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Performance as Analysis, Analysis as Performance

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In this paper I attempt to throw open some assumptions concerning performance, the functions that might be productively served by analysis (in the broadest sense of the term, to encompass all forms of musicological investigation) in the process of preparing and enacting performances, as well as the ways in which the act of performance constitutes a particular analytical take on the music in question. I do not pretend to provide definitive solutions to the extremely thorny issues raised (and am sure there are likely to be some contradictions and inconsistencies in the arguments I present), but by the process of critiquing existing ideologies and methods, hope to throw some light on other considerations might be filtered into such a discourse and associated field of practice.

Existing Models for Negotiating Analysis and Performance

There is a wide literature, historical and contemporary, of writing by performers on performing the wide repertoire of 'classical' music, some of it in the form of treatises (far too numerous to list), some in the form of interviews¹ and, much more rarely, detailed analytical and/or scholarly work by performers². When it comes to contemporary 'classical' music, the literature is much narrower, consisting for the most part of interviews, pragmatic works on specific techniques³, and a very small amount of more widely drawn intellectual investigation⁴. Clearly, if one believes in the value of theoretical work undertaken by

¹ Two very different examples of this would be Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dover, 1991) or Bernard Sherman, *Inside Early Music: Conversations with Performers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

² Amongst the best examples of this would be various books by Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech*, translated Mary O'Neill (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1988) and *The Musical Dialogue: Thoughts on Monteverdi, Bach and Mozart*, translated Mary O'Neill (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), or those of Charles Rosen; of all his books, those to deal most directly with performance are his *Piano Notes: The Hidden World of the Pianist* (London: Penguin, 2004) and *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). There are a number of cases of instrumentalists also pursuing careers as academic scholars – for example Peter Hill, John Rink, Kenneth Hamilton or Siegfried Mauser (my apologies for the fact that these are all pianists, but this category is dominated by performers on that instrument) - some of whose work (especially that of Rink and Hamilton) is continuously engaged with performance, but who also pursue other distinct musicological paths.

³ Especially for woodwind: for example Bruno Bartolozzi, *New Sounds for Woodwind*, translated Reginald Smith Brindle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), Carin Levine, *The Techniques of Flute Playing/Die Spieltechnik der Flöte* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), Robert Dick, *The Other Flute: A Performance Manual of Contemporary Techniques*, second edition (New York: Multiple Breath Music Company, 1989), Peter Veale, *The Techniques of Oboe Playing: A Compendium with Additional Remarks on the Whole Oboe Family/Die Spieltechnik der Oboe : Ein Kompendium mit Anmerkungen zur gesamten Oboenfamilie* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1998) and Philip Rehlfeldt, *New Directions for Clarinet*, revised edition (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); also Patricia and Allen Strange, *The Contemporary Violin: Extended Performance Techniques* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001) and Herbert Henck, *Experimentelle Pianistik* (Mainz: Schott: 1994).

⁴ Notable examples are the two books on Stockhausen by Herbert Henck: *Karlheinz Stockhausens Klavierstück IX: Eine analytische Betrachtung* (Bonn & Bad Godesberg: Verlag für Systematische Musikwissenschaft,

performers, there remains much to do; two relatively recent issues of *Contemporary Music Review*, edited by Marilyn Nonken and Barrie Webb respectively⁵, have sought to supplement the relatively meagre existing literature. To those reasonably familiar with the more intense theoretical and practical discourse that has accompanied performance of ‘older’ music and especially ‘historically-informed performance’⁶ (see below for more on both of these), let alone wider thinking on performance as a form of social practice⁷, the essays in these two volumes are for the most part unfortunately rather narrow in their focus and ideological assumptions.

Nonken’s volume consists for the most part of interviews with mostly American performers of new music. Their attitudes towards the role of performance generally fall into two categories: that of the self-effacing exponent of the *Werktreue* aesthetic, or that which seeks to appropriate new music within familiar or highly generalised categories of ‘expressiveness’ or ‘musicality’. Nonken herself writes that ‘Perhaps the greatest players share a talent for losing themselves in their instruments, so that the listener becomes aware of only the music itself, not the technician who negotiates the basic realization of the notated symbol’⁸, whereas Ursula Oppens talks about ‘Being expressive of what’s there’⁹. Rolf Schulte, on the other hand, does deal with ‘freedom and imagination’ in the performance of new music and the problems of new music being ‘played too straight’, preferring a ‘rhapsodic’ approach; yet when it comes to his suggestions, these are cast in general terms such as playing with ‘romantic abandon’, making music ‘sound improvisational’, playing ‘freely’, and wanting new music to sound ‘polished and expressive, rather than gritty’¹⁰. Similarly, Geoffrey Morris talks about having been taught to focus his attention ‘on the basic issues of

1978), and *Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Klavierstück X: A Contribution Toward Understanding Serial Technique*, translated Deborah Richards (Cologne: Neuland Musikverlag, 1980). Most of the written work of Pierre Boulez is concerned with composition rather than performance; one exception would be volume *Boulez on Conducting*, translated Richard Stokes (London: Faber & Faber, 2003), but this is in the form of interviews, as is Jean Vermeil, *Conversations with Boulez: Thoughts on Conducting*, translated Camille Naish (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996).

⁵ Marilyn Nonken (ed), *Performers on Performing*, in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 21 Part 1 (2002), and Barrie Webb (ed), *Contemporary Performance*, in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 28 Part 2 (2007).

⁶ The most significant book-length theoretical contributions to date on the latter field, to my mind, can be found in the aforementioned works of Harmoncourt, and Nicholas Kenyon (ed), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Good summaries of the theoretical debate at the times of writing can be found in Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988) and Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁷ Key texts on this area would include John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1974), Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998) and Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ Marilyn Nonken, ‘Introduction: Vessels’, in Nonken, *Performers on Performing*, p. 1.

⁹ Ursula Oppens, ‘Being expressive of what’s there’, in Nonken, *Performers on Performing*, p. 68. To be fair to Oppens, she is one player who does talk a reasonable amount about improvisation in this interview, but this appears to constitute essentially the ‘icing on the cake’ with respect to what is otherwise a fundamentally reproductive attitude towards performance.

¹⁰ Rolf Schulte, ‘An advocate for the piece’, in Nonken, *Performers on Performing*, quotes from pp. 54-55.

musicianship: tone, articulation and phrasing'¹¹, whilst Fred Sherry argues that 'The performer should consider himself a magician' whose 'tricks should always exceed the audience's expectations' and 'should not be discernible to the audience'¹². In terms of what might bring about this 'magic', however, he is no more specific than saying that some of its aspects 'include dynamics, tone color, vibrato, rhythmic inflections, and rubato'¹³. None of these figures engage seriously with what these terms might actually mean in specific musical contexts, how they might impact upon listeners; nor do their discourses entail the possibility of developing creative performance possibilities that lie outside of such reified categories.

Webb's volume is of a somewhat different nature, made up of articles rather than interviews, by just four British performers (including Webb himself), three of them (Webb, Christopher Redgate and Mieko Kanno) particularly associated with the performance of 'complex' music. Webb, Redgate and Philip Thomas each consider the performance of the Berio *Sequenzas* for their instruments (trombone, oboe and piano respectively), whilst other articles deal with wider issues of contemporary performance. Several of these are purely factual and pragmatic: Webb's 'Partners in Creation', whilst beginning promisingly by implying a critique of the notion that 'the performer is a kind of second-class musician, simply reproducing the wishes of the composer creator'¹⁴, turns out mostly to be a catalogue of particular instrumental techniques devised or implemented by a variety of trombonists (including the author), and the possibilities thus afforded to composers. This is of course an important issue, indeed one often overlooked in histories of contemporary music, but the article eschews any serious consideration of the creative role played by the performer *after* the work has been committed to paper. Redgate's 'Re-inventing the Oboe' takes a similar cataloguing approach towards extended techniques and their execution, making as much of their 'otherness' as might a more traditionally-minded individual antipathetic towards their use. The issue of why composers have decided to employ the instrument in unusual ways is framed (very briefly) in terms of a rather dated historical teleology: 'The potential of the instrument has also developed in other ways as composers have continued to push performers technically and physically. This re-invention of the instrument, while being quite radical, has the potential for further development'¹⁵. Interpretative issues are dealt with only very briefly in Redgate's articles on Berio's *Sequenza VII* and his brother Roger Redgate's *Ausgangspunkte*; in the latter he talks merely about how important it is to 'know the kind of style a composer is using', suggesting that there might be a multiplicity of such styles within the realms of 'complex' music, and concluding no more than:

¹¹ Geoffrey Morris, 'The modern guitar in Australia', in Nonken, *Performers on Performing*, p. 17.

¹² Fred Sherry, 'Never standing still', in Nonken, *Performers on Performing*, p. 88.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 92.

¹⁴ Barrie Webb, 'Partners in Creation', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 255.

¹⁵ Christopher Redgate, 'Re-inventing the Oboe', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 180. Throughout each of Redgate's articles, one encounters a relatively unquestioned espousal of all those musical qualities that might be said to tick the check-boxes of a 'complexity' aesthetic: use of extreme registers, high levels of virtuosity (in terms of difficulty of execution rather than flamboyance of display), quarter-tones, extended techniques, complex rhythms and so on, whilst studiously avoiding the question of why these should be seen as particularly desirable in themselves, and (perhaps more to the point) whether (and if so, how) they or other musical aspects might occupy a foregrounded position in a performance.

As with any other music one should consider the phrasing, choice of colour, tempo, dynamic range and so on. Many of the complex composers give a great deal of instruction at every level of direction; however, there is still a great deal to be done by the interpreter.¹⁶

Three articles in the volume exhibit some more original theoretical consideration of performance. Philip Thomas's writing on performance of indeterminate scores of the New York School includes subtle consideration of the role of performers such as David Tudor in developing a performance practice for such works, and different attitudes to the role of the performer amongst the different composers of this school¹⁷. Mieko Kanno develops a notational dichotomy between 'descriptive notation', that which 'informs us of the *sound* of a musical work' and 'prescriptive notation', that which 'informs us of the *method* of producing this sound'¹⁸. She defines the work of the performer in terms of three stages, (a) 'learning pitch and rhythm', (b) 'coordinating it with the body', and (c) 'making it 'musical' so that it doesn't sound like a direct translation from notation to sound'¹⁹. What a 'direct translation from notation to sound' might sound like is, however, not defined; I do not believe such a singular entity exists, and have elsewhere outlined in detail some of the major assumptions involved when simply executing a score supposedly at face value, and the extent to which these can affect how it might be perceived²⁰. Ultimately this model of performance is conditioned by a dichotomy between some literalist approach to the score, and the process of making 'musical' perceived as a modification of this²¹. Only one essay in the whole collection, however, considers the possible effects of performance approaches upon listeners,

¹⁶ Christopher Redgate, 'A discussion of Practices used in learning complex music with specific Reference to Roger Redgate's *Ausgangspunkte*', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 147. In his article on Berio, Redgate makes brief mention of how 'the colours, character and moods of the piece' should be 'considered in conjunction with the overall journey', but in terms of what constitutes this 'journey' he merely alludes to the 'stillness sometimes implied by the context' (as a reason for avoiding vibrato on multiphonics) and his own decision that 'the 'climax' of the work' is 'the high G6 in bar 123'. See Redgate, 'Performing Sequenza VII', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 227.

¹⁷ Philip Thomas, 'Determining the Indeterminate', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, pp. 129-140. Thomas draws upon the research into Tudor's realisations found in John Holzaepfel, 'Cage and Tudor', in David Nicholls (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Cage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Holzaepfel, 'David Tudor and the *Solo for Piano*', in David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch (eds), *Writing through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) and James Pritchett, 'David Tudor as composer/performer in Cage's *Variations IP*', in *Leonardo Music Journal: Composers Inside Electronics: Music After David Tudor*, 14, pp. 11-16. The extent to which this body of work (and Thomas's own) explores more intricately the creative interrelationships between composer and performer than much other writing I mention is most notable.

¹⁸ Mieko Kanno, 'Prescriptive Notation', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 232.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 233.

²⁰ See Ian Pace, 'Notation, Time and the Performer's Relationship to the Score in Contemporary Music', in *Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, edited Darla Crispin and James Cox (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), especially pp. 158-165, where I consider the first few lines of Elliott Carter's 90+ in such a manner.

²¹ Compare the thoughts of Nicholas Cook on 'compensating rubato'; in response to empirical studies suggesting that this approach is not reflected in what performers actually do (on the basis of recordings), he points out that such a thing is a modification of what performers do, 'not a description, but a prescription' (using the terms in a different sense to Kanno). Cook avoids the mistake made by many of seeing particular forms of rubato as deviations from an otherwise literalistic norm, instead recognising them as nuances introduced within what may already be otherwise nuanced styles. See Nicholas Cook, 'Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis' (hereafter simply 'Analysing Performance'), in Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 251.

and that is Webb's discussion of the performance of Berio's *Sequenza V*. After providing some interesting material on the conception of the work and in particular the inspiration of the Swiss clown Glock, Webb, whilst concentrating primarily upon pragmatic issues, does consider different interpretations of the work (such as those of Stuart Dempster and Vinko Globokar, both early advocates); he evokes the danger of an approach which invites the audience to emphasise with the performer, rather than 'distancing' or 'alienating' them²² (though here he is speaking of the visual rather than sonic aspects of the performance).

On the other side of the fence, there has over the last two decades been a steady stream of published articles and book chapters by theorists and analysts attempting to draw practical applications for performance from their analytical findings²³. Some of these can be quite prescriptive, even authoritarian in their outlook²⁴, emerging from a particular set of assumptions concerning the composer-performer relationship, whereby the task of the latter is essentially to uncover and illuminate what is somehow intrinsic within the work of the former. Other writers have taken a somewhat more flexible approach, filtering into the equation those things that performers do or might do which cannot necessarily be rationalised in terms of a work viewed as a fundamentally structural entity²⁵.

This strand of musicology is in many ways distinct from that devoted to the study of performance practice, which entails the exploration of historical conditions of performance (and historical performers), conventions of notation and practice, issues of composers' intentions insofar as they can be gleaned (often from a study of their writings, letters, diaries, memoirs written by others, etc.), in the hope of arriving at some clearer idea of how the music was either played or desired by the composer to be played at the time of its inception and first performances²⁶. Being involved in this field myself (focusing principally upon nineteenth-

²² Barrie Webb, 'Performing Berio's *Sequenza V*', in Webb, *Contemporary Performance*, p. 209.

²³ For an excellent summary of this strain of musicology, see Cook, 'Analysing Performance', pp. 239-261, and also Cook, 'Words about Music or Analysis versus Performance', in Peter DeJans (ed), *Theory into Practice: Composition, Performance and the Listening Experience* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 9-52, which partially overlaps with 'Analysing Performance'. Cook dates the beginning of this trend with the publication of Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

²⁴ For example Eugene Narmour, 'On the Relationship of Analytical Theory to Performance and Interpretation', in Narmour and Ruth Solie (eds), *Explorations in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honor of Leonard B. Meyer* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1988), pp. 317-340; a strong critique of this and other related articles can be found in Cook, 'Analysing Performance', pp. 240-247.

²⁵ There are many examples of this, including the articles of Cook already mentioned, as well as the thoughtful consideration of the subject in Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), William Rothstein, 'Analysis and the act of performance', in John Rink (ed), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 217-240; Stephen Davies, *Musical Works & Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), especially pp. 151-197, or John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) performance', in Rink (ed), *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 35-58. An earlier example of such an approach can be found in Janet Schmalfeldt, 'On the relation of analysis to performance: Beethoven's Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5', in *Journal of Music Theory*, 29 (1985), pp. 1-31.

²⁶ The literature on this subject is huge; a good introduction can be found in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) whilst an excellent reference guide to existing scholarship at the time of publication is Roland Jackson (ed), *Performance Practice: A Dictionary Guide for Musicians* (New York & London: Routledge, 2005).

century music) it is probably hardly surprising that I view this as a laudable field of investigation (though with doubts about some of the often cavalier methodologies employed), whilst sceptical about the value or even possibility of simply recreating such a thing in contemporary times. However, that these two sub-sections of contemporary musicology remain relatively separate is somewhat surprising; the former could be said to deal with the immanent properties of musical ‘works’, the latter to do with the stylistic framework within which these might have been represented. But I cannot believe that much is to be gained from such a demarcation, which serves to perpetuate what ought now to be seen as a rather archaic dichotomy between style and content. To give just one example of a performance issue which unites both forms of investigation, one might consider issues of phrasing. The ‘content analyst’ might explore the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic properties of a particular line of pitches contained within a piece, as well as how it relates to other lines within the same work, and as such arrive at a conclusion as to how the performer might best ‘shape’ (in terms of both dynamics and rhythm) such a line; the ‘style analyst’ might look at the types of instrument envisaged for the piece, conventions of bowing if on a stringed instrument (and what is implied by the notation in this respect), or sustaining power of a particular piano, and thus arrive at a particular conclusion in terms of lengths of phrase based upon simple practical possibility. But neither of these approaches seems to me to be sufficient if pursued in isolation from the other; the former is over-idealistic through viewing phrasing independently of sound and style, the latter exclusively concentrated upon the sounds of isolated moments and relatively oblivious to their harmonic or structural function. And from the applications of these different methodologies emerge very different types of performance: examples might be on one hand those of Wilhelm Furtwängler of Beethoven (bearing in mind his application of some of the ideas of Schenker²⁷) or those of a latter-day conductor from a similar tradition such as Daniel Barenboim; on the other performances of the same works by Roger Norrington²⁸. As a listener, I myself find much wanting in both of these: to simplify a little, the former employs a relatively homogeneous approach to sound, used primarily for the purposes of a somewhat overbearing form of ‘expression’, whilst the latter privileges the sound of individual moments above all else, as well as using minimal vibrato and tempo modification such as to produce a ‘flat’ (though timbrally variegated) surface in which the lack of response to more long-range aspects of melody, harmony and structure causes the wider expressive dimension to be minimised.

As one who pursues parallel careers as a pianist and a musicologist, it might seem obvious that I would espouse the benefits of mutual cross-fertilisation between the two fields of activity. To a large extent this is true, but here I am equally interested in exploring the more murky and sometimes antagonistic relationship between these fields, especially if the concept

²⁷ For more on this, see Nicholas Cook, ‘The conductor and the theorist: Furtwängler, Schenker and he first movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony’, in John Rink (ed), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 105-125.

²⁸ A sustained critique of Norrington’s recording of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is to be found in Richard Taruskin, ‘Resisting the Ninth’ (1988-89), in Taruskin, *Text and Act* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 235-261, though Taruskin is more sympathetic to Norrington’s other Beethoven in his earlier essay ‘The New Antiquity’ (1987), *ibid.* pp. 202-234.

of 'analysis' is drawn wider still²⁹. I believe it should be, to encompass areas of historical, social and political context of composers, works or forms of musical practice in general, the ideological dimensions and connotations of musical works and types of music-making (including performances and fields of performance), various perspectives concerning the relationship between producers and recipients of music³⁰, and even the economic conditions within which music-making exists (including issues of subsidy, commercialism, and so on). In my experience, few performers and composers in a 'classical' field have seemed to be interested in seriously engaging with these wider dimensions; indeed many have been actively hostile, deeming them to be purely of interest to the academic musicologist or cultural historian, with little bearing upon the more pragmatic business of writing and performing music. But I believe that all of these issues do indeed impact (and, historically, have impacted) upon the very details of composition and performance and also condition the activity of listening; the fact that they can be so complex and politically charged may be a primary reason for many musicians' avoiding them.

Nowhere is the discrepancy between the concerts of musicians and musicologists more stark than in the field of contemporary 'classical' music. Various individuals involved in musicology or in the wider field of music journalism have grappled with the labyrinthine complexity of issues of the importance of otherwise of a music whose listenership constitutes only a small minority of Western population³¹, the competing claims to the mantle of

²⁹ In terms of the problems inherent in separating out analysis from wider historical/social/political content, I know no better statement than that of Charles Rosen, who says that 'Sociologists who believe that the history of music can be entirely elucidated by its social functions and the classes that support it without any reference to the music itself are as harmful to a sane view as the critics who believe that music stands abstractly outside of society in a world of pure forms' (Rosen, *Critical Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 2)

³⁰ Here I prefer the term 'recipients' (in the sense of listeners) rather than 'consumers', because of all the implications of the latter in terms of a market-driven capitalist economy; this does not imply any lack of recognition that the majority of music-making does indeed take place under such economic conditions, but holds out the possibility that things might be otherwise (and also recognises that some forms of musical practice are less commercially-conditioned than others).

³¹ Here there are certainly some composers, at least, who have responded to this issue, as in Pierre Boulez and Michel Foucault, 'Contemporary Music and the Public', in *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 24 No. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1985), pp. 6-12, Milton Babbitt, 'The Composer as Specialist' (better known under its original title (not by Babbitt) of 'Who Cares if You Listen?') (1958), in Stephen Peles, Stephen Dembski, Andrew Mead, and Joseph N. Straus (ed), *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 48-54, whilst the subject (or perhaps rather its denial at least in terms of a projected utopia) hovers over some of Stockhausen's earlier writings, such as '«Musik kennt keine Grenzen?»' (1956), in *Texte Band 2* (Cologne: DuMont, 1964), pp. 210-211, or 'Vorschläge' (1961-62), *ibid.* pp. 235-242 (compare this with the uncompromising position espoused in Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, 'Musik gegen jedermann' (1955), in *Melos*, Heft 9, 22. Jahr (September 1955), pp. 245-248, reprinted in part in Ulrich Dibelius and Frank Schneider (eds), *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland: Dokumente aus den fünfziger Jahren* (Berlin: Berliner Festspiele GmbH, 1993), pp. 223-224). But the assumptions at play here could not be further apart from those found in, for example, Susan McClary, 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition' in *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989), pp. 57-81, Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) or numerous books written from a post-modernist perspective, e.g. Simon Miller, *The Last Post: Music after Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) or Joseph Auner and Judy Lochhead (eds), *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002). To varying degrees, issues of the importance of contemporary classical music surface within three recent texts, Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Joshua

‘contemporary’ presented by popular idioms, the arguments for and against providing public subsidy for elite minority interests³², the competing paradigms presenting composers, performers or listeners (or some combination of more than one of these groups) as the arbiters of musical value³³, what is achieved through certain forms of rationalisation of the compositional process³⁴, and which ideologies might be entailed through such strategies³⁵, the value of some type of creative ‘authenticity’ as opposed to work which unashamedly flaunts its qualities of artifice³⁶, and so on. But could a composer, say, really be expected to keep navigating all these different questions each time they commit pen to paper, without producing a type of work remarkable primarily for its self-consciousness?

Fundamental Questions Pertaining to Performance

Almost all of the writing presented in the volumes edited by Nonken and Webb is focused upon the relationship between the composer and the performer, the latter’s role in many of the British essays frequently consigned to the pragmatic realisation of the conception of the former. A fundamental consideration is missing, that of what is entailed in presenting these works in *public* performance³⁷, which is by definition a social phenomenon. What matters for these writers/performers are the desires and aspirations of the producers rather than the recipients, perhaps not so surprising in the context of a music whose audience is small even relative to ‘classical’ listeners as a whole. An alternative viewpoint is presented in starkest form by Richard Taruskin (in the context of a critique of historically-informed approaches to ‘early music’) in the introduction to his *Text and Act*:

Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother? Hearing the World of Contemporary Culture through a Composer’s Ears* (New York: Routledge, 2006) and Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) (see later in the article for the critique of these by Taruskin).

³² For example McClary, ‘Terminal Prestige’, Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), or some sections of David C.H. Wright, ‘The London Sinfonietta 1968-2004: A Perspective’, in *twentieth-century music* Vol. 2 No. 1 (2005), pp. 109-136. This subject does however, seem to have received only sporadic attention from musicologists, whereas it surfaces in journalism regularly in many countries, often in the context of wider debates about cultural subsidy.

³³ This issue occurs in some of the above-mentioned references and in particular in many of the writings of Richard Taruskin (not least his *The Oxford History of Western Music*, six volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)), some of these discussed within this article.

³⁴ This issue has of course also been addressed in writing by many composers in the forms of critiques of serialism, most famously Iannis Xenakis in ‘The Crisis of Serial Music’, in *Gravesaner Blätter*, Vol. 1 (July 1956), pp. 2-4, and György Ligeti in ‘Pierre Boulez: Decision and Automation in *Structure Ia*’, translated Leo Black, in *Die Reihe 4* (Bry Mawr, PA: Theodor Presser, 1960), pp. 36-62; here, though, the issue is framed in terms of compositional technique and its impact upon perception rather than extrapolating wider social or hermeneutical implications (as done around the same period by Adorno (see below)).

³⁵ Adorno, ‘The Ageing of the New Music’ (1955), translated Robert Hulott-Kentor and Frederic Will, in *Essays on Music*, edited Richard Leppert (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 181-200; McClary, ‘Terminal Prestige’; Born, *Rationalizing Culture*.

³⁶ See the various works on musical post-modernism already mentioned, and also some of the essays in Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (eds), *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

³⁷ One exception is David Burge, ‘A style to fit the purpose’, in Nonken, ‘Performers on Performing’, pp. 23-33; Burge considers some issues of ‘projection’ which I will consider later in this article.

I am glad to see increasing impatience with an excessively production-oriented system of values in classical music and the proper re-assertion of consumer values (yes, audience response) as a stylistic regulator. These are signs of critical systemic change - healthy change – in our culture that betoken the weakening of an increasingly irrelevant, pointlessly self-denying esthetic.³⁸

In its original context, Taruskin's position is well critiqued by John Butt³⁹, who rightly draws attention to the fact that the very performance tendency Taruskin critiques has actually been quite successful if his 'consumer values' are measured in terms of sales figures ('someone must have bought all those [Christopher Hogwood] records'⁴⁰). But Taruskin's wider position, founded upon a critique of the supposed hegemony of the 'post-Romantic work concept' which has 'furthered the stifling of creativity'⁴¹, looks more ominous when applied to contemporary atonal composition, for which no comparable sales evidence (at least relative to other fields of musical endeavour) could plausibly be marshalled. In a later article delivered in characteristically stentorian fashion, Taruskin asserts that the ideology of modernism (a term that he uses interchangeably within his writings to indicate various quite different tendencies⁴²) comes 'from the heritage of German romanticism'⁴³, citing a tradition leading from Moses Mendelssohn and Kant, through E.T.A. Hoffmann and Schopenhauer, culminating in the work of Adorno⁴⁴. Lest there be any doubt of Taruskin's disdain for this tendency, or indeed of his xenophobic disdain for most things German, he thunders about how art 'without utilitarian purpose' constitutes the 'most asocial definition of artistic value ever promulgated' and how ideas of aesthetic autonomy were 'preeminently a congeries of

³⁸ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, p. 47.

³⁹ Butt, *Playing with History*, pp. 14-24.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 19. It could be argued that Taruskin is positioning himself as a champion of consumer's rights rather than an advocate of consumerism, as Butt seems to imply. Nonetheless, the grounds upon which Taruskin would be able to lay claim to this sort of self-appointed role are obscure.

⁴¹ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, p. 13. I have not engaged in depth with the nature of the 'work-concept' in this article, though various recent discourse surrounding this concept has undoubtedly informed my thinking. The classic text critiquing the whole concept is Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), philosophically interesting if historically very questionable in some of its blanket claims. For some of the most interesting commentaries building upon (and sometimes critiquing) Goehr's work, see Harry White, 'If It's Baroque, Don't Fix It': Reflections on Lydia Goehr's 'Work-Concept' and the Historical Integrity of Musical Composition', in *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 69, Fasc. 1 (Jan. – Jun. 1997), pp. 94-104, Jim Samson, 'The Practice of Early-Nineteenth-Century Pianism', in Michael Talbot (ed), *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 110-127, Reinhard Strohm, 'Looking Back at Ourselves: The Problem with the Musical Work Concept', in Talbot, *The Musical Work*, pp. 128-152, Davies, *Musical Works & Performances*, pp. 91-98, and Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) pp. 127-136.

⁴² In *Text and Act*, the modernism he cites (as apparently a model for the reality historically-informed performance) is that of Stravinsky, Ezra Pound or José Ortega y Gasset (and also speaks in hysterical terms of 'Generalissimo Boulez' (p. 192)), clearly placed in *opposition* to German tendencies (see 'The Modern Sound of Early Music', where he links this with the work of Toscanini, Stravinsky and Satie, all of which he claims share 'an anti-Teutonic bias' (p. 167)) whereas in the example from 'The Musical Mystique' (see below), and in much of his *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), he locates modernism as an outgrowth of German romanticism.

⁴³ Richard Taruskin, 'The Musical Mystique: Defending Classical Music against Its Devotees', in Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), p. 338.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 338-339. Taruskin calls Adorno the 'last authentic apostle' of this creed; why younger (relative to Adorno) individuals such as Heinz-Klaus Metzger, Hans G. Helms, Helmut Lachenmann, Nikolaus A. Huber or Mathias Spahlinger, all prominent figures in the German new music world and quite deeply influenced by aspects of Adorno's thought, are not 'authentic', is anyone's guess.

German ideas about German art that consoled and inspired the Germans at a particular point in German history'⁴⁵ (try replacing the word 'German' with 'Jewish' in this quote and see how it reads). One shudders to imagine what he would make of Roger Redgate's *Ausgangspunkte* or Richard Barrett's *basalt*, to name just two of the works explored in Webb's volume, or how those composers or the performers who advocate them would defend the work against blanket critique for lacking 'utilitarian value'. But what is Taruskin's alternative? In this essay, about the question of whether classical music does have a viable future⁴⁶, the only possibility presented by the three authors he surveys to which he seems sympathetic is that of Lawrence Kramer, writing about the use of classical music in film⁴⁷. Otherwise, the future for classical music at all (let alone that atonal variety contained within that field) is bleak, as it becomes ever more usurped by a popular musical culture that has achieved not only commercial, but also intellectual, respectability⁴⁸. I suspect that a good deal of the writing I have already cited would be placed by Taruskin within that classical music discourse that he says 'so reeks of historical blindness and sanctimonious self-regard as to render the object of its ministrations practically indefensible'⁴⁹.

Whatever one thinks of Taruskin's often intemperate tone, the issues he raises are very real and have a bearing upon the activities of performers of contemporary atonal music, in terms not least of whether any arena will remain within which they can practise their art. He decries an art divorced from any type of social function, misconstruing in the process Adorno (of whom only the most superficial reading would allow for Taruskin's interpretation⁵⁰) in associating his work with a creed of 'defense of the autonomy of the human subject' and a position whereby 'All social demands on the artist . . . and all social or commercial mediation are inimical to the authenticity of the creative product'⁵¹. Adorno's dialectical formulations do provide a way out from Taruskin's ultimately empirical⁵² model; his conception of artistic possibility is founded upon the idea of art's being able comment critically upon actually existing consciousness in ways that are not simply hypertrophised through its appropriation

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 339. Similar considerations inform Taruskin's attack on Schoenberg, 'The Poietic Fallacy', in *The Danger of Music*, pp. 301-329.

⁴⁶ In the form of reviews of Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?*, Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother?* and Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*.

⁴⁷ Taruskin, 'The Musical Mystique', pp. 350-352.

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 330-338.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 332.

⁵⁰ Taruskin makes no mention of Adorno's writings on post-1945 music, including 'The Ageing of the New Music' or the important essay 'Vers un Musique Informelle', in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, translated Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1998) pp. 269-322, nor of his recurrent (and sometimes devastating) critiques of the high bourgeois Germanic tradition within which Taruskin places him. Some of the most interesting of Adorno's thoughts in this respect are to be found in Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928-1940*, edited Henri Loritz, translated Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) and also in Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, translated E.B. Ashton (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976).

⁵¹ Taruskin, 'The Musical Mystique', p. 339. There is not the scope within this essay to mount a defence of Adorno's own particular construction of *Authentizität* (especially in his *Aesthetic Theory*, translated Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1997)); suffice to say that it has little to do with the type of primitivism that characterised earlier romantic constructions of the term.

⁵² By this I refer to the fact that Taruskin's idea of social function, here and in other of his writings, is restricted to the here and now, the empirically observable, rather than in terms of playing some part in (or at least not hindering) the possibility of social change.

for pre-ordained social function. As I see it, such a critical role need not take the form of a remorselessly dark *musica negativa* (to use the polemical term employed by Hans Werner Henze to refer in particular to Helmut Lachenmann⁵³), manneristically flaunting some form of ‘displeasure principle’ in opposition to the supposedly affirmative nature of mass culture and consciousness (a charge that might be better levelled at a few ‘complex’ composers, or some Russian purveyors of relentless musical darkness, than at the German late modernist tradition with which it is more commonly associated). Such a role can equally be entailed through the construction of nuanced, subtle, intricate and individuated forms of emotional experience in distinction to a world where such things are so much more often pre-packaged into easily digestible affective commodities (in the form of ‘mood music’ and the like). The possible role that Adorno identifies (though only occasionally finds) is itself a ‘function’ which can stand outside of Adorno’s construction of ‘functionality’, though not easily (Adorno was as aware as anyone of the dangers of a notionally oppositional art serving as a substitute for broader actions towards social change⁵⁴). It may be rare to encounter this as somehow latent in a work of music, rarer still to be able to do justice to it in performance, and rarest of all to be able both to find an audience willing to listen, but the very hope that on some occasions this might be achieved is for me a sufficient motivation to continue playing certain classical music old and new and attempt to devise performance strategies accordingly.

But let me frame this issues in terms of fundamental issues that a performer⁵⁵ might ask from the outset - indeed those for which any performer must already have some answers (which may simply be unquestioned, passively adopted ideologies) by the very fact of undertaking their practice - and then survey different approaches to the relationship between performance and analysis in the light of these. One could simply begin by asking ‘how can analysis benefit performance?’ (or also ‘how can performance benefit analysis?’). To answer this requires some notion of what a better or worse performance is or, to place the question in a wider social context, how and if a performance can be considered beneficial in terms not just of the wishes, desires and aims of the composer and performers, but also the listeners. If considering the latter (who are always a factor in any *public* performance), there then follows the question of which listeners one is targeting (and also which sub-sections of society they represent) and whether what is ‘beneficial’ to them is also necessarily beneficial to others, who might stay away and listen to other types of music instead? At this point the very word ‘beneficial’ sounds cloying and patronising towards listeners, so I would replace the original question with ‘What is one trying to achieve through performing a piece of music?’ To answer this, I would suggest, requires asking ‘Why perform this particular piece of music rather than all the choices available?’ or, as few only ever play one singular piece of music, ‘Why play this particular subsection of the available repertoire?’ (which would include much relatively unknown or unpublished music that has not entered any particular canon). But then

⁵³ See Hans Werner Henze, *Die Englische Katze. Ein Arbeitstagebuch 1978-1982* (Stuttgart; S. Fischer, 1983), p. 345. For Lachenmann’s response to this, see Helmut Lachenmann, ‘Open Letter to Hans Werner Henze’, translated Jeffrey Stadelman, in *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 35 No. 2 (Summer 1997), pp. 189-200.

⁵⁴ See in particular Adorno, ‘Commitment’, in Adorno et al, *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 177-195 and *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 225-261.

⁵⁵ Throughout this paper I use ‘performer’ in the singular for the sake of convenience, though most of the arguments presented are equally applicable to groups of performers.

this question might be placed within a wider musical context and, if the particular subsection consists entirely of ‘classical’ works, why make such a focus exclusive in this manner?

Let me thus reconstitute the question once more, as ‘Why perform certain music in public, and what can be achieved through the act of doing so?’ I will focus first upon the former part of the question, an answer to which might initially seem straightforward: because one likes that music and feels one has something to contribute to it. But, at least for solo or chamber musicians, that desire could be satisfied in private; there are of course many historical examples of such a thing occurring, whether Bach’s composition of keyboard works for what may have been an essentially pedagogical purpose, not intended for public performance⁵⁶, numerous examples of private gatherings to play chamber music in aristocratic and high bourgeois households in the 19th century⁵⁷, and of course Schoenberg’s *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen*⁵⁸. But to wish to perform publicly implies something more, and in particular raises the question of the relationship between the musician and the particular ‘public’ for whom they play or hope to play. At the time of writing, I am not aware of a comprehensive international demographic survey of audiences for classical music at the time of writing, but there have been numerous micro-studies relating to this subject for earlier times and places⁵⁹; to undertake a comprehensive study is obviously well beyond the scope of this paper, but I hope it will not be too contentious to suggest that, on the basis of both experience and past study, the audiences for ‘classical’ music demonstrate an marked bias towards the higher social classes and income levels, and a significantly lesser proportion of those from ethnic minorities than is the case for various ‘popular’ musics⁶⁰; furthermore, they represent a clear minority of the population as a whole⁶¹.

⁵⁶ See Charles Rosen, ‘Keyboard Music of Bach and Handel’, in *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 25-53, for one espousal of this theory.

⁵⁷ For example the gatherings at the house of Moritz Hauptmann and Mendelssohn, or in the private homes in Russia in which Liszt and Clara Schumann were invited to participate during their concert trips to that country. See John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998) for a good overview of chamber music making, especially in the nineteenth century, and also Stephen E. Hefling, *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

⁵⁸ See the essays in Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (eds), *Schoenbergs Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1984) for the best information on this organisation and others influenced by it.

⁵⁹ There are too many of these to list here, but amongst the most exemplary would include William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (Guildford: Biddles, 1975) and *The Great Transformation of Musical Life: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) as well as Weber (ed), *The Musician as Entrepreneur 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), also Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), and for good overviews of the subject, Henry Raynor, *Music & Society since 1815* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1976), and Peter Anthony Bloom, ‘The Public for Orchestral Music in the Nineteenth Century’ in Joan Peyser (ed), *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations* (New York: Billboard Books, 2000), pp. 253-283

⁶⁰ I suspect also a higher percentage of men than women amongst classical listeners as a whole (especially for contemporary music), though in some cases (such as with respect to music in West Germany in the 1950s, mentioned below), this is not necessarily true.

⁶¹ The survey undertaken in 2002 by the Knight Foundation in America, *Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study 2002: National Survey* (Minnesota: Audience Insight LLC, 2002) found just 16% of Americans had attended a classical concert in the 12 months prior to the survey (some of the findings are summarised at ‘Who Attends Classical Music Concerts?’, at

If this is indeed the case, why should it matter? This would depend upon the nature of the performer's response to the initial question. If they wish to play for a public, are they concerned simply to satisfy this particular small and higher-class-dominated sub-section of society, or do they wish to communicate the music to a socially broader audience? If they take an unabashedly socially elitist perspective, and welcome the fact of this particular audience demographic (and I suspect this point of view – for which there is ample evidence in earlier times⁶² - may be much more prevalent than is often openly admitted), then there is no problem (and I would suggest those of such an opinion probably need not read this paper further), though one should seriously ask on what basis such an activity can justifiably warrant the investment of public money (through subsidy derived from taxation) to a greater extent than other forms of music-making⁶³.

If on the other hand they are concerned to communicate the music to a wider listenership, then there are two further questions to ask. First, what makes this 'classical' music in particular warrant such a messianic endeavour, bearing in mind that the non-classical-music-listening public regularly partake of and enjoy other forms of music? To give two rather stark examples which nonetheless hopefully demonstrate a wider point, is the listener who consumes symphonic poems evoking exotic foreign lands borne from colonial ideologies of domination (usually employing a small handful of stock musical signifiers to denote the usual patronising clichés⁶⁴), really undergoing any more of an elevated experience than one who listens to misogynistic gangsta rap? Or one who listens to music of the French baroque, much of it written to entertain the highest classes and embodying in its very musical fabric a set of clear musical hierarchies that mirror those of the feudal society of its time, compared to another who prefers the de-subjectivising communal experience of hypnotic dance music?

The second question is if anything more basic: why, despite countless initiatives to 'generate new audiences' and the like, does the make-up of 'classical' audiences appear to have remained relatively unchanged⁶⁵? If the aim of musicians is to take their music to a wider

<http://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/quickfacts/audiences/classical02.html> (accessed 6/5/09). This survey also showed a clear linear correspondence between income level and attendance at classical music concerts, showing numbers of those attending ranging from 13.1% of those earning under \$35,000 to 35.7% of those earning over \$200,000 (results derived from data available at

<http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/getDDISummary.xq?studyID=a00056> (accessed 6/5/09)).

⁶² See for example the brilliant study of the relationship between both Franz Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg and their various targeted audiences (consisting primarily of different sub-sections of the aristocracy in either case) in Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 18-77.

⁶³ Subsidy may not seem to be a direct issue for the performer (and perhaps especially not in the United States where it provides a considerably smaller percentage of the funding for classical music than in much of continental Europe in particular), though in many cases it provides the financial foundations which allows them to practice their art.

⁶⁴ For an overview of this subject, see the various essays collected in Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), Peter W. Schatt, *Exotik in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Katzschler, 1986) and the section 'Exoticism, Folklorism, Archaism' in Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 302-311.

⁶⁵ Notwithstanding the fair degree of popular success of such phenomena as the Three Tenors, Vanessa-Mae, Nigel Kennedy, and so on. Whilst achieving wider success in terms of box office and recordings than many

audience, why has such a venture been on the whole such a consistent failure, give or take a few generally short-lived successes? Are we really to believe that such a failure stems simply from not having yet ‘tried hard enough’, a situation that others are set to miraculously remedy?

Taken together, these questions place the performer of classical music in a difficult situation. They may want to communicate the music to a wider audience in the name of some educating, civilizing, or other lofty mission, but it is very hard to make a strong case that such a thing is actually entailed through their activities at least to date. Or they might wish to share something they value with more people, but then they are likely to be frustrated by a lack of success in doing so. Or they might wish simply to give audiences pleasure or some other form of fulfilment, and are prepared to place some of their own aesthetic preferences on hold in the service of a greater humility directed towards this end; but they could achieve this far better by attempting to be an even moderately successful popular musician.

The issues are if anything even more acute for those involved in much contemporary classical music, especially that of an atonal variety, for which audiences are considerably smaller still (not necessarily more or equally socially elite, though I suspect a stronger male bias⁶⁶). To understand what I believe to be the central issue here, one should return to the issue of what it means to play ‘classical’ music. As William Weber has traced in some detail, what we today understand as the ‘classical’ – based around a core repertoire of ‘classics’ predominantly by dead composers – was not firmly established until around 1870⁶⁷; he and others have also explored the ways in which this process was linked to the establishment (or even invention) of national ‘traditions’ in line with broader nationalistic ideologies of the time⁶⁸. In earlier

other classical musicians, the fact that their records may hit the top of the ‘classical’ charts but remain near the bottom of the charts for popular music is most revealing. And their work does not appear to have translated into any wider shifts in terms of classical audiences, at least for live concerts, other than for the artists in question. For one consideration of these issues, see James Morrison, ‘Classical music sales slump to all-time low’, *The Independent*, August 3, 2003, and for a more in-depth look at these sorts of phenomena as part of a wider ‘cross-over’ movement, Gwenyth Jackaway, ‘Selling Mozart to the Masses: Crossover Marketing as Cultural Diplomacy’, in *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, Vol. 11-12, Issue 1 (March 1999), pp. 125-150.

⁶⁶ A comparative study of audiences for contemporary classical music (in various countries) and for mainstream classical (and, indeed, for early music) in terms of social demographic is very much needed in the context of these debates – I am not aware of such a study at present. For one consideration of this issue in an American context, see Greg Sandow, ‘Looking for Listeners who can Love New Music’, at <http://www.gregsandow.com/marketing%20contemporary.htm> (accessed 6/5/09). Some surveys of opinion amongst young people in West Germany in the 1950s revealed a huge level of obliviousness about contemporary music of the time, with very few able to name a modern composer or work, and tiny percentages interested in developments in new music (see *Jugend zwischen 15 und 24. Eine Untersuchung zur Situation der deutschen Jugend im Bundesgebiet* (Bielefeld: Deutscher Heimat-Verlag Ernst und Werner Giesecking, 1954), pp. 252-254, and *Jugend zwischen 15 und 24. Zweite Untersuchung zur Situation der deutschen Jugend im Bundesgebiet* (Bielefeld: Deutscher Heimat-Verlag Ernst und Werner Giesecking, 1954), pp. 99, 300-301; however these surveys also revealed a greater percentage of women interested in ‘demanding’ music than men). For a consideration of issues of audiences for new music in Germany, see Rainer Pöllmann, ‘Angekommen in der Gesellschaft? Die neue Musik in Deutschland’, in *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* #8 (October 2006), pp. 4-6.

⁶⁷ See Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, pp. 169-272.

⁶⁸ For two interesting studies of this subject, see Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn’s Revival of the St Matthew Passion* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2005) and Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

times, public concert life was dominated by recent music by living composers (usually of the more 'popular' variety; in the early nineteenth century this would be focused around operatic numbers and virtuoso soloists). Viewed from this perspective, the whole concept of the 'contemporary classical' may seem contradictory, but such a dilemma can be traced back to the early days of the establishment of the 'classical', not least through Schumann's attempts on one hand to maintain his clear distinction between the work of him and his contemporaries and that of older generation (the latter having 'ruled over the passions' whilst the former are ruled by them), whilst also maintaining that 'The future should be the higher echo of the past'⁶⁹, thus wishing to fuse continuity and change together in a manner that Schumann himself realized to be paradoxical. The 'contemporary classical' can similarly be distinguished from the merely 'contemporary' (for which popular music could make an equal if not stronger claim, at least in terms of audiences and consequent social impact) in terms of a particular attitude towards a 'classical tradition' within which it situates itself (if not necessarily as the result of a teleological progression). As such, the performer of the 'contemporary classical' is placed in the situation of presenting something which, if not necessarily radically innovatory, must satisfy certain criteria of individuality and originality such as are entailed in commonly held notions of what a composer should do, whilst at the same time demonstrating some form of continuity with (and thus re-affirmation of) this 'classical' tradition.

For those performers (in which category I would include myself) sceptical about the latter end, in full knowledge of the extent to which the wider social culture – past and present - surrounding this 'tradition' is so deeply embroiled with forces of elitism and exclusion, the situation can be difficult. How is one to play to 'classical' audiences, the mainstay of whose listening is firmly rooted within this historically archaic and often socially questionable tradition⁷⁰?

One solution might seem to be an attempt as clearly as possible to locate the contemporary work in question within such a tradition⁷¹, thus foregrounding the aspects which most closely resonate with the found and known of that tradition. Another might be to place emphasis on

⁶⁹ Schumann, *Tagebücher Band I: 1827-1838*, edited Georg Eismann (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971), pp. 218, 304. I use here the translations in John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 59.

⁷⁰ An obvious alternative is of course to attempt to construct new audiences from outside of traditional classical listening communities. To some extent this may have been successful (in the sense of the audiences for contemporary classical music being something other than a mere subset of other classical audiences), but still the numbers of people involved are very far from constituting the type of community that could be compared with those for many popular forms, and as such the wider cultural impact of such work is negligible. Attempts to cross bridges between the 'classical' and 'popular' have frequently been primarily about issues of visual presentation, concert formats, and so on, rather than to do with the sonic content (and all that it signifies) of the music in question. There have been quite a number of concert presentations that have sought to bring together performances of the 'contemporary classical' with various manifestations of atonal free improvisation; however, the latter remains as esoteric a minority taste as much of the 'contemporary classical' and as such these cross-over ventures do not entail a significant move forward in terms of audiences.

⁷¹ On this process as manifested in discourse about music and performance, see Ian Pace, 'Verbal Discourse as Aesthetic Arbitrator in Contemporary Music', in Björn Heile (ed), *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 81-99.

the more radical aspects of the new music, specifically the ways in which it breaks with convention and tradition, thus foregrounding its contemporaneity rather than its historicism. But both of these approaches make most sense in terms of an objectivised notion of 'tradition' itself, viewed as an object or series of objects, rather than historical processes; furthermore there are various ways in which that tradition may be constructed. Any construction involves a selection of a very small percentage of all that has been composed and/or performed during the historical period in question, according to certain criteria. And whilst such criteria may often be those of the mystical 'great masterpiece', that is not the only way; instead one can adopt a selection criteria according to the extent to which musical works exist in a *critical* relationship with the wider social forces of their time as given cultural representation. This type of criteria is far from unproblematic, and indeed might result in a canon not dissimilar from that bequeathed by the 'masterpiece' attitude to history; nonetheless it entails a very particular *attitude* towards history that can fundamentally alter one's approach in the present day. It is not difficult to see how Beethoven's particular form of bourgeois individualism and ideals of compositional autonomy⁷², in terms of their specific manifestations in his work, do not look so radical now that such works have been enshrined within a canonical repertoire. However, an acute understanding of precisely how these factors became embodied in the work, and as such how the works exist in a critical relationship with the conventions of his time, is in my opinion the best way to comprehend (a) whether the work continues to be of more than merely historical interest; and (b) how such factors might be articulated in performance in ways that are meaningful today. In privileging these factors, one is constructing a type of 'tradition against tradition', a layer of history centred around music that *diverges* from the mainstream of history and all that entails socially.

So, musical performance involves playing to groups of listeners generally aligned with some type of tradition, which may of course be a wholly artificial construct for the reasons outlined above. As the very construction of such traditions is the product of some degree of consensus between social sub-groups, competing claims in this respect are *proprietary* with respect to the body of music appropriated in terms of those traditions. More simply it becomes a question of 'whose music', and whether the performer is to adapt to and reinforce the claims of a group. This is one of several ways in which performance becomes a social issue.

⁷² This notion of Beethoven's achievement is of course highly indebted to that presented by Adorno, in *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, edited Rolf Tiedemann, translated Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), but which has roots going back to the early nineteenth century (including in the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann). Amongst contemporary commentators, a milder (non-Marxist) version of this type of interpretation can be found in Reinhard G. Pauly, *Music in the Classic Period*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, NK: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 187, 194-195, and William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 1-14, whilst critiques can be found in Nicholas Marston, 'Intellectual currents: philosophy and aesthetics', in Barry Cooper (ed), *The Beethoven Compendium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), pp. 62-65, Barry Cooper, 'Politics', *ibid.* pp. 143-145, Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven's *Magazin der Kunst*' in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 203, Sanna Pederson, 'Beethoven and Masculinity' in Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 313-331, and throughout Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

This may seem an extremely long preamble for a paper on the relationship between analysis and performance; I am attempting to provide a framework not simply for the question of *how* (how we do analysis and apply it to performance) but to the more fundamental questions of *what* and *why* (what type of analytical criteria and methods a performer might apply, and why these are relevant to the socially-mediated arena of performance). Above all, for the reasons above, I believe that navigating the relationship between (possibly antagonistic) issues of ‘tradition’ (which might include genre) and mediation is one of the most important of all things for a performer to consider.

Analytical approaches to performance, the musical ‘work’, and issues of notation

One approach to analysis well-known in the English-speaking world (arguably considerably more so than in German-speaking lands⁷³) is that provided by the work of Heinrich Schenker. The publication of his (incomplete) sketches for an *Art of Performance*⁷⁴ provide an opportunity to survey how he himself viewed possible applications of his theories to performance (primarily upon the piano), at least at one point in his lifetime⁷⁵. It constitutes one of the most comprehensive integrations of analysis and performance imaginable, in which issues of piano technique and fingerings (and practising), legato and non-legato, dynamics, tempo and its modifications, and even rests are all brought together within a coherent system. Yet the sacrosanct nature of the work-concept is made clear by Schenker from the outset:

Basically, a composition does not require a performance in order to exist. Just as an imagined sound appears real in the mind, the reading of a score is sufficient to prove the existence of the composition. The mechanical realization of the work of art can thus be considered superfluous.

Once a performance does take place, one must realize that thereby new elements are added to a complete work of art: the nature of the instrument that is being played; properties of the hall, the room, the audience; the mood of the performer, technique, et cetera. Now if the composition is to be inviolate, kept as it was prior to the performance, it must not be compromised by these elements (which after all are entirely foreign to it). In other

⁷³ See Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race and Music Theory in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially pp. 275-296, for an in-depth exploration of the appropriation of Schenker’s work, stripped of much of its wider cultural and ideological baggage, to form the Anglo-American discipline of ‘Schenkerian theory’; for an earlier exploration of this issue, see William Rothstein, ‘The Americanization of Schenker’, in Hedi Siegel (ed), *Schenker Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 193-203.

⁷⁴ Heinrich Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, edited Heribert Esser, translated Irene Schreier Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) (hereafter simply ‘Schenker, *Performance*’). The original German title Schenker envisaged was *Die Kunst des Vortrags*.

⁷⁵ Schenker began sketching this work in July 1911, interrupted this a few weeks later, then took another look at it around two years later, then provided an index in 1930, but the work was not completed or published in his lifetime (see ‘Editor’s Introduction’, pp. xi-xii). A large amount of the material was included in his earlier works ‘A Contribution to the Theory of Ornamentation’ (1904) (translated Hedi Segel, in *The Music Forum*, IV (1976), pp. 1-139), *J.S. Bach’s Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* (1909), translated Hedi Segel (New York: Longman, 1984) and also in *Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony: A Portrayal of its Musical Content, with Commentary on Performance and Literature as well* (1912), translated John Rothgeb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)

words: those properties must not be given priority. Yet how casually will many an artist sacrifice the work of art – which never should be sacrificed! – to the hall, to the audience, to his fingers!⁷⁶

What exactly the ‘inviolable’ composition is prior to any possible performance (or why ‘imagined sound’ might not vary quite considerably depending upon who is doing the imagining) is never made clear by Schenker. It is clear that he posits ‘the composition’ as some objective ideal which a performance must not ‘compromise’, but I am at a loss to know what an un-‘compromised’ performance would sound like. Rather, I believe Schenker brings one very particular ideological perspective to bear upon the music he surveys, privileging certain elements and downplaying others (and devising systems of valorisation on this basis), and then presents this very particular notion of ‘the composition’ in terms of a particular type of imagined *performance*. Without wanting to enter into detailed examination of the validity or otherwise of Schenker’s analytical methods (which changed considerably during the course of his life, with only a relatively small section of his output informing his post-war legacy⁷⁷), I believe this project amounts simply to the advocacy of one out of many possible interpretive approaches and concomitant set of aesthetic priorities, whose enactment in no sense necessarily constitutes a performance of ‘the composition’ more than other approaches.

However, Schenker’s prescriptions in no sense entail simply a ‘literalist’ rendition of the text, such as might eschew tempo variation, dynamic nuance, and so on, other than where explicitly indicated in the score. Rather, he incorporates these elements into a particular way of *reading* that score. For example, he perceives what he calls a ‘root syllable’ within melodic lines approached by repeated notes or repeated rhythmic patterns⁷⁸. One example he gives⁷⁹ is bar 32 of Chopin’s Polonaise op. 40 no. 1, indicating a pushing forward for the last three semiquavers of the bar.

⁷⁶ Schenker, *Performance*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ My thanks to Nicholas Cook for various thoughts on these matters in private correspondence. Schenker’s thoughts in the work on performance by no means necessarily resonate in all respects with his analyses from the 1920s and 1930s, for which he is best known; here I concentrate purely on the perspective presented in this particular text.

⁷⁸ Schenker, *Performance*, pp. 53-57.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 55.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Chopin's Polonaise in A major, op. 40 no. 1, measures 25-32. The score is written for piano and includes a 'Seconda volta.' marking at the beginning. The tempo is marked 'energico'. The score features a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking and an 'Ossia' section. The music is characterized by a rhythmic stylization where shorter notes are delayed within the polonaise rhythm. The score includes a 'piu f' marking and a 'Ped.' marking. The music is in A major and 3/4 time.

Fig. 1. Chopin, Polonaise in A major, op. 40 no. 1, mm. 25-32.

The history of rhythmic stylisation of polonaise rhythms has, to my knowledge, yet to be researched more fully; what is well-known is a mode of stylisation demonstrated in the earliest recordings of Polish Chopin players such as Ignaz Friedman, Moriz Rosenthal or Raoul Koczalski (as well as in many later performers from various countries). This stylisation entails a certain delaying of entry of shorter notes within a polonaise rhythm, which are themselves played quicker (but still reasonably evenly) than their exact metrical notation would imply, so as to fit into the allotted time whilst maintaining the pulse. This is not exactly implied by Schenker's prescriptions, though neither is it wholly excluded. More importantly, his rhythmic ideal stems from a sense of the particular properties of the line (in terms variously of rhythm (in terms of strong and weak beats), harmony or melody, depending on the example in question), rather than relating specifically to any stylistic genre (other examples come from non-polonaise works of Mozart and Beethoven). It is difficult to know how Schenker's prescription would apply to the repeated chords from the outset of the Polonaise op. 26 no. 2, which Chopin specifically indicates *poco ritenuto*.

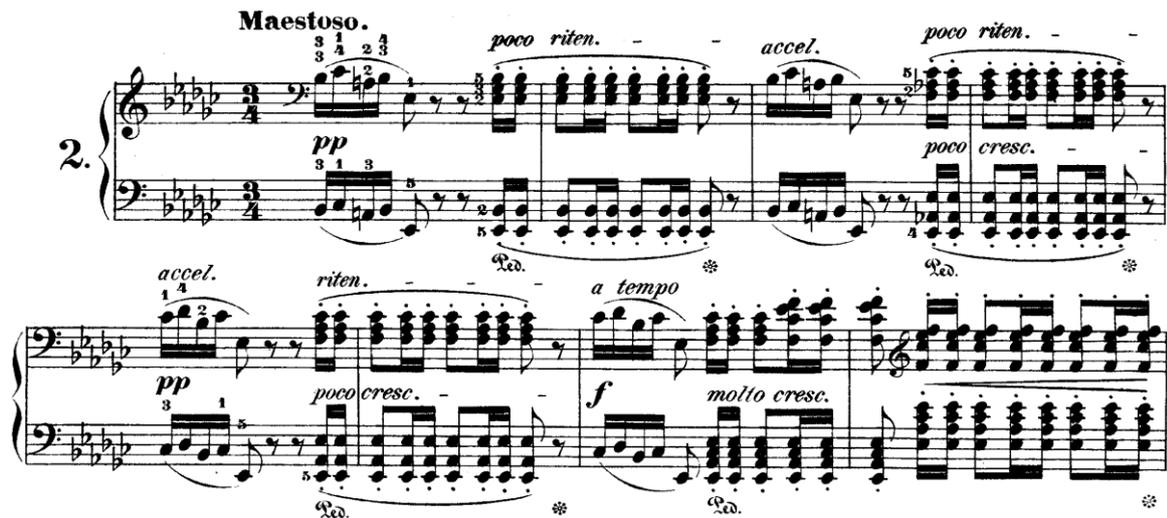


Fig. 2. Chopin, Polonaise in E-flat minor, op. 26 no. 2.

Elsewhere he advocates particular pedallings so as to mark off certain lines and medium-range harmonic progressions, sometimes crossing over various other micro-harmonic changes, as for example for the conclusion of the slow movement of Beethoven's Sonata in D minor op. 31 no. 2 (Fig. 3), where he advocates a long pedal to connect the bass octave B-flat in bar 98 to the final B-flat quaver in bar 102⁸⁰.

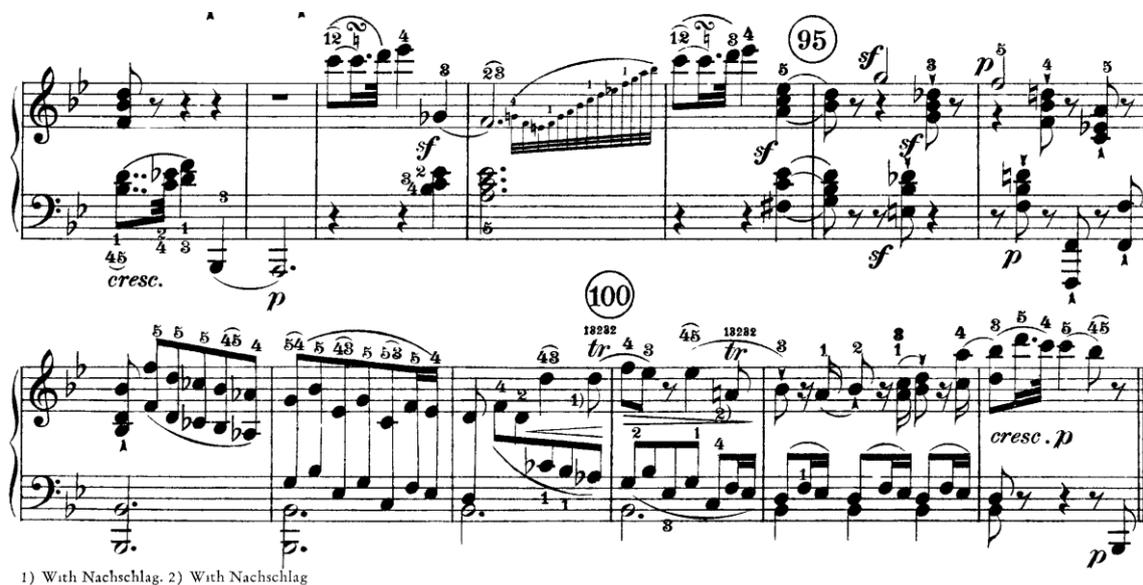


Fig. 3. Beethoven, Sonata in D minor, op. 31 no. 2. II, mm. 97-102 (from Schenker's own edition of Beethoven)⁸¹.

This is reminiscent of how my own teacher (György Sándor) said one should pedal the conclusion of the first movement of Schumann's *Phantasie* op. 17 (Fig. 4), placing the pedal

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 12.

⁸¹ In Schenker's book, he numbers these bars as 98-103 (ibid.).

down at the beginning of bar 342 (as marked by Schumann), then holding it without changing right through either to the end of the movement or at least until bar 346.



Fig. 4. Schumann, *Phantasia* in C, op. 17, close of first movement.

Both of these examples are founded upon particular assumptions and musical hierarchies, specifically that long- or medium-range harmonic processes must take precedence over more localised details, especially in terms of other parameters. In both the Beethoven and the Schumann, after the striking of the low bass note, the music shifts upwards in register (one octave in the case of the Beethoven, two in the case of the Schumann). This mode of pedalling makes such a registral shift merely an elaboration of detail upon a continuous bass line, which provides an anchor. Without necessarily denying that this approach might have its own merits, I consider it grounded in a musical attitude which privileges organic unity and harmonic closure above all else, treating parameters such as register as secondary details. Such an approach provides for a rounded and ‘complete’ listening experience, which does not leave ‘loose ends’ by a work’s conclusion; all is ultimately resolved. But there are other ways to conceive these works which allow for qualities of fragmentation, discontinuity and incompleteness. The shift in register in either case can be interpreted as entailing a momentary hiatus in consciousness, before returning to the resolution of the line. In the case of the Beethoven this can then take on the quality almost of an after-thought, the final low B-flat providing for ‘belated’ closure, somewhat overwhelmed by the rest of the material in the preceding four bars. If this approach is taken, through changing pedal to clarify the shift in register (or possibly even using a half-pedal there⁸²), a greater sense of instability inhabits the music, such as I would associate with a more doggedly individual and complex form of subjectivity, requiring of the listener a greater degree of subjective input and engagement of their own in the lack of a totalising resolution and closure. This is a somewhat less easily comforting and affirmative listening experience, less amenable to passive consumption. That is not to say that the result of the ‘Schenkerian’ approach wholly achieves the latter result; on the contrary, the harmonic blurring that results from the long pedalling (even with half-

⁸² It should be pointed out that Schenker himself did say elsewhere that on modern instruments one might substitute half-pedals for some of Beethoven’s long pedal indications (see *Performance*, p. 87 n. 2).

pedalling) does itself create a particular tension which, if nothing else, demonstrates the strangeness of attempting to force individuated works into reified structural models.

There are numerous non-Schenkerian approaches to performance which are equally centered around a particular conception of ‘the music’. Various of these I have mentioned earlier in the context of writings on analysis and performance; some of the most dogged forms of literalism came from Stravinsky and Ravel. Ravel said on several occasions to performers that ‘One should not interpret my music, one should realize it’ (‘Il ne faut pas interpreter ma musique, il faut le réaliser’)⁸³, whilst Stravinsky elaborated in more detail on a similar theory in his *Poetics of Music*:

It is necessary to distinguish two moments, or rather two states of music: potential music and actual music. Having been fixed on paper or retained in the memory, music exists already prior to its actual performance, differing in this respect from all the other arts, just as it differs from them, as we have seen, in the categories that determine its perception⁸⁴

He goes on to describe a conflict between two principles, ‘execution and interpretation’, as being ‘at the root of all the errors, all the sins, all the misunderstandings that interpose themselves between the musical work and the listener and prevent a faithful transmission of its message’:

The idea of interpretation implies the limitations imposed upon the performer or those which the performer imposes upon himself in his proper function, which is to transmit music to the listener.

The idea of execution implies the strict putting into effect of an explicit will that contains nothing beyond what it specifically commands.⁸⁵

Stravinsky goes on to argue that ‘The sin against the spirit of the work always begins with a sin against its letter’ and gives as examples conventions by which a *crescendo* is accompanied by speeding up, and *diminuendo* by slowing down⁸⁶. Others who adhered to similar views as regards the role of the performer included Arturo Toscanini (espousing performance ‘*com’è scritto*’⁸⁷ and Walter Gieseking⁸⁸, and to some extent even Wagner before them, when he praised the Paris Conservatoire orchestra playing Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony under Habeneck for having ‘played it *exactly* as it is written’, without audible bow

⁸³ Cited in Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 7-8

⁸⁴ Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music*, translated Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 121.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 122.

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 124. This repudiation of the distinction between ‘letter’ and ‘spirit’ of a work is associated with positivism by Taruskin (*Text and Act*, pp. 75-76, 99-100) in contrast to idealism, whereby the two things are quite distinct.

⁸⁷ See the overview of Toscanini’s work in Taruskin, *Text and Act*, pp. 222-226.

⁸⁸ According to one of his former students, Dean Elder, Gieseking’s artistic principle was to play ‘exactly what the composer wrote as beautifully as possible. . . One has only to be able to read notes correctly, but that is beyond most performers’ (Dean Elder, ‘Study with Gieseking’, in Elder (ed), *Pianists at Play* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1986), p. 9).

and string changes or modifications in dynamics to accompany ascending or descending passages⁸⁹.

This would seem to constitute a quite different conception to that argued by Liszt in a letter to Richard Pohl from 1853, talking about how an ‘imperturbable beating of the time’ in Beethoven leads to a situation whereby ‘*the letter killeth the spirit*, a thing to which I will never subscribe, however specious in their hypocritical impartiality may be the attacks to which I am exposed’⁹⁰, this type of dichotomy is also taken up by Richard Taruskin in his critique of over-‘literalist’ performance⁹¹. But there are also similarities between positivistic and idealist views of music and performance: both continue to be founded upon the idea that the performer’s task is essentially to do justice to the ‘work’ rather than use it as a starting point for their own creative imagination; though it could be argued that the ‘spirit’ to which Liszt refers is the property of a particular performance rather than something inherent within the work⁹². Busoni presented a more moderate form of idealism when he described notation as ‘itself the transcription of an abstract idea’⁹³, going on to describe performance as ‘also a transcription’ (one might also say the same about the act of listening), though he maintains that ‘the musical work of art exists whole and intact before it has sounded and after the sound is finished’⁹⁴. Clearly Busoni did not want to abandon the work-concept and the concomitant hierarchies of composer and performer.

In the process of explaining what led him to start writing programme notes (to ‘keep someone else’s nonsense off my record jackets’), Charles Rosen is strongly critical of the writing of James Huneker, who described a Chopin nocturne as having ‘staggered drunken with the odor of flowers’. Leaving to one side the value of this type of late romantic purple prose, Rosen’s subsequent comments are revealing in terms of his ideology of performance:

Huneker’s style is an invitation to the listener to dream, to dissipate attention into reverie. The writing about music that I prefer – and the performances of it, as well – fix and intensify the listener’s attention. When I hear music, I prefer to lose myself in it, not to drift outside in my own personal world with the music as a decorative and distant background.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Richard Wagner, *On Conducting*, translated Edward Dannreuther, second edition (London: William Reeves, 1897), p. 17.

⁹⁰ Liszt to Richard Pohl, November 5, 1853, in La Mara (ed), *Letters of Franz Liszt. Volume 1: From Paris to Rome: Years of Travel as Virtuoso*, translated Constance Bache (London: H. Greyel & Co, 1894), pp. 175-176. It is interesting to compare this with Brahms’s view of expression markings in a score, which he explained to Joseph Joachim were only necessary when a work is unfamiliar to performers, the situation being different when the work has ‘passed into the flesh and blood’ (Brahms to Joachim, January 20 [?] 1886, in Andreas Moser (ed), *Brahms’ Briefwechsel mit Joachim*, Volume 2 (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908) p. 205 (my translation)).

⁹¹ See note 85 above.

⁹² Liszt’s often reverential attitude (at least in later life) to works he greatly admired, especially those of Beethoven (see for example accounts of Liszt playing and teaching the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, in Adrian Williams, *Portrait of Liszt: By Himself and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 342-343, 621-622, or in William Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life* (New York: The Century Co., 1901), pp. 103-106) stands in contrast to the many accounts of the huge liberties he, by most accounts, took as a young player.

⁹³ Ferruccio Busoni, ‘Value of the Transcription’, in *The Essence of Music and other Papers*, translated Rosamond Ley (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 87

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 88.

⁹⁵ Rosen, *Critical Entertainments*, pp. 1-2.

In Rosen's statement is implied a clear distinction between 'the music' (in which he prefers to 'lose himself') and one's own 'personal world', and as such a clear downgrading of the listener who allows their own individual, personal experiences to influence the listening process – these are strictly 'outside' of the music. Rosen's ideal listener (himself?) would deny their own subjectivity prior to the point of listening, and allow themselves instead humbly to be transported into another realm of consciousness such as is provided by the composer and performer, 'losing themselves' in the process. This is the approach of religious cults, charged political rallies or other forms of de-individualising collective activity, and in our time is fulfilled more successfully by trance music than by the repertoire Rosen generally advocates.

I cannot agree with Rosen and would not wish to advocate such a de-subjectivising attitude towards the listener. A formulation by Nicholas Cook could be said to sum up this and various of the other positions I have mentioned. He describes 'the language we traditionally use to describe 'performance' in its specifically musical sense':

According to this language, we do not have 'performances' but rather 'performances of' pre-existing, Platonic works. the implication is that a performance should function as a transparent medium, 'expressing', 'projecting', or bringing out' only what is already 'in the work, with the highest performance ideal being a selfless *werktreue* (itself, as [Judith] Butler might point out, uncomfortably reminiscent of nineteenth-century conceptions regarding the natural role of women).⁹⁶

Drawing upon models from Butler on gender, as well as speech-act theory, Cook suggests an alternative model, whereby the work itself is 'performatively constituted':

[W]e might want to see what music psychologists refer to as performance 'expression' – the unsystematized transformation of notated pitches, dynamics, and articulation – as an aesthetically foundational aspect of music; structure, as defined by conventional analysis, would then constitute a means of representing or conceptualizing these 'expressive' characteristics, an attempt to capture their trans-situational properties. And more generally, what we call musical 'works' might be regarded along the same lines: that is to say, as means of representing or conceptualizing performances.⁹⁷

However, he also recognizes the limits and problems of this model, pointing out that, for example 'it would be absurd to try and understand Brendel's or Helfgott's playing without reference to *what* they play'⁹⁸. But I believe there are ways of achieving an at least partial reconciliation of this issue with the type of model suggested earlier by Cook, if one is prepared to conceive of the 'work' not so much as a singular ideal, but instead as a framework delineating a potential field of practice, the latter constituting those possible performances which can be said to be 'of the work', or better, of the *text*⁹⁹, in question. With

⁹⁶ Cook, 'Analysing Performance', p. 244.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 245.

⁹⁹ This could be taken even a stage further from 'text' to 'script', a metaphor suggested elsewhere by Cook, in 'Music as Performance', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (eds), *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (New York & London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 206-207. One corollary of this

this in mind, I have elsewhere suggested a particular model of notation, structuralist rather than positivist, whereby notation operates primarily by *exclusion* - in the sense of describing boundaries around the range of acceptable performances – rather than implying any one single approach that constitutes either a highest ideal, or a basis¹⁰⁰. This model, whilst not without its own problems, provides an acknowledgement of the field of performance in constituting the work¹⁰¹, without jettisoning some notion that such a ‘work’ has an existence other than simply in terms of all the performances that might lay claim to its name¹⁰². The boundaries may not be easy to define precisely (one needs some flexibility to account for the idea that margins of inaccuracy in performance which are nonetheless ‘of the work’¹⁰³), and it would be rash to berate a composer because some performance possibility which they do not desire can be found not to be excluded by their notation, though in cases where notation is quite specific, and the composer has equally specific but quite different intentions¹⁰⁴, it seems reasonable to suggest that this constitutes poor notational practice.

The problems with this notational model, or at least with its sole application to notation, are most apparent with music that may have been written with the assumption of different conventions of performance to those in common usage today (and such problems could also potentially exist with works of today in future times if conventions have changed in the interim period). Obvious examples of this are conventions for vibrato, pedalling, tuning, temperament, the use of *musica ficta*, ornamentation, and so on and so forth. Furthermore, a composer may have had relatively specific desires for a work which were communicated verbally to performers or others, at times when it was not common to present information of this type in the score (for example quite detailed verbal explications of the type of mood or character envisioned, using metaphors, allusions to other music or performers, and so on). Nowadays, a composer writing in full knowledge of international and stylistically diverse fields of performance would do best to attempt to indicate such things in a score if they are seen as defining¹⁰⁵, but this was certainly not attempted to such a degree in previous centuries, notwithstanding examples of greater specificity of verbal instructions in scores

model would be to reveal the absurdity of the notion of a ‘straight’ rendition of such a ‘script’, anymore so than with a theatrical script.

¹⁰⁰ See Pace, ‘Notation, Time and the Performer’s Relationship to the Score’, especially pp. 154-158.

¹⁰¹ This model allows for numerous possibilities in terms of rubato, expressive intonation, rhythmic and tempo flexibility, without these being conceived of as somehow deviations from or modifications to the basic ‘text’, as well as different interpretation of articulation and phrasing markings; it can even encompass graphic or other indeterminate scores.

¹⁰² One could potentially jettison the whole concept of the ‘work’ by this definition, and replace it simply with the ‘text’ (being the score); for now, I am reluctant to go quite this far.

¹⁰³ See Davies, *Musical Works and Performances*, pp. 152-162 for a more detailed consideration of this issue.

¹⁰⁴ For example the indication of a metronome mark alone to signify tempo, where the composer clearly desires a quite different metronome mark, a situation I have experienced. In this instance (by no means isolated) the composer had simply indicated a metronome mark of crotchet = 120 for the final section of their work, but in rehearsal was somewhat intemperate when it was played at that very mark, insisting on an appropriate tempo of around crotchet = 180 instead. Were the composer to be equally happy with a range of possible tempi averaging around the indicated marking, or allowing for some tempo modification in accordance with such things as the acoustics of the venue, or even to give this tempo as one of many other equally desirable possibilities, the situation would be somewhat different (though of course it would do no harm to indicate such a thing in the score).

¹⁰⁵ Though even then there are limitations – would one reasonably expect every composer to indicate the use of equal temperament in their score if they do not wish the use of any other temperament system?

from Beethoven onwards. These various problems may be partially circumvented by an expanded notion of the musical text (or script) that encompasses other information not explicitly indicated (which is discovered through contextual enquiry); in this sense the text becomes more than simply the notation or score, or could be said to modify that notation or at least affect how it is interpreted. So the boundaries provided by the notation may be ambiguous or hard to ascertain without wider knowledge of conventions and other relevant information; nonetheless I believe this structuralist model does constitute a significant improvement upon that which requires it to signify the work in some singular form¹⁰⁶.

To return to issues of music and listeners: whilst various works in the standard repertoire may be familiar to those who regularly listen to classical music, such people remain a minority of the population of Western countries; the number familiar with contemporary classical works is much smaller. Is there an argument for adopting different approaches to performance depending on how well-initiated the audience is likely to be? David Burge argues this with respect to new music, suggesting that the performance of 'lesser known' works should be 'even more convincing, more lyrical, more powerfully and coherently projected than performances of well-known works'¹⁰⁷. Whilst doubting that the category of the 'lyrical' is universally applicable to all new works, lesser-known or otherwise, Burge's formulation seems reasonable except for the familiar model he implies for performance in terms of 'projecting' the work. I would argue in distinction to this that the extent to which a quality of 'projection' is presented in performance affects the very nature of the musical experience, rather than simply being about clarification and elucidation. Also, at least in my experience of hearing 'projected' performances, this mode of delivery frequently entails a co-ordination, or at the very least clear hierarchy (for example in the manner suggested by Schenker), of parametric elements, for the purposes of producing as unambiguous a musical experience as possible, thus ironing out possibilities of fragmentation, discontinuity, non-reconciliation of musical elements existing in a dialectic, and other sources of potential ambiguity. As a listener, I certainly do not welcome having a work 'spelt out' to me (and have found myself intensely irritated by infantilising performances of this kind, with exaggerated dynamics, rhetoric, etc., even when applied to new music).

Adorno provides what I would interpret the starkest critique of this approach in amongst the notes for his work on musical reproduction:

Performing music has an element of talking people into something, convincing them, an element of propaganda about itself, and thus shows its affiliation to the dominant culture industry of today. One could exaggerate and say that any performance of a music work has the air of being an advertisement for it.¹⁰⁸

With this in mind, I would like briefly to return to Rolf Schulte's idea that a performance should be 'polished and expressive, not gritty'. To my ears, there is much in Bach's

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Davies takes a much more flexible notion of notation than is common, but is not ultimately prepared to jettison the idea that performance constitutes an elaboration of something indicated by the score. See Davies, *Musical Works and Performances*, pp. 99-150.

¹⁰⁷ David Burge, 'A style to fit the purpose', in Nonken, *Performers on Performance*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Adorno, *Reproduction*, p. 162.

Matthäus-Passion, Beethoven's op. 106 or *Grosse Fuge*, let alone various contemporary works, that invites a 'gritty' performance, which would in some sense 'express' something. Why should the category of the 'expressive' exclude this form of expression? Of course Schulte's ideals reflect a particular set of priorities, which I would not personally share, but that is probably indicative simply of different world-views as manifested in performance aesthetics. Schulte's view resembles that described by Nikolaus Harnoncourt as a 'reduction of music to the beautiful' which he identifies as having occurred at the time of the French Revolution¹⁰⁹; for the 'beautiful', substitute Schulte's 'expressive'. Harnoncourt puts it best, I believe, when he argues that 'While "beauty" is a component of every type of music, we can make it into a determining factor only by disregarding all of music's other components'¹¹⁰. The same could equally be said for Roger Norrington's notion of music having to be 'fun' (saying in summer 1990 'I don't mind so much if a performance is unhistorical. . .but I do mind if it isn't fun'¹¹¹), or to an extent that of Lawrence Kramer, who argues that 'perhaps the most vital role for performance in this process is precisely to suggest verbal and imagistic connections with the world, the very thing that the traditional culture of classical music, in the twentieth century at any rate, tried to get us to regard as forbidden'¹¹² to which Taruskin asks 'why not cut out the middle man and go straight for the words and the pictures?'¹¹³. Kramer seems to wish to deny music's very materiality and have it presented in a form which can be reduced to an external referent; one does not need to be a card-carrying formalist (which I am certainly not), nor deny the value of mimetic aspects of music, to see how limiting this attitude is when framed as an overriding aesthetic principle, denying as it does the ways in which music can not merely reflect experience but also add to it. These reified categories of 'expressive', 'beautiful' or 'fun' or the verbal/pictorial all constitute, once again, further means of appropriation of music into easily digestible forms; there is a place for such music, to be sure, but classical music attempting to operate on these terms is sure to be left behind by a popular culture industry which achieves them much more successfully and shamelessly¹¹⁴.

Inorganic Liszt and Aristocratic Performance¹¹⁵

I would now like to give the first of three examples in order to describe ways in which as a performer I attempt to apply analytical and musicological considerations to my work, bearing in mind all of the above. The only detailed source that is known to exist on Liszt's teaching of the *Sonata in B Minor* is contained in the *Liszt-Pädagogium*¹¹⁶. This in itself amounts to no

¹⁰⁹ Harnoncourt, 'Music in Our Lives', in *Baroque Music Today*, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 12.

¹¹¹ Cited in Taruskin, *Text and Act*, pp. 309-310. Taruskin goes on to criticise such an approach if applied in particular to the darker Bach Cantatas.

¹¹² Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 83-84.

¹¹³ Taruskin, 'The Musical Mystique', p. 349.

¹¹⁴ I should make clear here that I do not by any means intend to characterise the whole of popular culture in such a manner, but am referring to the results of an industry fashioning music for maximum sales and profit.

¹¹⁵ Part of this section is adapted from my article 'Conventions, Genres, Practices in the Performance of Liszt's Piano Music', in *Liszt Society Journal*, Volume 31 (2006), pp. 70-103

¹¹⁶ Lina Ramann, *Liszt Pädagogium*, edited Alfred Brendel (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996).

more than a page and a half of information including musical examples. Most of the salient points are detailed in Kenneth Hamilton's excellent book on the work¹¹⁷; I wish to concentrate on a single, but vitally important, point that Liszt made in his comments on August Stradal's performance, specifically to do with the first bar (Fig. 5). Liszt said that the staccato notes sound should like 'damped timpani strokes' (*dumpfer Paukenschlag*), achieved by playing the keys right towards the back, so as to create a smaller lever and thus give a dark colour to the tone¹¹⁸. Liszt also draws a comparison with Beethoven's *Coriolanus* Overture, in which terse staccato chords in the orchestra alternate with sustained unisons.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for the opening of Liszt's *Sonata in B minor*. The first system is for piano, marked 'Lento assai' and 'p sotto voce', featuring a bass line with staccato chords and a treble line with sustained chords. The second system is for violin, marked 'Allegro energico', showing a melodic line with staccato articulation. The third system continues the violin part with 'f marcato' dynamics. The fourth system returns to piano, marked 'p agitato', with a more active bass line and sustained chords in the treble.

Fig. 5. Liszt *Sonata in B minor*, opening.

¹¹⁷ Kenneth Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also Sharon Winkhofer, *Liszt's Sonata in B Minor: A Study of Autograph Sources and Documents* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Research Press, 1980).

¹¹⁸ Ramann, *Pädagogium*, Vol. 5, p. 3.

What I would like to suggest is that the contrasts between the ‘damped timpani strokes’ and the succeeding expansive melodic lines provide for one of the most fundamental determinants for the drama of the whole piece. And how one plays this very opening affects perceptions in this respect in a profound manner

Listening to a diverse selection of recordings, the most common approach here taken is that indicated by Arthur Friedheim in his edition of the score¹¹⁹, in which he indicates the use of a short pedal on each of the staccato Gs, and even suggests playing the lower two as grace notes to the highest note. Gordon Rumson suggests that ‘This recognizes the acoustic phenomenon that pizzicato strings appear to be slightly before the beat’¹²⁰. It does if one believes that pizzicato strings are the sound to be aimed for; I would agree more with Hamilton who argues that the ‘damped timpani strokes’ are a quite different sound to pizzicato strings¹²¹. Anyhow, recordings¹²² by Leon Fleischer (1959), Claudio Arrau (1970), Martha Argerich (1971), Alfred Brendel (1981), Maurizio Pollini (1989), all adhere to this practice, as to a slightly lesser extent does György Cziffra (1968). Arturo Pizarro (1999) plays the opening Gs more sustained than the others, sustaining them for almost a whole crotchet beat, but less so than Ernst Levy (1956), who takes a considerably slower tempo than the others and sustains the octaves almost right through the space separating them from each other, with only a tiny hiatus. To find something that sounds to my ears like ‘damped timpani strokes’ we have to listen to either Vladimir Horowitz (1932), Géza Anda (1954) or Leslie Howard (1990). In each of these we hear them played short, ghostly and terse, as is the outcome of following Liszt’s wishes (thus following the expanded ‘script’), assuming the *Pädagogium* to be accurate. Howard takes the opening considerably quicker than most of the others (Levy goes to the other extreme), creating a sense of urgency rather than brooding¹²³.

But I believe the importance of this approach to extend well beyond the opening bars. The G octave on the third beat of bar 8, also marked with a wedge (as opposed to the simple staccato dots in bar 10, the beginning of bar 11 and bars 12-13) is a continuation of this strand and should in my opinion be played equally short. Then the wedged notes in the first appearance of the third theme, in bar 14, are similar¹²⁴, as are the clipped ends of slurs in bars 18ff. If one conceives of Liszt’s articulation as underlining and enhancing that which is implicit in the pitches and rhythms, then it makes sense to play the opening Gs more sustained, so that they lead towards the sustained G of bars 2-3. But we should question whether this commonly

¹¹⁹ See Gordon Rumson, ‘Arthur Friedheim’s Edition of the Liszt B Minor Sonata’, *Liszt Society Journal* Vol. 26 (2001), pp. 17-59, for details of Friedheim’s markings. However, one should also note that Bernhard Stavenhagen recalled Friedheim playing the opening four pages of the sonata ‘totally without pedal – what a sound!’ (Elgin Strub-Ronayne, ‘Bernhard Stavenhagen; Pianist, conductor, composer and Liszt’s last pupil.’ *EPTA Piano Journal*, No 40, Vol. 14, p. 13, cited in Rumson p. 22).

¹²⁰ Rumson, ‘Friedheim’, p. 52.

¹²¹ Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata*, p. 34.

¹²² The catalogue details are as follows: Anda - Testament SBT – 1067; Argerich – Philips 456 703-2; Arrau – Philips 456 709-2; Brendel - Philips 410 040-2; Cziffra = EMI 7243 5 74512 2 2; Fleischer – Philips 456 775-2; Horowitz – Philips 456 884-2; Howard - Hyperion CDA 66429; Levy - Marston 52007-2; Pollini - DG 427 322-2.

¹²³ For a comparison of a much wider range of recordings of the work, see Philip Kennicott, ‘Liszt’s B minor Sonata on record’, in *International Piano Quarterly*, Winter 199, pp. 40-58.

¹²⁴ Liszt described these as ‘hammer strokes’ in a letter to Louis Köhler (Winklhöfer, *Liszt’s Sonata*, p. 45).

applied ‘organic’ approach to articulation is particularly appropriate for Liszt, or for that matter to Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann, let alone later composers. Beethoven used articulation to colour musical material in a variety of ways, leading to distinct articulations of the same phrases upon different appearances¹²⁵. With Liszt, articulation, touch and colour achieve an expressive role in their own right with a degree of autonomy from the other parameters involved, and sometimes used to express the grotesque. This is how I interpret the use of articulation here and throughout the work.

It is through the evocation of the grotesque, that which impresses because of its aura or distance, as distinct from the simple expression and instillation of emotion, that Liszt is revealed at his most ‘modern’. And this may have been connected to his disdain for the role of the performer as mere entertainer, ‘striving assiduously to gratify the fantasies of rich simpletons’, as he once said in a letter to Georges Sand¹²⁶. Of course the grotesque and the exotic can be and have been appropriated in such a manner as well, and look quite different from a twenty-first century perspective to how they probably did to Liszt. But I believe attempts to recapture some of Liszt’s modernity in ways that remain palpable today is a worthwhile venture, a positive alternative to use of the music to seduce, charm and entertain. The austerity of the ‘damped timpani strokes’, if played in such a fashion, is one way in which such an approach can be made manifest, if the implications are followed through in the course of the work, as I shall briefly describe here.

Throughout the whole of the *Sonata*, sustained legato melodic lines are countered by their opposite, sinister staccato utterances, creating an extended conflict between the two types of material. A passage like Fig. 6 shows this process clearly.



Fig. 6. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, bars 141-146.

In the tempestuous writing towards the end of the first movement, Liszt makes a clear notational distinction between wedged-staccato crotchets and quavers, usually obliterated by the use of much pedal on the latter (Fig. 7). Such a contrast continues through the succeeding

¹²⁵ See Charles Rosen, ‘Phrasing’, in *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 13-42, for more on this subject.

¹²⁶ Liszt to Georges Sand, April 30, 1837, in Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey: Lettres D’Un Bachelier Es Musique, 1835-41*, edited and translated Charles Suttoni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 30. The full sentence is ‘All about him he sees a mob of those who manufacture art paying heed to the public’s caprice, striving assiduously to gratify the fantasies of rich simpletons, and obeying the slightest whim of fashion’. Similar sentiments with regard to the artist and entertainment recur throughout this volume.

bars, with harsh, high, whip-like wedged quavers, somewhat grounded by more solid wedged crotchets upon the return to G minor.

The image shows a page of musical notation for Franz Liszt's Sonata in B minor, specifically bars 262 through 269. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 262 to 265, and the second system covers bars 266 to 269. The key signature is B minor (two flats). The notation includes various dynamics such as *sempre ff con strepito* and *sf*, and articulation markings like *sempre stacc.*. The music features complex textures with multiple voices in both hands, including sharp, high-pitched quavers and more solid, grounded crotchets.

Fig. 7. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, bars 262-269.

This culminates in a ferocious confrontation between the earlier *Grandioso* theme, here configured quite differently in a staccato rendition (*pesante* but still staccato, for which a selective and sparing use of the pedal can avoid grandiosity; this would have been easier to achieve on the non-cross-stringed pianos that were standard when Liszt wrote the work), and an impassioned recitative line that follows, but is answered once more by the ominous low chords (Fig. 8).

297

ff pesante

40

Recitativo
ritenuto

f appassionato

poco rall.

301

301

8

Fig. 8. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, bars 297-305.

The ‘slow movement’ provides some repose from all this, using sustained sonorities continuously, rightly through to the final return of the ‘damped timpani strokes’ (bar 453). But the high degree of edgy staccato writing in the fugue counteracts this, once again acting as a textural/articulative counterpart, only here the contrast is more on the macroscopic level. And so it continues, up to the wrenched *sf* that cuts short the final appearance of the ‘Grandioso’ theme (Fig. 9).

704

8

708

tremolando

18

8

sf

Fig. 9. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, bars 704-710.

The final note in the piece is not indicated with a wedge; nor are the preceding crotchet-length B major chords in bars 748-749, suggesting some sort of reconciliation between the two broad types of material defined by articulation. But the last note is a single quaver; even if pedalled, it should still presumably be quite short. Liszt does not seem to want to suggest final closure at the end of this piece, rather to leave matters open, looking ‘beyond’ (Fig. 10).

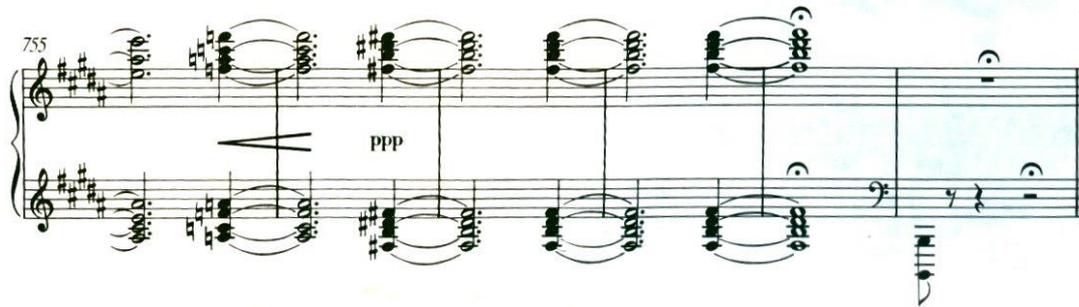


Fig. 10. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, conclusion.

This is not the only way in which articulation and colour come to play a function over and above the illumination of other parameters. In the D major appearance of the second theme in bar 239ff (Fig. 10), Liszt marks bar 240 (and presumably this applies to bars 242, 248 and 250 as well) as *non legato*, which surely suggests some raising of the pedal early in the bar, thus cutting short the culminating F# of the melody (which Liszt could always have marked as a tenuto crotchet, as in the preceding bar, had he wanted that effect – though this is what is commonly played).

The image shows a musical score for Liszt's Sonata in B minor, specifically bars 238 through 243. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves. The music begins with a fast, virtuosic passage in bar 238, marked with a 'dim.' (diminuendo) dynamic. This is followed by a more lyrical section in bar 240, marked 'p' (piano) and 'vivamente' (vividly). The section is marked 'non legato', suggesting a raised pedal. The score includes various articulation marks, such as slurs and accents, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'pp'. The page number 37 is visible in the top right corner.

Fig. 10. Liszt, *Sonata in B minor*, bars 238-243.

This is the sort of effect that a colouristically-minded player like Horowitz performed exceptionally (also in his recording of *Vallée d'Obermann*), bringing to the foreground what would otherwise simply be decorative figuration, often threatening to engulf the basic line

and thus causing another level of dramatic tension. In this and other moments of the Sonata, the way in which basic thematic material is configured becomes more significant than the material itself, which might otherwise seem banal through mere repetition. And an interpretative approach that stresses continuity of line and long-range harmony above all else can fail to capture this quality of *excess* which is to me such a fascinating aspect of Liszt's music.

There is a historical and social dimension to this issue which came to the fore in the 1830s during the ferocious rivalry between Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg, which has been subject to an exhaustive and penetrating analysis by Dana Gooley¹²⁷. On the basis both of contemporary accounts and the preface to the work *L'art du chant appliqué au piano*, op. 70 (a series of piano transcriptions of various well-known works)¹²⁸, one can conclude that the most important attributes of Thalberg's playing were (a) keeping the fingers close to the keys in order to produce a full sonority; (b) always separating the melody clearly from the accompaniment (and learning from singers), and using close arpeggios for melodies in the upper notes of chords; (c) playing the right hand slightly after the left when the former has the melody, but never exaggerating this, only with the shortest of delays; (d) holding notes for maximum legato; (e) much variety of dynamics, colour and sonority; and (f) using pedal (either one or both) at all times. Taken as a whole, these attributes constitute what would today be called a 'beautiful tone' approach to the instrument¹²⁹. 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 abhorred¹³⁰). 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 frequented by individuals associated with this order, especially the *Théâtre des Italiens*¹³¹. 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

¹²⁷ Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 18-77.

¹²⁸ 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 also be found in Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 158-161. Whilst these publications date from the 1850s and 1860s, I have not encountered any evidence of a significant change in Thalberg's style between the 1830s and the 1850s.

¹²⁹ The style of playing that is often characterised as exhibiting a 'beautiful tone' is the product of a particular set of stylistic practices like these mentioned. This is explored in Charles Rosen, *Piano Notes*, [give page reference] and Ian Pace, 'Meta-Piano: The Dialectics of Piano Playing' (programme note for concert in King's College, London, February 26, 2001, reproduced in part at <http://www.musicweb.uk.net/sandh/2001/Mar01/metapiano.htm> (accessed 21/4/09).

¹³⁰ Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 18.

¹³¹ 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, upon his return to Paris. for its 'suavity, sensitivity, expression and warmth without impetuosity' (*Ménestral* 9/19 (April 17, 1842), cited p. 35).

more specific sub-sections of this class, dominated by women and *litterati*¹³². Liszt's own playing, according to many accounts, was quite different and less easy to pin down in terms of just a few defining attributes: most commentators remarked upon its *dramatic* qualities, involving drastic changes of mood, tempo, characterisation, together with frenetic, untethered virtuosity, wild physical gestures at the keyboard (in contrast to the austere and static demeanour of Thalberg), and an 'orchestral' rather than primarily 'vocal' approach to the keyboard. He was more concerned with the production of varied colours and sonorities than the over-arching supremacy of a quasi-vocal line - one thing *not* remarked upon favourably by commentators on Liszt's playing was his 'tone', indeed some spoke negatively of this very aspect¹³³.

Liszt himself was sceptical about the virtues of the new composers of Italian opera, comparing the work of Bellini and Donizetti unfavourably with that of the older Rossini. He wrote a scathing article about 'Musical Conditions in Italy' in early 1839 for Maurice Schlesinger, editor of the *Gazette Musicale*, about both the singers of the time, with their 'violent and sudden contrasts of *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, whether motivated or not; quasi-convulsive accents in the singing; and terrible cries at the end of a piece when the character's situation has become pathetic and the action turns to combat, vengeance, or despair' and the public, who 'whilst quite familiar with the stereotypes', had 'developed the habit of invariably applauding the effects'¹³⁴. Liszt himself of course wrote numerous transcriptions of numbers from these very operas he criticised, however, though in later life he would dismiss their value, calling his fantasy on Bellini's *La Sonnambula* (1839, revised 1840-41 and 1874) 'nonsense' and even telling a student that about one passage 'Really trill, so that it dawns on the public why they had to pay twice the usual admission price!'¹³⁵. This statement is more meaningful than might be obvious if one is aware of Liszt's conscious strategy, during his virtuoso years, of charging very high ticket prices so as to exclude the middle bourgeoisie from his concerts¹³⁶, a strategy that proved very unpopular when he played in the arch *Burgerstadt* of Leipzig in 1840¹³⁷. To my ears, many of Liszt's Bellini and Donizetti transcriptions (especially the likes of the horrendously difficult fantasy on *Lucrezia Borgia*, for which the melodic and harmonic source material is nonetheless banal in the extreme) have a pronouncedly tongue-in-cheek quality, not least through their use of a type of virtuosity that is so hyperbolic as to be almost parodistic, as if he was treating his audiences with a certain disdain¹³⁸. This would be entirely consistent with the views he expressed in private

¹³² Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 62-70.

¹³³ *Ibid.* pp. 27-28.

¹³⁴ Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, p. 173.

¹³⁵ Richard Zimdars (ed. and trans.), *The Piano Masterclasses of Franz Liszt, 1884-6: Diary Notes of August Göllerich*. Edited by Wilhelm Jerger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 59.

¹³⁶ Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, pp. 69-70.

¹³⁷ On Liszt's first trip to Leipzig, a city against which he held a lifelong grudge, see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847*, revised edition (London: Faber & Faber, 1989), pp. 345-351 and Michael Saffle, *Liszt in Germany, 1840-1845* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1994), pp 91-101.

¹³⁸ In this respect I differ somewhat from the verdict of Charles Rosen, who argues that Liszt simply 'little feeling for the quality of his musical material, although he showed an extraordinary perception of its nature and of what could be done with it' (Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 540).

correspondence to Georges Sand, Marie d'Agoult and others, and the anger he felt towards Thalberg, who happily provided a certain type of audience with what they wanted.

Thalberg had himself become notorious for his 'three-handed' trick at the piano, in which a melody is surrounded by both swirling arpeggios and an accompaniment (Fig. 11)

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piano piece. It consists of two systems of a grand staff. The first system is marked 'a tempo.' and 'colante' in the right hand, and 'una corda' and 'ben marcato il canto' in the left hand. The second system is marked 'Ped. pp' and 'Ped.' in the right hand, and 'una corda' and 'ben marcato il canto' in the left hand. The score features complex arpeggiated accompaniment and a melodic line in the right hand. The page number '85' is visible in the top right corner.

Fig. 11. Sigismond Thalberg, *Fantaisie pour le Piano sur des thèmes de l'Opéra Moïse de G. Rossini*, op. 33.

Liszt himself admitted to having deliberately placed numerous 'Thalberg passages' in his *Reminiscences de Norma* (at the request of Camilla Pleyel, for whom he wrote the piece), which he later described as 'indecent'¹³⁹ (Fig. 12).

¹³⁹ Zimdars, *Piano Masterclasses of Franz Liszt*, p. 38.

The image displays three systems of piano sheet music, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music is written in a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system includes the instruction *in tempo* and *arpeggiando con grandezza*. The second system includes *sempre con Ped.* and *sempre marcatissimo la melodia*. The third system includes *sempre legato*. Each system features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The right hand often plays arpeggiated chords, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. Performance markings such as *sempre con Ped.* and *sempre marcatissimo la melodia* are placed throughout the score. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A fermata with the number 8 is placed over the final notes of the right hand in each system.

in tempo
arpeggiando con grandezza
sempre con Ped.
sempre marcatissimo la melodia
sempre legato

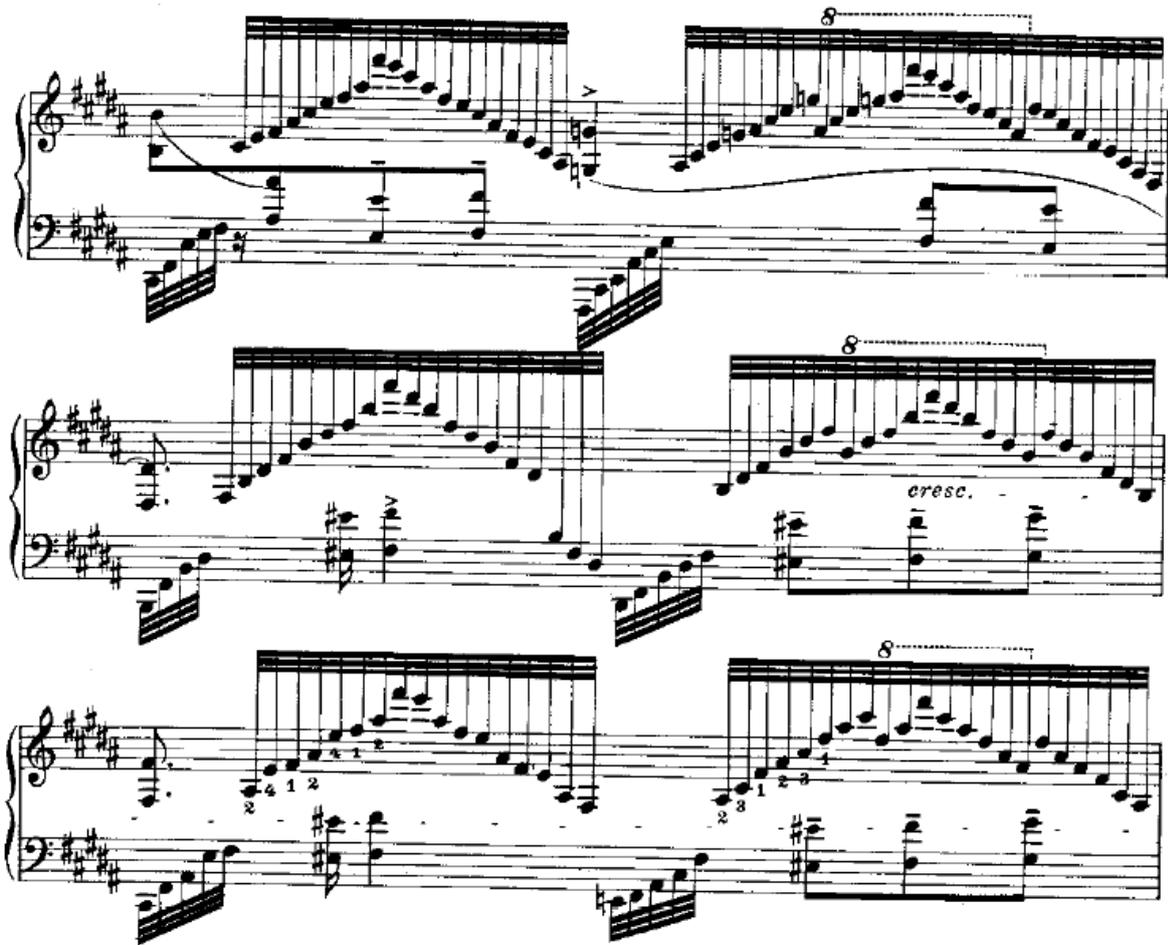


Fig. 12. Liszt, *Reminiscences de Norma*.

In light of these attitude, I believe it is wrong to cast Liszt as some populist champion of the masses; rather he, like many others of his time, thought in terms of how society could serve him and his ilk, rather than the other way round, as is made clear from a letter to Adolphe Pictet from September 1837:

What is art, the artist to do in these terrible times? The painters exhibit pictures and the musicians give concerts for the benefit of the poor. No doubt they do well to be concerned in this way, if only to demonstrate their ever-present desire to serve the cause of the working class. But should they really limit themselves to something as partial or as incomplete as that? For too long they have been regarded as courtiers and parasites of the palace. For too long they have celebrated the affairs of the great and the pleasures of the rich. The time has come for them to restore courage to the weak and to ease the suffering of the oppressed. Art must remind the people of the beautiful self-sacrifice, the heroic determination, the fortitude, and the humanity of their peers. The Providence of God must be announced anew to the people the dawn of a better day must be shown to them so that they can hold themselves in readiness for it and hope can inspire noble virtues in them. Above all, the Light must flood their spirit from all sides, the sweet joy of art must take its place in people's homes, so that they too will come to know life's prize and never turn barbaric in their vengeance or merciless in their frustration.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Liszt to Adolph Pictet, September 1837, in Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, p. 50.

These sentiments read to me like a rather strange mixture of Saint-Simonian ideas (with which Liszt had a brief flirtation in the early 1830s), such as celebrated ‘*the new trinity of science, industry and art*’¹⁴¹ and commonplace artistic egotism in a way that is not so far away from the patrician ideas of Matthew Arnold¹⁴². Art is there to supposedly enrich the lives of the working classes, who would do best in Liszt’s view to appreciate that wonderful ‘self-sacrifice’ made by people like, well, Liszt himself?

Yet one should not wholly dismiss such sentiments, for all of Liszt’s rather confused mixture of romanticism, pseudo-socialism and craving for acceptance above all amongst the elites. There is genuine potential in his view of an art which eschews the celebration of ‘the affairs of the great and the pleasure of the rich’ in favour of the exploration of some wider ideals, whilst the consciousness of an artist who does not wholly identify with such elites might itself fulfil some sort of critical function. It would be over-extravagant to claim that Liszt’s style today still constitutes something particularly deviant from the perspective of what are now somewhat socially broader audiences – not least as demonic virtuosity has become a staple of many pianists’ recitals – but I do believe that the type of oppositions that existed in the 1830s find echoes today, and that there remains critical and radical potential in performance approaches which do not necessarily favour vocal hierarchies, smoothness and continuity of line, and ‘beauty of tone’ above other more volatile, unstable and individualistic possibilities.

To give one more example of the application of some of the above in terms of performance, I would consider the final section of Liszt’s *Vallée d’Obermann*. This section contains a rather sugary melody in E major, which in the later version of the work (from some time between 1848 and 1855 - the earlier version dates from 1837-38) is presented first with a relatively gentle undulating accompaniment (Fig. 13a), then with a much more frenetic filling in the form of repeated chords (Fig. 13b; for the more extreme earlier version, see Fig. 13c)

¹⁴¹ See Ralph P. Locke, ‘Liszt’s Saint-Simonian Adventure’, in *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1981), p. 222.

¹⁴² Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar LLC, 2007), especially pp. 81-104.

Lento

dolce

u. r. corda

45

5

3

3

3

3

2

Red.

Red.

5

3

5

3

5

3

Red.

Red.

*

Fig. 13a. Liszt, *Vallée d'Obermann*.

sempre animando sino al fine

mf

8

11

2/4

3

2/4

3

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

*

Musical score for Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann*. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system includes markings for *crescendo* and *rinforz.*. The second system starts with a forte *f* dynamic. The third system includes another *rinforz.* marking. The bass line features several *Rea* (Re) notes, some marked with an asterisk (*).

Fig. 13b. Liszt, *Vallée d'Obermann*.

Detailed musical score for Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann*, focusing on the piano part. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It shows a piano part with markings for *cresc.*, *rinf.*, and *il più presto possibile non troppo forte*. The bass line features several *Rea* (Re) notes, some marked with an asterisk (*).

Piano zu 7 Oktaven.
 Piano à 7 octaves.
 Pianoforte of 7 Octaves.
 7-oktávás songorán.

8.....

8.....

8.....

rinforz.

energico sempre marcato il Tema

rinforz.

ff *vibrato*

rinforz.

ff

Fig. 13c. Liszt, *Vallée d'Obermann* (original version).

If one were to play this in a Thalbergian style, the melody would be very smooth and legato, the repeated chords serving essentially to amplify and sustain the texture and harmonies. Thalberg himself does use repeated chords (including in the *Moses Fantasy*) which I imagine he would have played in such a decorative fashion. But in this work of Liszt (and also later pieces employing a similar technique, including his transcription of Wagner's *Isolde's Liebestod*) I believe they serve a different function. The melody is unchanged for the most part from its earlier appearance, but it is continually battling against the hammered chords, and is reduced merely to its first three-note component, in different transpositions, as the work reaches its conclusion, still fighting for its life. In the hands of a pianist like Vladimir Horowitz, who avoids a 'tasteful' or 'aristocratic' Thalbergian relationship between melody

and harmony/texture, this sort of effect can be not merely titillating but quite terrifying, as if one individual or small group of individuals represented by the melody are locked in a pitched battle with another group, much more powerful and ominous. It may be to push a poetic metaphor too far to see this as some sort of musical analogue of conflict between an elite (the 'dilettantes' who adored Thalberg?) and the remainder of society who that elite would find so vulgar; but I do not think it is too far-fetched to see at least the conflict between the 'orchestral' many and the 'vocal' few somehow played out in the work. There is also surely little doubt that he saw the figure of Obermann, who retreated to the country in the face of misfortune, as a kindred spirit during his years of self-imposed exile in Switzerland and Italy. As Obermann himself says in the S enecour quotation that Liszt appends to the score: '*je sens, j'existe pour me consumers en d esirs indomptables, pour m'abreuver de la s eduction d'une monde fantastique, pour rester att er e de sa voluptueuse erreur*' ('I feel, I live in order to be consumed by untameable desires, to shower myself with the allure of a fantasy world, only to be ultimately shattered by its voluptuous illusion'). These 'untameable desires' quite exceed the boundaries of aristocratic demeanour.

Stockhausen's Klavierst uck X

If Liszt presents a conflict between line and texture in *Vall e d'Obermann*, the latter quality is taken to another level in Stockhausen's *Klavierst uck X*, of which the composer said that he 'set out to marry relative non-organisation with organisation', so that 'the initial homogeneous state of advanced non-organization (undifferentiation) unfolds into increasingly numerous and concentrated shapes', whilst 'solitary individual shapes. . . are levelled out in massed complexes' and 'The decrease in levelling-out is countered by an increasing emphasis on the individuation of shapes and the final unification of the extremely personal shapes evolved during the course of the piece into a higher, overall shape'¹⁴³. It would be a mistake, in my view, to see the performer's role in this piece simply to be to render Stockhausen's explicit description as palpable as possible. Such a description is, like all composers' writings (and those of performers, including what you are reading right now), tied up to the process of self-fashioning; the composer's own perception of their work may not take account of all other possible things that listeners might bring to bear upon it, of which they may be either unaware or unconcerned.

Having performed this piece many times, I drew at the outset upon the detailed analysis of the work performed by Herbert Henck¹⁴⁴, as well as reading the perspectives of others including Karl H W orner, Robin Maconie and Jonathan Harvey¹⁴⁵. Henck in particular gives an exhaustive account of the compositional procedures involved in determining pitch, durations of individual fragments and their corresponding rhythm, as well as of the silences,

¹⁴³ Stockhausen, note for *Klavierst uck X*, in Karl H. W orner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work*, translated and edited Bill Hopkins (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), p. 36.

¹⁴⁴ Henck, *Stockhausen's Klavierst uck X*.

¹⁴⁵ W orner, *Stockhausen*; Robin Maconie, *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Lanham, MD, Toronto & Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2005) (a significantly revised version of the earlier *The Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen*, second revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); (first edition London: Oxford University Press, 1976); Jonathan Harvey, *The Music of Stockhausen: An Introduction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975).

density, ‘degrees of order’, the use of chords and clusters, and much else. Whilst this was certainly very interesting to me, as an occasional composer and thus drawn to the question of ‘how does one produce a work like this?’, ultimately my strategies for performance derive from other factors: simply playing through the work many times and considering the most striking and meaningful aspects (meaningful as I imagine them to be to listeners) of the result, at short, medium and long range levels. In this respect the most interesting ‘analysis’ that is *performed* upon the work is probably that of Jonathan Harvey, who eschews detailed compositional elucidation in favour of an attempt to grasp the structural properties of the work in terms of how the sounding result impresses itself upon the ear¹⁴⁶. My approach is nonetheless somewhat different to that of Harvey, essentially in terms of details and priorities (in particular, I am not wholly convinced by his attempt to portray the work in terms of ‘sonata form’). This difference stems in part from my own particular experience of grappling with the notation and technical challenges, and simply repeated playing. I began with various notions of the ‘type of work it is’, in part influenced by knowledge of other performances and recordings¹⁴⁷, other of Stockhausen’s works, and indeed various other music, contemporary and otherwise, not to mention a set of loose preconceptions concerning the context in which the work was written and which it now inhabits. All of these things become modified during the course of practising, performing and re-performing the piece, as well as through my own wider musicological investigation into Stockhausen and his work in terms of a particular moment in German history.

From these various experiences and perspectives I derive my own set of ‘priorities’ (which can change from performance to performance). These inform my choices of musical aspects to keep foremost in the conscious mind at the very moment of performance. Chief amongst these is simply the dramatic structure of the work: on the most basic level it begins with several minutes of frenzied (though highly differentiated) activity, beginning (after the opening dyad) and ending with weaving lines in hushed grace notes around fragmented lines of pitches at a higher dynamic (Fig. 14).

¹⁴⁶ Harvey, *Stockhausen*, pp. 42-47.

¹⁴⁷ At the beginning the recordings with which I was familiar were those of Aloys Kontarsky and Bernard Wambach; later I was to encounter those of Herbert Henck, Frederic Rzewski and Ellen Corver, as well as experiencing various other pianists perform the work live.

Fig. 14. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück X*, p. 6, first system.

This leads to the first of a long series of what I would call ‘passages of non-activity’, either silences or sustained resonances. In between these come a series of different fragments, many of them consisting of shapes made up from clusters and/or cluster glissandi, leading to the first ‘climax’ on page 11, a glancing cluster in both arms preceded by the last in a series of grace note cluster approaches (Fig. 15).

Fig. 15. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück X*, p. 11.

This is followed by the longest period of non-activity thus far, punctuated by a strident chord followed by the top note of the instrument, then another period of non-activity, two-thirds as long as the last, and (very marginally) the second longest up to this point.

This to me forms a nodal point in the work, not least because the material which follows once more resembles that of the opening. Whether Stockhausen's compositional system and more intuitive interventions were designed to produce this result I am not sure, though ultimately this question does not concern me greatly. What matters is that, for various sonic reasons that I believe are likely to impress themselves upon any listener prepared to listen for differentiations within a highly dissonant and rhythmically irregular work, this moment has a clear dramatic impact. On a medium-range level, I could also mention the gesture at the very end of page 9, clearly set into relief by being marked '*langsamer*' after the extremely rapid material which follows it, as a smaller climax within this section.

From the beginning of the next 'section' I am struck by the first instance of a more clearly defined melodic gesture (the first such since the opening section) on page 14 (Fig. 16), emerging out of a sustained chord.

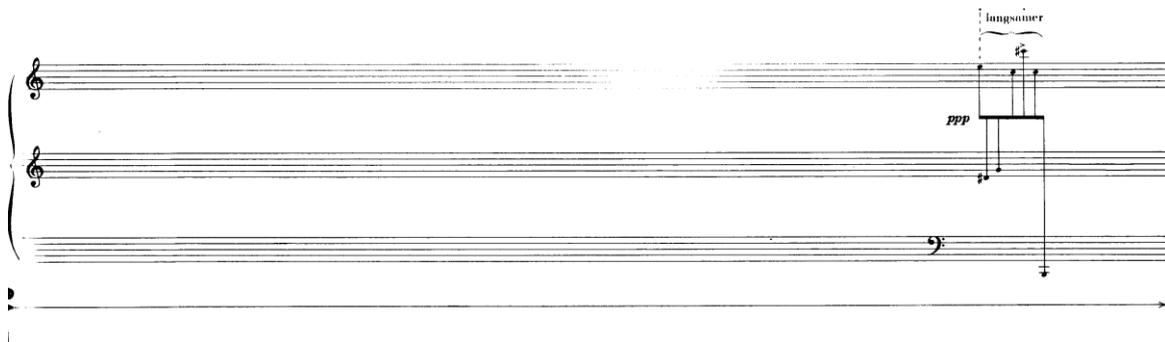


Fig. 16. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück X*, p. 14, first system.

This gesture's very definition causes it to stand out from the rest of the activity, though it connects somewhat with more dissonant 'gestures' such as that at the smaller climax I mentioned in the previous section, and a corresponding (if less violent) moment at the end of the played activity on the second system of page 15. This latter moment is approached by a slowing down and thus is less abrupt than that on page 9. The gestures on pages 14 and 15 both form a greater degree of continuity with the material that surrounds them than in the previous section, creating a slightly lessened sense of instability and discontinuity, also confirmed by the common 'pitch space' shared by the arpeggios on page 16, second system, and page 17, first system (so that the latter does not disturb the resonance of the former), despite their being separated by a long silence.

The remainder of this section is a little more complex. On page 17, second system, one encounters a further passage in the manner of the grace note figurations of the opening, studded with a few clusters (like the corresponding passage at the beginning of this section). The passage that follows after the next silence is strongly 'punctuated' towards its conclusion

such as to give a sense of relative closure. Then begins the use of ‘filtered resonance’ by the selective use of sustained pitches and/or clusters, which has only occurred once previously after the opening (at the mini-climax at the end of page 9). This becomes a prominent feature of the music in the next few pages, whilst the sheer vehemence of the hammered clusters on pages 19-20 creates what I hear as a second climax proper, exceeding the previous one in terms of sheer density and consequent presence (Fig. 17).

Fig. 17. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück X*, p. 19 second system, p. 20 first system.

In some ways it constitutes an extended form of the previous climax by virtue of being followed by single chords or pairs separated by long periods of non-activity, leading once again to the grace-note figurations (more deeply modified and compressed) on page 22. Even if one does not accept this material as clearly marking the beginning of a ‘section’ here and previously, I do believe it quite certainly creates a clear structural and dramatic function.

I could continue this way for the remainder of the piece, thus presenting my own particular ‘analysis’ of the large scale dramatic form. Some might say this constitutes description rather than analysis; they may not be wrong if mere ‘description’ involves articulation of something rather self-evident, but I suspect that some listeners and performers might conceive of this drama in a different fashion. Whether or not this is the case, I do believe in the importance of grounding an analysis primarily upon that which seems available to perception; sometimes this is quite readily available from looking at the broad macroscopic processes as laid out in the score, as I believe to be the case in a work of such bold contrasts and sharply differentiated material as this one (and is equally true of much of the music of Xenakis,

Scelsi, Radulescu, the earlier Finnissey, and others). On other occasions the ‘primary levels’ available to perception are manifested through less stark interactions between harmonies, gestures, texture, etc., and an initial analysis can take a little longer (as with much of the music of Boulez, Feldman, Lachenmann or Ferneyhough, for example). In the former case, I can of course extend this mode of investigation to medium- and short-range aspects of the work, and then consider the relationships between different levels of the drama. But the basic methodology would not be significantly different.

But then there are other considerations to bring into play as well. My analytical method outlined above is only one of several I employ – you will notice that I have not really said anything yet concerning the serial organisation of the work. Whilst knowing the particular note row employed in the work and the corresponding series for other parameters¹⁴⁸, I consider these factors primarily to be of interest to composers. As a performer and a listener, Stockhausen’s serial methods are important to me in terms of how they affect the sounding result and in particular how they affect the ways in which I approach the *notation*, especially in terms of durations and how these affect rhythm and density. There are numerous passages which, if executed within the slots of time indicated by the score, relative to a basic pulse of ‘as fast as possible’, produce results that are in many ways *counter-intuitive*, by virtue of seeming hurried or overly drawn-out. A temptation (which may be executed subconsciously) might be to render many of the short passages in a more manageable or even ‘musical’ manner, adjusting tempo and rhythm so that they accord better with more familiar types of musical figuration. But this is a strategy I consciously try to avoid in some respects; whilst in no sense denying that many aspects of the music do indeed resonate with known musical entities, whether small scale gestures, medium-range passages, or broader dramatic processes, I am equally concerned with the way in which these are *mediated* through the rationalisation of the compositional process. Such a process produces a type of music which exceeds the boundaries of the ‘already-known’, creating new (but meaningful) types of experiences rather than simply providing the listener with the comfort of the familiar. One example of this might be the passage on the second system of page 22 (Fig. 18)

Fig. 18. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück X*, p. 22, second system.

¹⁴⁸ As detailed in Henck, *Stockhausen's Klavierstück X*, pp. 14-60.

Here, in the passage with duration of a dotted semibreve tied to a double-dotted quaver, there are six events with a clear dynamic peak at the third. To make the whole passage most readily apprehensible, one might make the rhythm mirror the dynamic envelope, so that the third event is the longest, with the others speeding up towards it and slowing down away from it. Yet Stockhausen writes otherwise, with a gradual *accelerando* (indicated by the upward sloping beam), so that pulse and dynamics are ‘out of phase’ with one another. The result is to my ears much more original and striking.

So, after having arrived at my ideas of the dramatic structure of the work, I do not seek to ‘underline’ this so much as to *modify* it in accordance with the notation. This can in itself modify my notion of that very dramatic structure, especially in the complex later sections. There is always a two-way interplay between playing and analysing, each one continuing to inform the latter.

But why, more broadly, do I think this piece is worth playing, and playing publicly? I certainly find it exciting, invigorating, dramatic, sonically fascinating, sometimes lyrical in a wholly individual manner, and much else, and would hope others might share some of these responses. But I also find it of great historical interest, which ties into other aspects of my own musicological work, currently focused upon the early development of the musical avant-garde in the social and political context of post-war West Germany, and specifically the fundamental research question of why did this music happen in that particular time and place? This work, which has taken me to archives in all corners of Germany (and in some other countries as well), as well through a voluminous amount of secondary literature, on matters historical as well as musical, has led to various provisional findings – I say provisional as this remains work-in-progress at the time of writing this article. One is that the profile of such an avant-garde – and indeed its institutional support – was very much more marginal than one might believe from many existing histories of the period¹⁴⁹, in terms of performances, let alone public awareness,. The network of new music festivals that sprung up very quickly after the end of the war, and was quite firmly established by the mid-1950s¹⁵⁰,

¹⁴⁹ For example Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After: Directions Since 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Robert Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: Norton, 1991), Reginald Smith Brindle, *The New Music: The Avant-Garde since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Hermann Danuser, *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1984) or Ulrich Dibelius, *Moderne Musik nach 1945* (Munich: Piper, 1998). Even books hostile to the avant-garde, such as Taruskin, *Oxford History*, volume 5, or Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) are still found upon claims of this music’s prominence during this era.

¹⁵⁰ A selection of the large amount of important existing literature on these would include Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser (eds), *Im Zenit der Moderne: die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946-1966: Geschichte und Dokumentation in vier Bände* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997), Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (eds), *Darmstadt-Dokumente I (Musik-Konzepte Sonderband)*(Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1999) , Rudolf Stephan et al. (eds), *Von Kranichstein zur Gegenwart 1946-1996. 50 Jahre Darmstädter Ferienkurse* (Darmstadt: Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt, 1996), Josef Häusler, *Spiegel der Neuen Musik: Donaueschingen. Chronik – Tendenzen – Werkbesprechungen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), Renata Wagner (ed), *Karl Amadeus Hartmann und die Musica viva: Essays, bisher unveröffentlichte Briefe an Hartmann, Katalog* (Munich & Mainz: Piper Schott, 1980) Barbara Haas, *Karl Amadeus Hartmann: Zeitzeugen und Dokumente; zum 100. Geburtstags des Komponisten* (Wilhelmshaven: Noetzel, 2004), Renate Ulm (ed), «Eine Sprache der Gegenwart» *musica viva 1945-1995* (Munich & Mainz: Piper Schott, 1995), Frank Hilberg

during this period privileged above all inter-war modernism. The music of Henze, which I identify as constituting a continuity with this earlier tradition, achieved a higher level of consistent success and recognition than did Stockhausen, Koenig, Riedl, Otte, Schnebel and others who took music in more radical directions; in this and other senses the idea of a musical *Stunde Null* does not really hold up. And I identify the emergence of five principal regional centres during the 1950s: Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, Baden-Baden with Donaueschingen, and Frankfurt with Darmstadt (other centres such as Stuttgart or Berlin developed more slowly). The individuals most responsible for developing these places as centres for new music were Herbert Eimert, Herbert Hübner, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Heinrich Strobel and Wolfgang Steinecke respectively. Other influential figures upon the growth of this movement include the critic Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt and the physicist and phoneticist Werner Meyer-Eppler.

None of this is particularly new, but my work has also been about situating these various figures in the context of their time; working to build a new-music culture in a decimated country in the process of major reconstruction, and apparent denazification. Research by Fred Prieberg, Michael Kater, Michael Custodis, Toby Thacker and others¹⁵¹ have revealed the ways in which Strobel, Steinecke, Stuckenschmidt and to an extent Eimert became embroiled with the Third Reich, and on various occasions published articles on music that amount to Nazi propaganda; my own research has revealed more about Eimert (and some of the others), and especially on Meyer-Eppler, who was an NSDAP member from 1937, was earlier involved in a sinister glider organisation linked to the Luftwaffe, engaged in serious military research for the regime, and was dismissed from his job at the University of Bonn at the end of 1945 at the behest of the British (who had him on a list of scientists they were afraid might defect to the Russians, and even employed him briefly in their own Aircraft Production Ministry). It was probably only by reinventing himself as a phoneticist (eventually doing a second Habilitation) and thus being able to re-enter the university by the back door as an assistant to Paul Menzerath at the Institute of Phonetics (leading to letters of complaint from the British occupying authorities) that Meyer-Eppler was ultimately able to regain a position early on and develop the work that led to the publication of his *Elektrische Klangerzeugung* in 1949¹⁵², the year when his denazification was finally rescinded¹⁵³. This is just the very

and Harry Vogt (eds), *Musik der Zeit, 1951-2001: 50 Jahre Neue Musik im WDR: Essays, Erinnerungen, Dokumentation* (Cologne: Wolke Verlag, 2002), Michael Custodis, *Die soziale Isolation der neuen Musik. Zum Kölner Musikleben nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), and of course all the various monographs and collections of writings concerning the composers of the time. There is also an extensive literature on the radio stations and their role in promoting new music, which space does not permit to list here.

¹⁵¹ Fred Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982) and in particular his *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker 1933-1945*, CD-ROM (Kiel: 2004); Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Michael Custodis, "unter Auswertung meiner Erfahrungen aktiv mitgestaltend". Zum Wirken von Wolfgang Steinecke bis 1950', in Albrecht Riethmüller (ed), *Deutsche Leitkultur Musik. Geschichte und Musikgeschichte nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Fritz Steiner Verlag, 2006); Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler 1945-1955* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

¹⁵² Werner Meyer-Eppler, *Elektrische Klangerzeugung* (Bonn: F. Dümmers, 1949). For an exhaustive look at Meyer-Eppler's activities between 1949 and 1953, the crucial years in terms of establishment of the field of electronic music, see Elena Ungeheuer, *Wie die elektronische Musik 'erfunden' wurde Quellenstudien zu Werner Meyer-Epplers musikalischem Entwurf zwischen 1949 und 1953* (Mainz: Schott, 1992). For Meyer-

briefest summary of a complex sequence of events, documents about which I am still processing at the time of writing; I do however believe that without Meyer-Eppler's dismissal, he would probably not have changed the focus of his work in such a manner; without this there might have been no electronic studio in Cologne (or at least not of that nature¹⁵⁴) and Stockhausen's work, including *Klavierstück X*, might not have developed in anything like the manner it did, as his own study with Meyer-Eppler was of seminal importance in this respect.

The implications of all of this are too intricate to deal with adequately here; suffice to write briefly about how these types of factor affect my conception of the work. Eimert and Meyer-Eppler were arguably the arch-rationalisers of music, making a fetish of principles of organisation and promoting what may be conceived of as a de-subjectivised musical result; I do not believe this attitude can be wholly separated from the factors that made either of them able to arrive at an accommodation with the Third Reich, though neither were true Nazi ideologues. Stockhausen was able to conceptualise this approach within his own religious world-view, looking to some higher spiritual purpose for music than might be provided by more individualistic models of musical composition. Nonetheless, the period he spent in Paris, working with Messiaen and in Pierre Schaeffer's studio provided him with an outlook which counterbalanced the Eimert/Meyer-Eppler aesthetic. This was manifested most obviously in *Gesang der Jünglinge*¹⁵⁵, which brought together both found and synthetic sounds, created a dialogue between the known and the imaginary. And so it is in *Klavierstück X*, in the ongoing mediation between a type of 'noise' (especially through clusters and cluster glissandi), an untethered music with only a tangential connection to earlier models of melody and harmony, and the more obviously 'ordered' material provided by accentuated pitches and surrounding grace-note figurations. As well as of course the various musical phenomena which lay between these extremes, and some which do not fit easily at any place on such a spectrum. But in a devastated country – physically and ideologically – in which a rarefied presentation of the 'found' or the external would be more problematic, at least publicly, than at other times and places, there was a very real opening for a music that attempts this sort of mediation – looking forward whilst not forgetting also to look at what remains in known existence. A brave new world that is still constructed upon the wreckage of the past, perhaps, or upon a past which is very much wider than could be contained in previously existing aestheticised categories.

Eppler's influence on Stockhausen, see Maconie, *Other Planets*, pp. 125-138, Michael Kurz, *Stockhausen: A Biography*, translated Richard Toop (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), pp. 70-82 and M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 93-96

¹⁵³ For fuller details, see Ian Pace, 'Werner Meyer-Eppler's activities and work up to 1949', forthcoming.

¹⁵⁴ On the founding of the electronic studio, see Lowell Cross, 'Electronic Music, 1948-1953', in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1968), pp. 32-65, Marietta Morawska-Büngeler, *Schwingende Elektronen. Eine Dokumentation über das Studio für Elektronische Musik des Westdeutschen Rundfunks in Köln 1951-1986* (Cologne: P.J. Tonger, 1988), pp. 7-18, 32-56, Michael Custodis, *Die soziale Isolation der neuen Musik. Zum Kölner Musikleben nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), pp. 57-93.

¹⁵⁵ See David Metzger, 'The Paths from and to Abstraction in Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*', in *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (November 2004), pp. 695-721 and Pascal Decroupet and Elena Ungeheuer, 'Through the Sensory Looking Glass. The Serial and Aesthetic Foundations of *Gesang der Jünglinge*', in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 97-142.

As is probably painfully apparent, my thoughts on this music as coming out of and reflecting upon a particular historical moment are still being worked out, but all of these things certainly inform how I play the work. Above all, I am concerned not to sanitise or ‘objectify’ it, not to take it ‘out of history’ so as to attain the status of a rarefied aesthetic object, and as such would urge (through programme notes and the like) listeners to consider it as much as a historical artefact rather than just a ‘work of art’ – this I believe heightens appreciation and critical awareness rather than detracting from the experience.

Conclusion

To return to some of the issues discussed earlier: I see no reason to believe that audiences for classical music are likely to exhibit a broader social base in the foreseeable future than at present; utopian dreams of changing this situation through strategies of performance seem empty. A performer needs ultimately to accept this if they aim for audiences that are not simply small, select communities of individuals drawn together for other reasons (and I am not necessarily convinced this is in all senses a worse option), as well as to accept the concomitant ideologies that generally accompany these sub-sections of society. What a performer just *might* achieve is to induce or encourage amongst such audiences (or at least amongst some members thereof) a more nuanced, historically aware and critical mode of listening, which at best might have wider implications upon their consciousness. How to achieve this through performance is the biggest challenge facing any performer looking to do more than simply fashion their work so as to satisfy bourgeois ideology.