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Instrumental Technique and Scholarly Enquiry: Issues and Methods

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The study of instrumental technique is on an obvious level something which every performer does; the employment of particular choices as regards particular possibilities with respect to technique or techniques is equally central to performance, whether or not these choices are made consciously and with an awareness of their being choices per se. Scholarly research into instrumental technique has tended in two directions: pragmatic research, especially with respect to new music, investigating simply to find workable strategies to execute particularly challenging works (without necessarily engaging that deeply with what the aesthetic implications of those strategies might be) and historical research concerning various approaches and forms of pedagogy applied by performers in past times. This latter type of research can be most prominent in the context of performance on historical instruments, clearly requiring new techniques from those commonly taught in contemporary educational institutions.

In musicological circles, and to some extent more widely, it is no longer unusual to consider musical composition as conditioned by wider factors – aesthetic, ideological, historical, social, even ‘political’ in certain senses of the term. Furthermore these factors may not simply bear upon the circumstances within which compositional practice is undertaken, but also in one of various ways affect the nature of the very composition itself, including the techniques employed therein. In this way, composers’ decisions to employ various techniques of intricate motivic development, approaches to tonal organisation or fracturings of that very phenomenon, rationalisations of the compositional process, returns to more supposedly ‘intuitive’ approaches in light of the latter, and so on, can all be viewed within, or at least in relation to, a wider ideological and cultural history.

This approach, or at least attitude, certainly is not without its detractors, and important debates remain about how palpable might remain the concept of ‘relative autonomy’ of musical composition. My own position on this is to continue to defend a certain construction of autonomy, but not so much for the purposes of maintaining music within a rather esoteric realm so much as from the Adornian position whereby some degree of relative autonomy presents one possibility for subjective manifestation in an increasingly administered and commodified world.

But that debate still applies primarily to composition, at least in a classical context. On that last point, I should point out that the situation is significantly different with respect to jazz, improvisation and various popular musics, not to mention many non-Western musics. As applies in these fields, I want to talk today about the ways in which we might bring this types of wider paradigms to bear upon classical performance, and even upon issues of instrumental technique – specifically, how technical issues, such as relate to music new and old, might themselves often relate to and reflect back upon wider ideological questions. This may be surprising or at least unusual to those who imagine technique to be primarily a matter of finding the most efficient and effective means of realising musical ends; that view is not one I wish

wholly to reject, but to nuance, in the sense of suggesting that the technique employed (as well as other strategies of performance) can be not simply a means to an end, but part of the end itself. If not wishing to take a reductive view, dogmatically insisting that every approach to technique and performance is irrefutably ideologically loaded – and thus might be judged valid or otherwise purely on that basis – I do believe that an attitude which rejects any such dimension is equally problematic.

These issues are ones upon which I continue to be engaged as a performer and a scholar, and about which I do not at present have definitive and unequivocal conclusions – but in the context of this symposium I hope to raise some issues about how we might think differently about them, and hopefully stimulate further discussion and future research.

All of this may be fine in theory, but hardly convincing without some examples of its manifestation. So I'd like to consider various historical and contemporary cases – mostly for my own instrument, the piano, but which should have parallels for other instruments as well.

In 1861, the then 20-year old pianist Carl Tausig, by many accounts the most spectacular of Liszt's students, played solo within an orchestral concert devoted to Liszt's music. He received a decidedly mixed verdict from Eduard Hanslick, who said that whilst Tausig 'amazed by his unusual strength and bravura', nonetheless 'he went too far in the energy of his attack, and stabbed or cut into the key, causing the instrument to groan'. Thus, Hanslick thought, 'We can not yet form an opinion about the true artistic level of this concert-giver', though 'as a Liszt player he certainly makes a brilliant impression'¹. When Tausig played again in the city the following year (performing works of Chopin, Beethoven, Field, Handel and Schumann), Hanslick was even more critical. He wrote of Tausig's 'deliberate cultivation of the most ugly of all possible mannerisms of touch: that of jabbing the keys. . . What must one think of the ear of an artist who does not hear the howling metallic rattling of the abused chords or is not disturbed by it? And what a choking, squeezing, and strangling of tones you get when he finally sets loose his whole technical pack of hounds!'². And this was not the only aspect of Tausig's approach to the instrument which met with Hanslick's displeasure; he also wrote of how 'Excited massacres are succeeded in turn by long periods of indifference; the keys, having been jabbed and beaten, are now merely brushed, swept slightly touched, in a nearly inaudible pianissimo'. These types of criticisms would recur from various critics in Vienna and Berlin through the course of Tausig's short pianistic career, even though it was felt that the farthest reaches of his ostentatious virtuosity became somewhat more

¹ Hanslick, *Aus dem Concertsaal*, p. 225 (my translation).

² 'die häßlichste aller möglichen Anschlagsarten cultivirt: das Stechen in die Tasten. . . Was sollen wir von dem Gehör eines Künstlers halten, der das heulende Metallgerassel der also mißhandelten Saiten nicht vernimmt oder den es nicht stört? Wenn Herr Tausig vollends die ganze Meute seiner Bravour ausläßt, welch ein Würgen und Quetschen, welch ein Erdoffeln der Töne!'. Translation taken from Hanslick, 'Tausig', in *Music Criticisms 1846-99*, pp. 91-93; original in Hanslick, *Aus dem Concertsaal*, pp. 263-265. The review originally appeared in *Die Presse*, November 26, 1862. Peter Cornelius pointed out in a letter the day after the concert how opinion was divided; see Cornelius to his sister Susanne, November 23, 1862, in Peter Cornelius, *Ausgewählte Briefe nebst Tagebuchblättern und Gelegenheitsgedichten*, edited Carl Maria Cornelius, Volume 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel: 1904), pp. 678-679. Cornelius's letters and diaries from this time provide the most comprehensive published source on the activities of Tausig, about whom he writes frequently.

measured by the time of his premature death in 1871. In 1865, after a concert in Berlin, the critic of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* felt the need to draw attention to Tausig's 'peculiar sharp accentuation of the rhythms', even whilst otherwise admiring the virtuosity and bravura of the playing³, whilst Carl Weitzmann, writing three years later, was adulatory, but seemed slightly ambivalent about Tausig's 'bronze fingers'.

I should point out at this stage that despite Tausig's coming from Liszt's school, he remained friendly with Brahms through his life, refusing to concur with other Lisztians who took pleasure in continuously disparaging the Hamburg composer. Brahms in turn appears to have been favourable towards Tausig, defending him to Clara Schumann (who was unsurprisingly negative) and was probably inspired by Tausig's playing to write his *Paganini Variations*, various aspects of the pianistic idiom of which strongly resemble some of the descriptions of Tausig's playing. Tausig played these works just a few times, but between 1867 and 1868, but this in part seems to be related to the fact that they caused even a pianist like himself some sweat, as he made clear in a letter to Brahms nine days after playing the work in Berlin. Furthermore, Joseph Joachim wrote in 1866 to his brother Heinrich with uncritical praise for Tausig's 'richness and charm of attack' and 'absence of all charlatanism'.

What interests me here is what would appear to be a particular aspect of Tausig's techniques which perturbed some critics – a willingness to incorporate a mode of attack which probably involved a throwing motion of the fingers, held with a degree of firmness and resilience, such as can produce a sharp and pointed sound. Over and above such a sound, this technique is somewhat at cross-purposes with an aesthetic which privileges a smooth, mellifluous unbroken line, such as these critics seem to have believed to be an essential factor in the music concerned; on the contrary, it provides for the possibility of a more markedly punctuated or angular style of playing.

What might be the aesthetic-ideological implications of this? I would suggest that the criticism of this specifically *technical* aspect of Tausig's playing reflect a certain *pre-romantic* aesthetic which values only that more traditionally constructed as 'beautiful', rather than the more rugged romantic conception of the sublime. Tausig was unafraid of allowing some harshness and angularity into music and thus did not seek to censor such physical techniques from his playing as can bring about such a result. The thoughts of Brahms and Joachim on this approach give plenty reason to be wary of a simplistic reading of this merely in terms of the opposing parties in the 19th-century 'War of the Romantics'.

But some of these critical tropes had various precedents, as can be found in the ferocious rivalry between Liszt and Thalberg in the 1830s, which was heavily reflected in the press of this time. Dana Gooley, in his path-breaking work on Liszt within the cultural and political milieu of the 1830s and 1840s, has shown convincingly how Thalberg's playing was characterised above all in terms of its *vocality*, involving a clear *marcato* emphasis upon the melody (made 'completely independent of the other voices', according to the Russian critic Vladimir Odoyevsky) as well as continuous use of the pedals. Henri Blanchard wrote of how, when Thalberg played, one would 'forget the dryness of this mechanical instrument' and

³ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, May 3rd, 1865, p. 169 (my translation).

instead ‘hear the sound held, singing, crying like Grisi, Malibran, de-Beriot, or Rubini’⁴. This was in distinction to the playing of Liszt, frequently praised for its dramatic virtuosity but much less for his ‘tone’⁵. Furthermore, Thalberg’s posture was by various accounts very still and upright⁶, though his face was far from inexpressive⁷, whereas Liszt during his virtuoso years exhibited frenetic bodily motion, stamping his feet (anticipating the playing of Jelly Roll Morton almost a century later!), lifting his arms up high and shifting his centre of gravity continuously⁸.

These oppositions were mirrored in the violin world, by advocates of a Germanic school whose leading exponents were Louis Spohr and later Joseph Joachim (and to a lesser extent Ferdinand David in between) in opposition to the work of Paganini and later various Franco-Belgian-Russian traditions which stood at a greater distance from the predominantly quasi-vocal priorities of the Germanic school. The writer G. Dubourg wrote of Spohr how ‘The Roman critics remarked of the pre-eminent beauty with which Spohr enriched his playing, by a strict invitation of vocal effects. This perhaps is the highest praise that can be bestowed’ (cited in Milsom)

Most of Thalberg’s own music consisted of transcriptions and fantasies upon the popular operas of the time, focusing primarily upon the melodies as opposed to other aspects of the opera, as distinct to some of Liszt’s transcriptions (Thalberg also appears to have had no interest in improvisation, which he abhorred⁹). Gooley argues that this had a particular appeal to a certain section of the aristocracy socially defined at the time as ‘dilettante’, drawn to Italian opera and disdainful of more ‘learned’ forms of listening, expressing through their enthusiasm for this music an affinity with the political order of the Restoration and the venues with which it was associated¹⁰.

⁴ Henri Blanchard, writing in *Revue et Gazette musicale* 3/19 (May 8, 1836), pp. 153-154, cited in Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 26-27.

⁵ Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 27-28. One critique said that ‘Liszt has no touch, but he makes the tones awaken, live grow, and soar through a subtle handling of the keys’ (*Pester Tageblatt*, December 31, 1839, cited p. 28), whilst Henry Chorley, in an otherwise adulatory account, wrote that ‘In uniform richness and sweetness of tone he [Liszt] may have been surpassed’ (Chorley, *Music and Manners in France and Germany*, Vol. 3, p. 45). The differences between the playing of Thalberg and Liszt might in this sense be compared to the different operatic idioms of Bellini and Donizetti respectively (though Liszt was much more drawn to the earlier idiom of Rossini than either of these figures, at least as evidenced through his correspondence from the 1830s, to be found in Franz Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey: Lettres d’un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, edited and annotated Charles Suttoni (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1989)).

⁶ As related for example in Emil von Sauer, *Mein Welt: Bilder aus dem Geheimfache meiner Kunst* (Stuttgart: Spemann Verlag, 1901), p. 175, cited in Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 18

⁷ An account in *France musicale* 1/12 (March 18, 1838), p. 1, cited in Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, p. 48, described how Thalberg’s ‘features, ordinarily calm and imprinted with a modest dignity, gradually become animated and betray the violent commotion that he feels’, whilst Joseph d’Ortigue described Thalberg’s ‘calm force, this tranquil power, this exaltation at the same time measured and serene’ (*Revue et Gazette musicale* 4/12 (March 19, 1837), pp. 96-98, cited in *ibid.*)

⁸ See Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 42-52 for a more detailed consideration of the two pianists’ very different bodily comportment. One writer wrote in 1840 of how ‘No system of words can accurately describe the power which Liszt possesses in *dividing* himself, as it were, into two, or sometimes, even three performers . . . obviously unreachable extensions’ (*Musical World* 13/220 (June 11, 1840), pp. 361-364, cited in *ibid.* p. 46). See also James Hunecker, *Franz Liszt* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), pp. 285-287 for a comparison between the demeanour of Thalberg and Liszt.

⁹ Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 18.

¹⁰ Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 29-35. Gooley draws attention to reviews in the journal *Ménestral*, consistently supportive of Thalberg and critical of Liszt, which in 1842 praised Thalberg’s playing,

Believed to be of noble lineage himself, Thalberg garnered firm support widely amongst the Parisian high aristocracy to an extent at this stage not yet achieved by Liszt, whose social networks were limited to more specific sub-sections of this class, dominated by women and *litterati*¹¹. And in terms of the nature of both pianists' *theatrical* manner, and all this meant in terms of continuity of vocal line on one hand, or an appeal to the grotesque and fantastical on the other, such approaches similarly corresponded to then well-recognised behavioural norms connected with such different classes.

I would like to suggest to you that this opposition – which is equally applicable in terms of approaches to bowing, breathing or baton technique – remains an area of aesthetic dispute right up until the present day, and whilst it would be too easy to reduce this merely to a musical expression of class allegiances, the essential assumptions which have played a major part, historically, in forming such an opposition, are still at play in what is a far from politically neutral discourse.

In this context, concepts such as the 'beautiful tone' at the piano – a concept I believe to be a mystification, in reality a cypher for a particular set of stylistic practices which are rooted in the pianist aesthetics of Thalberg, as laid down in the preface to his *L'art du chant appliqué au piano*, op. 70 (a series of piano transcriptions of various well-known works), published in the 1850s and 1860s¹², and anticipated in some of the playing of John Field and Friedrich Kalkbrenner. The 'beautiful tone' school of playing generally entails one voice clearly foregrounded above all others, a *legato* tone as the default most of the time, with other articulations made into modifications of a *legato* rather than more separate entities in themselves, the continuous use of the pedal (rather like the continuous use of vibrato on string instruments), and an avoidance of any starkly exposed extremes or discontinuities. And it is surely far from coincidental that such a style, and its associated technique, continues to this day to be categorised as 'aristocratic', a term which persists in relatively unmediated and un-ironic form in critical discourse.

One might consider how arcane such an attitude would be in the context of jazz, or at least would be interpreted quite differently. Such a style would render the work of Earl Hines, Thelonious Monk, Cecil Taylor or countless others a wholly different phenomenon – as would analogous stylistic practices if applied to the work of Kid Ory, Sidney Bechet, Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker or Charlie Mingus. Only perhaps some Swing Era performers, and later ones such as Keith Jarrett or Jacques Loussier, might come close to satisfying such musical demands. The difference between 'classical' and 'jazz' styles of saxophone playing are well-known; if not exactly identical with the dichotomies I have been tracing in some 19th century pianism, there are definitive resemblances, as I hope will be relatively self-evident. Some of those involved with the 'New Musicology' have spent much time considering the implications of the 'high/low' cultural divide in terms of allegiances

upon his return to Paris. for its 'suavity, sensitivity, expression and warmth without impetuosity' (*Ménestral* 9/19 (April 17, 1842), cited p. 35).

¹¹ Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 62-70.

¹² Sigismond Thalberg, *L'art du chant appliqué au piano*, op. 70, four series (Paris: Heugel, 1853-1868). A summary of various of Thalberg's main points can be found in Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 158-161. Whilst these publications date from some time after the period in question, I have not encountered any evidence of a significant change in Thalberg's style between the 1830s and the 1850s.

of class, gender, and sexuality; if such work remains problematic, in my view, because of a tendency to reproduce too uncritically market-derived ideologies and evade serious consideration of the role of the industry, marketing, and so on in generating and manipulating certain potential audiences, nonetheless I believe they have shown conclusively that one cannot separate this cultural divide from other social divisions. And I would suggest this applies to performance and the technique of performance as well – certain approaches constructed as ‘ugly’, ‘spikey’ or other epithets antipathetic to reified constructions of the beautiful are suffused with normative and often doctrinaire notions of proper decorum and ideals of specific and limited types of phenomena which are the only ones deemed valid for musical representation, many of which have to do with the censorship from music of that which is culturally associated with the middle and lower classes. If I were to extend issues of performance and performance technique to some other popular musics as well, not just jazz (which has attained its own type of ‘aristocratic’ status when appropriated for such a purpose), I do believe these associations become even more starkly apparent.

To look at this in a more recent classical context, I want to mention a review in an American newspaper of a certain pianist, who I would rather remain nameless here, performing Ives’ *Concord Sonata*. I should say here that I did not hear this particular concert, but can surmise a fair amount from familiarity with their other work and the norms of this type of criticism. This pianist, said the critic, ‘stressed the sonata’s lyricism, continuity and organic structure. For once it held together as a coherent work of art instead of a scattershot glossary of yesterday’s experimental techniques’. I greatly doubt that this performance would have contained a wide range of highly contrasting modes of attack towards the keys, or else it would not have earned such a description; rather, differences of articulations were probably more localised variations within unbroken lines. Of a performance by the same pianist of a more recent contemporary work, another American critic wrote that they played it ‘so smoothly that even when the music fragmented it remained essentially lyrical, and never, to use an adjective too often applied to contemporary music, “spiky”’. Now, a combination of fragmentation and lyricism is certainly a striking notion which can present possibilities not always available within more obvious approaches to fragmentation. This notwithstanding, I believe both critics’ aesthetic agenda is reasonably clear: new and modernist works are found to be acceptable in performance to the extent that they appropriated within the category of the ‘aristocratic’, in the sense I outlined before.

Returning to Liszt, most accounts he moved away from the more extreme frenetics of his virtuoso years, including in terms of his types of motions at the keyboard, and would speak in disparaging terms about his earlier idiom. Indeed back in the 1830s his letters to Georges Sand already show quite clearly his increasing disdain for a musical world in which he felt forced to become like a circus monkey in order to satisfy the tastes of the new European middle classes and lower rungs of the aristocracy who made up his audiences. An attitude borne out of idealist aesthetics tends to view this, and Liszt’s compositions which resulted from his post-virtuoso period, as a type of progress, but I think this should at least be questioned somewhat. Liszt’s post-1847 musical trajectory can possibly be viewed in some aspects in terms of an *increasedly* ‘aristocratic’ approach in this respect. This needs to be offset by considerations of his relationship to Hungarian nationalism, interest in the

performance of the Romani (and their own role as itinerant performers of others' music, of which I believe Liszt was more aware than is commonly supposed), relationship to the revolutionary ideals of the early Wagner, and ultimate reduction of his idiom to something extremely sparse and austere, a long way from the aristocratic music of Thalberg (or that of Chopin). Liszt continuously re-negotiated his relationship to a changing public; his attitudes in this respect often constituted retreat or disdain, with a mixture of anti-populism and anti-commercialism which however – like many stances antipathetic towards bourgeois capitalism – often veered in the direction of a form of neo-feudalism and re-assertion of the aristocratic principle.

Cold War

Richard Taruskin refers to the existence of a 'Soviet' style of performance – 'overdramatised, overly demonstrative, ingenuously explicit, didactic', developed by the likes of the Lunacharsky and Lenin Quartets, supposedly in the name of communicating most immediately with the 'masses'¹³. This style does indeed differ from some earlier Russian schools (on the basis of information concerning pedagogy and recorded evidence of some of the musicians and their students), many such schools bequeathed by performers from elsewhere in Europe who came to be very influential at the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatoires, such as Theodor Leschetizky, Henryk Wieniawski, Karl Davidov, Anton Door, Karl Klindworth, Leopold Auer or Bernhard Cossmann.

It would be far too easy to posit monolithic styles of performance, and their associated techniques, amongst performers emerging from the former Soviet Union, but the attributes identified by Taruskin do seem to have been relatively common of those performers the Soviet government sent to participate in international competitions.

Now, I wish to consider the victory of Van Cliburn in the 1958 Moscow Competition. Coming on the heels of the launch of the Sputnik satellite the previous year, which became a major signifier of Soviet technological progress and something of a blow to US assumptions of superiority in this domain, Cliburn's victory constituted something of a coup for Western interests – upon his return to the US he was greeted by a ticker-tape parade in New York City of a type more usually reserved for returning soldiers, and he was feted as a national hero, with every musical society in the country queuing up to book him.

Van Cliburn's success increased further the profile of his teacher Rosina Lhevinne, and probably that of Russian teachers in general in America. He was able to beat the Soviets at their own game – and with the assistance of an émigré who had not returned to Russia following the Revolution (she and her husband Josef had been trapped in Berlin during World War One), but whose own teaching approach (perhaps somewhat more so than that of her more 'aristocratic' husband), drawing upon the teaching of former Moscow Conservatory director Vasily Safonov, by many accounts anticipates much of the 'Soviet' school (just as 19th century Russian 'realist' composers anticipated some of the compositional idioms which would become most highly favoured in the Soviet Union from the 1930s).

¹³ Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 89.

Whilst Vladimir Ashkenazy and Grigory Sokolov, winners or joint-winners of the 1962 and 1966 competitions respectively (the former winning jointly with John Ogdon, whose playing interestingly was perhaps closer to the ‘Soviet’ style than that of Ashkenazy) do not really belong in this category, those who followed them - Vladimir Kraniev, Andrei Gavrilov, to an extent Mikhail Pletnev, Vladimir Ovchinnikov and Boris Berezovsky – generally do, in my opinion.

This much is nothing particularly new; however I wish to suggest, as an area needing further research, that we should consider the development and consolidation of this type of style, in both the Soviet and US-allied worlds, as a fundamentally political phenomenon. As a hypothesis, I would suggest that US/Soviet rivalry concerning cultural issues led to a domination of a quite narrow range of stylistic and technical approaches to the piano, violin, cello and voice in particular during the period of the Cold War. Furthermore, these types of aesthetics – perhaps taken up, together with the technical approaches best able to produce them, with all innocence by many younger performers – continue to inform implicit performance norms for today.

Economies of scale, efficiency of automated industrial-style manufacture, and various other aspects of the processes of monopoly capitalism, enabled Steinway to become the world leader in piano manufacture by the early 20th century, so that practically all other manufacturers adopted the essential features of their model, bringing in particular the Viennese tradition of pianos to an end (Bösendorfer maintained some distance from Steinway’s, but this was not of anything like the scale as the differences between London and Viennese instruments in 1800 or even 1850). For different political and historical reasons, I would hypothesise (as another question deserving of future research) that the importance of competitions during the Cold War played a significant role in marginalising various Central European instrumental traditions.

Defamiliarising the Instrument

Works I have played which force a re-evaluation of various earlier technical norms:

Sylvano Bussotti’s *Pour Clavier*

Nicholas A. Huber’s works such as *Darabukka*

Ligeti’s *Étude Touches bloquées*

Written for me: Aaron Cassidy’s *ten monophonic miniatures for piano*

Wieland Hoban’s *where the panting STARTS*

Evan Johnson’s *Dehiscence, Flottiments*

My own “...*quasi una fantasmagoria op. 120 no. 2.....*”

And to look back to some earlier music, one need only consider various works for left-hand alone to see how the most effortless form of playing (which would be considerably facilitated by the use of both hands) is by no means necessarily in line with an appropriate aesthetic effect. Many of Brahms’s works appear to involve a consciously devised strategy of physical awkwardness: think, for example, of the second movement of the B-flat piano concerto, with its cumbersome left-hand leaps within an accompaniment to what would otherwise appear a reasonably smooth and lyrical melody, and of course the notorious pianissimo octaves, marked *legato* despite their more often being played *staccato* and with pedal. And various fingerings by

resourceful composers can produce highly distinctive and consequently meaningful musical results, even when far from being the obvious choice if not indicated as such: one example of this would be the rather wrenched arpeggio at the end of the Trio section of the third movement of Schumann's F# Minor Sonata, marked to be played by continuously alternating thumb and second fingers in both hands.

A few other issues I would like to throw into the discussion over the course of this symposium:

Issues of technique in late-19th and early-20th century performance – greater acceptance of rhythmic freedom and less 'tight' ensemble. Robert Philip suggests that in some ways this might be as much an issue of style as one necessarily of technique – can the two necessarily be separated?

Questions of hierarchical approaches, and forms of conducting technique which support this – tyrannical dimensions? Or what does the example of Toscanini suggest in this respect?

John Butt (*Playing with History*, p. 41) argues that the hierarchies at play in instrumental ensembles corresponded to those found more widely in society.