this is obviously an oversimplification, as will become clear, but it is a starting point. The PRT approach gives every player a text—an urtext that is available to all without mediation, which replaces all earlier texts, is guaranteed correct, and individuals can read for themselves and interpret accordingly. The CTH approach places the text in an exegetical tradition that explicates it, adds glosses, and controls its interpretation. This text may be an urtext, but it is still contextualised.

The outlined discrepancy between PRT and CTH is immediately rendered problematic simply by the existence of competing urtexts in the market. The most superficial comparison of the modern editions of, for instance, Haydn's piano trios by H. C. Robbins Landon and Irmgard Becker-Glauch shows strikingly different attitudes to what an urtext is supposed to represent. In their editions of Haydn's Piano Trio in E♭ Major, Hob. XV:30 (1796), the opening bars have quite different dynamics: Becker-Glauch marks the string parts *p* in editorial parentheses and gives the piano no dynamic at all (Haydn 1986), while Landon marks the strings *p* with no editorial qualification and the piano *mf* in brackets (Haydn 1970). Moreover, the earliest prints of this piece had no opening dynamic at all, while all nineteenth-century editions of this trio began *f*.

On a larger scale, the recent editions of the Beethoven Violin Concerto by Clive Brown (Beethoven 2011) and Jonathan Del Mar (Beethoven 2009) were certainly not identical either. The publishers announced these new publications in different ways. Bärenreiter (2009) described Del Mar's edition uncompromisingly:

> Beethoven's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra is one of the most famous works in the history of music. Over the last 150 years it has been published in numerous editions and up to now, none of these really does justice to the work.
>
> After detailed study of all sources this new edition, prepared by the outstanding Beethoven scholar Jonathan Del Mar, now presents Beethoven's original slurring and articulation in the solo violin part, together with over 100 corrections in the orchestral parts.

> The musical text has been freed of additions made over the decades by various editors and violinists.
>
> The significance of Beethoven's solo and tutti markings has also been clarified for the first time.
>
> The pioneering critical new edition will prove indispensable for all violinists as well as for orchestras and music libraries.

Breitkopf (2011) took a different approach:

> What with all the traditional editions available on the market, can we still expect new readings? This is what editor Clive Brown asked himself as he meticulously examined the often conflicting sources. The result is a wealth of new readings in the score, which deserve as much attention as the extensively commented arrangement for violin and piano. The treatment of the solo instrument is particularly interesting: next to the Urtext solo part, the edition also contains a historically informed and marked-up part with fingerings and bowings that go back to Franz Clement, the soloist of the premiere performance, and to the Viennese performance tradition of Beethoven's time. For violinists of today, this is a treasure trove of new, innovative ideas and suggestions for the individual shaping of the part.

According to Bärenreiter, the concerto has been "freed" and clarified by Del Mar, and later additions have been removed. However, Brown puts it firmly in the context of the performance practices of the time (and the relationship of the various sources has also been thoroughly explored), providing "new, innovative ideas." In fact, Brown also gives "a more detailed analysis of the nineteenth-century traditions of performing Beethoven's Violin Concerto, including the matter of cadenzas and ornamentation, and their implications for our understanding of the composer's text" (Brown 2011, xvi). He therefore includes references to later editions by violinists who could be seen as having insights into the performance practice of Beethoven's time from as late as Heinrich Dessauer's 1897 edition, and those by Joseph Hellmesberger Jr from ca. 1901 and Joseph Joachim from 1905, almost a century after the original work was composed.

There are methodological elements in common between Brown and Del Mar, but these two editions fall roughly on either side of the PRT/CTH divide. Del Mar gives us the text, while Brown gives us the text with its tradition, although this is an oversimplification as both editors are ultimately aiming at an authoritative text that can be used by performers. Del Mar's ingenious argument, in essence that the urtext's editor aims to reconstruct the composer's notational intention—not the *performing* intention but just what Beethoven intended to *write*—is to a degree modified by his clear evaluation of textual cruces at least partly in terms of the decisions that performers have to take (Del Mar 2020). Brown's edition is arguably more innovative in the sense that it goes beyond "purely" textual questions by amassing a wealth of positivist data (that some would think not relevant to a textual edition) with the presumed aim of subverting modern "mainstream" performances: if it is subversive, it is, as it were, *conservatively subversive*.

The actual life of musical texts is more complicated than either the PRT or the CTH view allows. The Latin scholar Albert C. Clark once argued that in the transmission of biblical manuscript texts, omission was a more common scribal

error than addition: "A text is like a traveller who goes from one inn to another, losing an article of luggage at each halt" (1915, 233). Musical texts work in the opposite way. As time goes on, they accumulate more and more luggage, until it is all discarded with the urtext. The edition of eighteenth-century violin music published by Cartier (1798) included remarkably clean texts of repertoire such as Corelli's sonatas, which were later edited by Ferdinand David so as to amount to recomposed works (David 1867–72), before gradually being simplified. In this reception history, the text is the hero of a picaresque novel, who gradually learns about him- or herself through travel and adventures. The Bach cello suites provide additional examples of this process. Nineteenth-century editions grew increasingly elaborate (a process only somewhat inhibited by the emergence of the first Bach *Gesamtausgabe* in 1851), reaching a peak in the earlier twentieth century in the editions by Fernand Pollain, Diran Alexanian, and Paul Tortelier, the last two both using complex analytical notation. All this accumulated commentary was subsequently removed with the appearance of, first, August Wenzinger's edition (Bach 1950), which still retained some older editorial practices, and then the new Schwemer and Woodfull-Harris edition (Bach 2000), which offered facsimiles of the four eighteenth-century manuscript sources and the first printed edition from 1824, along with an unadorned text, giving all variant readings from these sources together with information about performance practice, basically leaving it to the player to decide what and how to play.[1]

How printed musical texts are interpreted or glossed represents another layer of complexity. In the CTH approach, to be explicated for the purposes of historically informed performance, older musical texts are surrounded with a multitude of other texts, freely defined. These can be any verbal document (instrumental treatises, newspaper articles and reviews, account books, novels with relevant content, etc.), other musical documents (contemporaneous annotated editions, annotated editions even from a later period), or, depending on the historical period, acoustic or graphic documents (old film, old recordings, paintings, photographs). All such resources can illuminate the performance of the musical text in question, but they can go further and create a palimpsest by which the original text is overwritten with other texts until it risks being submerged, in keeping with those biblical, Talmudic, and Qur'anic commentaries where the marginalia tend to be longer than the historical text under discussion (Herdman 2015).

But what practical musicians actually like is not so much detailed historical documentation (of course they *do* like this, but it is not everything), but something with which they can weave a story that informs or inspires their performance. This could be a fantasy that Schubert's last year was a death-obsessed traversal of all that was gloomy (untrue). It could be an imagined picture of Bach's caffeine-fuelled Leipzig coffee house that inspires an especially fast performance of the last movements of the Third or Sixth Brandenburg Concertos. When Casals exclaimed of a passage in the Schumann Cello Concerto, "all is pain—the poor man!" (Blum 1977, 3), he was historically inaccurate, in that

1 For a study of nineteenth-century editions of the Bach cello suites, see Kennaway (2020).

Schumann was well when he composed the piece, only becoming mentally ill when proofreading it and committing suicide a few days later. However, notwithstanding this objection, the image of the mentally ill composer helped Casals, and through him his students, to achieve a kind of dramatic expression ("a hair-raising crescendo, culminating in a sforzando that had the intensity of a shriek" [ibid.]). The story can be true, *but it need not be*; and it is only for the performer's benefit, so there is no need to share it with the audience or to expose it to critical examination. This could be justified in terms of Aristotle's concept of the probable impossibility versus the improbable possibility (*Poetics* 1460a27; Aristotle 1895, 99); but in any case, *se non è vero, è ben trovato*.

The PRT approach, on the other hand, needs no intermediary to gloss the musical text for the performer. That seems simple, but there are two problems. First, despite a supposed scientific method, urtexts can differ markedly for a host of reasons. Second, there is an obvious risk when that text itself is from a time when various performance conventions were taken for granted and not written down. We need to know how to read it, not simply to disentangle unfamiliar clefs or complicated ornament notation, but to apply the relevant conventions. In nineteenth-century music a dynamic hairpin crescendo can sometimes entail an accelerando, contrary to everything that one was taught as a student (Poli 2010). In this period, piano arpeggiation was normal and did not need to be written down (Peres Da Costa 2012). An urtext of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century work that does not take such unwritten conventions into account can encourage some musicians to play *come scritto* and not read between the notes.

Even when composers appear to give clear instructions, there can be problems. If they say explicitly that the work is to be played exactly as written, or that a particular technique is or is not to be used, it is a relatively easy matter to undermine such *obiter dicta*. There are many examples of composers saying "play as written" but then admitting that an unforeseen performance is equally valid; one may well find examples of a performance given by a composer at a different tempo or with different phrasing; we may know that they heard and approved a performance that contradicted their directions. If we take Joachim as our model for German violin style in the later nineteenth century, a disconcerting anecdote in Moser's biography serves as a warning. Before Joachim's quartet played Mendelssohn's String Quartet in E♭ Major, op. 12, the violinist received a letter from an amateur quartet who wanted to bet on which bowing he would use at the opening of the Canzonetta movement, in a passage that occurs three times. Joachim played the passage in three different parts of the bow: "I then had the fun of playing the theme, which recurred three times in the piece unchanged, each time at a different point of the bow with ever-changing strokes" (Moser 1908–10, 2:286, my translation).[2]

Negative instructions like *non vibrato* or *non crescendo* are particularly ambiguous in historical performance research. Do composers mean that although this

2 "Darauf machte ich mir den Spaß, das in dem Stück dreimal unverändert wiederkehrende Thema jedesmal an einer anderen Stelle des Bogens mit stets wechselnden Stricharten zu spielen."

sort of passage is normally played with vibrato, they do not want it here?—or that they are not concerned elsewhere about vibrato, but it is not wanted here?—or that a player known to the composer used vibrato habitually, but it is forbidden here?—or that other players are assumed to be using it, but this player should not? (see Kennaway 2015). Any statement of this kind, positive or negative, can be undermined. The general approach is to say that the composer "used words in a different sense from today's meaning," or that "the command 'don't do X' means that X was used generally, so we can do it." It is as if the Ten Commandments meant that in practice murder and theft were the norm in Moses's Egypt. This type of sophisticated exegesis (sophistry?) can be valid, but it can also amount to a case of confirmatory bias arising from attachment to an overall worldview. In no area more than in vibrato is this clearer. The historical evidence is quite transparent in telling us that, at one time, vibrato was an ornament tastefully applied to single notes, but the debate about this has astonishing tenacity. A discussion of vibrato on the Facebook page "Historical Performance Research" grew to such a length (around eighty thousand words over nineteen interconnected threads) that it was archived as "Vibrato Wars."[3]

Those who fundamentally dislike vibrato on simple grounds of personal taste can amass all sorts of references in reviews that approve of Mlle. X's silvery, flute-like, or glassy tone. Those who think vibrato essential will either dismiss this as poor technique or even vocally unhealthy, or they will find other approving references to vibrato or get involved in tortuous distinctions between different terminologies in several languages. This perennial, heated discussion is fuelled by the potential ambiguity of the texts quoted and the diversity of historical terminology. The PRT approach is therefore full of pitfalls if the aim is to be historically informed. Evidently, there is, and always has been, room for musicians who simply let their unfettered sensibility play over the clean, error-free text, but this can be seen as almost subversive or dissident. The multiple sub-divisions of religious Protestantism show that the individual's direct communication with the text does not resolve such matters but, on the contrary, can create more problems.

In a further refinement, or expansion, of the PRT approach, rather than use a modern urtext that may give a text that was unknown when the music was composed, performers are now free to take any contemporaneous musical text as their starting point. Here is an example from Haydn's String Quartet in D Major, op. 20, no. 4 (table 6.1).

In various early editions, the descending chromatic scale in the first violin part is grouped inconsistently in shorter phrases; but from the mid-nineteenth century, it is more consistently presented under one long slur. (Clearly, a long slur can be a legato instruction rather than a bowing; long slurs can be divided up into several legato bow strokes, and this is particularly true of nineteenth-century orchestral music. However, given the allegro di molto tempo of this movement, which Lipiński [(1851), 1:73] gives as dotted half note = 58, I take

3 The original files from this Facebook thread are no longer accessible. See Braithwaite (2021b) for a brief account, and Braithwaite (2021a) for a longer version. The expression was also used in an article in *Early Music America* (2015) and explored by Tracy Smith (2016).

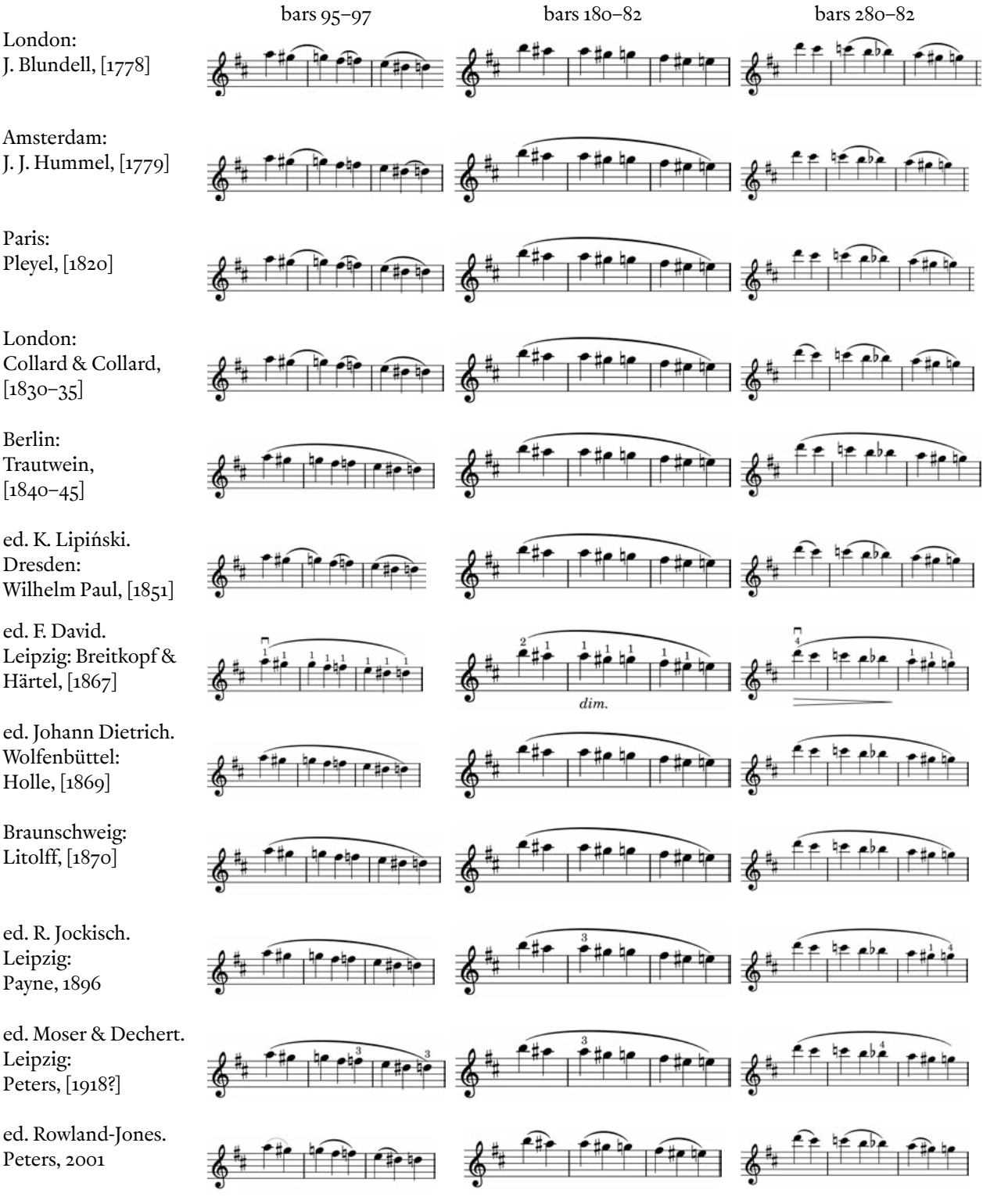

Table 6.1. Variant bowings in the first movement of Haydn's String Quartet in D Major, op. 20, no. 4 (Hob. III:34, 1772).

the view that in this case they coincide with bowing instructions.) However, the current, widely used edition by Simon Rowland-Jones offers a version that corresponds to no early source in particular, but which retains their collective approach by using shorter slurs. Ferdinand David's solution was the most extreme—a first-finger descending slide. But an argument could be made for using David's *nineteenth*-century fingering in a historically informed performance of *eighteenth*-century Haydn. After all, there were violinists in the later eighteenth century who used portamento, including Nicola Mestrino and Antonio Lolli. Mestrino's pupil Michel Woldemar notated his portamento (1798), while Lolli, who played in the Esterházy orchestra, notated portamento in his Violin Sonata op. 9, no. 4 (1785). Admittedly, portamento was less common in the late eighteenth century than it would become in the next century, but one only has to imagine either of these violinists playing the piece to find an experimental approach—"this is how Lolli or Mestrino *might* have played it." That is a relatively conservative way in which to justify such a performance. But, more radically, we can invent a story: Haydn was joking with one of his violinists about portamento, the player demonstrated it for fun, and Haydn kept it for simple amusement. In any case, it may be that, in the end, what our performance research produces is actually a historical novel or, more provocatively, a counterfactually informed performance.

Although playing Haydn with nineteenth-century fingering might be seen as a frivolous thought-experiment, there are many examples available of later performances being suggestive of earlier performance practices. The study of early recordings—which also tend to be "read" as texts—has transformed our understanding of nineteenth-century performance. This was begun by Robert Philip (1992) and continued by David Milsom (2003) and Neal Peres Da Costa (2012); it has been extended by Inja Stanović, who explores early recording processes themselves, revealing much about the performance practices required in the early recording studio (Stanović 2022). The playing of cellist Aleksandr Verzhbilovich, as recorded in his fifties in 1902–3, may well reflect that of Karl Davydov, his teacher; the 1913 recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony by Arthur Nikisch and the Berlin Philharmonic contains examples of unnotated *inégalité* in the slow movement; Heinrich Grünfeld's recording of the slow movement of Haydn's Cello Concerto in D Major (Hob. VIIb:2; 1784) uses very obvious overdotting; Marie Soldat-Roeger's 1920 recording of the slow movement of Louis Spohr's Ninth Violin Concerto has been argued to retain aspects of the playing of her teacher Augustus Pott, who was himself a Spohr pupil (see Milsom 2015). But how far back one can go in plausibly inferring past practices from later performances is indeed a question—especially since aspects of early recordings do not neatly correlate with age. Younger players can play in a relatively old-fashioned way; older players can be entirely up-to-date (Kennaway 2014). This methodology folds over history like a Möbius strip, so as to invert chronology and make twentieth-century musicians contemporaneous with those of the previous century.

The CTH approach is more complicated. It needs many texts, but they have to be carefully curated. Here, magisterial players such as Joachim are like biblical commentators or prophets, interpreting the text of the composer. The problem is that there are many players, many prophets, who want to do this. Over roughly a century, there were at least ten different editions of the Beethoven violin sonatas; and in 1877 alone there were three different editions of Mendelssohn's cello sonatas, with a fourth appearing around 1902 (Kennaway 2012). Later in the nineteenth century, a reaction began. In 1876 a reviewer of Alfredo Piatti's performance of a viola da gamba sonata then thought to be by Handel objected to Grützmacher's edition from a clearly PRT position:

> The writer of the analytical book [the programme note] states that "none of the marks of expression indicated by Herr Grützmacher . . . is Handel's own. It is curious that such matters cannot be left to the judgment, taste, and feeling of the executive artists themselves, instead of being dictated, as is too much the fashion now-a-days, by special individuals." We quite agree with the analyst; the *Athenæum* has always contended for the right of artists to a free and independent interpretation. . . . A truly great pianist must have an original conception of a sonata or concerto, and have the will to carry out the reading. . . . There is no more value in a traditional theory for the execution of compositions for the pianoforte than for the reading of Shakespeare. (*Athenæum* 1876, 240)

The editing that the reviewer disliked was also strongly criticised by Andreas Moser in 1905 regarding Spohr:

> The modern practice, therefore, of "editing" recognised classical and standard works cannot be too severely condemned as Vandalism. . . . Spohr . . . has especially suffered much from this mania for editing. Partly from an utter lack of knowledge regarding certain peculiarities in his style of composition and treatment of the violin, and partly in order that the amateur might be enabled to reach the grapes which otherwise hung too high for him, the sacrilege with respect to Spohr's works has arrived at such a pitch as to call for the strongest protest. (Joachim and Moser 1905, 3:10)

Scholars now further interpret these player-editors, discriminating between those who transmit the "true message" and (other) outliers who are just eccentric. Some more recent urtext editions also do this while making wide reference to things like alternative cadenzas and explaining unnotated performance practices that can be shown to have been current at the time of composition; the editions of Brahms's chamber music by Clive Brown and colleagues (Brown, Peres Da Costa, and Wadsworth 2015) are good examples. These editions teach us how to read older texts in the context of contemporary descriptions and explanations. But some voices remain unheard, like those of amateur musicians or novelists, some of whom found the austere performances of Alfredo Piatti, Joseph Joachim, or even Brahms himself cold. True, many critics liked Piatti's restrained vibrato, including Hanslick (1870, 162), the English cleric and editor of Tudor music Edmund Fellowes (1946, 18–19), who was offered violin lessons by Joachim, and the cellist Hugo Becker (Becker and Ryner

1929, 202). In contrast, though, the amateur cellist Stanley Rigby remembered Piatti's playing from the 1870s and called it "beautiful but . . . cold" (1954, 140); and the novelist Marie Corelli ([1886] 1890, 114) makes her character Heliobas describe Joachim's performance as "coldly correct" and Charles Hallé's as "icily-null," complaining that London critics despise emotional playing as "clap-trap"—Heliobas instead admired the cellist Joseph Hollman's "throb of passion." Hanslick, Fellowes, and Becker are admitted into the gospels, but Rigby and Corelli are not. The cellist Heinrich Grünfeld said, "It is very strange to note that Brahms, who was a pianist of the very first order, always remained cold in his pianistic performance" (1923, 123, my translation).[4] Hanslick was writing from his own particular aesthetic position, expressed in his 1854 *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*. Grünfeld, by contrast, was a successful Berlin cellist, a chamber musician but not a virtuoso, who rejected 1920s modernism in favour of expressive *cantilena* (ibid., 105–6). So who decides what writings should be relegated to the apocrypha?

Ironically, the new historically informed performance made in the light of all these texts is now pored over and treated as another text—and this is in itself a historically informed process. Nineteenth-century students were urged to emulate the best musicians in order to learn things that could not be written down, and now styles are learned more quickly by listening to live performances and recordings. The performance, that is, becomes itself a text for study, and this process helps establish a consensus whereby prophets become rivals, competing for the faith of potential disciples.

A potential problem with the urtext concept is that it can offer a text free from any wider cultural context or exegesis. In literary criticism, such tensions were abandoned years ago. In the early twentieth century, much literary criticism was directed at the author's intention: how well did the poem match the intention? In the 1920s, however, the critic I. A. Richards's New Criticism tore away all surrounding context, such as biographical information about the writer or other literary information, and presented students with a bald text, a sort of urtext. Analysis of the text—one might even call this a "performative" approach—proceeded through the application of close reading techniques (Richards 1929). The celebrated exegesis of this approach in William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley's essay "The Intentional Fallacy" ([1946] 1954) still feels like a dose of cold water, with its rigorous dismissal of anything that is not demonstrably present in the text. This method could not last, of course, and works of art are now routinely placed in their historical context—they are seen as porous objects in a culture, not impermeable stones. Neither poems nor musical works are boxes with things inside. The musical text—the page of notes—becomes a site interpenetrated by many other texts, some more tangential than others.

4 "Es ist sehr merkwürdig zu konstatieren, daß Brahms, der ein Pianist allerersten Ranges war, in seinem pianistischen Vortrag immer kalt blieb."

Legal comparison

I began with the Bible, but I end with the Constitution of the United States, another text whose interpretation raises complex questions familiar to musicians. Lawyer and musician Ian Gallacher's 2006 paper about the Constitution draws a parallel between textualist and contextualist approaches to this text and similar approaches to performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in E♭ Major ("Eroica"), op. 55, imagining how Supreme Court judge Justice Scalia, a confirmed textualist, would conduct the symphony. Scalia's approach would accept the text entirely, although he would allow the addition of what Gallacher (2006) calls a "non-articulated meaning" (326) and elsewhere "interstitial textualism" (323), rather like reading between the notes. In the first movement, Beethoven's trumpet plays only some of the theme because of the instrument's limitations; but since at least the time of Hans von Bülow this has been altered because modern instruments can play all the notes. *Only* the physical limitation of the time prevented those notes being written, so a contextualist is justified in playing what Beethoven must have (?) wanted but could not expect to hear. Scalia takes a position inclined towards an "originalist" reading. Originalism is seen as a reactionary trend in American jurisprudence; its followers try to recover either the original intent of the framers of the Constitution or the meaning the document would have for the generation that ratified it. There is no room for a "living constitution" that evolves in response to changing practices and beliefs. A follower of a living constitution might think that a definition of "cruel and unusual punishment" (as referred to in the eighth amendment—this expression is part of the American 1791 Bill of Rights, but it uses almost *verbatim* expressions from the 1689 English Bill of Rights) was not historically fixed but depended on shifting notions of morality and common decency. Originalists do not see it that way. They would say that the amendment forbids, for example, mediaeval methods of execution, but does not forbid later forms of torture. This has been called a "paleoconservative fad" (Kidd 2022). The musical equivalent of a "living constitution" approach would embrace performances of Bach's Goldberg Variations on a Bösendorfer Imperial; the "originalist" keyboard player would steadfastly refuse anything other than whatever they thought Bach himself meant by "Clavicimbal mit 2 Manualen."

Musical choices do not have the consequences for individuals that trials based on interpretations of the American Constitution have. The "Eroica" will still be available after a performance, whether the trumpet plays the original part or not. But our choices do have consequences. The PRT approach still has to deal with multiple musical texts: all performers create their own. Paradoxically, this leads to the increasingly provisional status of the performance itself, which some might say encapsulates its ontological status: "Next week we will play Chopin from his German editions"; "This is how an elderly musician in an isolated Baltic village might have played Mozart"; "This is how Marie Corelli might have liked Chopin." That is, the musical work is that which is performed. The CTH approach, dealing with many more texts and commentaries on texts, requires careful curation to avoid heresy, which in turn raises

questions of discourse limit and control: who has the power to decide what is extra-discursive? Such questions may not concern the musician looking at the music on the stand that has to be performed tomorrow, but they should not be dismissed either. It is not necessary to make a fixed choice between the PRT and CTH approaches and, indeed, it would seem that an ecumenical approach is best.

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The Flexible Text

Published and Unpublished Alterations to the Schumann Cello Concerto in the Nineteenth Century*

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> We ought to take a fresh look at tradition, considered not as the inert acceptance of a fossilized corpus of themes and conventions, but as an organic habit of re-creating what has been received and is handed on. It may be that we ought to re-examine the concept of originality, which is relatively modern as a shibboleth of criticism. . . . We may even come to believe that, great as some authors have been, their greatness is finally surpassed by that of the craft they have served; hence, whenever we reckon their contributions, we should also remember their obligations.
>
> —Harry Levin, Preface to *The Singer of Tales* ([1960] 2000, xxxi)

> The Schumann concerto, as written, is impossible to play; every cellist changes it in his own (naturally often very unsatisfactory) fashion, and thus an approved, effective (and, if I may say so, a duly reverent) arrangement would be greeted with enthusiasm.[1]
>
> —Friedrich Grützmacher, letter to Peters-Verlag (1883)

Accounts of the early reception of Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto in A Minor, op. 129 (1850), are often dismissive of the first generation of soloists to perform it and downright contemptuous of Robert Emil Bockmühl (1812–81), the cellist who worked together with Schumann on the preparation of the first edition between 1852 and 1854 (Schumann [1854]b). Bockmühl had long ago earned an ignominious place in the history of this concerto, first by requesting major changes to the third movement and then, when Schumann did not make them, by demurring to give the work's premiere, which he and Schumann had originally planned. In his 1995 critical edition of the concerto for Breitkopf und Härtel, Joachim Draheim (1995, [iii]) dispenses with Bockmühl immediately as "a composer of technically demanding but musically shallow virtuoso pieces for cello," who "could or would not understand Schumann's concept."

* Many thanks to the Leverhulme Trust for funding this research and to Heinz von Loesch and Alfred Richter for connecting me with invaluable source material and other information.

1 "So, wie das Concert von Schumann geschrieben ist, ist es unmöglich zu spielen; jeder Violoncellist ändert es sich auf seine (natürlich oft sehr ungenügende) Weise, und wird daher eine abprobirte, wirkungsvolle (und, wie ich doch auch sagen darf, pietätsvolle) Einrichtung freudig begrüßt werden." All translations mine unless otherwise indicated. Any underlined text is underlined in the original.

As for later generations' tendency to take liberties with the text, such as cellists supplying alternative cadenzas and composer-conductors messing about with the orchestration, Draheim finds performers' hubris so reprehensible that Bockmühl's well-meaning suggestions for Schumann begin to look "harmless and pardonable" (harmlos und verzeihlich) by comparison (Draheim 1993, 264; see also 1995, [v]).

Heinz von Loesch (1995) takes a more performer-friendly approach by considering nineteenth-century cellists' relationship with the piece as a continuation of the Bockmühl–Schumann negotiation.[2] Looking at a small note change in Julius Klengel's 1903 edition (Schumann [1903]), as well as more substantial rewrites in a hand-annotated copy that references Bernhard Cossmann (1822–1910), in addition to the robust tradition of alternative cadenzas, Loesch argues that Bockmühl's thoughtful critique highlighted genuine problems with the piece—specifically as a cello concerto—which later generations of cellists then attempted to solve.

From the perspective of a historical performer, however, even this defence does not go far enough to exonerate the musicians who have dared to interfere with Schumann's text. For one thing, Schumann himself treated other composers' texts flexibly, for example in his composed piano parts to the Bach cello suites.[3] For another, Schumann's body of music criticism, which he himself had collected and prepared for publication at the same time as the Cello Concerto, shows a range of responses to text alteration and enhancement as practised by other musicians. His reviews of Franz Liszt, for example, even when they are critical, show his underlying support for the related arts of improvisation and transcription, and his feeling that the performer's first allegiance is to something deeper than the notation (Schumann [1854]a, 3:231–42).

Moreover, some of the musical colleagues Schumann trusted most have also left us evidence of text flexibility—even as they worked to promote the very ideals that are now used to condemn it. Schumann's protégé, the violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907), refused a request to publish his rendition of the Bach Chaconne (from Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004) in 1879, because he played the arpeggio section differently every time and therefore was not able to write it down (Joachim [1879] 1921). Ferdinand David (1810–73), the concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and a friend of Schumann's, left a wealth of evidence of adjustments made to the music of composers ranging from Bach and Beethoven to Robert Volkmann and Mendelssohn, both in the form of published editions and in personal annotations that often take the changes even further.[4] The pianist, composer, and

2 This negotiation is partially preserved in a set of twenty-six letters from Bockmühl to Schumann, housed in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Krakow. Unfortunately, we do not have Schumann's responses or any record of what passed between them when they met in person.

3 For a study that considers Schumann's arrangements in the context of other nineteenth-century editions and arrangements of the Bach cello suites, see Knobel (2006).

4 See in particular David's versions of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Mendelssohn's String Quintet in A Major, op. 18, Cherubini's String Quartet in E♭ Major, and Volkmann's String Quartets opp. 9 and 14 available from the Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions (CHASE), at https://mhm.hud.ac.uk/chase/.

conductor Carl Reinecke (1824–1910; see also Nir Cohen-Shalit's chapter), with whom Schumann felt a musical kinship, gave a thorough explanation and defence of his various adjustments to the Mozart piano concertos toward the end of the century, in which he also mentioned that both Ferdinand Hiller (1811–85) and Clara Schumann (1819–96) adjusted the text to a similar degree (Reinecke 1891, 25). There is even a surviving copy of Brahms's First Piano Concerto with passagework adjusted by Clara Schumann, a source that Alexander Stefaniak discusses in detail in his recent portrait of Clara Schumann as a performer (2021, 126–32). Stefaniak sums up the issue very neatly when he writes that nineteenth-century performance practice "combined an elaborate ideology that demanded respect for the musical work with practices that allowed, even encouraged, concert performers to exercise considerable creative agency" (101).

Within the culture of Robert Schumann's musical circle, then, a decision to change the notes of a piece of music would not have implied a defect, either in the performer or in the composer. Against this backdrop of text flexibility as a normal part of Schumann-circle musicianship, I propose a fresh look at the various alterations cellists made to the Schumann Cello Concerto over the first few decades of its existence. If performers today could imagine a type of reverence for the composer's intentions that allowed for personal rewrites, we might win some additional creative space for ourselves in engaging with this cornerstone of the cello repertoire.

"The original is untouched": Friedrich Grützmacher's 1887 edition

While the Schumann Cello Concerto had more early adopters than we tend to think, it was not until the late 1860s that the most established cello soloists began to tour with it. Friedrich Grützmacher (1832–1903) was one of these, bringing the piece to multiple cities where it was heard for the first time, and often being praised as an advocate for a piece that did not immediately speak to the public. After a concert in Hannover in 1869, for example, in which Grützmacher paired the Schumann concerto with some solo Bach, *Signale für die musikalische Welt* remarked that the Bach pieces "gave more pleasure than the Schumann concerto, although they also had not yet been heard here," continuing:

> The self-denial Herr Grützmacher showed in choosing not to reprise well-known musical pieces that are flattering to the ear deserves the greatest recognition and proves that, in Herr Grützmacher, we quite rightly honour the dignified musician who pays homage to serious art, every bit as much as the virtuoso. (*Signale für die musikalische Welt* 1869, 134)[5]

5 "Daher machten diese Pièccen noch mehr Glück als das Schumann'sche Concert, obgleich auch sie hier öffentlich noch nicht gehört sind. Die Selbstverläugnung, mit welcher Herr Grützmacher darauf verzichtete, mit bekannten, gefällig zum Ohre sprechenden Musikstücken zu beleben, verdient die größte Anerkennung und beweist eben, daß wir ganz richtig in Herrn Grützmacher ebensowohl den gediegenen, der ernsten Kunst huldigenden Musiker verehren, wie den Virtuosen."

By the early 1880s, the piece had gained so much traction that Peters-Verlag asked Grützmacher to prepare an edition of it with his own bowings and fingerings. Grützmacher replied that, in order to do that, he would also need to make major changes to the cello part (see above), a plan that was briefly entertained but ultimately rejected by Peters. This negotiation was part of an ongoing ideological tension between Grützmacher and the director of Peters, Max Abraham, who considered it his "sacred duty" to publish the musical classics "exactly as they were composed" (Peters-Verlag 188[6]; eine heilige Pflicht die Werke der Komponisten so zu veröffentlichen, wie sie von denselben geschrieben sind).[6] As a result, Grützmacher's altered version was never published, although it does appear to have reached the engraving stage as a *Virtuosen-Ausgabe* or "soloist's edition" (Grützmacher 1884). However, the edition he did publish includes certain alternative suggestions. The Schumann–Bockmühl negotiations had already produced a few short alternative passages, either written or approved by Schumann himself, and set in double staves in the first edition (as in figure 7.1).

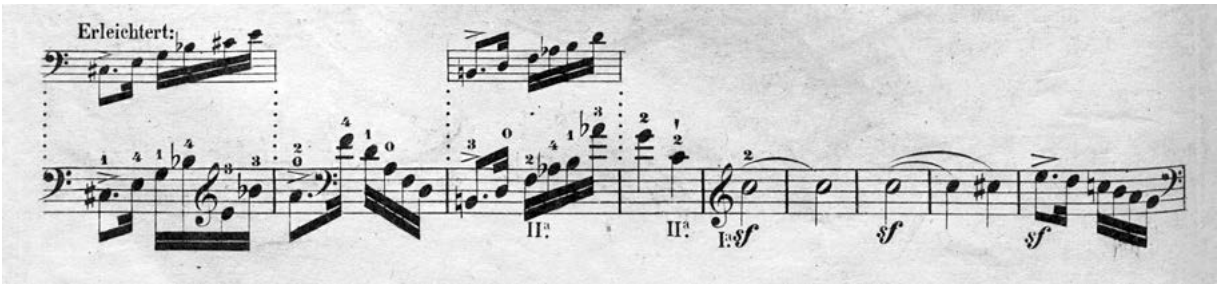


Figure 7.1.

In figure 7.2, Grützmacher takes advantage of the double-staff format to provide his own alternative, while keeping the same harmony, rhythm, and melodic shape.

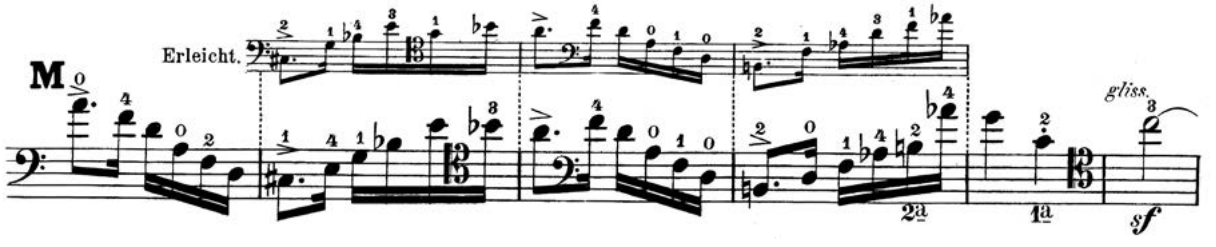


Figure 7.2.

6 Grützmacher's four-decade correspondence with Max Abraham from Peters-Verlag illuminates the tension between the type of reverence required of a performer or teacher versus that required of an editor, with some polemical letters from both sides through the 1880s. See Wadsworth (2018).

Figure 7.1. First edition of Schumann's op. 129 ([1854]b): third movement, bars 87–95.

Figure 7.2. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Grützmacher (Schumann [1887]a): third movement, bars 86–91.

Grützmacher also makes use of the double-staff format to suggest alternative bowings for certain passages, generally to add more intricacy to the bowings, either by adding separate bows to slurred passages or by slurring against the beat, as in figure 7.3.

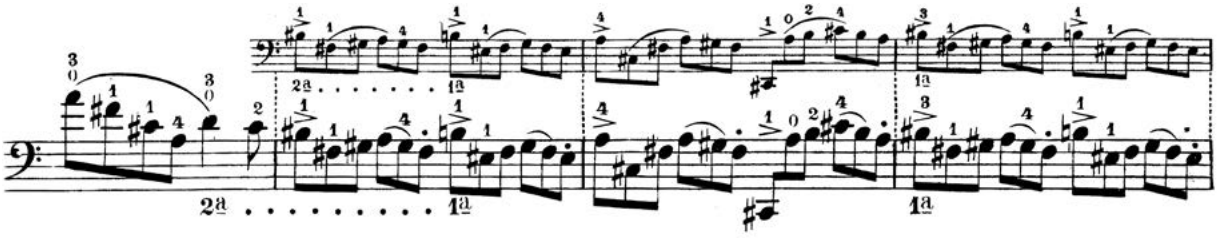


Figure 7.3.

In figure 7.4, Grützmacher preserves Schumann's alternative while adding a third option: in the main staff, he adds an a in small print over the A.[7]

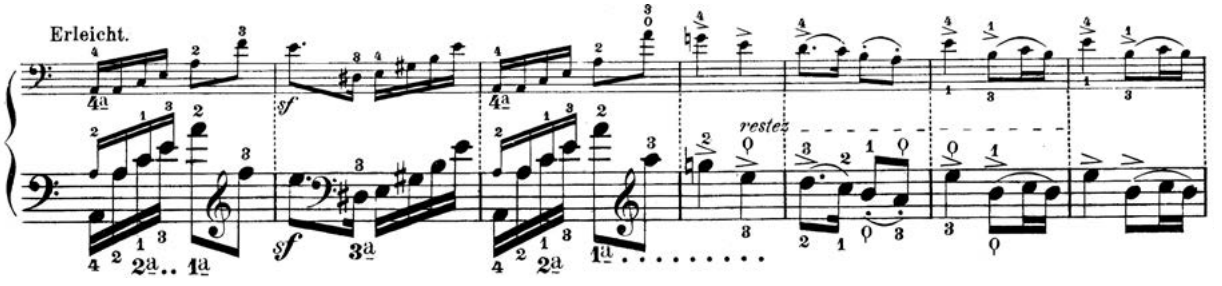


Figure 7.4.

Grützmacher also occasionally makes silent changes to the bowing. Where there are impractically long slurs, such as Schumann's slur over three bars in the transition into the third movement, Grützmacher breaks them up without letting the reader know he has changed them. It may be that he saw this type of bowing change as purely technical and therefore not warranting a double staff. Another silent change that is characteristic of Grützmacher's work is his decision to remove all the "hat" accents from the first edition, replacing them with ordinary ones.[8] There is even an occasional silent change of notes, such as his addition of a unison double stop in bar 32 of the third movement (figure 7.5).

7 This is the note change Loesch refers to in Julius Klengel's edition, which, unlike Grützmacher's, takes the liberty of replacing Schumann's original A with the higher a (Schumann [1903]).

8 In Grützmacher (1896), he explains that the "hat" accents are too easily confused with down-bow markings (^).

Figure 7.3. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Grützmacher: first movement, bars 164–67.

Figure 7.4. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Grützmacher: third movement, bars 8–14.

Figure 7.5.

Nevertheless, when he sent his edition to Peters, Grützmacher felt able to claim that "the original is untouched," having "added merely those markings and amendments that were necessary for practical use (often in a new way, devised specifically for this edition)" (Grützmacher 1885).[9] We can therefore be certain that Grützmacher's edition represents the absolute minimum textual intervention that he considered necessary for a performer—and that it has very little to do with the version (or versions) he had performed himself.

Karl Davydov's 1887 edition: a *Virtuosen-Ausgabe*?

In an edition that came out in the same year as Grützmacher's, Karl Davydov (1838–89), Grützmacher's successor at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, goes much further in suggesting changes to the cello part—perhaps thanks to a more lenient publisher (Schumann [1887]c). Like Grützmacher, Davydov uses Schumann's double-staff precedent to suggest his own alternative passage-work—although, in figure 7.6, he changes the notes in the main staff and leaves Schumann's easier alternative intact.

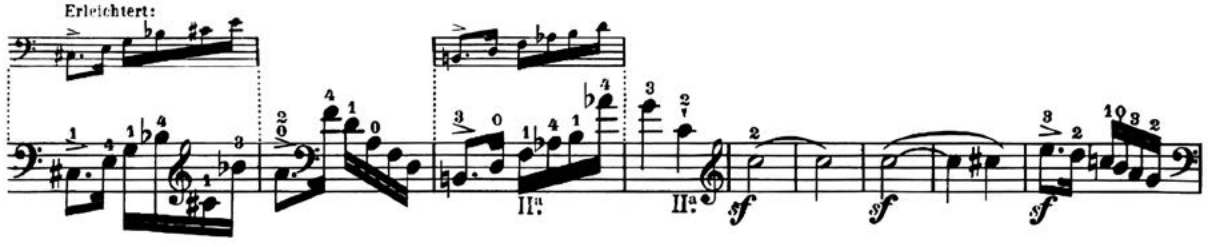


Figure 7.6.

In figure 7.7, he adds a g′ to Schumann's open G, creating a powerful-sounding double stop that also prepares the left hand for the following leap to the e″.

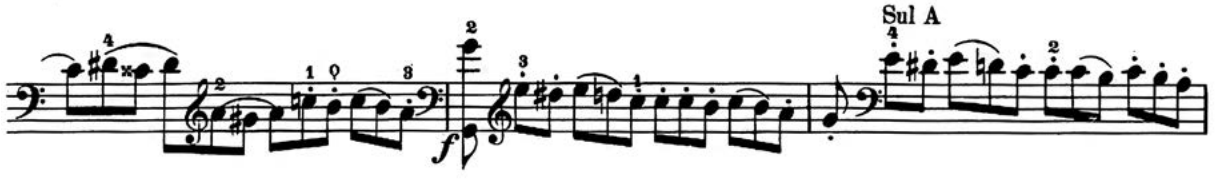


Figure 7.7.

9 "Das Original ist unangetastet, alle für die practische Verwendung nöthige Bezeichnungen und Abänderungen beigegeben, (oft in eigenes hierzu ersonnener neuer Weise,) . . ."

Figure 7.5. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Grützmacher: third movement, bars 30–32.

Figure 7.6. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Davydov (Schumann [1887]c): third movement, bars 87–92. To be compared with figure 7.2.

Figure 7.7. Schumann's op. 129 as edited by Davydov: first movement, bars 89–91.

This is one of several instances in which Davydov changes or adds the upper octave of a note in order to prepare a leap into the upper register of the cello—a nineteenth-century style of intonation risk management that Job ter Haar has referred to as "salami tactics" (2019, 227). However, in this case it would have been possible to play the upper g silently with the left hand as a way to get into position for the following note, suggesting that the double stop is meant to serve a musical purpose as well. In several other places, Davydov adds double stopping that neither adds nor diminishes risk. In figure 7.8, an *Eingang*-cadenza-like passage just before the recapitulation of the third movement, he removes Schumann's slurs and adds extra double stops, underscoring the sense of power and drive created by Schumann's combination of triplets and double stops.

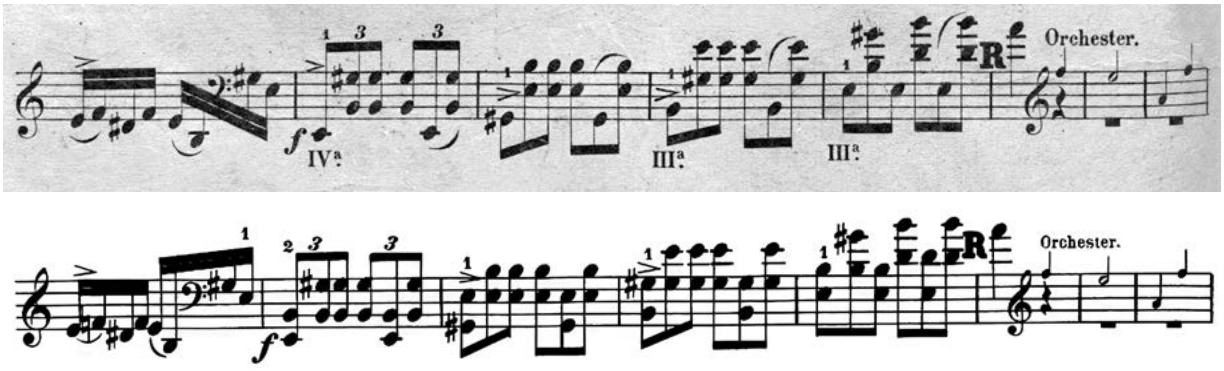


Figure 7.8a–b.

This type of change could have been motivated by "effectiveness," a theme that comes up both in Bockmühl's letters to Schumann and in Grützmacher's letters to Peters, based on a shared understanding that a cello concerto needs to hold up not only as a musical work but also as a performance, that is, as a public event. It is perhaps for this reason that Davydov's most extreme changes are reserved for the coda. In bars 373–76 and 382–83, he gives alternatives that replace Schumann's cellistically awkward passagework with smooth scales; in bars 388–91 he quietly fills in Schumann's triplet rests with notes that happen to sit comfortably under the hand (figure 7.9). Other silent changes here include a quick substitution of stepwise motion for a muddy arpeggio in bar 387 and a more emphatic rhythm and double stop to mark the critical V/V chord in bar 394. With these changes, the coda can go at a much faster tempo, which on a more abstract level supports Schumann's marking of *Schneller*.

Figure 7.8a–b. Schumann's op. 129, third movement, bars 200–5: (above) first edition; (below) Davydov's edition.

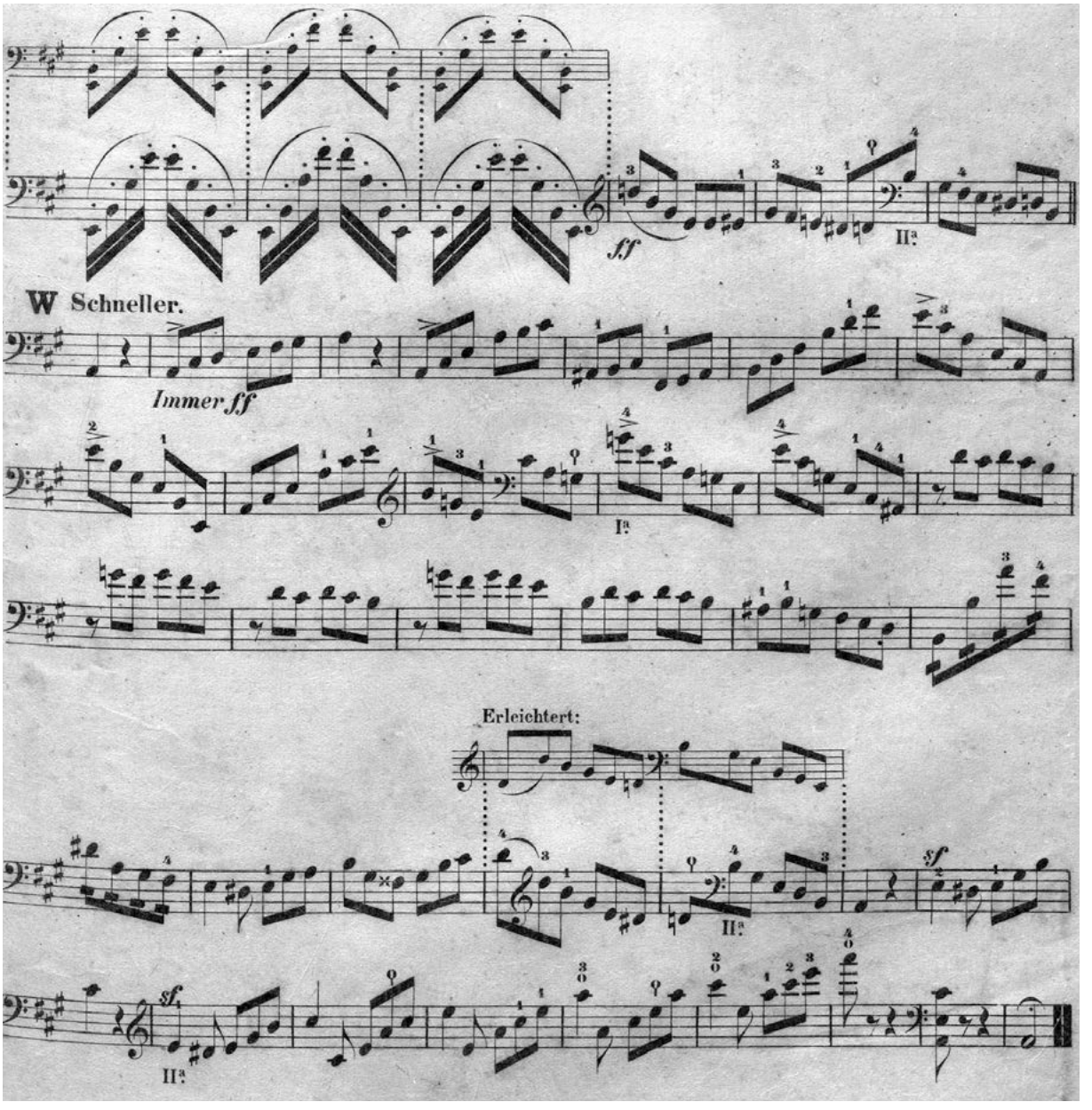
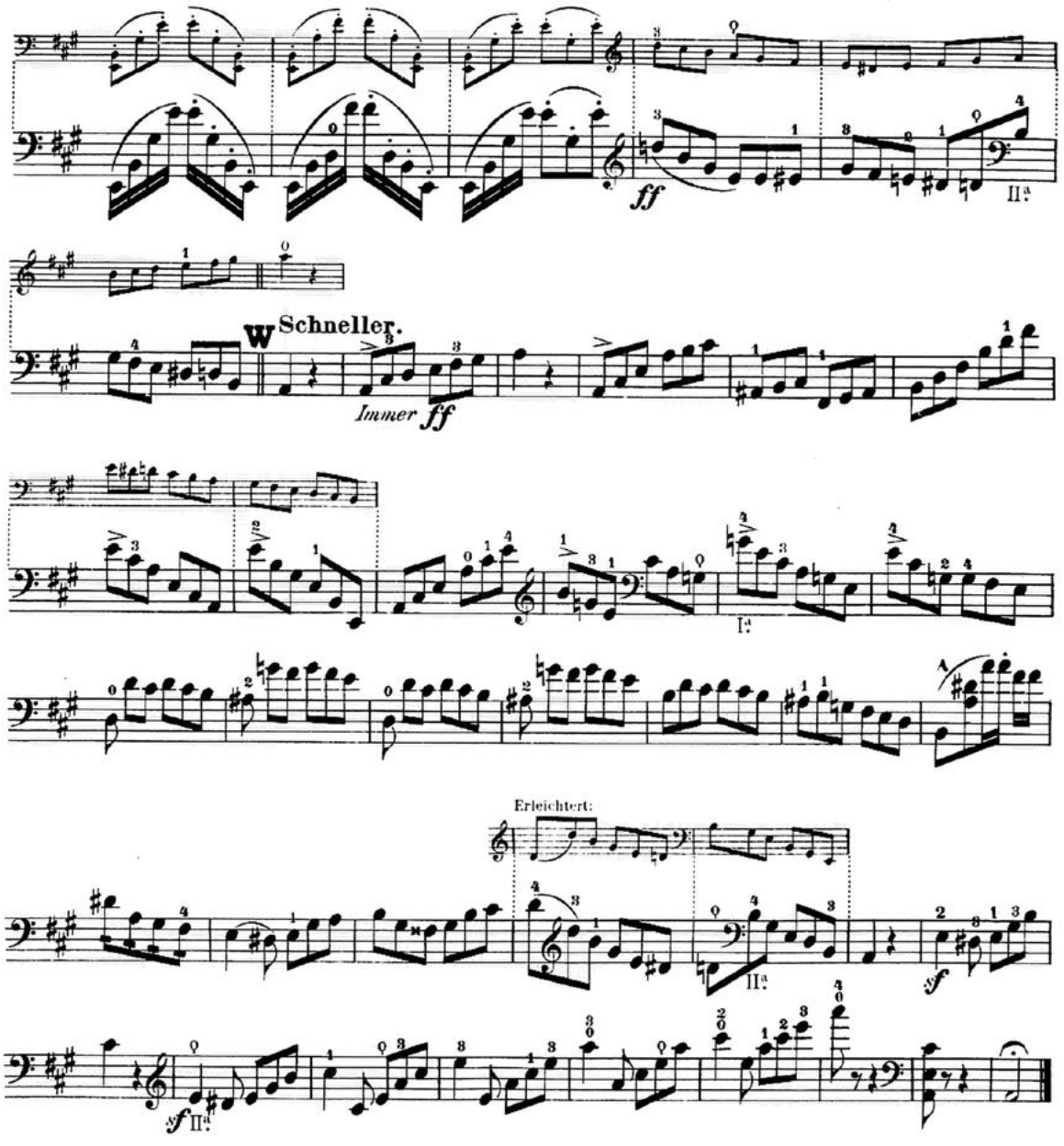


Figure 7.9a–b.

Figure 7.9a–b. Schumann's op. 129, third movement, bars 370–410: (left) first edition; (right) Davydov's edition.


ff
II.a
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II.a

Davydov's version of the coda is not the most extreme rewrite that survives. A concert review from 1868 approvingly notes that the soloist, Bernhard Cossmann (1822–1910), substituted his own cadenza and coda, and remarks that it dovetailed well with the rest of the piece (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 1868). Forty-four years later, after Cossmann's death, his cadenza was published by his student Carl Fuchs (1865–1951) (Cossmann 1912).[10] Unlike the Grützmacher and Davydov editions, Cossmann's version departs from Schumann's original harmonies, rhythms, and phrase lengths, with a much longer cadenza and a much shorter coda, so that a modified accompaniment is needed in order to perform it.[11]

There is also a published cadenza by David Popper (1843–1913), who, like Grützmacher and Cossmann, began touring with the Schumann Cello Concerto in the late 1860s (Popper 1924). Popper's cadenza is written in a way that replaces the accompanied portion of Schumann's cadenza but—unlike Cossmann's—allows the cellist to continue with Schumann's coda. As with Cossmann's cadenza, however, Popper's cadenza was published only after the cellist's death. In the preface, the editor explains that Popper had chosen not to publish his cadenza, preferring to reserve it for the use of his students (Vikár 1924).

A third nineteenth-century cadenza is printed in a cello method from 1900 by Louis Abbiate (1866–1933) and attributed to Léon Jacquard (1826–86), who had taught at the Paris Conservatoire and who had begun performing the Schumann concerto as early as 1875 (Abbiate 1900, 2:279; *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 1875, 383).[12] Abbiate does not mention whether Jacquard's cadenza had been published during the cellist's lifetime, or whether it had circulated only within the walls of the Paris Conservatoire, where Abbiate himself had studied later in the century. Jacquard's cadenza bears an unmistakeable resemblance to the family of cadenzas preserved in twentieth-century editions and recordings by cellists such as Pau Casals, Gregor Piatigorsky, Pierre Fournier, André Navarra, Maurice Gendron, Daniil Shafran, and Leonard Rose, both in its thematic structure and in its passagework. Whether it represents the common ancestor or merely an older relation, however, is not clear.

Since Cossmann's and Popper's cadenzas, and possibly Jacquard's as well, were circulated only privately while the cellists were alive, they have a "bootleg" quality that puts them in a category between published and unpublished alterations. It seems plausible that they represent trade secrets of the 1860s and 1870s—particularly given the absence of cadenza alternatives in Grützmacher's and Davydov's editions.

10 See also Loesch (1995) for a fuller discussion of Cossmann's cadenza and coda.

11 In 2013, a performance of this version took place in Manchester, involving a reconstruction of the orchestral parts by Geoff Thomason, based on Carl Fuchs's published piano part. I am grateful to Mr. Thomason for sharing his music files with me.

12 Many thanks to George Kennaway for making me aware of this source.

Ludwig Ebert's orchestral score

Housed in the collection of violinist, conductor, and composer Willem Kes (1856–1934) is a handwritten orchestral score of the Schumann concerto, dated 1861 and signed by the cellist Ludwig Ebert (1834–1908). Ebert had given the first two known performances of the piece in 1860: first with the Oldenburg orchestra on 23 April; then with piano at the Leipzig Conservatorium on 9 June, at the fiftieth birthday celebration in Schumann's memory. On the inside cover of the score, Ebert later jotted down a list of performances he had given of this concerto. Next to the Leipzig premiere is the tantalising phrase: "In original form, without changing a single note, with the entire original cadenza" (Schumann 1861, inside cover).[13] This disclaimer implies that, possibly before the Leipzig performance and definitely after it, Ebert was both changing notes and replacing the cadenza.

Whatever these changes were, it seems that they went over well. A review of his performance of the Schumann concerto in an 1869 issue of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* remarks that "[n]ot only did Herr Ebert overcome the great technical difficulties with perfect assurance but also he showed himself so familiar with the spirit of this rather brittle work that—especially in the Adagio and Finale—it came across to the listener as a delight" (*Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 1869, 94).[14]

Learning from hand-annotated parts and scores is a more delicate business than studying annotated editions, because it is not always clear how many people have annotated a given copy, when they lived, and what attitude each annotator had to the pre-existing markings (see also Nir Cohen-Shalit's chapter). Ebert's score appears to have three distinct layers to it: the original ink, and two sets of pencilled amendments, each with a distinct style of handwriting. One set of pencil markings is clearly in Kes's hand, and it looks as though he may have used Ebert's score as a scratch pad for designing his own drastically revised version of the Schumann concerto.[15] The other set of pencil markings is in handwriting that looks very similar to the underlying ink and may well be Ebert's. The changes in this hand are more limited, along the lines of Davydov's coda alternatives but applied to other areas of the piece as well. Figure 7.10 shows a way of preparing the same leap to the high f″ that Davydov's edition navigated—in this case by rewriting the passagework in the preceding bar. After the high f″, there is some alternative passagework that has been rubbed out—possibly by the same writer, or possibly by Kes, who had other ideas for this passage.

13 "In ursprünglicher Gestalt, ohne Aenderung irgend einer Note, mit der ganzen Original-Cadenz."

14 "Herr Ebert überwand nicht nur die grossen technischen Schwierigkeiten mit vollkommener Sicherheit, sondern er zeigte sich auch so vertraut mit dem Geiste des etwas spröden Werks, dass es—besonders im *Adagio* und *Finale*—dem Hörer anmuthend entgegentrat."

15 Kes's version also survives intact in his collection, including an orchestral score, a cello part, and orchestra parts. It features large cuts, inserts, and reorchestrations, as well as a completely recomposed coda (Schumann [ca. 1924]). This version would make a fascinating study, but it probably relates more to the late-Romantic tradition of conductor-composers reorchestrating Schumann's symphonies than to cello soloists' artistic freedom. See also Franke (2006).

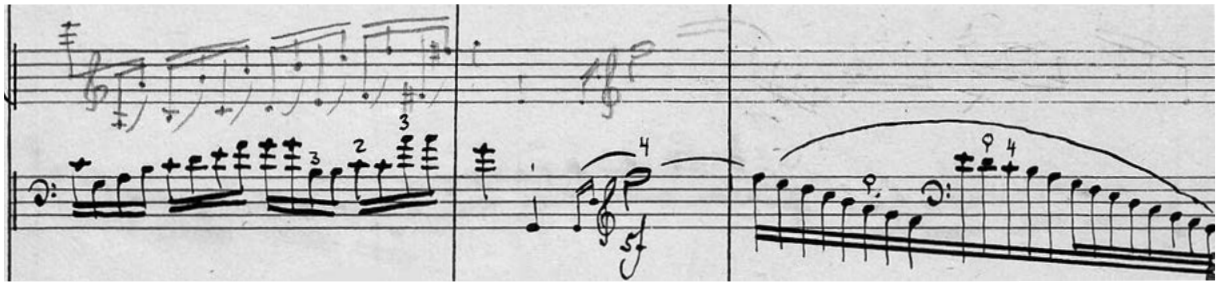

Figure 7.10.

In figure 7.11, the passage in pencil creates a more light-footed alternative to Schumann's passagework leading into the recapitulation of the third movement.

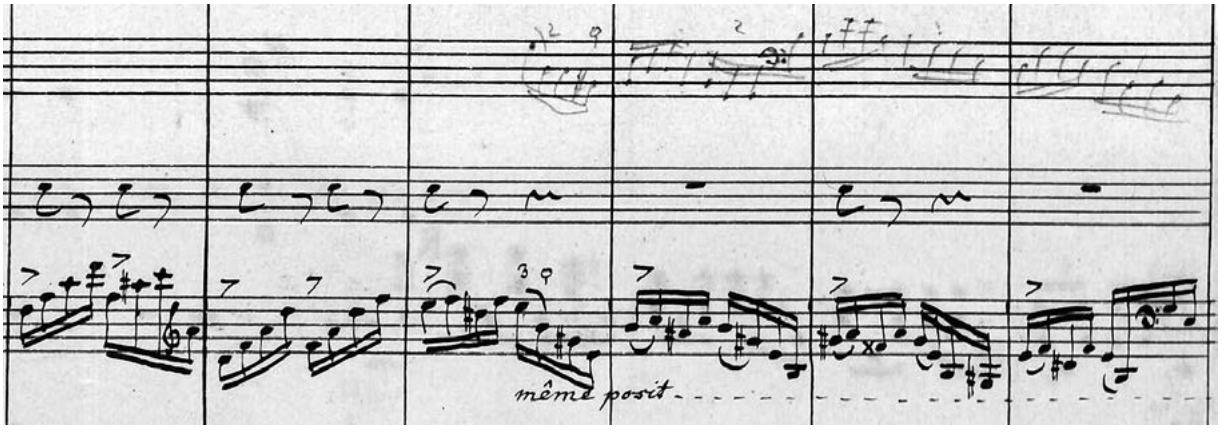

Figure 7.11.

While these pencil markings may or may not represent the changes Ebert made to the piece after 1861, we can be certain that the underlying ink score at least represents the choices he had made before that point. The bowings and fingerings in the cello line tend to follow the first edition, with certain exceptions. Figure 7.12 adds slurs to Schumann's octave leaps, giving this passage a more operatic effect.

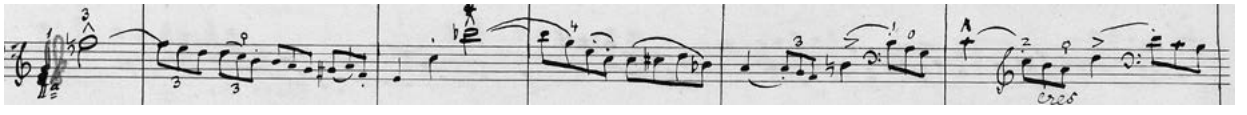

Figure 7.12.

Near the beginning of the third movement (figure 7.13), the cello line matches one of Schumann's alternative passages, with the lower octave. It also adds some hooked bowings, suggesting that Ebert bowed this passage "backwards" to make the string crossings cleaner.

Figure 7.10. Schumann's op. 129 in Ludwig Ebert's score (Schumann 1861): first movement, bars 93–95. Courtesy of the Haags Gemeentearchief, collectie Nederlands Muziek Instituut.

Figure 7.11. Schumann's op. 129 in Ebert's score: third movement, bars 195–200. Courtesy of the Haags Gemeentearchief, collectie Nederlands Muziek Instituut.

Figure 7.12. Schumann's op. 129 in Ebert's score: first movement, bars 68–73. Courtesy of the Haags Gemeentearchief, collectie Nederlands Muziek Instituut.

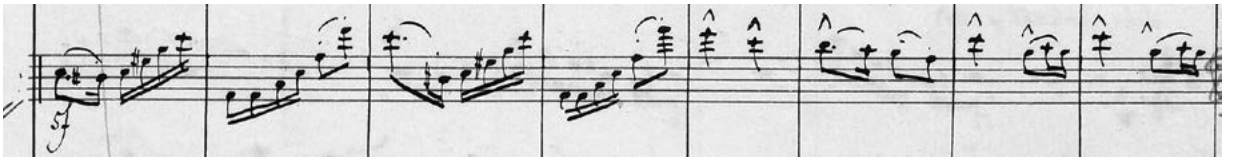

Figure 7.13.

These changes in ink, like Grützmacher's edition, must have registered in Ebert's mind as being so close to the original that he could describe his performance as not having changed a single note.

Personal pasteovers by Hugo Becker

Somewhat more difficult to unravel is a set of copies of the published cello part stamped with the name of Hugo Becker (1863–1941). Becker had studied first with Grützmacher and later with Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901), another early advocate for this concerto, who is also known to have made his own set of changes (Wadsworth 2017, 51–52). Becker was, moreover, a junior colleague of Clara Schumann's at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, as well as a chamber music partner of Johannes Brahms (Grohe 1941, 593). In his treatise, *Mechanik und Aesthetik des Violoncellspiels*, Becker draws on both those relationships to share advice on Brahms's and Robert Schumann's music (Becker and Rynar 1929). He is therefore very closely bound up with the first generation to play Schumann's music, despite being from a younger generation himself. Becker's treatise also includes a section on the art of making small adjustments to a piece so that it sits better on the cello, emphasising that this should be done "not for the sake of personal convenience, but solely to find a better way to realise the composer's wishes" (ibid., 211).[16]

Two of the Becker copies are housed in the collection of cellist Fritz Sommer, and a further two are in that of Becker's student Rudolf Metzmacher (1906–2004). To distinguish these two pairs of pairs, the private owner of the two collections has named them Schumann-Becker-Sommer I, Schumann-Becker-Sommer II, Schumann-Becker-Metzmacher I, and Schumann-Becker-Metzmacher II, respectively (Schumann [1854]c, [1887]b).

In addition to these four versions, there is also a copy in the Metzmacher collection (catalogued as Schumann-Cossmann-Metzmacher) that is stamped "Rudolf Metzmacher" (rather than "Hugo Becker") and labelled "Cossmann's fingerings and cadenza," although it also contains rewritten passagework in common with Becker-Sommer I.[17] It is not clear whether these smaller rewrites stem from Cossmann, Becker, or a third party, and in this case identifying the handwriting would not solve the mystery, since the two available copies contain nearly identical changes but not identical handwriting. It may be that Becker

16 ". . . nicht aus persönlicher Bequemlichkeit, sondern einzig in der Erkenntnis, des Komponisten Wünsche besser reaslisieren zu können."

17 This is the copy that Loesch (1995, 126–27) analyses.

Figure 7.13. Schumann's op. 129 in Ebert's score: third movement, bars 7–14. Courtesy of the Haags Gemeentearchief, collectie Nederlands Muziek Instituut.

owned a cello part with Cossmann's rewrites and lent this part to his students to copy for their own reference. Meanwhile, the bowings and fingerings in Becker-Sommer II are closer to those marked in the music examples from Schumann's concerto and printed in Becker's cello treatise, suggesting that these bowings and fingerings are Becker's own. Whatever the specific provenance may be for the individual markings, these five hand-annotated copies show a related cluster of approaches, not only to bowing and fingering but also to rewriting passagework and navigating the cadenza and coda.

Figure 7.14 shows the same octave slurs Ebert had added in bars 72–73, as well as a pasteover that replaces Schumann's whimsical triplet passage with a smooth upward scale.

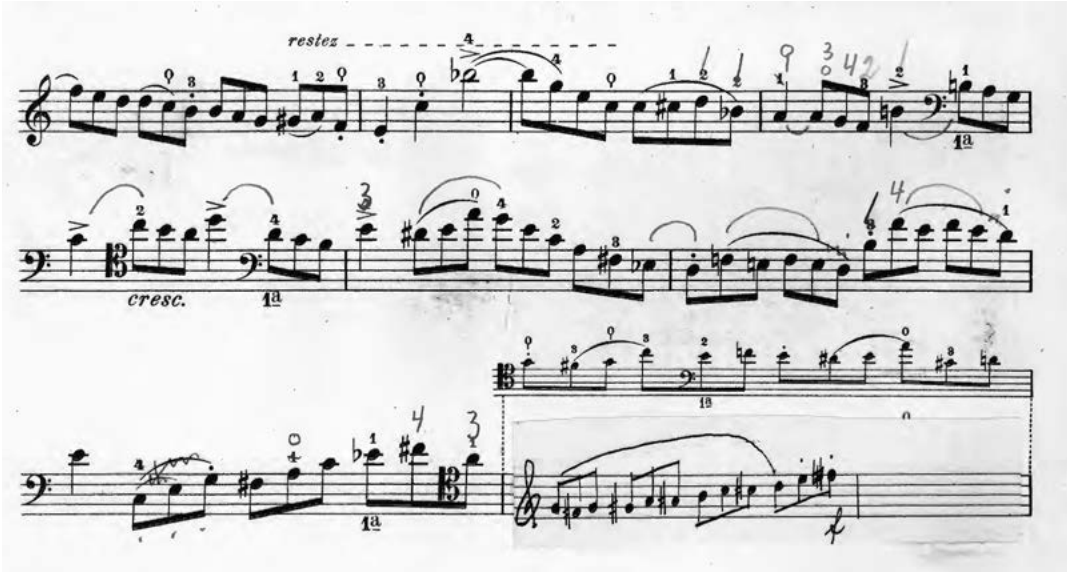

Figure 7.14.

At the end of the exposition of the first movement, Schumann's somewhat blurry downward scale is replaced by running sixteenth notes that descend and then shoot upwards again (figure 7.15).

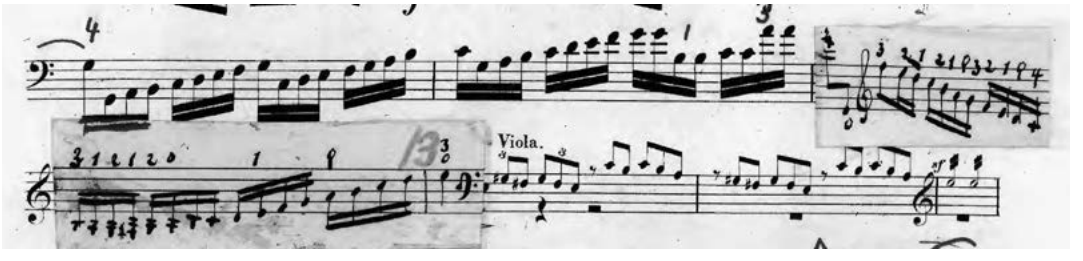

Figure 7.15.

Figure 7.14. Schumann's op. 129 in the Cossmann-Metzmacher copy (Schumann [1887]b): first movement, bars 69–78. Courtesy of the Cello Library, Alfred Richter (Lugano).

Figure 7.15. Schumann's op. 129 in the Becker-Sommer-I copy (Schumann [1854]c): first movement, bars 92–96. Courtesy of the Cello Library, Alfred Richter (Lugano).

One added passage that is unique to Becker-Sommer-I is the beginning of the third movement, in which the entire first phrase is transposed up an octave and marked *mp* (figure 7.16).

Figure 7.16.

It is not clear whether this represents Becker's own rewrite or a transmission of one of his teachers' rewrites.

The cadenza in figure 7.17 is a hybrid of Cossmann's version and Schumann's original, enabling the cellist to play the original coda.

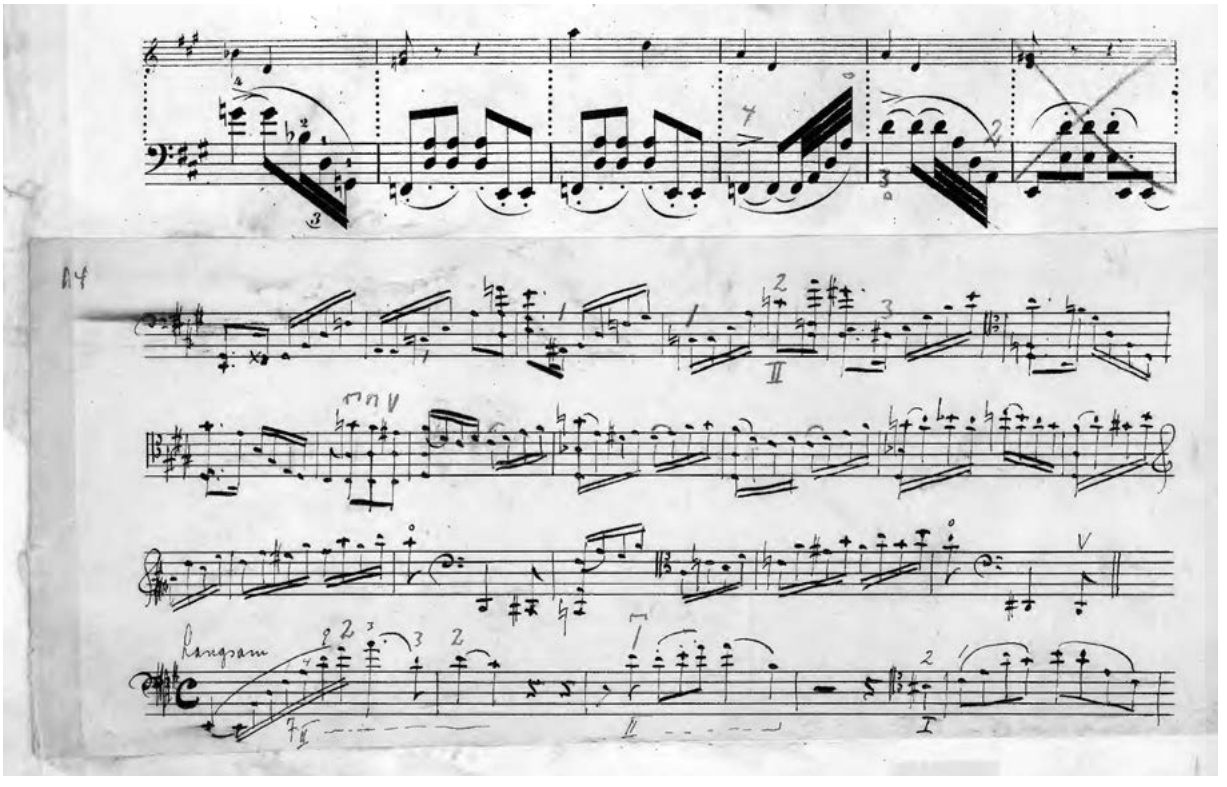

Figure 7.17.

Figure 7.16. Schumann's op. 129 in the Becker-Sommer-I copy: third movement, bars 7–14. Courtesy of the Cello Library, Alfred Richter (Lugano).

Figure 7.17. Schumann's op. 129 in the Becker-Sommer-I copy: third movement, bars 347–51, with part of Cossmann's cadenza. Courtesy of the Cello Library, Alfred Richter (Lugano).

Four of the copies also cut about thirty bars from the development of the third movement, a cut that is also marked in the Ebert score (and also recommended in Leonard Rose's edition—see Schumann 1960). As Heinz von Loesch has pointed out (1995, 119, 130), this cut relates directly to one of the issues Bockmühl had raised in his correspondence with Schumann.

Evidence from twentieth-century recordings

While we cannot know the actual practices of most of the musicians discussed above, we can hear some echoes of their approach to textual change in a few precious documents from the twentieth century. Gregor Piatigorsky (1904–76), who had studied with Julius Klengel and Hugo Becker, recorded the piece in 1934 with the London Philharmonic and Sir John Barbirolli, including a few small note changes as well as an added cadenza. His performance allows us to hear these note changes in the context of actual music-making, with its varied demands on technique and expression.

As in the Davydov edition, Piatigorsky often changes the last note before a big leap. For example, in bar 320 of the third movement, he replaces Schumann's E with an e′, two octaves higher (Piatigorsky 1934, track 3, 5:06). While this could easily be for added comfort and security in shifting, Piatigorsky's performance of these altered notes is also strikingly lyrical, pointing to an extra advantage that may also apply to Davydov's thinking. If a large leap in a cello concerto ought to sound like a large leap in opera singing, then the writing will need to be adjusted, not just for cello technique, but for vocal delivery as well.

Another element of performance practice that is easily forgotten when studying written sources in isolation is flexibility of timing. In addition to being an expressively potent tool, flexibility can also give the cellist extra time when needed for technical reasons—for example, in the awkward shifts at the beginning of the third movement. Having just played the transitional run into the third movement *allargando*, Piatigorsky then compresses the rhythm within the opening figure, creating a *scherzando* effect that also helps him ground his hand in bars 7–14.

In addition to this commercial recording, there is a video of Piatigorsky performing the concerto live at Pau Casals's music festival, with Casals conducting, in 1967 (Piatigorsky 1967). Being able to watch Piatigorsky's body language, in addition to his bowings and fingerings, offers even more insight into the musical motivations guiding textual change in the Schumann concerto. For example, while he does not cut the development of the third movement, his body language changes radically in this passage. From 7:30, he becomes Piatigorsky the chamber musician, half-turning and leaning towards the orchestra with raised eyebrows and the faintest hint of a smile, as though he is playfully batting each musical fragment to the other musicians on stage. Then abruptly at 8:34, he straightens his head, lowers his brows, and reassumes the stern grandeur of a soloist. It makes a beautiful illustration of the consensus that this development section was out of place in a virtuosic movement.

Conclusions

Combining the evidence provided in Grützmacher and Davydov's editions, the alternative cadenzas by Cossmann, Popper, and Jacquard, the handwritten annotations connected with Ebert, Becker, and Cossmann, and certain sonic and visual clues from Piatigorsky's performances, we have the beginnings of a grammar of acceptable textual change for a cello soloist in the second half of the nineteenth century. Passagework, flourishes, the cadenza, and the coda were all places where an experienced cellist's inclinations could override the composer's text. Within these "cello zones," bowing could be made more idiosyncratic, especially using short slurs against the grain of the metre or the motives. The actual notes, meanwhile, could be changed to scale down a composer's idiosyncrasy, using more ordinary figures that already lay comfortably within the hand. Cuts were permitted, as well as alternative cadenzas, even in a concerto like this one, in which the cadenza is accompanied. Outside the cello zones, very small changes to the text were still permissible (generally just one note per phrase, and, if possible, the same note in a different octave). Equally significant, however, are the changes cellists avoided making: within the most melodic or expressive parts of the piece, they tended to leave the composer's notes undisturbed—although in legato passages, mid-length slurs could be redistributed.

It is still possible, of course, to condemn these changes as irreverent, or to shrug them aside as historical curiosities. However, the growing consensus within the historical performance research community is that flexibility of text may be exactly what we need in order to infuse older repertoire with freshness and life. Not everyone will use the freedom in the same way, but everyone ought to know that they have it.

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The Romantic Conductor-Scholar

What I Learned from the Archives

Nir Cohen-Shalit
Conductor and independent researcher

Even the most robust and extensive research cannot answer all questions on historical performance practice, as every artist-scholar will admit. While historians normally live in peace with the realisation that gaps in knowledge will always exist, performers who want to apply the practices of the past must find ways to bridge them (as Niels Berentsen's and Björn Schmelzer's chapters also point out). All performers, to some extent, embody a similar tension between learned practices and self-expression. For conductors, this tension is all the greater in that they serve simultaneously as both "servants" and "masters," to use Lydia Goehr's words, and must balance "fidelity to the work specified by the composer" against their desire for a personal interpretation (Goehr 2007, 273).

The HIP performer-scholar's preoccupation with fidelity to the score, composer, or historical style makes it harder to turn to one's own personal taste, intuitions, and preferences, knowing that these do not display the scholarly standards expected from historical evidence.[1] All too often, HIP performers turn to modern, mid-twentieth-century practices[2] to fill in the gaps (Haynes 2007, 221). The situation is further complicated for the HIP conductor-scholar of nineteenth-century music.

First, modern, twentieth-century conducting is anachronistic to most of the canonical repertoire, up until at least the middle of the nineteenth century (Carse 1948, 289; Koury 1986, 61–65). The period that produced the core symphonic repertoire, as well as the institutionalisation of the symphony orchestra, is also the period in which modern conducting only began to emerge (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2004, 530). Orchestral and conducting practices prevalent in the times of the genesis and early reception of these works would have been completely different to our own; neither orchestral practices nor conducting techniques were standardised yet. Put differently, while there are many HIP *conductors*, we have not yet developed HIP *conducting*.

1 I use the HIP acronym in a broader sense: as a descriptor for historically informed performances, practices, performers, scholars, research projects, and so on.

2 Think, for example, about rehearsal routines—crucial processes in shaping a future performance—the historical practice of which we know nearly nothing about. Even the use of urtexts, critical, and other scholarly editions is a modern invention, unfamiliar to nineteenth-century performers.

Second, while the field of nineteenth-century HIP has thrived in recent years,[3] its impact on HIP performers is far from satisfactory; many specialists are reluctant, for various reasons, to discard late twentieth-century style in favour of experimenting with and adopting the wide range of stylistic possibilities that research has uncovered (Brown 2010). On top of that, an increasing number of mainstream performers (that is, persons untrained as HIP specialists) believe that, when it comes to Romantic music, they can simply switch instruments while changing nothing else in their playing, thus reducing the idea of nineteenth-century HIP to the mere use of period instruments, with complete ignorance of issues of technique and expression.[4]

Lastly, despite the achievements of nineteenth-century HIP research thus far, its impact is still mostly limited to issues of notation (Brown 1999; Poli 2010) or solo and chamber playing (e.g., Wadsworth 2017; Brown, Peres Da Costa, and Wadsworth 2015; Kennaway 2014; Milsom 2003; Peres Da Costa 2012). Orchestral playing is the domain most neglected—in particular, those issues pertaining to the mechanics of large ensemble apparatuses, rehearsal routines, authorship distribution, and the extent to which expressive devices associated with individual instruments have been applied in orchestral settings.[5] True, HIP orchestras and conductors have produced some of the most exciting and novel recordings of Romantic music; but they, too, pick and choose from the available techniques and expressive devices offered by recent studies, while relying heavily on modern practices (Milsom 2008, 97).[6]

This chapter draws on my ongoing doctoral research, provisionally entitled "(Un)interpreting the Romantics: Performance and Pre-performance Practices of Nineteenth-Century German Orchestras." Using archival work as the basis, I wish to offer here a way to tackle the above-mentioned challenges, not only by expanding our understanding of orchestral performance practices, but also by embracing the past as a source of inspiration to fill in gaps. I will focus on two groups of singular and unique historical texts: verbal and musical. The former includes mostly administrative documents from estates of conductors and orchestral managements, found in municipal and state libraries and archives.[7] Within these documents are various lists of repertoires performed

3 It is worth mentioning here some of the most exciting recent research and performance projects, such as Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's "Challenging Performance" (2023), Tony Harrison and Sigurd Slåttebrekk's "Chasing the Butterfly: Recreating Grieg's 1903 Recordings and Beyond . . ." (see http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no), and David Eggert and Gili Loftus's 2023 album *Down with Romanticism* (see https://downwithromanticism.bandcamp.com).

4 This is notwithstanding the artistic value of many such performances and recordings, nor the possibility of practitioners specialising in a wide range of styles and instruments.

5 Among the very few exceptions, Koury (1986) has done some work on issues of size and seating; and, most recently, Claire Holden led the project "Transforming C19 HIP," dedicated to string ensemble playing (see https://c19hip.web.ox.ac.uk/home), which produced a recording (Holden and Accordes! 2020) as well as a much-anticipated volume that was still in preparation at the time of writing.

6 Among the oft-ignored aspects are the use of individual portamento and tempo flexibility (Philip 1992, 239).

7 Among the personal estates I consulted are those of Franz Wüllner, Ferdinand Hiller, and Hans von Bülow at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin; Felix Mottl and Hermann Levi at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich; Rudolf Herfurth at the Landesarchiv Thüringen, Staatsarchiv Rudolstadt; and additional letters to and from, among others, Max Bruch, Julius Rietz, and Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski at the Heinrich Heine Institute in Düsseldorf. Administrative documents include material by city or-

by an orchestra or conductor, hiring contracts, statutes and regulations, periodic summaries of activity, and so on. The second group, which is particularly under-researched,[8] comprises musical texts, including annotated performance material: scores, orchestral parts, and everything in between, whether in print or copied by hand.[9]

This choice of source materials sets my research apart from more traditional HIP research on nineteenth-century music, which tends to focus on the score itself as the authoritative representation of the "Work," on a very selected group of "great composers" and their presumed intentions, and on widely distributed printed material that, at most, prescribes the desires of the few musicians who were privileged enough to publish, rather than describes the actual state of things in practice. My research, therefore, suggests a shift of focus from the work as *text* to the work as *act* and co-creative *process* (Taruskin 1995, 24, 353–58). Additionally, it de-canonises both the repertoire and the historical figures at the centre of the narrative. All these efforts, I hope, will enrich our engagement with music from the Romantic era in a way that is similar to that which the HIP movement has done with early music (Butt 2002, 69, 78; Faultless 2010; Goehr 2007, 284).

Verbal texts

References to musical issues, in particular pertaining to performance or pre-performance practices, are surprisingly rare. Whether we are dealing with contracts, rules and regulations, or protocols from board meetings, the issues primarily discussed concern money: salaries, pensions, penalties, and so on. Occasionally, one does find scattered clues and bits of information relevant to the artistic side of daily orchestral routines. Reviews and comparisons of administrative and personal documents yield information in six areas: musicians' workloads and responsibilities, orchestral size, rehearsals, programming, conducting, and the personal responsibilities of the orchestral players as specified in institutional statutes.

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chestras and *Musikvereine* of Düsseldorf (at the Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf) and Münster (at the Stadtarchiv Münster); and the court orchestras (*Hofkapellen*) of Meiningen (at the Meininger Museum), Rudolstadt (Landesarchiv Thüringen, Staatsarchiv Rudolstadt), and Baden-Württemberg (Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe).

8 The value of the study of performance material has been sporadically noted (Holman 2005, 505; Wehner 2002, 12); it was demonstrated, more importantly, by the extensive research project CHASE (Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions; see https://mhm.hud.ac.uk/chase/), which, though focusing solely on solo and chamber string music, includes published annotated editions and manuscript annotations in private copies.

9 Annotated performance material comes from the following collections: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (including material from the estates of Hans von Bülow, Ferdinand Hiller, and Franz Wüllner); library of the Universität der Künste (UDK), Berlin (including the estate of Joseph Joachim); Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (including the estate of Rudolf Herfurth); library of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein (ADMV) at the Liszt Hochschule für Musik, Weimar; Meininger Museum (library of the Meininger Hofkapelle); Landesarchiv Thüringen, Staatsarchiv Rudolstadt (including the libraries of the court orchestras of Rudolstadt and Sondershausen); Stadtarchiv Münster (including the library of the Musikverein zu Münster and Julius Otto Grimm); Heinrich Heine Institute in Düsseldorf (including the library of the Düsseldorfer Musikverein); and the Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe (including material from the Schlossbibliothek Baden-Baden, the Fürstliche Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek Donaueschingen, and the estate of the Kalliwoda family).

1. Workload. Orchestras in nineteenth-century Germany were not independent bodies but rather municipal or court institutions, which meant that all their musicians were employed by the city or court. Therefore, their responsibilities went well beyond playing in symphonic concerts. Whether as individuals, members of chamber groups, or members of an orchestra, other duties might have included regular church events, participation in concerts of local choral societies and *Musikvereine* (which typically included oratorios and other large choral works), festivals and holidays, and—above all—accompanying plays and operas at the local theatre.[10] This resulted in an enormous workload for members of the orchestra, including the music director.

2. Orchestral size. The constant increase in orchestral forces in nineteenth-century compositions was not always reflected by the actual number of musicians in many orchestras. Forces used for performances varied radically. In many of the smaller cities and towns, the total number of musicians normally did not exceed around thirty string players, with double winds and brass. Often there were fewer. This means no more than six or seven first violins in an orchestra that played contemporary repertoire. Occasionally, if at all possible, extra winds and brass were supplemented by local military bands for individual projects; as we shall see below, this practice required adjustments to the score. At the opposite end are festival performances, which generally took place during the summer and saw neighbouring orchestras join forces, sometimes with local amateurs, to form huge orchestras with one hundred or more string players and wind and brass parts usually doubled.[11]

3. Rehearsals. During theatre seasons, normal routine included seven musical performances every week, at least half of them in the theatre (plays or operas), and the remaining events divided between large orchestral concerts (in subscription concerts or in collaboration with the local choral society) and other activities (most likely chamber concerts). Rehearsals were scarce: it was quite normal to have a single rehearsal before a revival at the theatre, and not even that for common repertoire; two rehearsals before a symphonic concert; and occasionally three for concerts that included large choral works. Rehearsals were typically shorter than the standard duration of programmes, which means that even a complete run-through of the entire programme was unlikely.[12]

10 In fact, in many cities an orchestra designated for symphonic concerts never existed or was established only very late in the century. Orchestras tended to function as theatre orchestras or as ad hoc ensembles accompanying concerts of the municipal choral society; they were only occasionally asked to give symphonic concerts. Subscription series for purely symphonic concerts usually appeared last in the history of these institutions.

11 It is interesting to note that neither situation is reflected in modern performance practices: the mainstream tradition is to use a large string body for almost all nineteenth-century repertoire, with single wind players per part; HIP practitioners for their part tend to stretch the use of chamber orchestra to later repertoire and, with some exceptions (such as the music of Berlioz), seldom revive the practice of using one hundred strings, doubled wind parts, and a similarly large choir.

12 This situation was very common and lasted until much later: Sir John Barbirolli commented about his early years as a cellist in the Queen's Hall Orchestra, which played the entire season of the Proms Festival (six concerts a week for six weeks, a different programme every concert), with only three rehearsals for each week of concerts: "We had to sight-read half the stuff when the time came" (quoted in Philip 1992, 231).

4. Programming. Concert programmes were almost never repeated.[13] This was due not only to a lack of audience demand, which today often exceeds the tickets available for a single performance, but also, as recommended by conductor Felix Weingartner in his treatise on conducting (1906, 45), so that the orchestra would not be tired by the repetition of repertoire.[14] Close examination of hundreds of programmes reveals that even though the notion of a classical canon was already emerging (Weber 2008, 251–54), only a few older compositions were regularly played. The core repertoire of nineteenth-century German orchestras consisted of works by living or recently deceased composers. As opposed to modern practice, in which orchestras specialise in playing a wide range of styles by intimately knowing a small selection of works from each period, nineteenth-century orchestras achieved fluency only in a limited range of styles by playing a vast yet stylistically related repertoire. Many composers that appeared regularly on concert programmes are now almost completely forgotten.[15]

5. Conducting. Even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, conducting did not necessarily mean what it means to us today: a single (usually) non-performing musician, standing and (generally) holding a baton, who leads the orchestra in rehearsals and concerts, using a full score with which they have grown deeply familiar through meticulous preparation. In this period, one could still witness a seated conductor, a concertmaster, or a keyboard player leading from a desk.[16] Since for many works, symphonies included, the parts alone were available (scores could be published years later, or not at all), conductors/leaders had to use either a first violin part, a designated conducting part (usually first violin with cues for other parts), or some form of a short score.[17] The municipal or court musical directors, often serving as the main conductors, were so busy keeping up with their tasks and responsibilities that it was not unheard of for them to conduct only the concerts, entrusting others to oversee rehearsals. Guest composers, too, were often given the honour of conducting their own works (not the entire programme), but they were not necessarily present to take part in rehearsals.

13 Very rarely a single work might be programmed twice in the same or consecutive seasons, should there have been a demand for it.

14 Weingartner recommends this for tours, but since he sees the repetition of programs as a disadvantage necessitated by the impossibility to rehearse due to travel times, it makes sense to infer that his recommendation applies to regular situations as well.

15 Some names are remembered today for their prolificity (though usually not in symphonic forms) or for their successful careers as virtuosi; think of Luigi Cherubini, Ferdinand Ries, Peter Josef von Lindpaintner, Johann Wenzel (Jan) Kalliwoda, Franz Lachner, Ferdinand Hiller, Julius Rietz, William Sterndale Bennett, Niels Gade, Joachim Raff, Julius Otto Grimm, Woldemar Bargiel, Anton Rubinstein, Friedrich Gernsheim, or Max Bruch.

16 For more information about these methods of leading an orchestra, see Carse (1948, 297–306); Koury (1986, 66–83).

17 Obviously, works were sometimes conducted using a manuscript score, especially in cases where the composer was involved in the performance. However, I did not come across any evidence of a wide practice of preparing manuscript scores on the basis of an available set of parts, in lieu of a published full score.

6. Statutes. Orchestras, theatres, and music societies published booklets of statutes, rules, or regulations, to which all its members were bound. Artistic or musical matters are hardly mentioned in them. Instructions that today would seem trivial, such as to be ready with one's part or to practise at home, are completely absent. It is fair to assume that maintaining professionalism as instrumentalists was as obvious then as it is now and therefore would not have to be mentioned explicitly. A single exception appears in a service instruction for the municipal theatre of Düsseldorf, 1881. It states:

> Any corrections or indications given by the conductor during rehearsals or later must be entered immediately into the parts in order to prevent any disruption in the performances. Each orchestra member must have a pencil and an eraser at hand; the use of blue, red, or other coloured pencils for newly obtained or well-preserved music is strictly forbidden. (*Dienst Instruction für die Mitglieder* 1881, §8, my translation)[18]

On top of the very little rehearsal time dedicated to preparing a programme that was most likely completely new to the orchestra, with the possibility of changing conductors between rehearsal and performance, marking the parts was an act expected to be avoided,[19] except in extreme situations, and taking parts home does not seem to have been a practical option either.[20] The study of annotated performance material reinforces this assessment.

Musical texts

Although the annotation of performance material was not a common practice, it did exist and seems to have gained popularity over time—and in any case, its absence is no less telling than its existence. It is not easy to find performance material that can be determined with certainty to have been both used and marked during the nineteenth century. I was able to find several collections and archives that hold performance material previously owned by conductors and orchestras (see footnote 9). I have examined over five hundred such items—by "item" I mean the complete surviving material, printed or copied by hand, of a single work with shared provenance in a single estate or collection; an item can range from a single surviving orchestral part, to a complete set of parts with copies of string parts, to a full conducting score, anything in between, or all of the above. Of these five hundred, I was able to ascertain that roughly three

18 "Die von dem Dirigenten bei den Proben oder später angegebenen Correcturen oder Bezeichnungen in den Stimmen müssen, um jeder Störung bei der Aufführung vorzubeugen, sogleich eingetragen werden. Jedes Orchestermitglied muß Bleichstift und Gummi zur Hand haben; die Anwendung von Blau-, Roth- oder sonstigen Farbenstiften ist bei neubeschaffen oder gut erhaltenen Musikalien unbedingt untersagt."

19 The habit of keeping parts as clean as possible remained partially in favour even as late as 1924, when Oscar Cremer wrote in his violin treatise (1924, 62): "Don't pencil your own fingering over certain passages that are awkward to play; remember that other violinists have to play from these parts at some time, and what fingering suits one may not suit another; as a rule violinists do not like to come across parts with fingerings marked." On the issue of individual technique, see below.

20 The surviving parts, however, indicate that the number of individual parts obtained (or copied) matched the number of music desks rather than players.

hundred of them were in use during the nineteenth century and not later.[21] However, only about 25 per cent of these contained significant annotations, by which I mean even just a scribble or two that I could attribute musical meaning to. That leaves about 75 per cent of material *used* but *unmarked*.

Meaningful reflection, classification, categorisation, and analysis of orchestral annotations, which would be relevant to performance and pre-performance practices, require an intersectional approach. It was only by looking at the annotations from several perspectives simultaneously, with each perspective illuminating the differing aspects of seemingly similar markings, that I was able to develop a multi-layered interpretation (table 8.1). First, I identified the basic musical elements to which the annotations or markings pertain (e.g., dynamics and articulation) and classified them accordingly. Next, I tried to think of larger groups the annotation could fit into. This was important for two reasons: first, some annotations did not lend themselves easily to the elementary classifications of the first layer; and second, this basic classification did not say much about the use or purpose of the annotations. I identified two categories, not unrelated to the first-layer classifications but rather complementary to them: technique-related and navigational. The first category is self-explanatory: it regards elements annotated by the musician in their own part that relate to the technical performance on their instruments. These could include bowings and fingerings, reminders for pizzicato, changes of transposition in a wind instrument part, or, for a conductor, beat patterns and cues in scores.[22] However, when beat patterns—usually marked by vertical lines indicating the number of beats in a measure—are marked by players in their own parts, they do not constitute part of the user's technique; they therefore do not belong in this category, although they fall under the same classification in the first layer. This is where the second category comes into play: annotations that help users find their way through the work in real time. These include, among others, reminders in the guise of highlighted dynamics, changes of tempo, key, or time signatures, breaking down multi-measure rests, instrumental cues, and so on. Beat patterns in parts, then, belong here, since they aid the player in following the conductor.

21 In some cases, it seems that, while the material belonged to an active conductor or orchestra, it was never used, while other material bears clear traces of much later use such as markings, names of performers, or performance dates.

22 Unless otherwise specified, I use the word *score* to denote any form of music sheet used for conducting (a so-called conducting part including the first violin part with cues, some form of a short score, etc.) hence not necessarily a "full score."

First Layer: identification of musical elements

Dynamics, articulation, tempo, bowings, fingering, conducting patterns, cues, etc.

Second Layer: categories of purpose

Technique-related	Navigation
In scores or parts?	In scores or parts?

Third Layer: degree on two scales/axes

Practical	◄——————————►	Expressive
Auxiliary	◄——————————►	Text-altering

The first two layers in my intersectional approach may be helpful in identifying the purpose of many of the annotations, but they are not sufficient for reaching broader conclusions regarding performance practices. For the final level, I mapped the quality of the annotations on two intersecting scales or spectra, which act like two axes governing an imagined space. One axis marks the degree of the annotations between two poles, the "practical" and "expressive," specifying the degree to which the annotations reflect, respectively, practical considerations or internal, expressive aspects of the work. The second axis is similarly defined by two poles, "auxiliary" and "text-altering": to what degree do the annotations accompany the original text, add to it, change it, or contradict it?[23] Dynamics, for example, can be "practical" and "auxiliary" if they merely highlight existing dynamics; they can be "expressive" but still within the "auxiliary" realm if they add dynamic shading or subtleties to the notated text, and they can be both "expressive" and "text-altering" if they downright contradict the text (figure 8.1). Fingerings or bowings, to give another example, are more usually placed on the far end of the "practical" axis, especially when they appear in a sporadic, inconsistent manner (that is, marked individually in one's own part). But when a specific choice of fingering is consistent across parts (which rarely happens), it can be argued that this is an intentional choice made for expressive reasons. Whatever degree of expressiveness one would attribute to technique annotations, they are still most likely to be placed on the "auxiliary"—rather than "text-altering"—side of the spectrum (see figure 8.1).[24]

23 The word "original" is a contentious one, evoking many questions about the interference (or lack thereof) created by editors and copyists. What matters here is not whether the text in the score or part is original in the sense that it represents the composer's notation; rather, by contrast, at the centre is the user's experience: any textual and notational information that the user considers to be part of the work is "original," regardless of its actual source (composer, editor, or copyist) and of the relationship between the annotation and the given text.

24 Bowings present a slightly more complicated issue: when annotations are confined to up- and down-bow they clearly fall under "technique" (notwithstanding possible expressive ramifications when performed in unison), but slurring can be both a technical and an articulatory issue. When bowing markings contradict the given text, they could move towards "text-altering." Such occurrences, however, usually happen when annotations are consistent. More about that can be found below.

Table 8.1. Three-layered intersectional approach to annotations in orchestral materials.

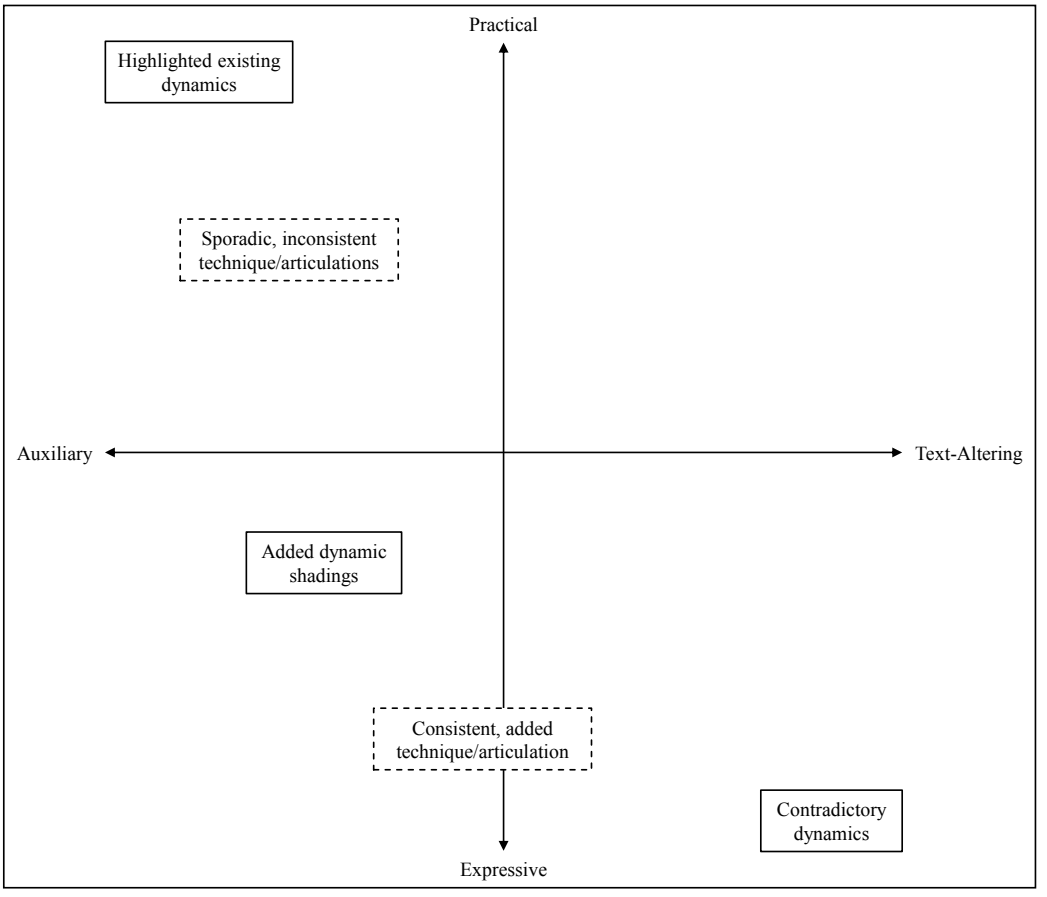

Figure 8.1.

Beat patterns present a more intricate example. These would normally be regarded as "practical" and "auxiliary," serving as technical reminders; but they, too, potentially carry expressive ramifications: in an andante movement in $\frac{6}{8}$, the choice between beating in two or in six has implications for tempo, character, and phrasing. Changing from one pattern to another (especially when no change of metre or tempo is indicated) could suggest a modification of the tempo, which makes such annotations clearly "expressive" and possibly moves them a step closer to "text-altering" (figure 8.2).[25]

25 Given that the application of tempo modifications on various levels is a stylistic feature of nineteenth-century practice, I would not take subtle indications, such as changes in beat patterns, too far in the direction of "text-altering."

Figure 8.1. Axial location of annotations of dynamics (in solid rectangles), and of technique/articulations (in dashed rectangles).

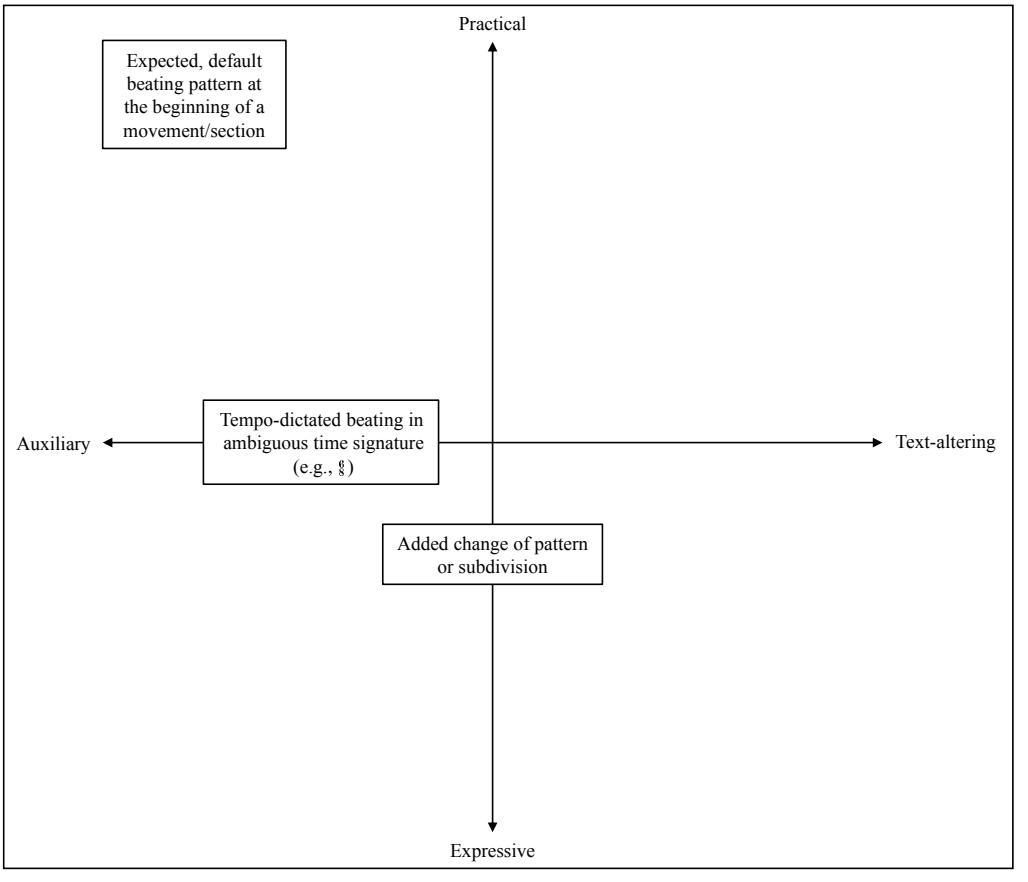

Figure 8.2.

"Text-altering," in conjunction with the "practical/expressive" axis, also functions as a larger space, under which fall many annotations that do not fit any of the earlier ones. It is tempting to think that all text alterations are distinctly expressive, however it is not always so (figure 8.3). Corrections of presumed mistakes (wrong notes, placement of articulation, or technique instruction) belong to the 'practical' end.[26] Cuts and other forms of abridgements might also be the result of practical considerations, such as time constraints or technical deficiencies in the performing ensemble. The largest group of text-altering annotations includes interventions made to the orchestration. As mentioned above, wind parts were often doubled when a large body of strings was available, a practice that, while "practical" to a high degree, is already a step closer to being "expressive" in that it reflects aesthetic values such as balance.[27]

26 It is not uncommon to see "corrections" of notes or other markings that the marking musicians thought were wrong but that, from our experience and familiarity with sources that were not then available to the musicians, are not mistakes in the text at all.

27 This practice is relatively well documented for earlier repertoire, such as symphonies by Haydn and Beethoven, but there is evidence that suggests it was utilised for the symphonies of Schumann and Brahms, when the strings numbered sixty players or more.

Figure 8.2. Axial location of annotations of beat patterns.

Getting closer to the "expressive" end are changes to parts that result from expansion of instrumental registers (e.g., flute) or the introduction of valved horns and trumpets, which allowed for richer tonal and chromatic possibilities. Orchestral reduction, the most common type of such textual amendments, is better understood as "practical." This surprisingly common practice should not be confused with reorchestration à la Mahler or published arrangements of popular pieces for alternative ensembles like marching bands or salon orchestras. As mentioned earlier, many orchestras in smaller cities and towns did not have the forces required by most Romantic scores, so many musical directors had to amend the parts, so that parts for unavailable instruments (like third and fourth horns, one or more trombones, sometimes second woodwinds, etc.), were given to other, available instruments. Figure 8.4 shows a partial score found in the performance material library of the Hofkapelle Rudolstadt that contains the alternative wind parts to Carl Reinecke's *In memoriam*, op. 128.[28]

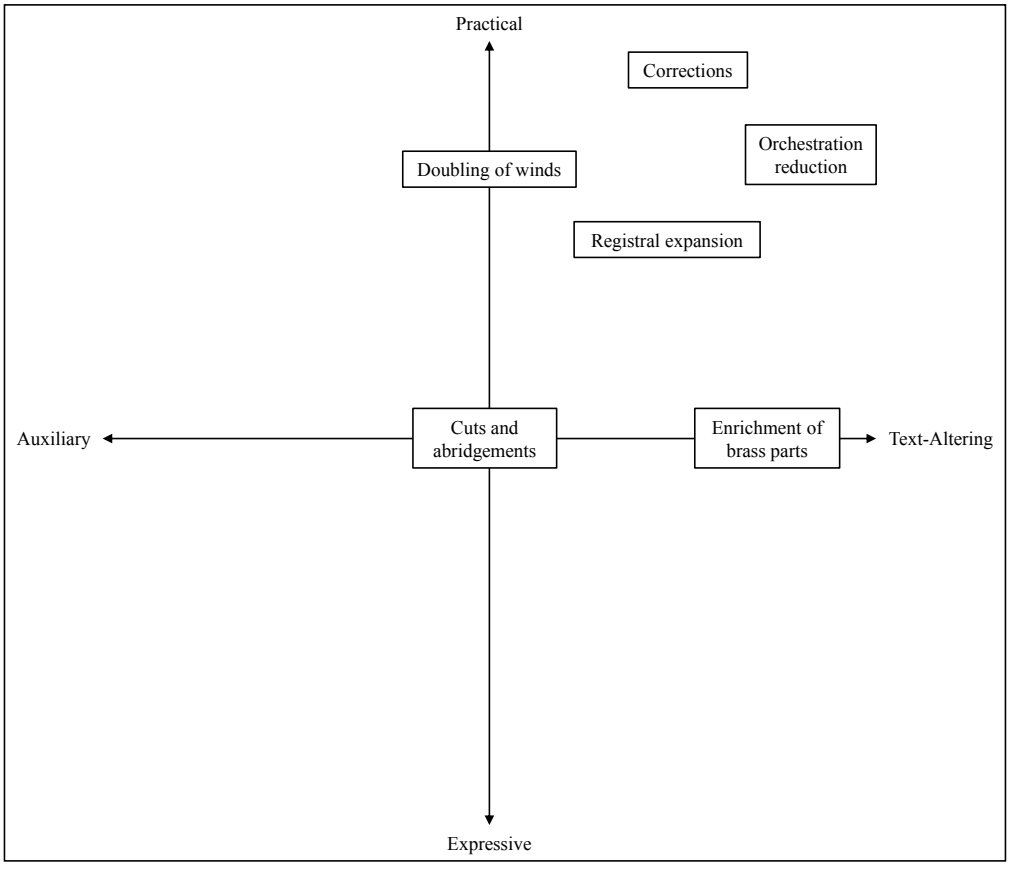

Figure 8.3.

28 For clarity and conciseness, the original annotations are not reproduced here. All musical examples have been transcribed by the author to incorporate or reflect the annotations.

Figure 8.3. Axial placement of text-altering annotations.

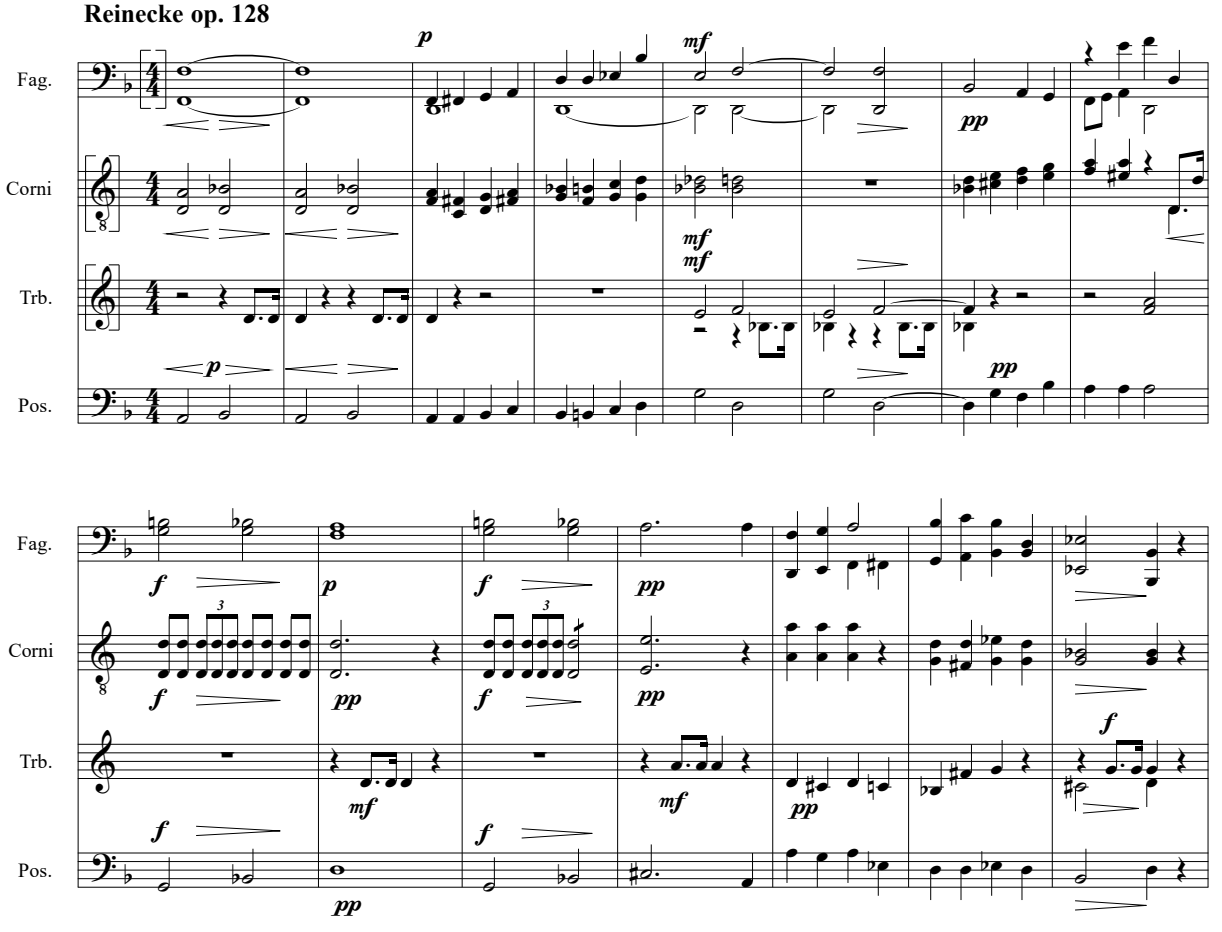

Figure 8.4.

Lastly, there are some very rare text alterations that are more radical in their level of intervention; these belong on the "expressive" side, since they stem from idiosyncratic musical-artistic views on the text, rather than being a response to external circumstances. Figure 8.5 is taken from the performance material of Schumann's First Symphony (1841) that was previously owned by conductor Rudolf Herfurth. The opening motif, played by the horns and trumpets, is transposed down a third, presumably to restore the composer's original intentions.[29]

29 In Schumann's early manuscript, the opening motif is indeed a third lower than in the later, published version. The original, lower version of the motif included notes that required the use of hand-stopping on natural horns (marked [x] in figure 8.5). Schumann may have transposed the motif to render it playable in his desired instrumentation. One could argue that restoring the composer's intentions moves the annotations closer to the "practical" side, but Schumann may have had other reasons to transpose the motif, and he could have employed another orchestrational solution had he wanted to keep the motif as it is. Because of the highly speculative nature of this change, I maintain that it has a high "expressive" quality.

Figure 8.4. An excerpt from a partial score of the beginning of Carl Reinecke's *In memoriam*, op. 128, containing alternative parts for bassoons, horns, trumpets, and trombone (top to bottom), bars 1–15. Edited from Landesarchiv Thüringen-Staatsarchiv Rudolstadt, Sammlung Hofkapelle Rudolstadt, item no. 2498, with clefs and time signature in square brackets added by the author.

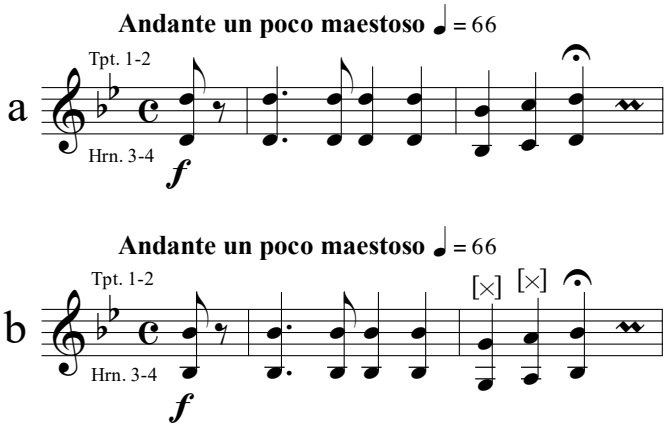

Figure 8.5.

In another example, taken from the Adagio movement of Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, op. 15 (1858), the rhythm of the first oboe and first clarinet parts in bar 48 was changed in order to avoid a harmonic clash between their G♮ on the sixth quarter note in the measure and the strings, which sustain the G♯ right up to the last sixteenth note of the measure (figure 8.6). This alteration is interesting, as it is marked in a set of parts previously owned by conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow, who is known to have performed this concerto many times with the composer.[30] It is, therefore, very reasonable to believe that Brahms was aware of this change or perhaps even authorised it, but there are no indications that he ever implemented it on his own copy, nor that he asked his publisher to do so. I consider this change to be more "expressive" than "practical" because it does not rectify something that was perceived to be a clear-cut mistake or oversight but rather offers a possible alternative reading of the score in the face of a personal dissatisfaction with a specific sonority.

30 Hans von Bülow performed the concerto as a pianist under Brahms's baton for the first time in the 1881/82 season. He later performed the concerto several times as a pianist, possibly conducting from the keyboard. It seems that the first time he conducted it with another pianist as a soloist was in 1891, though it is possible that he and Brahms switched roles on some occasions (Birkin 2011, 593, 624, 691).

Figure 8.5. Opening motif from Schumann's Symphony No. 1 in B♭ Major, op. 38, bars 1–2: (a) version as published by Breitkopf & Härtel (plate nos. 8545 [full score] and 6595 [parts]); (b) changes found in the personal copy of the conductor Rudolf Herfurth as held in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, shelf no. Mus.ant.22-580, corresponding to the version of the theme in Schumann's early manuscript. Notes marked [x] indicate pitches playable only using stopped notes on the horns, which may have prompted Schumann to alter the theme to its higher version.

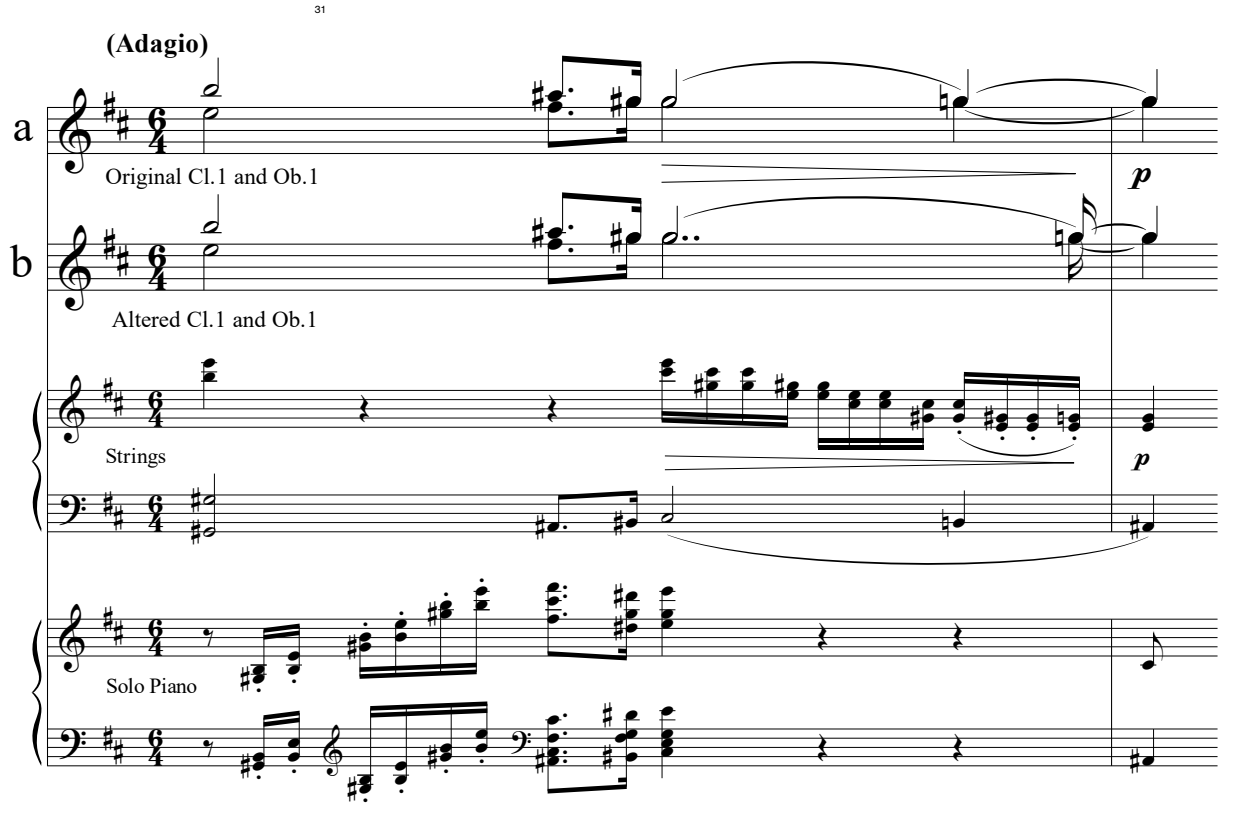

Figure 8.6.

The most immediate—and perhaps surprising—fact that emerges from the study of annotations in orchestral performance material is how rare this practice was during most of the nineteenth century. The majority of the annotations are of the more "practical" and "auxiliary" kind, which suggests that the primary use was orientation through the work. Musicians marked as little as needed—things like radical changes in dynamic and tempo or technical instructions—and only to ensure that they made it to the end of a work without missed entries. There is also a correlation between the quantity and nature of annotations and their approximate dating: "expressive" annotations are much more likely to appear in material from the later decades of the century. In earlier material, annotations are almost always individual and show no consistency either between parts and score or among the parts themselves. This is true not only for technical annotations (bowings, fingerings) but also for corrections of mistakes. Moreover, not only did players solve technical issues individually (see also footnote 19), but also they had some degree of freedom in their employ-

31 The original notation of the rhythmic change is retained here, despite the miscalculation of the overall rhythmic values in measure 48 (the prolonged G♯ is longer than the remaining part of the measure; it should be notated as a half note tied to a dotted eighth note).

Figure 8.6. Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, op. 15: Adagio, bar 48. Top staff (a) shows the original oboe 1 and clarinet 1 parts as published in 1862 by Rieter-Biedermann (plate no. 170); below it (b), the parts as marked in personal copies owned by conductor Hans von Bülow and held at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, shelf no. Mus.10.395. Strings (reduced on two staves) and solo parts are shown in smaller size.[30]

ment of expressive devices. Towards the last decades of the century, annotations became more consistent—marked individually, at the beginning—and there is a growing tendency for conductors to be more involved in coordinating (and later originating) instrumental technique and collective expressive decisions.

All the above suggests that, for most of the century, orchestral players enjoyed greater agency regarding artistic authorship in the performance process. Aside from the various forms of abridgements (cuts, performance of single movements from a cyclic work, skipping repeats), annotations that are both "expressive" and "text-altering" probably date from after 1880.[32] Signs or clues suggesting tempo modifications, on various levels, are scarce but present consistently throughout the period. Small-scale fluctuations, agogics, and individual rubato are hard to detect, but there is clear evidence of structural modifications: shaping of phrases and themes, accentuation of tonal plans, and emphases of changes in mood and character.[33] The annotations relating to tempo and expression (including aspects of technique, articulation, phrasing, and so on) reveal that our modern conception of temporal and expressive uniformity, whether vertical (between players who share a musical idea and play it simultaneously) or horizontal (of the musical idea's repetition over time), did not exist or, at the very least, was not the aesthetic ideal it is today.

Towards an interpretation-free performance

On the basis of my findings, derived from verbal and musical historical texts about performance (practices) in nineteenth-century Germany, I find it hard to conceive that orchestral playing at that time presented an "interpretation," in the sense we use the word today—that is, an individualised conception of a work's meaning, which, in the current discussion, is expected to be the conductor's, proxied by the orchestra (Davies and Sadie 2001). Orchestras simply did not have the time to rehearse or familiarise themselves, collectively and individually, with the performed repertoire. Additionally, it seems that they did not develop the discourse necessary for efficiency in making expressive decisions, nor—as the surviving annotated material testifies—habits for marking them in the parts. For most of the century, conductors did not function in a way that allowed them to do much more than oversee a safe arrival at the final bar line, let alone communicate an interpretive vision of works. In fact, the very word "interpretation" was not part of the discourse of the time, and most critics and other writers used words whose meaning is closer to "rendition," implying something singular (Dreyfus 2020). Furthermore, concerning Goehr's *Werktreue*, fidelity to the work or the composer probably meant something quite different then from what it means now, especially for orchestral

32 The question of dating is complicated and will not be elaborated upon here. Exact dating is hardly ever possible, but there are clues in the form of documented performances by the conductor or orchestra, handwriting and the marking device (e.g., pen, lead or coloured pencil), and sometimes even dates signed by players in their parts. Handwriting and colour of pencil used also help establish my claim that certain annotations stem from the conductor.

33 The evidence regarding temporal treatment conforms with the Romantic style described by Brown (1999, 375–414), Peres Da Costa (2012, 189–308), Philip (1992, 5–94), and R[anken] (1939, 52–82, 110–26).

music. Nineteenth-century understandings of *Werktreue* signified fidelity to an abstract idea of the work, mediated by the score (Loftus 2023). A literal and extreme adherence to the text was unimaginable, as notation was not regarded as sufficiently accurate to convey all the required subtleties of expressive performance (Kuijken 2013, 11–15; Peres Da Costa 2012, 233–36; R[anken] 1939, 131).[34] Although notation became more accurate over the course of the century, it was left purposely incomplete in some traditions, and some degree of openness was also an important feature in nineteenth-century notational practices (Butt 2002, 96–122; Cooper 2008, 173, 187).

To return to the opening discussion of filling in the gaps in Romantic HIP research, I find in my research not only more answers about performance practice but also guidance in how to be inspired by the past instead of resorting to modern practices. The first thing I have learned is to shy away from purism of any sort. Practicality was a prominent component in the artistic lives of nineteenth-century musicians. Published scores and the final notation chosen by composers might reflect something less fixed than we have been taught to believe. They might represent an average of all possible ways to perform a work; or they might be a compromise in the face of having to decide on a single version for publication, instead of adjusting the work for every performance, as was the practice in earlier periods. The second thing I have learned is that a looser sense of fidelity—to the composer, the work, the text—is inherent in the Romantic style: "Werktreue on the page, flexibility on the stage," as Kate Bennett Wadsworth (2017, 49) put it. In applying Romantic practices, performances call for taking more risks, accepting individual expression and temporal freedom even within an orchestral setting. Lastly, more agency needs to be reassigned to orchestral players, who should be given greater active participation in shaping the rendition of the work both in rehearsals and in performance.

What I want to suggest here is a new concept of *interpretation-free* performance. "Interpretation-free" does not mean a Stravinskian approach that sticks to what is written and nothing more—literal execution, as opposed to interpretation (Stravinsky 1947, 122).[35] Nor does it mean an inexpressive delivery. We should remember the language used by Mendelssohn and Berlioz, who demanded that one ought to be *inspired* by the work, and not interpret it (Bowen 1993, 83). The "interpretation" I suggest we should reject is that of a fixed, pre-conceived, coherence-aspiring, highly centralised, and supposedly definite version, to which one must fully commit, of how a musical work *should* go. Instead, I advocate a more flexible, risky, and spontaneous approach that results not from a premeditated plan *dictated* by conductors but from giving more authority to the orchestra, creating a constant dialogue *moderated* by conductors. It is a singular rendition, contingent to the particular combination

34 This point has been commented on in both historical and contemporary writings. Spohr differentiated between "correct style," which follows the notation, and "fine style," which deviates from it in certain ways (Spohr [ca 1832], 195). Others who have written about the subject include Brown (1999, 2012) and Poli (2010). See also Camilla Köhnken's contribution to this book.

35 This opinion was shared by many composers of the early twentieth century, among them Schoenberg and Ravel, the latter of whom is reported to have said, "I do not ask my music to be interpreted, but only for it to be played" (quoted in Philip 1992, 11–12).

of musicians, a co-creative process that experiments with how the work *could* go. It can be compared, in a way, to jazz performance. Coming out of a single textual source, a multitude of possibilities arises, even for a single performer. These possibilities, with all their differences, do not compromise the integrity of what the work is perceived to be. Although the textual sources in the classical tradition are more elaborately prescriptive than textual sources in jazz, the historical evidence presented here shows that the text was not regarded as complete, at least in the eyes of performers, and that deviations were common and perhaps even expected.

To approach interpretation-free performance and to fill in the gaps, one must adopt a style that has been often termed free or flexible (R[anken] 1939, 67–82) or, by analogy with speech, as rhetorical, declamatory, or inflected. Many features of this style, it should be remembered, are not reflected in the notation; or, at least, deciphering them requires reading "between the lines." This style is almost completely absent from current HIP recordings, with the exception of some individual instrumentalists.[36] With this style in mind, and recalling how unfamiliar (at least according to modern standards) both nineteenth-century performers and audiences were with the vast majority of the repertoire, I imagine musical performance to be a sonic guided tour, navigating the listeners through the structural and emotional content of the work: emphasising key moments, heightening contrasting character of themes, expressing excitement and relaxations by fluctuating tempo and dynamic, and so on.

Developing this style of performance, combined with less authoritative pre-performance practices and a revival of forgotten works and composers, can help performers expand and deepen their fluency in the Romantic style. In our time, in which we are saturated with recordings and live performances of a relatively narrow nineteenth-century repertoire, I believe that this approach offers a new and exciting way to engage with the music of the Romantic period for both performers and audiences. It is the closest we can get to enjoying our beloved works as if hearing them for the first time, while cultivating performance and pre-performance practices that reflect modern values of pluralism, resistance to centralisation of power and authority, and encouragement of curiosity and exploration, rather than instilling ready-made answers.

I would like to finish with an example of my proposed style. Somewhere in the year 2021, I needed a video of myself conducting the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. I did not have one, nor was there a planned performance, but I did have a chance to conduct a short rehearsal session with an orchestra. I decided this was a great opportunity for me to experiment with shaping a work in the style described in this chapter, and the conditions fitted my needs perfectly: the Israel Camerata Jerusalem, Israel's top chamber

36 Beside the previously mentioned work by Kennaway, Wadsworth, Holden, Milsom, Peres Da Costa, Eggert and Loftus, Harrison and Slåttebrekk, and Leech-Wilkinson, other examples of this style in action can be heard on the recordings of Beethoven piano sonatas by Tom Beghin; more recently, Andreas Staier and Jos van Immerseel have also started taking steps in that direction. In Romantic repertoire, the joint recordings of Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov showcase a very subtle use of some of the main features of this style. To my knowledge, however, no orchestras or conductors have taken this challenge seriously in Romantic repertoire.

orchestra, had not played this work in years, so the musicians did not have it "in their fingers," so to speak; rehearsal time was far from sufficient according to modern standards (fewer than twenty minutes); and we were not preparing for a concert or other public performance, so everyone was ready to follow my ideas. The result is not perfect, which is probably a good thing, nor is it too radical, but it does demonstrate subtle idiosyncrasies: small- and large-scale tempo modifications incorporated to shape structural function, individual themes, changes of texture and mood, and moments of excitement and relaxation; dynamic shading to vary long stretches of *perpetuum mobile*; individual treatments of fermatas based on harmonic and structural functions; and an original oboe cadenza where the notation may have once been understood to be an invitation for improvisation.[37] My aim in this rendition can be described in the words of Robert Philip, commenting on the character of early orchestral recordings: I sought to create "a sense of being 'put across,' so that the precision and clarity of each note is less important than the shape and progress of the music as a whole. [I] intended to convey what *happens* in the music, to characterise it" (1992, 230).

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37 The video of this rendition can be watched at https://youtu.be/HoUbrKxzugk.

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Relocating Ravel's "Sad Birds" in Alternative Forests of Place and Time*

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> The aesthetic of Edgar Allan Poe, your great American, has been of singular importance to me. (Ravel [1928] 1990, 45)
>
> As for technique, my teacher was certainly Edgar Allan Poe. The finest treatise on composition, in my opinion, and the one which in any case had the greatest influence on me was his *Philosophy of Composition*. . . . I am convinced that Poe indeed wrote his poem *The Raven* in the way that he indicated. (Ravel 1990, 394)
>
> The acute and subtle perception guiding the artist . . . may become keener and keener year after year, leaving no place for standardized and permanent classification. (Ravel [1928] 1990, 42)

In reflecting upon the structures and influences that underpin individual musical works, we rarely have such specific access to the composer's direct preferences as we find in Maurice Ravel's remarks about Edgar Allan Poe. The influence of Poe on Ravel's aesthetics has been widely acknowledged across Ravel scholarship. Some studies have directly applied Poe's treatise "Philosophy of Composition" to the formal analysis of individual Ravel compositions, such as *Boléro* (Shaw 2008; Lanford 2011). To my knowledge, however, the piano piece "Oiseaux tristes" has not yet been explored in relation to Poe's treatise. To do so seems eminently sensible, not least because of its uncanny mirroring, in subject and disposition, of "The Raven," the poem forming the subject of Poe's treatise. Perhaps most pertinently, Ravel himself considered "Oiseaux tristes" to be the most characteristic piece in his *Miroirs*, a set of piano compositions written in 1904–5 (Ravel 1906) that "mark a rather considerable change in [Ravel's] harmonic evolution" (Roland-Manuel 1990, 30). While I do not posit

* Earlier and partial presentations of this research were given on two occasions: (1) in the forum series Virtual Consultants, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore, 16 March 2021; (2) at the virtual conference "New Recipes for Music Teaching and Performance," Southeast Asia Music Academy Online, 2 June 2021. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Bernard Lanskey, Peter Tornquist, Brett Stemple, and Frances Lee for their invaluable support, encouragement, and critical insights through various stages and permutations of this project.

that Ravel based "Oiseaux tristes" on Poe's treatise, the abundant connections between the composer and writer invite exploration.

Over time, my initial spark of curiosity about Poe and Ravel fuelled a larger artistic inquiry. As much as this chapter is about Poe and Ravel, it is also about the connective powers between texts and contexts that have spurred artistic correspondences, resonances, and ownership across people from different places and times. How did the sensibilities of a nineteenth-century "American (not) in Paris" shape those of a French composer? How might they inspire a Singaporean artist-researcher further removed by two centuries and one continent? I begin with the intertextual correspondence between four textual sources—Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" and "The Raven," on the one hand, and Ravel's "Oiseaux tristes" and the translation of his 1928 Houston Lecture "Contemporary Music," on the other. I will first analyse the nature and strength of the connections Ravel found in Poe, situating these in the context of early twentieth-century French artistic aesthetics. This will be followed by applying Poe's analysis of his own poem, in "Philosophy of Composition," as a proposed roadmap for understanding "Oiseaux tristes." The cross-mapping of Poe's treatise onto Ravel's "Oiseaux tristes" will be demonstrated in two ways: first, by reflecting how the derived roadmap affects my musical interpretation of the piece; and, second, through unpacking my multimedia performance of "Oiseaux tristes" and its layers of embodied translation. The final section of the chapter shifts slightly in focus—away from Poe and Ravel, to come full circle by reflecting on the artistic-cultural correspondence that the process has generated.

For any piece, it is challenging to create a musical "roadmap"—an interpretive appraisal illuminating structural touchpoints and features—that meaningfully acknowledges evocative qualities within a theory-oriented framework. Creating such a roadmap for "Oiseaux tristes" feels just as elusive. Following the premiere of *Miroirs*, the critic Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi singled out "Oiseaux tristes" as "something extremely new" with "a great depth of feeling, of intimate feeling, totally devoid of grandiloquence" (quoted in Orenstein [1975] 1991, 49–50). This reaction suggests that the extent of perceived emotional transparency and intimacy ran contrary to expectations, serving as a counterpoint to images of artificiality and imposture.[1] Regarding formal analysis, the consensus is that the work possesses an improvisatory quality. In contrast with works from Ravel's student days at the Paris Conservatoire (1889–1900), a newfound freedom in structure is unmistakable. While such observations regarding emotional quality and form clarify the desired musical impression, bridging the relations between musical sections and emotional narrative—relations that formal structures (such as sonata form) both essentialise and afford—is left entirely to the interpreter. Such freedom presents an interesting challenge to the performer-interpreter, who finds it necessary to reconcile two paradoxes: first, to create a musical roadmap that illuminates and stimulates an emotional

1 See Kaminsky (2011) for further details on the "master tropes" concerning Ravel's perceived image and artistry.

narrative yet does not impose rigidity; and, second, to connect Ravel's innate craftsmanship with his seeming abandonment of form.[2]

In the hope of creating a musical roadmap—and keeping in mind the above-mentioned paradoxes—I began ploughing through the "forest" of texts and contexts that emerged in direct and indirect response to Ravel's and Poe's works. The dense network of interpersonal and intertextual relations amassed over time means that there are countless ways to navigate this "forest" and that any route will involve moments of disorientation and reconsideration. The path that I have found (or that, perhaps, has found me) suggests that—when guided by personal artistic instincts (or, in the quotation above by Ravel, "the acute and subtle perception guiding the artist"), self-reflexivity, and a desire towards new vantage points—one can emerge from the "forest" with an increased sense of artistic ownership.

A classical pianist is arguably limited in the extent to which reinvention and innovation can be applied when approaching an annotated composition. To what extent can ownership, originality, and creativity truly be exercised when, traditionally, the basis of one's profession lies in the ability to reproduce what has already been notated? The influence of benchmark recordings (including Ravel's own piano roll, recorded for Duo-Art on 30 June 1922) and the traditions inherent in institutionalised music training also leave present-day classical musicians grappling with the "rep dilemma"—that is, being caught between the constraints of *rep*ertoire, *rep*etition, *rep*roduction, and *rep*utation (Lanskey 2019). In addition, having being born into a history coloured by politics of colonialism and imperialism, it is particularly difficult for me to understand how my artistic and cultural identities could sensibly coalesce. Over the past two centuries, globalised networks of expansion and dissemination have resulted in displacements of native traditions and in impositions of received, "foreign" traditions. Beneath these calcified layers of history, tradition, and the resultant cultural baggage, how can I find a way to make the artistic process alive? Over what process can I, in retrospect, claim to have exercised artistic ownership? These are questions to which I have found an inkling of answers by navigating the "forest"; they will be slowly unpacked in the remainder of the essay.

An American writer's influence on *fin de siècle* Paris

Ravel's 1928 lecture "Contemporary Music" focuses primarily on contextualising the composer's work in relation to more general influences that are relevant to the composer's view of contemporary French musical composition. In recognising Poe's impact on his own aesthetic, albeit tangentially, the lecture distinguishes two types of influence: "one might be called the national

2 That I see the matter as presenting such a challenge is indicative of a predisposition towards analysis, insofar as having the means to articulate certain inner workings of the form and having a structural basis to guide further musical imaginings. Approaching performance with a musical roadmap does not necessarily contradict or compromise on a desired improvisatory quality.

consciousness, its territory being rather extensive; while the other, the individual consciousness, seems to be the product of an egocentric process" (Ravel [1928] 1990, 41). Ravel stresses that it is only through awareness of these that one's artistic identity, lineage, and community can be identified and deeply understood. Given these two points of focus—national and individual—it is intriguing to inquire how an American two generations before Ravel might have come to play such a central role in the composer's aesthetic.

At first glance, an American poet may seem to be a strange influence on the constitution of France's (and by extension Ravel's) consciousness; but Poe's indirect influence proves to have been profound and enduring. By Ravel's adolescence, Poe had already acquired notoriety in French literary circles.[3] Many of his works had been translated by ardent admirers such as Charles Baudelaire, whose French translation of Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" in *La genèse d'un poème*[4] was read by Ravel (*New York Times* [1928] 1990, 455). But it is more immediately clear that, from an early age, Ravel's innermost artistic philosophy—his "individual consciousness" ([1928] 1990, 41)—already bears evidence of Poe's influence. One of the earliest acknowledgements of the composer's respect for Poe's work dates from 1892, when the seventeen-year-old Ravel showed Ricardo Viñes—a future fellow member of the *Apaches* and dedicatee of "Oiseaux tristes"—two "dark and somber drawings" he had sketched after reading Poe's short stories "A Descent into the Maelström" and "MS. Found in a Bottle" (Orenstein 1990, 22). By Ravel's days as a student at the Paris Conservatoire, Poe's influence was perfectly evident (Kelly 2007).

What, then, could Ravel mean by mentioning the importance of Poe's "aesthetic" in relation to his own compositions? Rather than the abstraction of stylistic character, as evidenced in his early drawings, the later Ravel points directly to Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," in which he clearly saw pedagogical value, calling it "the finest treatise" (Ravel 1990, 394). While Ravel enjoyed "The Raven" as a self-sufficient work, the explanation and analysis in the "treatise" elevated Ravel's enjoyment and regard of both the poem and the poet. However, unlike Poe, Ravel rejected analyses of and commentaries upon his own works ([1928] 1990, 40). Given his own disinterest in musical analysis, yet also given his enthusiasm for Poe's self-explication, what insights could be gained if we were to apply the compositional techniques espoused in Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" to the experience of Ravel's music, particularly in a context that shares with "The Raven" a similar effect, length, and even subject? On the other hand, given Ravel's resistance to analysis, to what extent can such an approach be justified?

3 See Cambiaire (1927) for a comprehensive survey of Poe's fame in France and of his influence on prominent French poets such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Verlaine, and Rollinat; and Justin (2010) for a probing discussion of the synergy effected by Poe's presence, as seen through the reactions and ensuing interactions among the abovementioned poets.

4 Baudelaire's *La genèse d'un poème* (The genesis of a poem), containing a short introduction by Baudelaire and his translations of Poe's "The Raven" (as "Le corbeau") and "Philosophy of Composition" (as "Méthode de composition"), was first published in the *Revue française* on 20 April 1859.

Two kindred logicians

In a two-part essay in *La revue musicale*, Alexis Roland-Manuel in 1921 referred to Ravel as a "sensual logician" (Huebner 2011, 10).[5] Since then, the popular ideas that Ravel was emotionally reticent and that his music was scene painting (rather than romantic outpouring) seem to have become mutually supportive. Parallel with his meticulous personal grooming is the beauty of his music, rendered with the most exquisite craftsmanship.[6] Similarly, his love of mathematics and logic seems to align with his love of methodical and mechanical constructions, as evidenced, for example, by his self-acknowledged fascination for the cars his father handed down to him in his youth.

A similar propensity towards meticulous precision underpins Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," in which the author's design is "to render it manifest that no one point in [the] composition [of "The Raven"] is referrible either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem" (Poe 1846, 163). His process is essentialised in eight points or "considerations" that guided "The Raven" from conception to completion. These eight considerations constitute the tenets of my analysis when I cross-map Poe's compositional technique to Ravel's music.

Another striking similarity between Poe and Ravel is the way in which they set themselves apart from "the crowd." Ravel expresses disdain towards contemporaries such as Massenet for writing "everything that came into his head" (1990, 395); Poe, too, draws a distinction between himself and other writers who "compose by a species of fine frenzy" (1846, 163). The similarities in the thoughts and their clarity articulated by both artists is uncanny. Although others may not view composition through the lenses of formulaic deduction and calculable precision, logic is requisite to best represent emotions in Ravel's and Poe's creative processes. Indeed, Ravel's apparent reluctance to engage in retrospective analysis is perhaps even more intriguing given his assertions about the constructed nature of his compositional process.

5 Huebner offers a robust discussion of Ravel's connection with Poe, arguing that, although Ravel did personally acknowledge Poe's influence, Roland-Manuel's publication "set the tone for much subsequent Ravel criticism" (Huebner 2011, 9). Huebner argues further that, by championing the composer through the distinct artistic sensibilities he derived from Poe, Roland-Manuel set Ravel apart from contemporary French composers.

6 Ravel was known to have acknowledged the apparent contradiction between his view that art was a "marvellous imposture" yet also an expression of sincerity (Orenstein [1975] 1991, 181n1). The following quotation is a distillation of Ravel's attitude towards that paradox: "Sincerity is of no value unless one's conscience helps to make it apparent. This conscience compels us to turn ourselves into good craftsmen. My objective, therefore, is technical perfection. I can strive unceasingly to this end" (ibid., 118).

Correspondences: challenges and opportunities

Alongside Ravel's reluctance to analyse his work a posteriori is the challenge of translations between languages (English–French–English), art forms (literary analysis–poetry–music), cultures (French–American–Singaporean[7]), times (mid-nineteenth century–early twentieth century), or interpreters (poet–composer–performer). Essentially, differences in medium and context make it likely that some specifics may not be completely transferable. Stylistically, for example, how do different literary and musical forms correspond to each other? Ravel once said, "For me, there are not several arts, but only one: music, painting, and literature differ only in their means of expression" (1990, 393). Contemplating Édouard Manet's *Olympia* and Emmanuel Chabrier's "Mélancolie" from the *Dix pièces pittoresques* (1881), Ravel perceives the same "essence" in both works, with the "same impression" being simply "transferred to another medium" (ibid., 394). Thus, the disciplinary porousness and fluidity inherent in Ravel's outlook offers some validation for exploring correspondences between "The Raven" and "Oiseaux tristes," drawing on visual imagery, metaphor, and ultimately direct representation.

A further challenge relates to what Ravel referred to in his 1928 lecture as the relationship between "inner manifestations" and "outward expression" ([1928] 1990, 47). In his view, when two artworks have a similar outward expression yet a dissimilar inner manifestation, one almost necessarily is plagiarising the other, in that surface expression is replicated without any deep-level commonality in aesthetics and vision. By the same token, we can infer that, if two artworks share the same impulse and root in their inner manifestation, any dissimilarity in the outward expression would be due to other variables, personal factors that do not impugn the validity or integrity of either artist. In fact, it would only make them kindred artistic souls, creating through differing means of expression. Such a kindred spirit is what Ravel most likely saw in Poe, affirmed in the latter's treatise, and this connection is the foundation upon which further interpretations are built.

Performative interpretation from cross-mapping "Philosophy of Composition" onto "Oiseaux tristes"

Having outlined the connections between Poe and Ravel's aesthetics and contexts, this section will unpack the framework developed by Poe in "Philosophy of Composition" using his eight "considerations": extent, locale, effect, tone, pivot, climax, rhythm and metre, and denouement. In tandem, I will explain

7 My use of nationality to represent culture is an extension of Ravel's understanding of nation as a cultural community bound by the shared experiences of "climate, government, and way of life" (C. B. L. 1990, 488), broadly encompassing the artistic and ideological currents that one receives and, perhaps more readily, identifies with, given one's immediate realm of experiences. In view of the fluid and increasingly blurred borders of exchange, I believe nationality could, additionally, be understood as a relative, rather than definitive, term. I do not intend any explicit performance of my nationality in this analysis; that is, I do not intend to consciously apply a distinctly "Singaporean" approach.

how these "considerations" informed my performative interpretation of "Oiseaux tristes."

Extent considers the length of a work against its "unity of impression" (Poe 1846, 163) wherein "brevity must be in direct ratio [to] the intensity of the intended effect" (164). The theme of unity is echoed and reinforced in the consideration of *locale*, in which Poe deems it pertinent for a work to unfold within the "close circumscription of space," akin to "the force of a frame to a picture" (166, italics removed). Having decided that 108 lines is the appropriate length to sustain and deliver his intended poetic effect, Poe then demarcates the temporal and physical boundaries in which the narrative unfolds: one night, within the narrator's chamber. A parallel, concise form characterises "Oiseaux tristes." From Ravel's inscription—"birds lost in the torpor of a very dark forest during the hottest hours of summer" (Roberts 2012, 56)—it is clear that he intends the thirty-two bars of "Oiseaux tristes" to evoke and characterise these birds within the imagined physical framing of a torpid forest. A similar understanding of length and frame also informs other movements of *Miroirs*: each miniature revolves around the depiction of a singular subject within a specified setting—of moths in the night, a boat on the ocean, a jester's song in the morning, and bells in the valley. The implications of "extent" and "locale" as structural frames—both temporal and imagined physical—lend a framework and intentionality to my conception of the musical narrative.

For Poe, there are three types of *effect* (i.e., impression) at one's disposal: beauty, which is the "excitement or pleasurable elevation, of the soul"; passion, being the "excitement of the heart"; and truth, which is the "satisfaction of the intellect" (1846, 164). It is in contemplating the beautiful that the most intense and pure pleasure can be found, making it the most desirable effect (ibid.). Moreover, Poe proposes that "beauty" reaches its highest manifestation when expressed through the *tone* of sadness. At the time of composition, Ravel cited the following lines from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1.2.54–55; [1623] 2005, 630)[8] as a source of inspiration, "the eye sees not itself / But by reflection, by some other things," thus capturing, as Orenstein ([1975] 1991, 159) puts it, "an objective, though personal, reflection of reality."[9] Combining this definition of effect with the considerations of extent and locale, the broad strokes of construction come into view. Within the frame of a torpid forest, the effect to be sustained is that of a carefully constructed poetic sadness, with distance borrowed from a reserved perspective—that is, through notions of scene-painting rather than impassioned outpouring. The portrayal of sadness gains a deeper sense of beauty when personified by a subject (the bird) and its surroundings. When performing, I consider myself to be both conjuring and observing sadness, which translates into a sense of restraint and third-person remoteness that is nevertheless empathetic with the emotional content at hand.

A *pivot* refers to the means through which the structure of a work gels and attains cohesiveness; Poe thought the refrain to be the most effective example

8 See Roberts (2012, 43), for the fuller context around Ravel's quotation of Shakespeare.

9 Orenstein also makes explicit Ravel's belief that "art [is] to be a quest for beauty, rather than truth," and argues that this attitude was "an idea derived from the writings of Poe" (Orenstein [1975] 1991, 118n1).

of a pivot. In "The Raven," the refrain is the word "Nevermore," which is sounded by the bird at the end of each stanza in the fashion of an ominous omen. To avoid the monotony of repetition, Poe stressed that the context in which the refrain appears should be varied each time. The thrust of the narrative follows how the refrains and interspersing materials build towards a *climax*, which, in Poe's words, pairs the refrain with the context that would invoke the greatest amount of despair, reaching the peak of melancholy. The climax should also appear near the end, right before the final appearance of the refrain.

The central motif of the "Oiseaux tristes" refrain is a pair of repeated notes; the full refrain is a theme that consists of three iterations of the repeated notes motif (figure 9.1). The full refrain appears three times: first, a cappella (bars 1–3); second, over an A♭ pedal point with murky non-triadic inner chords (bars 7–10); third, in a modulation in which the refrain begins on A instead of B♭, over a G–D compound pedal point with, again, non-triadic inner chords (bars 21–24).[10] The varying harmonic context that accompanies each refrain steeps the birdcall in different hues of sadness.

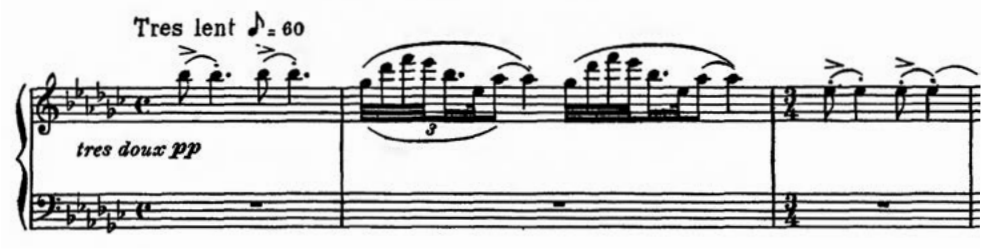

Figure 9.1.

I identify bars 25–28 as the climax (figure 9.2). This decision may seem misguided compared with most works, in which the climax is signalled by a dynamic peak, but an alternative perspective corresponds more closely to Poe's definition. The dynamic peak of "Oiseaux tristes"—the only time *f* is indicated—is in bar 15. Identifying that as the climax, however, is problematic: the piece is only midway through at that point, which leaves little room to argue that the music before serves as a convincing build-up and also brings ambiguous implications to the material that follows. Though mostly *pp*, bars 25–28, on the other hand, prove to be a more compelling climax when their narrative function is re-examined through Poe's definition. Here, the refrain evolves into a sprawling and soaring arabesque figure that is seen nowhere else in the piece and which, in bar 26, descends into the familiar texture of unresolved chords in the lower registers. The narrative shifts towards despair as the short-lived

10 Orenstein ([1975] 1991, 159) relates Ravel's comment that *Miroirs* "marked a rather considerable change in my harmonic evolution, which disconcerted even those musicians who had been accustomed to my style," and that "the most characteristic piece, in my opinion, is 'Oiseaux tristes,'" in which "the 'disconcerting' harmonies may refer to the avoidance of tonic triads over extended periods or to the many unresolved chords over pedal points."

Figure 9.1. Maurice Ravel, "Oiseaux tristes," *Miroirs* no. 2, bars 1–3 (Ravel 1906).

possibility of hope and liberation, embodied in the arabesque, is juxtaposed with the immediate and cruel denial of it. Bars 25–28 also constitute the last section that contrasts with the full refrains in terms of *rhythm and metre*. The full refrains are characterised by a lumbering triplet pattern, whereas bars 13–17 employ divisions of the triplets into groups of three and two (bar 13) before further acceleration into divisions of four (bar 15). A similar manipulation of rhythm is seen in bar 25. It is precisely the choreography of alternating the still refrains with such rhythmically animated sections—mirroring the alternation between sadness in entrapment and pursuit of escape—that justifies placing the climax in bars 25–28, which suggest that escape is merely a fantasy and sadness an inevitability.

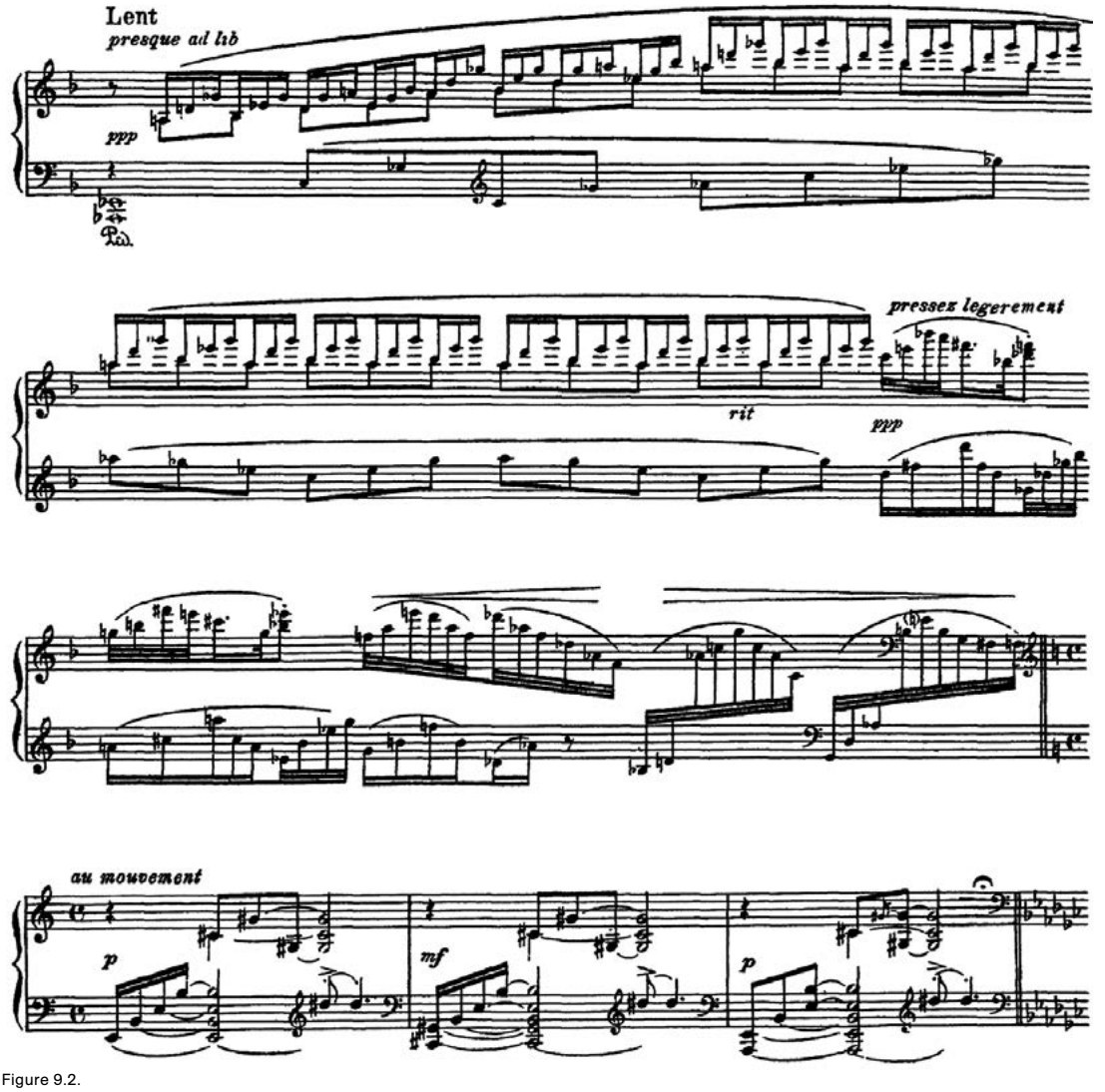

Figure 9.2.

Figure 9.2. Ravel, "Oiseaux tristes," bars 25–28 (Ravel 1906).

Poe proposes that the *denouement* follows the climax, stating that this is where all materials reappear and synthesise, bringing completion and a sense that the story transcends "the real." The synthesis of previously heard materials—such as pedal point, the D–B♭ figure from bar 4, and the core of the refrain—is found in bar 29. That bar is repeated three times, inspiring a poetic reading in which the sad birds are forevermore entrapped in the eternal suspense of the torrid forest.

Overall, the musical roadmap derived from the cross-mapping demonstrates that: (1) the cross-disciplinary application of a literary framework onto a musical work can enrich interpretive experience; (2) such an approach challenges one's normative musical understanding of key structural points, such as a climax, by involving a different set of considerations and contexts; (3) the analysis of a musical work can go beyond traditional, section-based forms to a narrative understanding based on the linear unfolding of musical events. A non-linear, puzzle-piecing method gained from Poe's treatise reveals broader points of narrative and structural considerations.

A further layer of translation—a multimedia amalgamation

My process of correspondence and translation—beginning with a close reading of the score of "Oiseaux tristes," followed by a literature review and intertextual studies of scholarly texts related to Ravel and Poe, and ultimately leading to a hermeneutic, cross-disciplinary application of principles from Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" to "Oiseaux tristes"—ultimately found manifestation in a multimedia performance of Ravel's piece (figure 9.3). Alongside poetry, prose, musical notation, and scholarly discourse, such a multimedia performance represents yet another layer of correspondence and translation. Recognising that sound alone could convey narrative and interpretive insights only to a limited extent, I turned to a visual medium that could more explicitly represent structural and narrative features: digital animation. In collaboration with Clarisse Bu, a Singaporean graphic-motion designer, I came up with the idea of transferring my Poe-inspired interpretation of "Oiseaux tristes" to a visual medium.

The animation is deliberately conceived in black and white to emphasise the duality of (and tension between) entrapment and liberation that underpins the emotional or poetic experience of sadness (MF9.1).[11] The artistic deliberations concerning how the "sad birds" themselves should be visually represented were particularly interesting. After first considering a realistic aesthetic, which would have involved footage captured of birds around Singapore, we opted for something more abstract and symbolic, with feathers and ink taking the place of birds and trees. The full refrain, for example, is represented by a slowly turn-

11 The animated video (MF9.1) can be viewed in the virtual companion to this book at https://sonus.orpheusinstituut.be/publication/publication/performing-by-the-book-musical-negotiations-between-text-and-act/relocating-ravels-sad-birds-in-alternative-forests-of-place-and-time.

Figure 9.3.

ing feather. Each return and variation of the full refrain conveys a deeper sense of sorrow: the feather initially appears solitary against a white background (00:10), "reappears" against black ink that symbolises a dense and suffocating canopy (00:49), and finally is multiplied through fractured mirroring, orbiting in complete darkness (02:18). In the sections that alternate with the refrain, a sense of hope, liberation, and liveliness is represented through feathers with quicker motions (01:26–01:58) and active textures. At 02:50–03:38, the climax begins, as the multiple feathers generated in the third full refrain gather together and collectively start to rise. By 02:57, it becomes apparent that these feathers are soaring towards the treetops. The sense of hope is augmented by using footage of a treetop in Singapore's Clementi Forest as a backdrop (the only time real-life footage appears in this video). Pairing the refrain material with a visual context that suggests heightened reality and hope thus invokes the greatest despair when, in the next moment, the feathers sink and fall back to the pit of the forest, exemplifying birds that will never escape. With a fresh narrative, I believe the creative agency exercised in this process of translation and co-creation further augments the performative and interpretative dimensions of "Oiseaux tristes," offering a personal and reimagined performance.

Figure 9.3. The author performing "Oiseaux tristes" (2022) to the animated video by Clarisse Bu and herself.

Reconciling texts and contexts

> The self-evident is often the least examined: how did I come to study Western classical music?
>
> —Kok (2011, 75, reflecting critically on the early experience of her music education in postcolonial Malaysia)

In 1922, Ravel's name first appeared in Singapore newspapers. Under the headline "A Real Classical Concert," the programme of an upcoming performance by Russian soprano Anna El-Tour was announced to include his works (*Malaya Tribune* 1922).[12] A hundred years later, the musical landscape of Singapore has drastically evolved. In this country, which prides itself on its cosmopolitanism, modernity, and multiculturalism, the presence of Western art music and its institutions is keenly felt. Growing up as a first-generation Singaporean born to Chinese parents, I did not hear one note of Ravel or a word of Poe—or for that matter, the English language—in my household before I was taught at school how to understand and express myself in those "tongues." For most of my upbringing, learning and eventually specialising in the repertoire of Western classical music seemed a rather natural consequence of my early fascination with the piano. However, as my musical pursuits deepened, I increasingly experienced a sense of cultural "admixture" that was haphazard at certain times and deeply acute at others; my dialogues with and reproduction of music written by "dead white men" ran counter to other cultural expressions that could be more readily identified as "mine" or "ours"—by way of national or ethnic cultures—instead of "theirs." The proliferation of Western classical institutions in Asia is a phenomenon that bears the mark of colonialism. My cognisance of such cultural admixture has since been enhanced and articulated through the discourse of postcolonial studies at large, and more pertinently through the critical reflections, reckonings, and negotiations for agency echoed across non-European practitioners of Western art music (Kok 2011; Tan 2017; Yang 2007). Perhaps some comfort can be drawn from the sense that this struggle is, to some extent, shared by European music scholars, as discussions among European conservatories bear out. Decolonisation has presented itself as a daunting but necessary challenge to be met in this shared historical moment, so fiercely determined by processes of globalisation and imperialism. In the midst of these discourses, the exploration of ownership and autonomy in relation to interpretative and performative dimensions of music-making has proven to be essential in the recognition of one's personal and artistic identities (Hargreaves and Marshall 2003; Lanskey 2019; Wang 2015). The weight of tradition stands against the freedom of self-innovation in a delicate balance—

12 Anna El-Tour's visit to Singapore took place between her teaching appointments in Moscow (1913–20) and Berlin (1922–25); the latter concluded with her appointment at the Conservatoire International de Paris (1925–48) (Slonimsky 1958, 436). A search on NewspaperSG, the largest online archive of Singaporean newspapers, reveals no mention of Ravel that predates 10 March 1922.

how does one find a way forward while preserving the layers and lenses that have contributed to the self? Returning to the "forest" analogy, how can one pay heed to the dense texts and contexts without being trapped under their branches? Perhaps the most emboldening realisation from this research is that it is possible to dive deeply and yet emerge free from the "forest." Having journeyed through various layers of cultures and translation, I was already finding a way to "emerge" from them to explore "Oiseaux tristes" with greater ownership over the artistic process. With my research now consolidated, I have condensed the key points of the project into a model (figure 9.4).

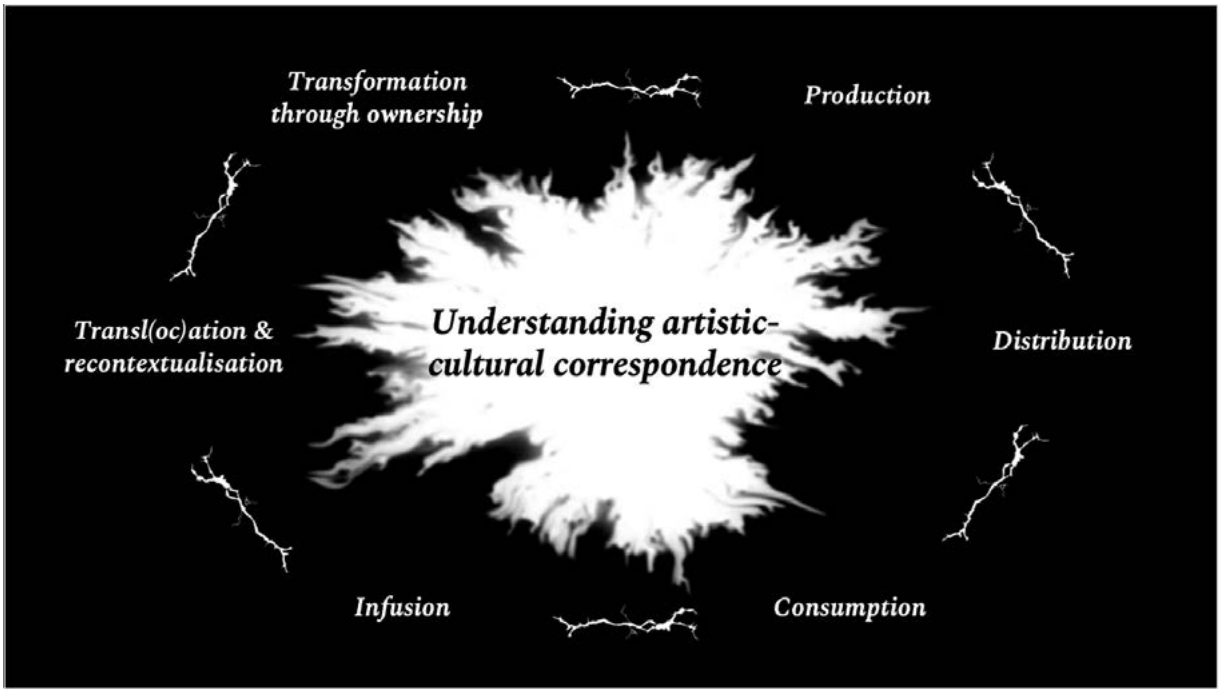

Figure 9.4.

By *production*, I refer to the process through which an inspiration or thought materialises in a distinct and identifiable artistic product, such as Poe's treatise and Ravel's composition. Through the means of *distribution* enabled by cultural processes, agents, and technologies of the modern world—industrialisation, printed media, publishers, globalisation, touring performers—the distribution and circulation of ideas, personnel, and commodities has increasingly transcended national and continental borders, finding markets and audiences on a global scale. Upon receiving the produced artwork, one may at times stop at the stage of *consumption*, when the moment of experience does not trigger further thoughts or resonance. However, when one feels porous and susceptible to the artwork, a process I would term *infusion* happens. This is marked by the feeling

Figure 9.4. Diagram illustrating a personal concept of the hermeneutic process of artistic-cultural correspondence derived from this project.

of internalising a hitherto foreign idea that is embodied in a work, a feeling sparked by an ideological resonance that intrigues and results in a deepened desire towards understanding. This is evident both in Ravel's fascination with Poe and in my decision to explore my interpretive instincts in correspondence with theirs. When a step is taken beyond consumption and infusion towards an active process that signifies and reconciles translational challenges and barriers, the consequent artistic product, or by-product, is *translocated and recontextualised*. In its new form, as comprehended by the beholder—Ravel's renewed understanding of formal structure in light of Poe's compositional principles as articulated through his lectures and interviews, or my revitalised understanding of "Oiseaux tristes" as expressed above—the recontextualised product is liberated from categorisations, labels, or cultural baggage that might have previously been perceived by the individual to impede such translocation. The multi-level transformation through new connections discovered, discourses explored, and dissonances negotiated revitalises one's sense of interpretive *ownership* and autonomy, which in turn reverberates through one's artistic identity and practice. When a newly conceived idea materialises in an original composition, in the case of Ravel, or in an original multimedia performance, as in my "Oiseaux tristes," the *(re)production* can potentially begin another virtuous cycle of cultural correspondence when received by another kindred artistic spirit.

Conclusion

This project represents an early foray into a multi-layered artistic inquiry. The perspectives gained from the initial intertextual analysis have deepened my appreciation of each work or "text" in relation to others. From that, too, have risen enriched possibilities of musical interpretation in light of self-aware performance practices. Echoing Ravel's concept of an individual and national consciousness for identifying one's artistic lineage and identity, the multi-layered correspondence between texts and contexts addressed in this project has emboldened a keener personal reflection of both kinds of consciousness within my own artistry. The journey through the dense "forest" of texts and contexts emerging from the works of, and correspondences made between, Poe and Ravel has presented challenges of translation, translocation, and artistic ownership. Because of the ever-increasing fluidity and exchange between artistic practices and cultural bodies made possible by heightened global connections, a twenty-first-century performer-interpreter must inevitably face such challenges, correspondence, and negotiations. The multimedia production of "Oiseaux tristes" was an avenue to express the complexities of personal and cultural correspondence with which I have been grappling. It also attests that all individuals, when exercising the creative agency they uniquely possess, can contribute to the ever-flourishing process of recontextualisation and translocation. Further, this project shows that artistic philosophies and ideals can persist through time and remain relevant as guiding principles, finding fresh reverberations and manifestations in the hands of others. The virtuous

cycle of artistic-cultural correspondence therefore proves its potential to offer self-permitting transformation in transcending any perceived constraints of texts and contexts.

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The Virgin Act

Mediating Supplement and Repetition in Performance

Clare Lesser
Independent researcher and performer

According to René Char, "The act is virgin, even repeated" (2010, 149). This sentiment is well suited to the process of interpreting and realising musical texts (in the widest sense), where the negotiated space between text and performance, author and reader, and centre and supplement is in permanent motion. The French singer and pedagogue Pierre Bernac expresses similar ideas in *The Interpretation of French Song* when he quotes Paul Valéry: "A work of music, which is only a piece of writing, is a cheque drawn on the fund of talent of a possible performer" (Bernac 1976, 1). Thus, already the artist *is* a researcher by default, negotiating the space between text and act through multiple acts of translation, and the two quotations by Char and Bernac both circle this undecidable space. The first, the potential of a blank cheque that can be infinitely rewritten—although not erased—and the second, the "first and last" that is *every* performative act, even when part of an infinite chain of (assumed) repetition. Using these two quotations as starting points, as well as the design of placing them side by side in *this* text, I propose to explore acts of mediation through Derridean concepts.

But what texts are we talking about here? What forms do they take within the Western musical canon? Derrida might have thought of them as a "disparate multiplicity" (Tschumi 1996, 257), for musicians work from a wide variety of texts and textual information, ranging from "standard" forms of musical notation—denoting rhythm, time, pitch, and so on—and incorporating language to indicate, for example, speed (allegro), mood (misterioso), or amplitude (*mezzo forte*) to considerably more experimental ways of expressing musical content. In twentieth-century compositions, there may well be copious instructions, ranging from prescribing the intended actions, the "how" of performance, or the intended "result," or indeed the construction of the score itself from a kit—although that score will still be in need of further layers of performative interpretation. Then there are scores that provide frameworks without contents and, vice versa, there are graphic scores with and without written explanation, ranging from non-standard and extended forms of notation to pictures prompting improvisation—such as can be found in works by Cathy

Berberian, Cornelius Cardew, Hans-Joachim Hespos, Anestis Logothetis, Dieter Schnebel, and others. There are text scores, many of which are closer to performance art than traditional concepts of music, scores that combine some or all of the above, and those written "a posteriori" acting also as performance documentation.[1] Thus, performers must prepare pre-existing works by first reading the text, whether score, image, or set of directions; a period of thought and rehearsal follows, concluding with a (theoretically) unique performative act that is part of a potentially infinite and unstable chain.

Although this chapter will be mainly concerned with supplement and repetition, as illustrated by the performative affordances of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Plus-Minus* (1963) and John Cage's *Four*[6] (1992), I shall also be touching upon the related concept of the *pharmakon*—a key term referring to instability and decentring—as Derrida's philosophical terms all operate within mobile chains of connectivity. The pharmakon is relevant to any performative act and can be discerned in all stages of musical performance, from the form(s) of the original text over the multitude of interpretations in action to its eventual afterlife as object or memory. It is a space that is unstable, or undecidable; a place for consideration and experiment that accelerates the kinetic processes of turning towards and oscillation between texts and acts. And dominating everything is undecidability: in the scores themselves, in processes of interpretation, and in performance. Derrida sums up the problem when he says, "the question posed here being one of knowing whether *a* text could be *one* and if such a thing exists any more than a unicorn" (Derrida 1986, 169).

Pharmakon

Originating from Plato's *Phædrus*, pharmakon is a play on the original Greek term φάρμακον, which denotes both medicine and poison. Derrida introduces the concept in "La pharmacie de Platon" ("Plato's Pharmacy," 1968, see Derrida 1981), where he explicates its properties as an "undecidable." For Derrida, the pharmakon is a space and a movement whereby oppositions can be overturned and where the actions of conjoining and interpenetration, the either/or, neither/nor, and "and" take place. Derrida states: "This *pharmakon*, this 'medicine,' this philter, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself into the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence" (1981, 70). In other words, the pharmakon allows Derrida to overturn oppositions. It represents opposing states simultaneously and also the perpetual movement between and through them. For music it applies to both unstable texts and illusory "virgin" performative acts by highlighting the contradictions that are inherent in acts of interpretation and the "objects" that are interpreted—"This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be—alternately or simultaneously—beneficent or maleficent" (70). However, "If the *pharmakon* is 'ambivalent,' it is because it constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, the movement and the play that links them among themselves, reverses them

1 Recordings would also fall into this category.

or makes one side cross over into the other (soul/body, good/evil, inside/outside, memory/forgetfulness, speech/writing, etc.)" (127).

The properties of instability and movement represented by the pharmakon are also fundamental to an understanding of supplement, play, and repetition. In *Glas* (first published 1974), Derrida playfully compares this instability to one of horror literature's key characters:

> They are neither man nor woman —
> They are neither brute nor human —
> They are Ghouls: —
> (Derrida 1986, 156)

The ghoul can be viewed as contra to metaphysical conceptual order: it is either dead or alive, yet it is neither dead nor alive, while also being both dead and alive. We can see the same process of problematising in the Char and Bernac quotations opening this chapter, both of which present pharmakoi in their embodiment of the operators *either/or*, *neither/nor*, and *both*. Char's act is both virgin *and* repeated, while Valéry's cheque is continually overwritten, yet without being erased. "First" and "last" imply binary opposites, but if first *is* last, how can it be part of a chain of repetition and how can a blank cheque be continually rewritten? Is this part of a wider process of decentring, or "play," as Derrida would have it?

Play and supplement

"La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines" ("Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences") from *L'écriture et la différence* (*Writing and Difference*, 1967, see Derrida 1978) is one of Derrida's earliest works to systematically, albeit elliptically, "discuss" or set out deconstruction and its processes as applied to language, literature, and the gamut of Western philosophical concepts, especially metaphysics.[2] Derrida questions notions of interpretation, of sign systems, of ruptures and redoublings, of the role of *presence*, of centres and origins in structure, and how all this relates to *difference* and *play*. He interrogates the role and nature of the "centre" in classical Western philosophy and argues: "it is the point at which the substitution of . . . terms is no longer possible" (1978, 279). Thus, the centre must be unique and can be thought of as an origin or a point of presence. According to Derrida, the centre governs and organises structure, but "escapes structurality" (279). However, he then constructs a framework for what he calls the *rupture* or the *event* that will allow for a new mode of interrogation. According to Derrida, this rupture is repetition, repetition of the "structurality of structure" (279), "repetition in every sense of the word" (280). If this is so, logically there cannot be a centre, and the centre instead must be a *function*, not a place, with *every-*

2 The other two publications from 1967 dealing with structuralism and phenomenology are *La voix et le phénomène* (*Speech and Phenomena*) and *De la grammatologie* (*Of Grammatology*).

thing considered as discourse. Hence, the centre is now "a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play"; furthermore, discourse is "a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (280).

Naturally, this chain of reasoning raises questions pertaining to the stability of musical texts, but it also problematises conceptions of technique and authenticity in performance. Play not only implies the past but also projects forwards into the future. Performance technique becomes able to move freely backwards and forwards throughout the historical flow of repertoire, further problematising any narrow notion of authenticity as "fixed" in performance. The same can be said of musical notation, being part of a continuum that flows in both directions. Composers may radically develop notation—and its implied usage—the past informing what Derrida would call a series of modalised presents, while the understanding of older sources may be lost, requiring more speculative approaches to performance based in the text's "future." Historically informed interpretation is as valid as the radical or contemporary in light of this process of decentring. They are points on the same continuum, as are the texts from which they are derived.

Regarding the supplement, Derrida notes: "this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a centre or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*" (1978, 289); the sign that replaces the centre is a supplement, a surplus. If the sign is a surplus, then, Derrida suggests, neither can the centre be determined nor can totalisation be exhausted. Thus, the supplement offers another challenge to metaphysical binary oppositions, for it is simultaneously an addition, an extension—or repetition—*and* a replacement. It is another of Derrida's undecidables, a pharmakon that crosses logical boundaries. Think of an apple tree: it is complete, but it flowers and an apple grows—an *addition*. Here, the addition, the apple, is added to something that is already complete. But how can the tree be complete if it needs an addition? It needs that apple or the species will die out, so the tree is *not* complete. The supplement, then, repeats; it extends by means of repetition. The apple shares some of the DNA of the parent tree, and biologically it is an extension or repetition, but it will also *replace* the tree. The tree+apple overturns binary logic. The tree is both complete and its own supplement—in the form of the next tree that will grow from the apple. It is the same but different. It is first and last. We can extend this further: the new apple+tree opposes—is different to, a replacement of—the complete tree, the parent. The apple opposes what it repeats; it opposes itself.

I will now outline two instances of how this chain of play and supplement unfolds in performance and its relation to their accompanying texts: the first, Stockhausen's *Plus-Minus*, illustrates variability in repetition of the performances of one work; the second, Cage's *Four*[6], demonstrates a yet more radical process of *generative* interpretation.

Plus-Minus

> He said: "I've finished. . . . It's short really. I found a way to bring all the seven types in the quickest possible way to −13, and I killed them off." There were just a few blips and blobs and then lots of silences . . . that was it.
>
> —Cott (1974, 141)

Stockhausen is referring to the way one of his students at the Kölner Kurse für Neue Musik (Cologne Courses for New Music) realised a version of *Plus-Minus* (1963). Although Stockhausen said he was "proud that I'd made a piece that allowed for many different versions and which at the same time gave a very strict skeleton for the composing . . ." (ibid., 141), he seemed rather surprised by the student's radical reading. It is a striking example of what a reader can bring to a text—something that is completely unexpected by its original author. It is this area of repetition and variability, as part of Derridean "play" and "supplement," that I shall now move to.

The 1960s was a decade of frenetic activity for Stockhausen, in which he composed many works that adopt highly innovative approaches to notation and structure, which not only invite but also demand high levels of performer agency in each new presentation.[3] Plus-minus notation—a form of symbolically specific notation where processes of transformation are tightly controlled, but the materials to be transformed are much freer, particularly in the later works—appears in *Plus-Minus*, *Mikrophonie I*, *Prozession*, *Kurzwellen*, *Spiral*, *Pole für 2*, and *Expo für 3*, with the later works also deploying yet more chance elements through their use of sonic found objects via shortwave radio signals.[4] *Plus-Minus*, "a composition in which the essential processes are expressed symbolically" (Maconie 1976, 177), introduces a new form of notational representation that is able to systematically explore the "intrinsic tension between form and content, fixed process and variable expression" (ibid., 181).

Although Stockhausen's experiments in notation were nothing new for him—the 1950s had seen a slew of innovations in scores such as *Elektronische Studie I* (1953) and *II* (1954), *Klavierstück XI* (see also Niels Berentsen's chapter), *Zyklus*, and *Refrain* (1959)—*Plus-Minus* considerably increased the inventiveness of his graphic scores, one of the main innovations being a new methodology for de/constructing the performance score itself. The "score" is in the form of a kit, consisting of two groups of seven pages: one of pitch aggregates and one

3 Examples, besides *Plus-Minus*, are *Mikrophonie I* and *Mixtur* (1964), *Stop* (1965), *Solo* (1965–66), *Telemusik* and *Adieu* (1966), *Hymnen* and *Hymnen mit Solisten* (1966–67), *Prozession* and *Ensemble* (1967), *Stimmung*, *Kurzwellen*, *Aus den sieben Tagen*, *Musik für ein Haus*, *Hinab-Hinauf*, and *Spiral* (1968), *Für Kommende Zeiten* (1968–70), *Kurzwellen mit Beethoven* and *Hymnen mit Orchester, Dr K. Sextett*, *Fresco*, and *Tunnel-Spiral* (1969), and *Pole für Zwei* and *Expo für Drei* (1969–70).

4 For example, Stockhausen suggests inserting "radio sounds which are fairly undefined" (Cott 1974, 140) into the "holes" (generated through the process of further subtraction to events that have already reached "0" value) that form in the negative bands. Maconie (1976, 181) notes that Stockhausen was fascinated by the 1974 Cornelius Cardew and Frederic Rzewski piano duet version of *Plus-Minus*, where Cardew employed transistor radio static for the negative-band material.

of performance instructions represented by symbolic notation.[5] The two are combined to realise the parts required for a performance, but in *Plus-Minus* the individual parts must be prepared in advance rather than used "live" as in *Spiral*, *Pole*, and so on.[6] In *Plus-Minus*, the plus-minus notation, appearing in flaglike boxes, affects either the repetition or the removal—depending on whether the sign is a plus or a minus—of the form defining the "central sound" (*Zentralklang*) or the central sound defining the ancillary notes (*Akzidentien*) (figure 10.1). Although the plus-minus signs do not occur very frequently, they nevertheless play an important role in controlling the expansion and contraction of the combinations of *Zentralklang* and *Akzidentien*. Thus, the score itself is unfixed—being composed of loose pages—and further indeterminacy is built into the resulting interpretation by the plus-minus notation. The space between text and act is large indeed.

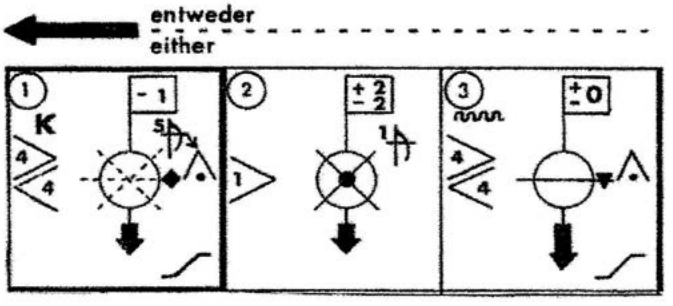

Figure 10.1.

Of particular interest is the function of the minus signs, which allow for the insertion of continuous bands of contrasting and compensatory sound whenever the negative sign has caused the complete erasure of the original *Zentralklang* structure. This band can then be further punctured by insertions of silence; if it is a zero-value structure, it can be completely replaced with silence. There are also occasions when the *Zentralklang/Akzidentien* combination either reaches plus thirteen—which implies a completely new and different interpretation, in some ways anticipatory of the "spiral" symbols in *Spiral*, *Pole*, and *Expo*, which ask the performer to transcend their playing capabilities—or reaches minus thirteen, when the structure is "disappeared," permanently erased, and ignored, if its symbolic representation reoccurs in the score.

Later plus-minus scores add more variety in symbolic notation, with new symbols for difference and opposition appearing in *Mikrophonie I*, where the plus-minus symbols now represent supporting and destroying—rather than simply increasing or decreasing—actions. Not only is the original score of *Plus-Minus* unstable, but also its notation is part of an evolving continuum. In addition, *Mikrophonie I* continues the variable order of event structures established in *Plus-Minus*. Perhaps its most radical departure from *Plus-Minus*, though, is

5 There is also a considerable quantity of text instruction on methods for score realisation.

6 Kit forms, the materials of which must be prepared in advance of the live performance, can be seen to anticipate Stockhausen's use of form schemes in, for example, *Stimmung*, *Stop*, *Solo*, and *Sternklang*.

Figure 10.1. Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Plus-Minus* (1965), page 1.

that the plus-minus notation is used to denote relationships between structures, rather than the contents or transformations of material within those structures. Hence, structural relationships are fixed, but the order is free, notated using plus-minus symbols; pitches and rhythms or durations use standard notation, and timbre is indicated through text instructions, although the interpretation of these instructions is delegated to the two performers.[7]

In *Prozession*, the plus-minus notation is stripped back to essentials—the form in which it will appear in later scores such as *Kurzwellen*, *Spiral*, *Pole*, and *Expo*—emphasising the importance of transforming sonic "found objects" taken from other compositions by Stockhausen. The plus-minus notation affects musical events played by a particular performer, which may then be subjected to further processes of transformation, or events played by other performers in the group. The process of transformation throughout *Prozession* is constant, therefore. Duration and instrumentation[8] are indeterminate; signalling is used extensively as a means of fragmentation, punctuation, and overwriting during performance; the entire work is governed by a process of transformation, derived from the composer's own earlier works in an exercise of the supplement on many levels.

Plus-Minus, too, amply demonstrates the supplement in action: it generates a new score—a new physical text—for every performance, while the performance itself is yet another supplement. As Stockhausen says, "It's what the compositions I am dealing with are all about. I create something that can recreate itself. Phoenix music. And in *Plus-Minus* I even thought for the first time in my life of composing a piece that would have its own children" (Cott 1974, 137). Referring to the undecidable, Derrida expresses similar sentiments in *Glas*, although here he further challenges the assumption that an "ungraspable" text would be somehow inferior to a monolithic text:

> For if my text is (was) ungraspable, it will (would) be neither grasped nor retained. Who, in this economy of the undecidable, would be punished? But if I linearize, if I line myself up and believe—silliness—that I write only one text at a time, that comes back to the same thing, and the cost of the margin must still be reckoned with. (1986, 66)

The student's radical version of *Plus-Minus* is a perfect example of decentring through the natural variability in repetition of interpretation when the centre—as score or performance—is a function. In other words, all these versions are linked, in a very real sense, to one another through play, yet each one is also and simultaneously a unique moment that is representative of Char's "virgin act"—even repeated. If the centre is thrown into doubt, then the totality is equally suspect, and it is consequently impossible to know one's own or anyone else's limits as an interpreter or the supposed limits of the score and its

7 For more information on developments in plus-minus notation see Maconie (1976, 182–87, 227–38, 243–50, 263–8, 280–84).

8 "*Prozession* was composed for the ensemble to which it is dedicated; however, one may replace the instruments with other corresponding ones and draw upon further compositions of the author as sources" (Stockhausen 1967, 7).

realisations. There is always more to add and nothing can ever be complete. A musical performance in this instance is derived from a prior object, a "score" that in turn comes from multiple prior sources, but the "score" itself is open to an infinite number of interpretations and performances. Neither the performance nor the score can ever be complete, for the chain of play and supplement moves forwards and backwards, extending the line of musical DNA ad infinitum. This is emphasised further when the score requires the insertion of musical materials derived from another piece, whether by the score's composer or from another composer's work.

The infinite number of performances inherent in any musical text is analogous to Valéry's "blank cheque" of potential, but supplement can be extended further as evidenced in scores that afford so much agency within their frameworks that they are able to generate completely new works from iteration to iteration. Extending some of the concepts already discussed in *Plus-Minus*, John Cage's *Four*[6] is one such work.

Four[6]

Composed for four players or performers—Cage varies his designations between cover page and parts—*Four*[6] is one of the group of so-called number pieces written during the last five years of the composer's life, and it utilises the system of "time brackets" he had developed during the mid 1980s.[9] Briefly, time brackets specify lengths of time during which events, often but not always prescribed,[10] should take place, and events are often, but not always, surrounded by "silence," or more likely ambience.[11] The actual presentation of events in *Four*[6] is variable within each pair of time brackets, with start—left—and stop times—right—and also possible interruptions, being determined by individual players either during "live" performance or pre-determined. Thereby a certain amount of structural freedom is built into the score, even though the total duration is fixed at thirty minutes. Although time brackets allow a certain amount of—structural—performer agency, they are very far from totally free; they all have rules. However, *Four*[6]—and *One*[7], a supplementary work derived from it—does permit much greater agency in the choices of the sounds themselves—the "fillings" for the time brackets. The sounds are indeterminate, drawn from a total lexicon of forty-six performer-chosen possibilities, twelve each for performers two, three, and four, but only ten for player one, who does not have a sound 2 or 10.[12] Nor is there anything to prevent players from over-

9 One of the earliest examples of a time bracket work is *Thirty Pieces for String Quartet* (1983).

10 *Theatre Piece* (1960), an earlier use of proto-time-bracket notation, is open regarding content, specifying only "one to eight performers of any sort," who are directed to choose words that signify sounds, actions, or objects, from which the performance then proceeds. The score was also written *after the fact*, in that it is a summary—of sorts—of the first performance (see Pritchett 1993, 133–34).

11 Especially in the earlier time bracket pieces, sound events often have a buffer of silence, or non-action, surrounding the pitch or sound material in the time bracket. This feature is present in *Four*[6], but sound events also sometimes run into one another with no discernible break (indicated in the score by a connecting line between brackets).

12 For a discussion of the compositional processes employed by Cage in *Four*[6], see Haskins (2009, 100–107); for more general discussion, see Brooks (2002, 141–45) and Pritchett (1996, 200–204).

lapping or doubling sounds if the time brackets permit. *Four*[6] consists of forty-five sonic "events"[13] taking place during its thirty-minute total duration; as if both to emphasise the singularity of each "player" and to bring into play concepts of distributed creativity or even usership—for a "score" rather implies a "controlling" hand—there is no master score, only a set of parts with some brief, introductory instructions.

Although the players have agency over when they place their sounds and what those sounds are, the numbers for the time brackets themselves—and their contents in other time-bracket works—were created using indeterminate I Ching processes. Cage remarked in 1992:

> Writing now . . . they fall into a flexible [time] bracket. They only get to a point through the physicality of the performance. And if that physicality is plural . . . the more numbers there are, the more impossible it is to imagine that there could be such a thing as one version, hmm? There are too many possibilities. (Retallack 1996, 235)

Thus, in *Four*[6] the players' almost total freedom is in marked contrast to the composer's relinquishing of personal, granular design, and the score and performances both exploit processes of indeterminacy and randomisation.

Cage asks the players to "Play within the flexible time brackets given. When the time brackets are connected by a diagonal line they are relatively close together" (1992, 2). Content is at the performers' discretion because the work is "for any way of producing sounds (vocalization, singing, playing an instrument or instruments, electronics, etc.)" (1). Further, Cage writes: "Choose twelve different sounds with fixed characteristics (amplitude, overtone structure, etc.)" (2).

Four[6] presents creative contradictions or *pharmakoi* from the outset. Sounds are apparently both fixed and free. We assume that Cage *intended* that each of the twelve sounds should have fixed characteristics, but why instruct the players the work is "for any way of producing sounds" in that case, and does the word "fixed" apply to all the sound's characteristics? Could a sound with a fixed overtone structure have varying dynamics in performance, or could a constant dynamic be combined with an unfixed timbre? It is seemingly redundant and yet perhaps it is a deliberate—albeit somewhat obscured—provocation to the players. Otherwise, Cage could have written "produce twelve sounds with fixed characteristics (amplitude, etc.)," which would make perfect sense to a musician. The time brackets are deployed like empty shells, waiting to be inhabited by events, throwing the composer–performer hierarchy into confusion in yet another instance of the *pharmakon*, for who is actually "composing" the score and the performance here: composer, computer, performer(s), all, none? In performance, each player is independent yet conjoined, an island of splendid isolation embedded in a sea of ambience. Thus, Cage's works invite us to question the undecidable and unstable space between text and act, as well as the

13 But note that nothing in Cage's instructions prevents the deliberate overlapping and doubling of sound events by an individual player where the time brackets so allow.

status of repetition in performance. In a mesostic on "structure/variable," Cage says:

> when there are not pointS / Time / foR both beginnings and endings is in space / the sitUation / is muCh more flexible / These time-brackets / are Used / in paRts / parts for which thEre is no score no fixed relationship / it was part i thought of a moVement in composition / Away / fRom structure / Into process . . . (1993, 35)

Praxis

How does this plurality of undecidables play out in performances of *Four*[6]? How do undecidability and supplement intermingle in praxis? A partial list of the undecidables and their contingent questions in *Four*[6] would include:

> *Forces*: who can perform the work?
> *Content*: what will inhabit the time brackets?
> *Domain*: does it have to be music?
> *Hierarchy*: who is the composer?
> *Ensemble*: who is in control?
> *Supplement*: where can it go next?

I will consider these questions by outlining a series of performances I made of *Four*[6] between 2017 and 2019. My principal concern will be the idea of generative supplement—the "apple tree" example—illustrative of the complete work that is incomplete and that opposes itself through regeneration.

Like *Plus-Minus*, *Four*[6] has inbuilt generative qualities, the first one of which is provided by Cage through the supplementary work *One*[7], a solo version of *Four*[6]. However, the inherent undecidability of *Four*[6] allows for an even greater variety in its forms of performative repetition than *Plus-Minus*. By way of testing this idea, I made six different versions of the work, performed by a mixture of musicians and non-musicians: (1) A control—using sound actions.[14] (2) A version of *One*[7] performed "circus" style in several locations simultaneously. (3a) Two iterations of an art version, where the "sound actions" were performed onto a canvas, which in turn generated another entirely separate, yet connected, work—the painting (figure 10.2). (3b) The gradually evolving canvas, considered as "documentation" of that performance (figure 10.3). (4) A version where sound actions were applied to LPs of Dusty Springfield (*Dusty in Memphis*, 1969), Arvo Pärt (*The Sound of Arvo Pärt*, 2016), Glenn Gould (*Bach: The Goldberg Variations*, second recording, 1981), and Nick Drake (*Pink Moon*, 1972), which generated four sets of sonic "remains" that can be played individually and/or incorporated into yet another performance of *Four*[6] (figure 10.4). (5) A mixdown of these highly damaged sound objects—a new work entirely, but generated by collaging the sonic remains of a *performance* of *Four*[6].

14 Compare with the recording by Cage, Joan La Barbara, William Winant, and Leonard Stein (1992).

(6) The creation of a new electronic composition called *Logosphere*, which uses fragments of the damaged Nick Drake LP in combination with chance-determined spoken excerpts from Derrida, Stockhausen, and Cage's writings.[15]

Figure 10.2.

15 The performance remains could also be considered as "exquisite corpses" (such as those popularised by the surrealist movement during the 1920s), each one being the result of several hands' independent work.

Figure 10.2. John Cage's *Four*[6]: "art" version, showing the wet canvas immediately after the performance, New York University Abu Dhabi, April 2018. Reproduced in colour as plate 4, p. 108.

Figure 10.3.

Figure 10.4.

Figure 10.3. Canvas showing dust and mould spots, December 2022. Reproduced in colour as plate 5, p. 109.

Figure 10.4. Cage's *Four*[6]: end of performance "remains" (Nick Drake's LP), New York University Abu Dhabi, 19 April 2019. Reproduced in colour as plate 6, p. 110.

And so we come full circle. The scores of both *Plus-Minus* and *Four*[6] embody the instability of the pharmakon through their invitation to embrace undecidability and the infinite variety of their realisations, as both composers have deliberately created opportunities for radical interventions by their interpreters. Both are exemplifications of play, being products of their composers, interpreters, audiences, and spatio-temporal contexts. Scores and interpreters actively join in a process of decentring between text and act, refusing to permit any notion of a realisation that can act as a mark against which all others could be compared. Both generate future realisations and, indeed, future works—Stockhausen's point about pieces that produce their own children was both apt and prescient. In their supplementarity, the line continues but evolves, while repetition undermines the centre as a fixed place, instead acting as a function that allows for a supplementary continuum of genetically connected but different performative, musical progeny. The blank cheque of performance is indeed a phoenix, the ink turning to ash on the completion of every new realisation, ready for the next iteration. Thus, the act is virgin, even when repeated in an infinite chain of play and supplement.

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Appendix

Online materials

The virtual companion to this book features enhanced versions of chapters 3 (Ayerst), 5 (Köhnken), and 9 (Lin) alongside the introduction. Hosted on the Orpheus Instituut's online SONUS platform, it can be accessed at https://sonus.orpheusinstituut.be/publication/performing-by-the-book-musical-negotiations-between-text-and-act.

Since 2000, Jonathan Ayerst has been principal pianist of the contemporary music group Remix Ensemble, based at Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal. In 2024 he was appointed Dozent für Partiturspiel at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHDK) and also organist at the Reformed church in Witikon, Zürich. For many years he has pursued an interest in musical improvisation, focusing on the challenges facing Western classical musicians trained only in reading scores. His PhD thesis, "Learning to Improvise as a Western Classical Musician: A Psychological Study" (2021), is an autoethnographic account of skill-learning in classical improvisation.

Niels Berentsen is a researcher, vocalist, and music educator, specialising in late medieval and Renaissance music. He is a lecturer at the Haute école de musique de Genève-Neuchâtel (HES-SO), teaching counterpoint, musical rhetoric, and research. Niels investigates techniques of polyphonic improvisation and composition in the period from 1300 to 1500. He received his doctorate from the University of Leiden in 2017 and currently leads the research project Lacunæ Ciconiæ. He is director of the ensemble Diskantores, whose first recording *Hollandse Fragmenten* (muso, 2021) has received strong critical acclaim.

Nir Cohen-Shalit, a multidisciplinary conductor and musicologist, navigates a broad spectrum of musical genres, spanning from Baroque to contemporary opera, Bach to Sondheim. He has conducted esteemed orchestras such as the Jerusalem Symphony and the Israel Camerata Jerusalem, and appeared at festivals such as the International Jerusalem Chamber Music Festival. Currently pursuing a PhD at New York University, his research centres on the historical performance practices of nineteenth-century orchestral music, showcasing his commitment to both scholarship and artistic expression.

Elizabeth Dobbin is Head of the Early Music Department at the Haute école de musique de Genève (HES-SO). She has a doctoral degree from the University of Leiden, as well as graduate and undergraduate degrees in singing, law, piano, and French and English literature from the University of Sydney and the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. A founding member of the ensemble Le Jardin Secret, she appears regularly as a soloist in oratorios and as a chamber musician. Her discography includes recordings for Coro, Alpha, Pentatone Classics, Aliud Records, and ORF.

Bruno Forment is the principal investigator of the Resounding Libraries research group at the Orpheus Instituut, Ghent. He was previously a researcher at Ghent University, the University of Southern California, and CEMPER, taught at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, KU Leuven, and the Royal Conservatories of Brussels and Ghent, and worked as artistic director, coordinator, and dramaturge at orchestras, conservatories, and heritage centres. His four books and dozens of essays on opera, performance practice, and

theatre heritage have received numerous awards and formed the basis of musical productions and policies.

George Kennaway is a Scottish cellist, conductor, teacher, publisher, and musicologist. He has taught at conservatoires in the United Kingdom and abroad, and has lectured at several British universities. Publications include *Playing the Cello, 1780–1930* (Ashgate, 2014), *John Gunn: Musician Scholar in Enlightenment Britain* (Boydell, 2021), and articles and book chapters on aspects of nineteenth-century performance research, topic theory, ekphrasis, and octatonicism. He is also the leading British specialist in the work of the Lithuanian composer-artist Mikalojus Čiurlionis.

Camilla Köhnken studied piano performance with Pierre-Laurent Aimard (Cologne), Jerome Rose (New York), and Claudio Martínez Mehner (Basel). In 2018, she completed a doctorate on the interpretation strategies of Liszt's students at the University of Bern working in Kai Köpp's research project on instructive editions (2014–18). From there she went on to focus on Romantic period instruments during her postdoc in Tom Beghin's group Declassifying the Classics at the Orpheus Instituut (2019–22). Since 2023, she has lived in Vienna, splitting her time between researching, teaching, and performing, for example as pianist-in-residence at the Beethoven-Haus Bonn or with the Philon Trio.

Clare Lesser is a performer, musicologist, and composer. She is the founder of ElectroFest and was a senior lecturer and Program Head of music at New York University Abu Dhabi. Recent publications focus on the work of John Cage, Sun Ra, Michael Finnissy, and Hans-Joachim Hespos and deconstructive approaches to the archive. Research interests include deconstruction, indeterminate and improvised music and performance, graphic notation, and sound art. Forthcoming volumes for Palgrave Macmillan and Cambridge University Press explore the intersection between deconstruction and experimental music. She is also recording chamber music by Michael Finnissy and Hans-Joachim Hespos for Métier.

Born in Singapore, Xiangning Lin is a pianist, researcher, and educator, as well as a curator and producer of interdisciplinary works. She obtained her BA and MA in piano performance at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, National University of Singapore, where she currently teaches courses exploring music within Singapore and Southeast Asian contexts. Her research interest lies in the intersections between cultural history, literature, and music. As an advocate for greater diversity in the arts, Xiangning is a member of the Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equality Working Group of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires.

Björn Schmelzer is a musicologist and anthropologist who works as a conductor, writer, artist, and film-maker. The artistic director of the ensemble Graindelavoix and co-leader of the Advanced Vocal Ensemble Studies master's programme at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, he has produced seventeen CDs (plus assorted hybrid-format works), while regularly putting on concerts in Belgium and abroad, and undertaking residencies at art institutions. The extensive research Schmelzer engages in to produce the ensemble's musical repertoires is further elaborated in the book *Time Regained: A Warburg Atlas for Early Music* (with Margarida Garcia, MER, 2018) and numerous essays, lectures, and publications that situate his approach at the intersection of speculative theory, psychoanalysis, music, and art history.

Kate Bennett Wadsworth is a cellist and gambist devoted to historical performance of all periods, with a special research interest in nineteenth-century performance practice. In collaboration with Clive Brown and Neal Peres Da Costa she prepared annotated editions of Brahms's cello sonatas and co-authored *Performance Practices in Johannes Brahms' Chamber Music* (Bärenreiter, 2015). Her chapter in the present volume draws on research she carried out as a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying the performance practices surrounding Schumann's Cello Concerto.

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The Orpheus Instituut has been providing postgraduate education for musicians since 1996 and introduced the first doctoral programme for music practitioners in Flanders (2004). Acting as an umbrella institution for Flanders, it is co-governed by the music and dramatic arts departments of all four Flemish colleges, which are strongly involved in its operation.

Throughout the institute's various activities (seminars, conferences, workshops, and associated events) there is a clear focus on the development of a new research discipline in the arts, one that addresses questions and topics that are at the heart of musical practice, building on the unique expertise and perspectives of musicians and maintaining a constant dialogue with more established research disciplines.

Within this context, the Orpheus Instituut launched an international Research Centre in 2007 that acts as a stable constituent within an ever-growing field of inquiry. The Orpheus Research Centre is a place where musical artists can fruitfully conduct individual and collaborative research on issues that are of concern to all involved in artistic practice. Its core mission is the development of a discipline-specific discourse in the field of artistic research in music.

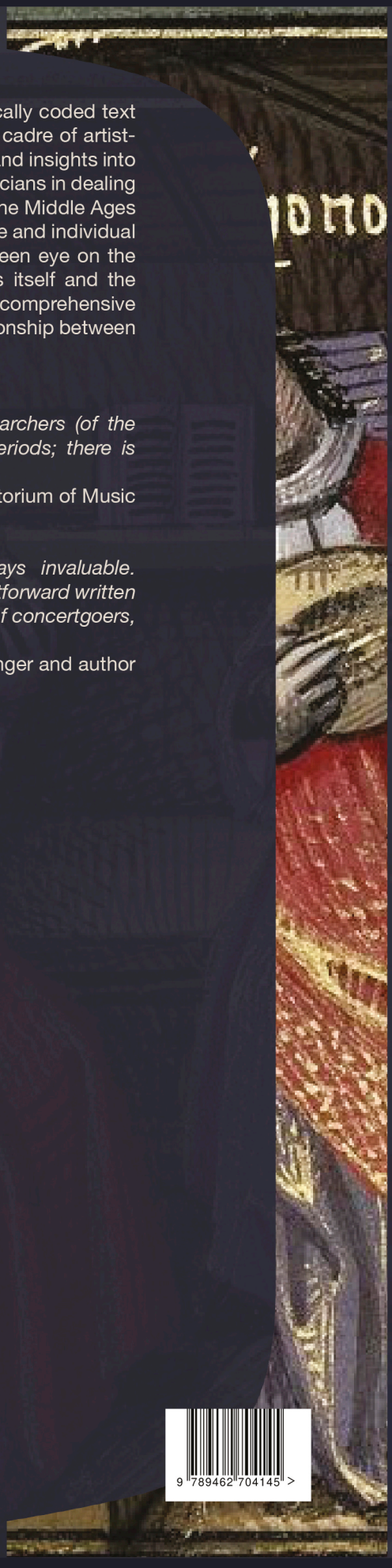
To perform a musical score implies the transformation of a symbolically coded text into vibrant sound. In *Performing by the Book?* a carefully selected cadre of artist-researchers dissects this delicate act in critical ways. Offering first-hand insights into the notational, structural, and interpretative challenges faced by musicians in dealing with texts of all kinds, the chapters traverse the spectrum between the Middle Ages and the age of Stockhausen. In a harmonious blend of scholarly allure and individual artistry, free from academic obfuscation, the contributors keep a keen eye on the limits of interpretation, in terms of both the interpretative process itself and the balance between textual faithfulness and artistic autonomy. This comprehensive volume is an indispensable guide for everyone interested in the relationship between musical performance and texts.

Bruno Forment has assembled a wonderful group of artistic researchers (of the highest calibre) working in a wide range of musical styles and periods; there is something here for everyone.

—Neal Peres Da Costa, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Performers involved with HIP will find this collection of essays invaluable. Musicologists will also find much to ponder, and the relatively straightforward written style of almost all the contributions will appeal to a wide readership of concertgoers, especially those with an interest in historical performance.

—John Potter, singer and author



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