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Review-Article

THE NEW STATE OF PLAY IN PERFORMANCE STUDIES

By IAN PACE

In an essay published in 2004,¹ John Rink characterised the field of ‘Performance Studies’ in music as consisting of ‘three overlapping domains’: historical performance practice, the psychology of performance, and analysis and performance. Within these he found a series of problematic biases: towards Western art music, solo piano repertoire, and the study of tempo and dynamics. Of these, historical performance practice (or HIP – historically-informed performance) is much the oldest, dating back at least as far as the work of François-Joseph Fétis in the 1830s, and gaining in prominence later that century. At the time of Rink’s essay, the field was already starting to embrace the study of historical recordings, building on the pioneering work of Robert Philip, has been labelled as a subdiscipline in its own right: ‘phonomusicology’.² (I prefer to see recordings and videos more simply as a source-type for the study of musical performance, with only limited application for the previous century, and almost none for earlier periods.) The study of historical performance practice now includes historical instruments and techniques, performance style and normative practices in specific times and places, and self-reflection on methodological and aesthetic considerations appertaining to the field in general.³ The psychology of performance emerged from the early 1980s onwards, not least through the important work of John Sloboda and Eric Clarke. Analysis and performance came to the fore in the 1990s, stimulated by a debate following the publication of Wallace Berry’s *Musical Structure and Performance* in 1989,⁴ and has been notable for major contributions from Rink, Jonathan Dunsby, and Nicholas Cook.⁵

The field has spawned subdisciplines since Rink’s essay, and I would identify a further important domain already established at that time - critical, philosophical, and theological reflection on performance, which sometimes draws upon wider

¹ John Rink, ‘The State of Play in Performance Studies’, in Jane W. Davidson (ed.), *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher and Listener* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 37-52.

² Robert Philip, *Early recordings and musical style: Changing tastes in instrumental performance, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, 1992); Stephen Cottrell’s survey text ‘The Rise and Rise of Phonomusicology’, in Amanda Bayley (ed.), *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture and Technology* (Cambridge, 2010), 15-36.

³ As most obviously in volumes such as Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford, 1988); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford, 1995); and Peter Walls, *History, Imagination, and the Performance of Music* (Woodbridge and Rochester, 2003).

⁴ Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven, 1989).

⁵ Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (Oxford, 1995); John Rink (ed.), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1995); and Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford, 1998), ‘Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis’, in Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford, 1999), 239-61; and ‘Words About Music, or Analysis Versus Performance’, in Cook, Peter Johnson, and Hans Zender, *Theory into Practice: Composition, Performance and the Listening Experience* (Leuven, 1999).

scholarship on theatre, performance and performativity⁶ - together with at least eight other latent or subsequently developed fields, some of which overlap with those identified by Rink. These are performance-as-research and performance-based research (and its continental European counterpart, artistic research into performance), generally undertaken by practitioners and requiring a practical element; study of the performance of contemporary art music, including techniques and practices, a relatively autonomous field and underdeveloped in terms of critical methodology; ethnographic studies of performance and performers; cultural history and study of performances, considering particular performances and groups of performances, relating their musical characteristics to wider cultural and social concerns; studies of performance traditions, a field which incorporates much of the best work in popular music studies and ethnomusicology; detailed study of specific performers and groups of performers, intense investigation of the musical work of individual performers or ensembles, bands, orchestras, choirs, etc. (a tradition which in many Western contexts (art and popular musics) has previously been pursued mostly by amateurs); historical and comparative performance pedagogy; and the theatre of performance.

In the UK, one can identify three principal clusters of scholars working on performance: the first, focusing primarily on HIP, is centered around the University of Leeds and features many active performers, including Clive Brown, Peter Holman, David Milsom, George Kennaway, and Neal Peres da Costa. A second cluster is more focused on instruments through the work of Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell. The third, and today most powerful and influential, spans several universities and centres on four scholars: Rink, Clarke, Cook and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson. Their most prominent collective endeavour was the establishment of CHARM, the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music in 2004,⁷ and they were involved with the design of the software Sonic Visualiser, used in various CHARM projects. Collectively, these four scholars have worked predominantly across the domains outlined above, but the emphasis of their work is distant from the HIP scholarship of the other two clusters (notwithstanding Rink's work on Chopin or Leech-Wilkinson's on medieval music). Cook has become the dominant figure in British performance studies; putting to one side the fields of performance research into early music and the work of the Leeds group, there are few UK publications or funded research projects which do not show his imprimatur or at least influence.

Cook's earlier writings on performance have tended to be rooted in the domains of HIP, analysis and performance, and critical and philosophical reflection on performance - though acknowledging and drawing on other approaches. *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*, his most extended work to date on performance, continues in this vein.⁸ There is no doubt that this is a work of huge erudition and

⁶ Such as Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca and London, 1995); or Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford, 2001).

⁷ CHARM's plentiful website is <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html> (accessed November 15 2015). One key text (also highly partisan and polemical) associated with this cluster of scholars is Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge, 2009); the other is Leech-Wilkinson's online monograph *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performances* (London, 2009), at <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html> (accessed 10 November, 2015), a work with interesting insights but also rather sweeping historical claims on the basis of thin evidence.

⁸ *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*. By Nicholas Cook. pp. xvii + 458. (Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 2013. £32.99. ISBN 978-0-19-935740-6).

breadth, and as such constitutes a significant addition to the field. However, its rhetorical tone, use of straw man arguments, populist positioning, and sometimes rather clinical writing style together make it a problematic work in scholarly and ideological terms. I say this with reluctance, having previously been impressed by some of Cook's earlier work on the subject (not least his book on Heinrich Schenker⁹), quite a bit of which is incorporated into this new book.

The explicit central aim of the book is to redress existing hierarchies in Western art music - especially with respect to the common practice period - which are said to favour composers and constructions of musical 'works' over performers and performances. That performance should be addressed more centrally and regularly within musicology is an important issue, which would surely be opposed only by die-hard traditionalists, studio composers, or other composers wary of forfeiting a privileged status in academia or new music. But Cook seems to go too far: in his writing I perceive an implicit valorisation of act over text and - in common with many new musicologists - a disparaging view of written music, in ways which sometimes tend towards a general anti-literacy.

Cook draws upon a large and impressive range of secondary literature, but the degree of critical engagement with these sources is selective. Writings which support anti-modernist, anti-HIP positions generally escape critical scrutiny, as do those supporting other members of CHARM. The bibliography is also mostly monolingual, with only seven foreign-language entries in a list of 612 texts. The writings of Schenker and Adorno on performance, both of which exist in English translation, are considered, but not those of Rudolf Kolisch, nor the mighty collection of essays on performance of the Second Viennese School edited by Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp.¹⁰ Nor is there anything on the extensive debate on *Aufführungspraxis*, *Authentizität* and *Werktreue* which appeared in German from the 1950s onwards (and in some cases back to the 1920s), long before the interventions of Leech-Wilkinson, Taruskin and others, which essentially went over some of the issues these earlier scholars had already exhaustively debated.¹¹

Elsewhere, Cook has declared his antipathy to any type of musicological advocacy, describing this as 'musicologists or theorists issuing admission tickets to a canonic hall of fame',¹² but he does much the same with respect to other musicologists, many of whose reputations will be bolstered by their favourable mention. Indeed, other musicologists feature more prominently than many composers or performers: there are more entries in the index for any of Eric Clarke, Mine Doğanatan-Dack, Bruno Repp or Neil Todd than for Stravinsky, Boulez, Nadia Boulanger, and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Some international readers might find his

⁹ Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New York, 2007).

¹⁰ Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (eds.), *Rudolf Kolisch. Zur Theorie der Aufführung* (Munich, 1983); Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp (eds.), *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Aufführung in der Wiener Schule* (Vienna, 2002).

¹¹ A range of these, such as the writings of Harald Heckmann, Wilhelm Fischer, Walter Wiora or Georg von Dadelsen, are cited by Dorottya Fabian in her article 'The Meaning of Authenticity and The Early Music Movement: A Historical Review', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 32/2/ (December 2001), 153-67. At the end of an important text not mentioned by Fabian, Gotthold Frottscher, *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik* (Wilhelmshaven and Amsterdam, 1963), 168-9, there is a clear awareness of self-constructions of 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches by performers of historic music, concluding that *both* entail simplistic and de-personalising views to Bach, a more subtle position than argued by Taruskin over two decades later.

¹² Cook, 'Writing on Music or Axes to Grind', 260.

choices of musicians provincial (and sometimes rather Anglocentric): a significant passage is devoted to what would be fair to describe as a relatively minor piano piece by Bryn Harrison and a few unremarkable comments on its performance by Philip Thomas, but John Cage is only mentioned in passing, and David Tudor not at all, nor Aloys Kontarsky or Siegfried Palm.

The volume's opening chapters deal with existing models and methods. The next four, at its heart, are founded upon analysis of sonic documents: a piano roll of a Schubert Impromptu played by Eugen d'Albert alongside an analysis of the work by Schenker (ch. 3), a range of recordings of Mozart's Piano Sonata K 332 and also *Rondo alla turca*, in particular a recording by Carl Reinecke, in order to consider rhetorical performance (ch. 4), and then two chapters drawing upon the wider work done at CHARM on Chopin Mazurkas in the context of style analysis and the question of 'phrase arching.'¹³ Chapter 7 considers questions of musical works and performance, and is followed by a highly problematic chapter on 'Social Scripts', concerning interactions between performers; this is the one place where Cook spends some time on new music. The last four chapters are less weighty in approach: chapters 9 and 10 look at the role of the body in performance, but without relating this to sound in a sustained fashion. Chapters 11 and 12 attempt to thematise the relationship between performance and recording, drawing heavily on the work of Philip Auslander, and otherwise adhering essentially to a populist and commercialist view of modern music-making. Cook barely acknowledges studio or laptop composition (increasingly important in commercial music-making), which would have put into perspective his material on editing and on the work of Jon Culshaw and Glenn Gould, as well as raising questions about the fundamental ontology of performance. Also absent is any consideration of the central role played by radio stations in supporting and enabling a large range of performance in the twentieth-century, all of which would be recorded for later broadcast, and thus achieve a degree of permanency. Such consideration would have nuanced attempts to separate approaches to both live concerts and recordings.

The detailed focus upon three different piano works is surely not accidental. Because of the relative clarity of attack of notes, Cook is able to quantify the parameters which appear important - primarily tempo and rhythm (not voicing, use of legato, pedalling), for which he can use software to produce graphs. These are sometimes - as in his analysis of d'Albert playing Schubert - considered in isolation, rather than in terms of their relationship to other parameters such as harmony. With performances on string or wind instruments, let alone voice, a failure to consider in detail timbre, bowing, vibrato, and breathing in detail would be a more obvious lack.¹⁴ Cook is critical of older methods of close listening using more ad hoc methods, but unwilling to acknowledge these types of limitations; this attitude towards close listening stands in contrast to his uncritical appropriation of anecdotal and journalistic citations from ethnographic studies.¹⁵

¹³ See 'Style, performance, and meaning in Chopin's Mazurkas', at http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/projects/p2_3.html (accessed 18 November, 2015).

¹⁴ See Cook's criticism of Dahlhaus's alleged neglect of 'the timbral, textural and performative qualities of popular music', in Cook, 'Writing on Music or Axes to Grind: road rage and musical community', *Musical Education Research*, 5/3 (November 2003), 259.

¹⁵ Such as 'the musicians seemed to respond to teach other in an atmosphere of risk taking and challenge that extended their joint creativity', in Frederick Seddon and Michele Biasutti, 'A Comparison of Modes of Communication Between Members of a String Quartet and a Jazz Quartet', *Psychology of Music* 37 (2009), 395-415 at 407, cited Cook 237; or 'I think you have to let your own

Cook has written repeatedly on problematisation of the work-concept, and his reflections have been amongst the most rigorous. Here he uses familiar examples: jazz standards and Corelli's Violin Sonatas op. 5. He also explores further the role of the score, pointing out that no musicians can simply execute the often ambiguous instructions in a score 'in the way a computer plays a MIDI file' (p. 235). But a computer is not free from human agency either; all relevant software involves means of converting data into sounds which reflect the programmer's notational aesthetic. Cook's model is underpinned by some conception of a 'blank' performance (my term) with nuances as a creative 'extra'. But I would counter that this type of performance results from just one of many ways of *reading* the notation (even when read indirectly through software), and is no more neutral or unstylised than, say, the prose of Hemingway or Camus. Cook writes that 'performers add the specific sonorous content' to the framework provided by composers, a slightly awkward metaphor, but then turns back on himself to say that 'Performances do not simply reproduce scores, but neither do they simply fill them out' (p. 236). He hovers around the idea that 'performers erase the score', implying the importance of improvisation, and ultimately concludes that 'in the real time of performance, everything is always being done for the first time' (ibid.). But this model is negative towards literate (or notated) music; I prefer to see scores as a means for channelling performers' creative imagination in directions unavailable by other means. I can agree with Cook that 'there is no reason to privilege Schubert's own knowledge of what might be created out of what he wrote' but his statement that 'This is an example in miniature of what it means to think of music as performance' (p. 67) is glib; in numerous ways the interpretation is still beholden to the score, and the possibilities are not unbounded (if d'Albert replaced all chords with clusters, say, few could deny that this would stretch the conception of what it means to play that Schubert score).

While there are frequent references to improvisation, there is only one very short section on free improvisation (pp. 226-7); Cook is essentially concerned to establish a normative model for this field on the basis of three quotes (two by musicologists, one by a jazz musician, none by free improvisers) about improvisation always being around 'something'. It is true that improvisation can never be wholly 'free' (even if all that is known in advance is the instrument(s) available and the maximum duration), and in some cases one might even speak of a text which is communicated orally between musicians rather than being in written form, but Cook's drawing of too-wide conclusions serves to marginalise an important and diverse field of practice.

In the introduction, Cook claims that his book 'is not intended as an attack on modernist performance' (p. 3), but this is a ruse; an vague conception of 'modernism' (sometimes used interchangeably with 'structuralism', a problem to which I will return) is an ever-present 'other', without the spectre of which many of the arguments would lose much of their rhetorical force.¹⁶ Yet the term is never defined in such a

voice shine. I think a good conductor does that', in Cottrell, *Professional Music-Making in London*, 108, cited Cook 269.

¹⁶ Cook's book is just as partisan in this respect as Bruce Haynes's *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music* (New York and Oxford, 2007) (which Cook surprisingly never cites). Haynes posits three broad styles of twentieth-century performance, 'Romantic', which lasted up until around World War I, 'Modern', beginning at this point and continuing until the 1960s, and thereafter 'Rhetorical'. He makes it clear that he considers 'the Modernist spirit to have been a disastrous blight on the music of the latter part of the twentieth century' (32).

way as could be applied to a significant body of work; Cook appears to assume that his readership will share his negative view of something called ‘modernist’, and not require further substantiation, nor desire nuance. He repeats without scrutiny Richard Taruskin’s circular argument that all ‘truly modernist musical performance’ plays the work as if composed or performed by Stravinsky (p. 219) - circular because Taruskin’s definition of ‘modernist’ is already essentially a Stravinskian one. However, Cook also writes that ‘the performance culture of WAM is undoubtedly more pluralistic now than it was a few decades ago’ and that ‘this welcoming broadening of musical horizons reflects the relaxing of modernism’s grip on the concert hall’ (p. 131), but this claim requires that one shares his overwhelmingly negative and monolithic conception of ‘modernism’ (and by implication pluralistic conception of ‘postmodernism’).

He also writes disapprovingly of how allegedly ‘modernists drew highly selectively on what we now call the premodern’ (p. 130) but his view of modernism is equally selective. He calls modernist performance ‘the product of a culture in which it is the exception for performers to be also composers’ (p. 127) – which would exclude Busoni, Hindemith, Artur Schnabel, Boulez, René Leibowitz, Bruno Maderna, György Kurtág and others. Or ‘Hanslick’s aesthetics turned into sound’, because according to Cook, in Hanslick’s terms ‘expression is something piled on top of structure’ (p. 127), an argument which might be different if Hanslick’s many critical writings were investigated as well as his early treatise. At different times Landowska, Schenker, Schnabel, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Furtwängler, Boulez, or Alicia de Larrocha (though not necessarily Adorno), are all associated with modernist performance. Schenker, we are told, ‘laid the foundations’ of ‘modernist music theory’, which ‘in conjunction with modernist aesthetics and modernist performance’ turned the classics ‘into perfect musical objects, perfectly reproduced’ (p. 134), an extravagant statement which needs more evidence (I would find it difficult to recognise various of the above names in this description). The most prominent performers of new music are largely omitted, even those also associated with repertoire from the common practice era. There is nothing at all on Leibowitz, Hans Rosbaud, or Maderna and just a brief mention of Hermann Scherchen; Claudio Abbado and Maurizio Pollini are only mentioned in passing, and Pierre Boulez is addressed through his pronouncements rather than his performances.¹⁷

A *Stilkommission*, was set up by the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna to find the style of playing which preceded the perceived distortions of Bach at the hands of Liszt and Busoni, or Chopin by later performers (pp. 27, 128).¹⁸ A short passage by Robert Hill, summarizing the commission’s ‘cleansing’ of performance practice, is cited by Cook = with barely concealed horror (p. 27), despite the fact that the commission was swamped by other institutional concerns and never really got off the ground.¹⁹ Cook’s loaded language easily matches, even surpasses,

¹⁷ I should declare an interest, as Cook briefly cites my own article on notation and contemporary performance (‘Notation, Time and the Performer’s Relationship to the Score in Contemporary Music’, in *Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Darla Crispin (Leuven, 2009), 151-192), as the most explicit case of a ‘performance equivalent of Frankfurt-School critical theory’, alongside writings of Roger Heaton and Frank Cox (p. 281). I am personally quite happy with such a view.

¹⁸ Then renamed an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für musikalische Werkpraxis*. See Robert Hill, ‘“Overcoming Romanticism”: On the Modernization of Twentieth-Century Performance Practice’, in Bryan Gilliam (ed.), *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge, 1994), 37-58 at 46-7.

¹⁹ Harmut Krönes, ‘175 Jahre Aufführungspraxis Alter Musik in Wien’, in Krönes (ed.), *Alte Musik und Musikpädagogik* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 1997), 15-22 at 20-1.

that of those behind the *Stilkommission*,²⁰ and is used as part of a wider attack upon those ‘conflating classical and modernist performance’ (p. 128). But a belief that not all recent developments have been unqualified progress by no means equates to a full-on evocation of an idealized past. Busoni’s heavily inflected editions of Bach, or Bülow’s of Beethoven, are fascinating documents in their own right, but because of their creative license, the boundaries of which are not always made clear, one would not like these to be my only copies.

In his influential 1992 study of early recordings, Robert Philip presented a view of decreasing interpretive diversity and (correspondingly) a growth of literalism through the course of the twentieth century, a view mirrored in the writings of Richard Taruskin, and echoed in a lot of work by CHARM scholars. The most prominent critic in English of this view is Dorottya Fabian, who has investigated documentary and recorded sources, and found evidence of literalism in performances of Bach and some other composers well before the twentieth century. She has also argued on the basis of these sources that in some ways diversity has increased rather than decreased through the twentieth century, and that the reality of many HIPsters’ performances is often sharply at odds with their verbal pronouncements or those of others associated with them.²¹

It was possible for Philip, and others following him such as Timothy Day, David Milsom, Will Crutchfield, and Neal Peres da Costa,²² to engage in detail with the breadth of recorded material from the period they investigated (though this is tiny in comparison to the range of live performance during this period, a factor which might temper too-broad conclusions). However, the sheer vast numbers of recordings, which mushroomed after 1945, place them beyond the grasp of single scholars working alone. Fabian looked at a wide range of recordings of a few select works of Bach, while Bruce Haynes and Leech-Wilkinson could compare early recordings with a small and not necessarily representative sample of those from after 1945,²³ but there remains much work to be undertaken on sub-sections of this later body of recorded evidence, so that broader conclusions to be drawn with scholarly reliability.

Fabian did, however, demonstrate that the conclusions of Philip, Taruskin and others were problematic. Similarly Cook notes fruitfully an increasing divergence rather than convergence of tempo in Schubert recordings after 1945 (pp. 82-3). But he reiterates an ideology of post-war homogeneity in his investigation of ‘phrase arching’ – getting faster and louder as going into a phrase, and slower and softer as coming out – as theorised by Neil Todd. In an analysis of thirty-three recordings of Chopin’s Mazurka op. 63 no. 3 made between 1923 and 2003, Cook finds this

²⁰ It is notable how different is Cook’s tone when citing a claim that apparently ‘Interpretations departing too far from the original music were not allowed’ in the International Chopin Competition (p. 174)

²¹ See Dorottya Fabian, ‘The Meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement – A Historical Review’, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 32/2 (December 2001), 153-67; *Bach Performance Practice 1945-1975: A Review of Sound Recordings and Literature* (Aldershot, 2003); ‘Is diversity in musical performance truly in decline?: The evidence of sound recordings’, *Context: A Journal of Music Research* 31 (2006), 165-80. Cook cites only the last of these.

²² Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven, CT, 2000); David Milsom, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance* (Aldershot, 2003); Will Crutchfield, ‘Vocal Performance in the Nineteenth Century’, in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (Cambridge, 2012), 611-42; Neal Peres Da Costa, *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing* (New York and Oxford, 2012)

²³ In Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, and ‘Recordings and Histories of Performance Style’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, 246-62.

practice anticipated in pre-1945 recordings, in a transitional state in recordings from Andor Földes (1945) and Vladimir Horowitz (1949), then at its height with Heinrich Neuhaus (1953), and continued in a small range of subsequent recordings. Cook himself notes inconsistencies in a parallel sample of seven recordings of op. 17 no. 4, by just three pianists, then claims that phrase arching was ‘a phenomenon of the post-war period’ and a model ‘of *some aspects of musical expression during the second half of the twentieth century*’ (p. 205, Cook’s italics), in particular in Russia. Later he draws back momentarily, acknowledging that the results for two mazurkas might not be replicated elsewhere, to say nothing of whether piano performance is representative of other instrumental/vocal media (p. 209), but this does not inhibit a highly speculative passage that relates this approach to phrasing in terms of an aesthetic cult of simplicity through a partial reading of the work of Isadora Duncan, Coco Chanel, Osbert Lancaster, Le Corbusier, Adolf Loos and Buckminster Fuller, leading him to extravagant phrases like ‘the new simplicity of post-war phrase arching’ (p. 217).

Cook states: ‘my aim has not been to present a balanced overview of early recorded performers, but rather to focus on some of those who, through their difference from present-day practices, most clearly embody what a study of historical performance practice needs to accommodate (p. 131). But for such a study to be genuinely ‘historical’, it does indeed need to embody a balanced overview. His portrayal of HIP removes this domain – wrongly in my opinion – from the history of early music performance and the subsequent application of methods developed therein to later repertoires. He writes that HIP’s ‘modern form’ began ‘in the late 1960s’ (the reason for choosing this date is unclear) and that it was ‘a reaction against the established mainstream of post-war performance’ (p. 26), a statement that echoes Leech-Wilkinson’s polemics.²⁴ No examples are given of ‘the aggressively authenticist rhetoric that marked the early years of HIP’, nor of the claim (disputed by Fabian), that the ‘entire early music revival was built’ around a claim that ‘certain performance practices were authentic while others were not’ (p. 13). Cook does acknowledge that ‘HIP has long historical roots’ (ibid), naming just the work of Dolmetsch, but does not explain how (or indeed if) this ‘modern form’ differs fundamentally from that which flourished in Belgium, Germany and Switzerland in the interwar period, when *Aufführungspraxis* first achieved a solid scholarly footing.²⁵

The view that HIP’s ‘authentic value was not as scholarly reconstruction but as a distinctively late-modernist performance style’, adopted by Leech-Wilkinson and Richard Taruskin,²⁶ is for Cook ‘nowadays widely accepted’ (p. 28) – though this may be truer in some circles than others. Is this the view of the many musicians actively involved with HIP, or those who organise, promote, record such work, not to mention some scholars who have written critically about the work of Taruskin and

²⁴ For example, Leech-Wilkinson argues that the work of the likes of Harnoncourt, Brüggem, Bylisma, Norrington, Hogwood and Kuijken, we encounter ‘the late modernist reaction against materialist and technological complacency, a turning back to a more primitive original state which the modern world had comfortably covered over’; ‘Recordings and histories of performance style’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, 253.

²⁵ On the early history of the term *Aufführungspraxis* and the early literature on the subject, such as that of Hans Mersmann, Johannes Wolf, Arnold Schering and Robert Haas, published between 1919 and 1931, see Rudolf Stephan, ‘Zum Thema historische Aufführungspraxis’, *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* 11/1 (1994), 9-19.

²⁶ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, ‘What We Are Doing with Early Music is Genuinely Authentic to such a Small Degree that the Word Loses Most of its Intended Meaning’, *Early Music*, 12/1 (1984), 13-16; and many of the essays collected in Taruskin, *Text and Act*.

others?²⁷ I suspect that such arguments may be more territorial: prioritising the study of recordings over that of documents. This has the effect of not only dismissing by implication a good deal of the work of the other clusters of scholars (and many others outside of the UK), but also denying the possibility of different approaches and styles from those which can be experienced on early recordings.

Cook's related assertion elsewhere that 'Since the evidence in question was produced by musicologists and based on documentary sources, the net effect was to subjugate the practice of performance to the regime of scholarship and the written word' is unwise for a scholar who has written more than a few words on performance himself.²⁸ He comments disparagingly that in the work of Wallace Berry, 'Practice is subordinated to theory', but of what performance is this not in some sense the case? What teachers preach and performers follow, even in a conservatoire, are 'theories'; the issue is the degree of critical reflection. Cook coins a term, 'analytically-informed performance', or AIP, which he claims exists primarily on campuses and 'has been pursued within the contexts of academic epistemologies, modes of dissemination, and criteria for evaluation' (p. 97). This resembles another of his concepts: '[S]tructuralist performance, better known as modernist performance – the kind of performance in terms of which Schenker's writings on performance have been read – should be seen as a historical style, and not the paradigm for performance in general as which it has been widely represented in music-theoretical and pedagogical circles (p. 87). I do not know what a non-'structuralist' performance would be; all performers in some sense articulate some structural aspects of a piece, whether wittingly or not. In chapter 7, Cook is sceptical as to whether 'large-scale structure' is 'the most productive place to look for the emergence of musical meaning' (p. 246), citing Leech-Wilkinson cautioning performers to be wary of music theorists. But every performer needs somehow to make decisions about such long-range factors as relative dynamics through the course of a work, tempos, use of different sounds and textures at strategic points. To maintain that analytical work could never fruitfully inform performers in these respects appears like just bad conscience or even musicological anti-intellectualism. Tim Carter has written on frequent observation of students who think that other than simply 'playing the notes', all one needs is 'sincerity and reverence';²⁹ such students would be as dismissive of the work of Cook and his colleagues at CHARM as they would of the work that CHARM is keen to disregard.

Cook writes 'The idea of the performer's duty has *traditionally* come in two distinct versions; on the one hand duty to the composer, on the other to the work (sometimes referred to as *Werktreue*)' (my italics) (p. 13), then eight pages later that '*Werktreue* is almost completely irrelevant to the major stream of nineteenth-century pianism that centred around the cult of virtuosity and culminated in the 'piano wars'

²⁷ Not least in John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge, 2002), 14-24; Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music*, 1-10; and more recently Nick Wilson, *The Art of Re-enchantment: Making Early Music in the Modern Age* (New York, 2014), 37-53.

²⁸ Nicholas Cook, 'Bridging the Unbridgeable? Empirical Musicology and Interdisciplinary Performance Studies', in Cook and Richard Pettengill (eds), *Taking it to the Bridge: Music as Performance* (Ann Arbor, 2013), 71.

²⁹ Tim Carter, 'It's all in the notes?', *Early Music*, XLI/1 (2013), 81. For wider observations on the indifference of performers to musicology (including feminist work or critiques of autonomy which Cook and others favour), see George Kennaway, 'Historiographically Informed Performance?', in Vesa Kurkela and Markus Mantere (eds.), *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions* (Farnham, 2015), 159-71.

of the second quarter of the century' (p. 21).³⁰ So what does he mean by 'traditionally'? The approach now denoted by the term *Werktreue* was once associated with very specific performers, such as Clara Schumann,³¹ Joseph Joachim, and to some, Hans von Bülow (but perhaps *Texttreue* would have been more appropriate in the latter case).³² But when Liszt, undoubtedly a central figure in those 'piano wars', wrote to Richard Pohl in 1853 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',³³ he was also claiming a fidelity to the 'spirit' of the work, which qualifies as at least some form of *Werktreue*.

In line with the obsessive New Musicological rejection of abstraction, Lawrence Kramer called in 2007 for performance to 'suggest verbal and imagistic connections with the world'.³⁴ Cook aims for something similar via topic theory: he sets out the topic labels for the exposition of Mozart's Piano Sonata K 332 provided by Wye Jamison Allanbrook, and advocates the resulting stark contrasts between material – contrasts which Hans-Georg Nägeli cited in 1826 to criticise Mozart.³⁵ In 1984 Nikolaus Harnoncourt made clear that he shared Nägeli's diagnosis, but with an opposite valorisation;³⁶ Cook cites Harnoncourt in general on a rhetorical conception of music, though does not refer to Nägeli and his historically contextualizing remarks. Cook's subsequent survey of eight recordings of K. 332 (this time with three on period instruments) is dominated by topics, but with little on their correspondences and relationships. He says 'In none of these recordings is there the least sign of Allanbrook's "street theater"', which is fair enough, but a thoroughly different rendition which would fit such a definition *can* be found in the Norwegian fortepianist Liv Glaser (more emphatically so than in the recording of Malcolm Bilson, which Cook investigates at length and whose wider views he cites).³⁷ In essence, Cook equates a 'topical' reading of the scores with a 'rhetorical' approach to performance, once again contrasted with a 'structuralist' approach. From this, he concludes that 'the very fabric of the classical style is representational' (p. 109), and later that 'rhetorical performance turns on reference and is in that sense a semiotic practice' (p. 125). His comparison of the views of fortepianists such as Malcolm Bilson and Bart van Oort with Heinrich Schenker's call for abolition of 'phrasing slurs' is very incisive, as is the remarkable and detailed comparison of van Oort's recording of Mozart's *Rondo*

³⁰ This view sharply contrasts Lydia Goehr's simplistic claim that 'The ideal of *Werktreue* pervaded every aspect of practice in and after 1800 with full regulative force' (Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford, 1992), 242).

³¹ See for example Angelika App, 'Die „Werktreue“ bei Clara Schumann', in Peter Ackermann and Herbert Schneider (eds.), *Clara Schumann: Komponistin, Interpretin, Unternehmerin, Ikone* (Hildesheim, Zürich & New York, 1999), 9-18.

³² A comprehensive investigation of historical thought on such conceptions can be found in Hermann Danuser's 1988 series of lectures 'Werktreue und Texttreue in der musikalischen Interpretation', reprinted in Sabine Ehrmann-Herfort, Ludwig Finscher and Giselher Schubert (eds.), *Europäische Musikgeschichte*, Band 2 (Kassel, 2002), 1115-65.

³³ Liszt to Richard Pohl, November 5, 1853, in La Mara (ed.), *Letters of Franz Liszt*, Vol. 1 'From Paris to Rome: Years of Travel as a Virtuoso', translated Constance Bache (London, 1894), 175-6.

³⁴ Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 2007), 83. It is not coincidental that Kramer quotes Cook earlier on this page.

³⁵ Hans-Georg Nägeli, *Vorlesungen über Musik mit Berücksichtigung der Dilettanten* (Stuttgart, 1826), 157.

³⁶ See Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *The Musical Dialogue: Thoughts on Monteverdi, Bach and Mozart*, trans. Mary O'Neill (Portland, OR, 1989), 86-7.

³⁷ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Piano Sonatas Vol. 4*; Liv Glaser, fortepiano; Simax – PSC1148 (1995).

alla turca with a serious of recordings and piano rolls from the first decades of the twentieth century, reading in relation to the ideas of Schenker and Adolf Kullak.

My biggest problem with the book combines issues of literary style and ideology. Cook writes throughout in a rather cold and impersonal style, which on one level suggests aesthetic disinterest and quasi-scientific neutrality, though this is belied by the often loaded and moralistic fashion in which he sets up oppositions and arguments. As mentioned earlier, he eschews advocacy; similarly there is little if any sense of personal identification or empathy with the music and performances discussed in this long book. But when we partake in culture, even very casually, we make value judgements; the exclusion of any hint of such a thing is what gives the book such an ‘academic’ feel.³⁸ Such an approach, also found in the work of Stuart Hall, Howard Becker, Tony Bennett, Fred Inglis and others, brackets out lived experience of culture, and renders those engaged with it like laboratory specimens. Furthermore, an avoidance of value judgement is radically at odds with the experience of any performer who has listened self-critically to their own work and modified it accordingly. This would be impossible without some system of valorization in place; as an active performer myself I feel profoundly estranged when reading Cook’s text.

Cook absolutely advocates that music is a social practice, but is dismissive of approaches to music-making which attempt to break with existing practices. His definition of the social is that of an ideological empiricist, limited to those phenomena that through empirical data can be associated with particular social practices or milieus; so it would be anti-social to try and modify these associations.³⁹ This is the very essence of a conservative position, notwithstanding the communitarian rhetoric which accompanies it. Rejecting a critical function for art, I believe Cook’s position excludes *creativity* - for what is it to create if not to make something anew (even for relative non-innovators such as Mozart or Brahms)?⁴⁰ I have elsewhere critiqued a dichotomy presented by John Croft, by which ‘research *describes* the world; composition *adds something to* the world’; this aptly characterises the difference between Cook’s work here and that of a creative artist.⁴¹

Certain types of mainstream performers are treated with near-deferential respect, placed on a higher pedestal than scholars and composers, while other more deviant figures are invariably dismissed.⁴² Performers are seen as having everything

³⁸ This type of point is made in Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Oxford, 1996), 93-7. The sociologist Simon Stewart presents a relatively balanced consideration of the problems inherent when sociology abandons aesthetics, though within a rather limited liberal framework which does not consider connections between value-free relativism and surrender to the market, in ‘Evaluating Culture: Sociology, Aesthetics and Policy’, *Sociological Research Online* 18/1 (2013), at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/18/1/14.html> (accessed 5 March 2016).

³⁹ For a sustained Marxist critique of the replacement of musicology with the empirical social sciences, in the process reproducing and reinforcing bourgeois categories (and class hierarchies), see the critiques of the work of Sara Thornton, Georgina Born, and Simon Frith, in Ben Watson, *Adorno for Revolutionaries* (London, 2011), 99-148.

⁴⁰ This position of Cook’s was strongly criticised by Anne Boissière in ‘L’ambivalence d’une approche: critique ou nihiliste?’, *Musicae Scientiae*, Discussion Forum 2 (2001), 29-33, in response to which Cook located the origins of her argument within ‘the attack on capitalism and consumerism that developed throughout the German-speaking countries in the 19th century (where it was associated with the nostalgic values of an idealised rural past), and fed ultimately into the Nazi creed of ‘blood and soil’; Cook, ‘Writing on music or axes to grind’, 257.

⁴¹ John Croft, ‘Composition is not Research’, *Tempo*, 69/272 (Apr. 2015), 8, and my response to this, ‘Composition and Performance Can Be, and Often Have Been, Research’. *Tempo*, 70/275 (Jan. 2016), 60-70.

⁴² As witnessed by his celebratory citation of Wanda Landowska imagining Rameau rising from his grave to comment on her performance of his work, and her turning him away (p. 95).

or nothing to learn from scholars. Cook and others are harshly critical of such relatively harmless phenomena as analysts advocating and judging particular performance strategies, but neglect to critique the culture of the conservatoire - more hierarchical and less democratic than that of the university, sometimes breeding desperation, fear, callous exercise of charismatic authority, abuse, bullying, and much more, and the extension of these principles into the world of professional performance. This surfaces just once in the book, when he cites Stephen Cottrell's research on performers and dictatorial conductors, and then turns to the management consultant Yaakov Atik's views on dispute resolution, which are taken practically at face value (pp. 269-70).

Cook's general lack of any consideration of historical and comparative performance pedagogy may also be revealing. Learning an instrument or voice in order to perform notated music frequently entails developing the sophistication and subtlety of one's perception of that music. Those who listen to performances may have had some of this training, and the wider musical education (some of it away from the instrument or voice), that enhances it. This is not so distant from the realm of 'music appreciation', facilitated by recordings and bemoaned by Virgil Thomson, whom Cook tacitly endorses (pp. 309, 365-6). But when the very notion of an educated mode of listening is not strongly supported within education, it is not surprising that one is left with new students demonstrating only very elementary listening skills. Teachers can try and develop these, or take the easier option of re-focusing the musical education (which can in turn facilitate cuts). For the increasing preponderance of this latter direction, I do believe the whole school of thinking bequeathed by Cook bears some responsibility.

This book is something of a manifesto, to whose claims I have tried to respond. Older analysts or HIP scholars did not shy from aesthetic judgement, and would often treat performers - and listeners - as people capable of active choices themselves, which can themselves be analysed and critiqued. Modern post-CHARM performance studies could benefit from greater and freer exploration, moving away from the territorial disputes and arguments that have a limited impact upon wider communities of performers or listeners.