Theory into practice

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WORDS ABOUT MUSIC,
OR ANALYSIS VERSUS PERFORMANCE
Nicholas Cook

WORDS ABOUT WORDS ABOUT MUSIC

To anyone who takes exception to the title of this paper, the section title must seem worse. For musicians are perenially suspicious of words, seeing them as a means not so much of clarification as of obfuscation; if there is anything worse than words about music, I hear you saying, it must be words about words (about music).

But there is something paradoxical about this musicianly suspicion of words - something reminiscent of Borges's account of the traveller Abulcasim Al-Ashari, who claimed to have been to China but whose detractors, "with that peculiar logic of hatred, swore that he had never set foot in China and that in the temples of that land he had blasphemed the name of Allah".1 For on the one hand we complain that words can't represent music, that they distort and even betray an art whose essence lies in its evanescence, lending it a spurious and domesticating determinacy while at the same time being vague (as Felix Mendelssohn put it) just where music is precise. But on the other hand we try to use words to do just what we say they can't do, that is to represent music - to stand in for it, in the manner of a working model or a simulacrum. We claim that music cannot be translated into words, but at the same time we expect them to say how it is. Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising if we find that, when we talk about music, we never quite say what we mean or mean what we say; to put it another way, it seems impossible to talk about music without finding that you have inadvertantly changed the subject.

The problem is not that words are inadequate for music, but that we tend to have unreasonable expectations of them. And when they do not fulfil these expectations - when we conclude

that the gap between words and music is unbridgeable - we seek to devalue them, hurrying through the words so as to get to the music with the minimum delay (for isn't a phrase of music, like a picture, worth a thousand words?). It is like the premature 'rush to interpretation' which Richard Middleton condemns in sociologically-inclined writers on popular music, only the other way round: where the sociologists explain meaning without exploring the musical properties that support it, musicians rush from words to music without attending sufficiently to the conditions of their signification. But in truth the requisite rethinking of words about music need not take long. For it stands to reason that if words cannot say what music says, our purpose in deploying them must be to say what music does not say. Or to put it less paradoxically, the way we talk about music does not simply replicate it (if that were the case, words about music really would be redundant) but rather affects the way we make it, not to mention what we make of it. Words change what we play and what we hear. It is precisely because words do not just stand in for music that they matter so much: a musical tradition is as much as anything a historically transmitted way of talking about music.

The issue of words about music penetrates to the core of music's cultural identity, but is particularly pressing in relation to its performance. It would be hard to think of another area in which musicology (etymologically 'words about music') has been so conspicuously at odds with cultural practice; the whole thrust of scholarly writing about music has until recently been to downplay the variance between one performance and another, so locating the aesthetic centre of music in the written text. Under such circumstances the performer's highest legitimate aspiration becomes one of adequacy, of acting as an ideally transparent medium between composer and audience without the intrusion of his or her own personality; it was said of Hans von Bulow that when you heard him play Beethoven you had no sense of Bulow's presence but only of Beethoven's, and such remarks, indicative of high praise, continue to be made of performers to this day. (The other side of the coin is expressed in Schoenberg's famous if ironical die-

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words about music, or analysis versus performance

tum that "the performer, for all his intolerable arrogance, is totally unnecessary except as his interpretations make the music understandable to an audience unfortunate not to be able to read it in print". 3) And for their part, performers have tended to see words as less a means of engagement with music than one of deferral; there is a widespread suspicion of musicological pronouncements about performance, in particular those that advocate a particular performance practice on the basis of structural analysis. Even as analytically informed a performer as Alfred Brendel has said that "few analytical insights have a direct bearing on performance, and that analysis should be the outcome of an intimate familiarity with the piece rather than an input of established concepts". 4 Yet in no other area of musical activity is it quite so literally true that what we say determines what we do; after all, conservatory teachers may be hired for what they play but they are paid for what they say. If many of their students would nevertheless sign up to Elvis Costello’s contemptuous dismissal of the value of words about music, 5 that is because of the pervasive assumption that words should do what they cannot do: stand in for music, replicate it. In this paper I argue that words and music can never be aligned exactly with one another, that there is always a remainder, a non-linearity in the mapping of what is said onto what is played. In short, you can’t play it as you say it. But if we can tease apart the saying and the playing, the words and the music, then two benefits may follow. It may be possible to develop models of the relationship between analytical conception and performance that are more challenging (both intellectually and musically) than those in general currency. And this in turn may facilitate the devel-

3. Quoted in Dika Newlin, Schoenberg Remembered: Diaries and Recollection (r938-76). New York 1980, p. 164. How literally Newlin’s recollections should be assumed to reflect what Schoenberg actually said is a moot point (I owe this observation to Peter Johnson).
opment of what is coming to be known as 'performance studies': a musicological subdiscipline which accords to the performance and the performer some of the serious interest previously reserved for the score and its composer. All this, of course, adds up to an agenda that goes way beyond what can be accomplished in this paper. But that is no reason for not making a start.

**WORDS ABOUT PERFORMANCE**

Maybe I have drawn too strong a line between musicologists and performers. After there, all there are those, particularly in the area of historical musicology, who have distinguished themselves on both sides of the line (Charles Rosen is the outstanding example). The real gap, then, lies not between individuals but activities: writing about music and playing it. All the same, when it comes to analysis it is possible to distinguish between two literary genres, one associated with writers who play and the other with players who write. When people speak of analysis and performance, it is generally the former to which they refer: writings by professional analysts and theorists which attempt to establish some kind of linkage between the structure of music and its performance, and which are in some cases explicitly directed at the performer. But there is another literature, though rarely recognized as such, which is the work of professional performers, and which is best represented by Alfred Brendel's books. In *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, Brendel puts forward a model of musical structure which he regards as indispensable for the performer of Beethoven's piano sonatas, and which he terms 'foreshortening'. (Without entering into details, the idea is that any significant structural point in the music is preceded by a series of phrases of diminishing length; it is by articulating these phrase-lengths that the performer can do justice to the musical structure.) And while it is not particularly obvious for whom the book is written, it is evident that theorists are included among the target readership, for Brendel explains that he has been unable to develop the concept of foreshortening to the full, and explicitly invites "colleagues

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words about music, or analysis versus performance

whose time is less limited than my own" - presumably the theories - to undertake this task.7

What makes Brendel's concept of foreshortening typical of what might be termed the literature of 'performer's analysis' is its summary nature.8 By this I mean two things. In the first place the concept of foreshortening, and the identification of structural points which it supports, gives rise a framework that is intended to coordinate all the parameters of performance variance (tempo, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, and so on); the assumption is that by internalizing this framework the performer will gain a degree of interpretive control otherwise impossible. And this idea of the summary framework links back to Rachmaninov's idea of the culminating moment or 'point' (if you missed the 'point', he said, your performance could never be articulate),9 and forward to the graphical interpretations which John Rink has recently been proposing as a means of bridging the gap between analysis and performance. But the examples of Rachmaninov and Rink also illustrate the second way in which analyses that explicitly adopt the performer's perspective might be said to be summary. Rachmaninov never explained the basis on which the 'point' of a piece of music was to be established; his concept is theoretically undefined and therefore mysterious. (That is, it is 'summary' in the sense that no evidence or rationalization is provided.) And while Rink is himself a professional theorist, his graphs are open to criticism on rather similar grounds.

A representative example is the graph of Liszt's "Vallee d'Obermann" in Rink's article "Translating Musical Meaning".10 It looks like the increasingly familiar graphs that plot tempo

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10. John Rink, "Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-century Performer as Narrator", in: Nicholas Cook and Mark Everiss (eds.), Rethinking Music. Oxford 1999, pp. 211-238, especially fig. 10.2 (p. 236). As explained in notes 67-68 of his chapter, Rink adapted his notion of the intensity curve from Wallace Berry, who however used it as a purely analytical device rather than as a representation of performance; Rink also draws parallels with the work of Neil Todd (see n. 88 below) and Manfred Clynes.
deviation against time, but in fact represents a variable which Rink terms 'intensity'. By this he does not mean intensity in the physical sense, nor indeed any other objectively determinable attribute of either the music or its performance. What he offers is rather "a graphic representation of the music’s ebb and flow, its 'contour' in time, determined by all active elements (harmony, melody, rhythm, dynamics, etc.) working either independently, in synchrony, or out of phase with one another to create the changing degrees of energy and thus the overall shape". But there are no rules for assessing the relative contribution of these elements, which means that "an intensity curve relies upon the analyst/performer’s musical judgements". This, Rink admits, creates a problem: "the difficulty of defining and objectively quantifying intensity". And if there are no explicit rules for deriving intensity values from the score, then the same applies to the application of the intensity curve to performance, for there is no implication that it is to be directly translated into, say, tempo or dynamic variation. Nevertheless, Rink claims, the construct is powerful from the performer’s point of view; like Brendel’s foreshortening structure, once internalized it can act as a coordinating framework for performance. Accordingly Rink links his intensity curve not only with the unsystematized but ubiquitous gestural representations that characterize music lessons and rehearsals, but also with historical concepts of performance (he cites in particular the grande legato of nineteenth-century commentators).

The problem with Rink’s intensity curves, as I see it, is that they are insufficiently grounded in analytical method. This is not the same as complaining that they have no objective existence; that, after all, could be said of many of the most familiar analytical constructs, for (as Matthew Brown and Douglas Dempster have expressed it) "it is not in the least bit clear what sort of entity a middleground, or an implied dominant, or a nexus set might conceivably be". It is rather a matter of intersubjectivity, of having

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established if informal discovery procedures that enable different individuals to reproduce the identification of a particular analytical construct. This in turn is a question of experiencing or (as musicians say) 'hearing' the music in a particular way; as Marion Guck puts it, "when analysts write analytical texts, we are offering readers the possibility of recreating a hearing that we have found worthwhile". And the role of an analytical method is to support the hearing through a demonstration that is as much practical as logical. The problem with Rink's intensity curves, then, is in essence the same as with Rachmaninov's 'point' (and even, arguably, with Brendel's foreshortening): there is no way in which the reader, or performer, can disassemble the contribution of the various musical parameters to the summary graph and so reconstruct the experience of the music that motivates it. As a result the analysis has no greater explanatory value than would a performance that embodied it.

The work of Rink, then, represents a concerted and indeed unique attempt on the part of a theorist to adopt a performer's perspective, but he only achieves his goal to the extent that he severs his links with theory. In this way he does not so much create a bridge between analysis and performance as simply cross from the one terrain to the other. The prevailing picture in the field of analysis and performance, however, is exactly the reverse: theoretically legitimate interpretations whose application to performance remains problematic. The principal example of such an approach is Wallace Berry, whose book *Musical Structure and Performance* was more than anything responsible for establishing the subdiscipline of performance studies. Berry was not only a professional

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15. Jennifer Tong illustrates the largely arbitrary nature of Brendel's application of the foreshortening principle in "Separate Discourses", p. 154FF.

theorist but also an accomplished pianist and conductor, and his book is full of insights regarding ways in which structural relationships can be projected (or 'brought out', as musicians say) in performance; under certain circumstances he also advocated what he called a 'neutral' style of performance, that is to say one in which the performer explicitly refrains from inflecting the music towards one structural interpretation or another. But there is an essential inflexibility in his way of thinking about the relationship between analysis and performance. The basic trouble is that he sees it as a one-way relationship. So he speaks of "the path from analysis to performance" (elsewhere enlarged to "the path from analysis to interpretive decision"), and describes the central topic of his book as "how (...) a structural relation exposed in analysis can be illuminated in the inflections of edifying performance".17 In other words, you begin by analyzing and end by performing; the one leads to the other.

To be fair to Berry, in seeing the relationship of analysis and performance in this way he was only repeating well-established views expressed, for example, by Rudolf Kalisch ("only when one has reached the point where one feels completely certain of how the piece must go should the realization process commence")18 and Benjamin Britten ("after the intellect has finished work, the instinct must take over. In performance the analysis must be forgotten."

One might object that the relationship between writing (or reading) and playing is not so simple, that it is less like a sequence and more like a counterpoint; Glenn Gould surely spoke for many performers when he claimed that "the ideal way to go about making a performance (...) is to assume that when you begin, you don't quite know what it is about. You only come to know as you proceed."20 But what is of perhaps greater significance is the way in which, as is so often the case, a claim of

17. Berry, Musical Structure and Performance, pp. 10, 2, x. I shall not on this occasion explore the ramifications of that interesting word 'edifying'.
chronological priority slips imperceptibly into an asserted hierarchy of authority. In Berry's book this hierarchy is implicit rather than explicit; it resides in the simple fact that the book is written by a theorist and takes the form of injunctions to performers, providing no occasion for the reciprocal process - for the theorist to learn from performers, that is to say. (In fact, as Joel Lester has pointed out, there is a striking omission from the entire literature of which Berry's book is representative: 'performers and their performances'.\footnote{21}) But other theorists have promulgated the hierarchical relationship between themselves and performers quite explicitly, and none more so than Eugene Narmour in his article "On the Relationship of Analytical Theory to Performance and Interpretation".

One of the passages on which Narmour focusses is taken from Act 2, Scene 1 of Richard Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier - the moment when Sophie falls in love as she accepts Octavian's silver rose.\footnote{22} Narmour begins by analyzing the passage on the basis of his customary implication-realization model, arguing that the otherworldly effect of the music (matching the words "how heavenly, not earthly") arises from the way in which, as he puts it, "practically every melodic event is in some way unexpected and in some way unclosed".\footnote{23} For instance, he observes that Strauss marks the a\#\textsuperscript{2} on 'himmlische' pianissimo, whereas the ascent of a sixth from the preceding c\#\textsuperscript{1} might have been expected to give rise to a crescendo. Again, the leap to a\#\textsuperscript{2} creates the expectation of a descent within the intervallic area defined by the leap, whereas just the opposite happens: the melody rises to 6\textsuperscript{2}. And for Narmour this has a clear performance implication: "a further reduction in dynamic on the unexpected step up to the dissonant, syncopated, high B will also be extremely affective in an aesthetic sense".\footnote{24}

\footnote{23. Ibidem, p. 332.}
\footnote{24. Ibidem, p. 333.}
the basis of this and similar arguments, Narmour ends up with what he describes as "an analytically justifiable recreative interpretation" of the passage, which he presents in the form of an annotated score. He then works through a series of commercial recordings to see how well they match up. The Karajan recording, with Teresa Stich-Randall, turns out to be a clear best buy.

There are two particularly striking characteristics of Narmour's approach. One is the way in which the theorist is set up as the arbiter of performance. This is built into the very procedure that Narmour adopts, with his derivation of an analytical model against which recorded performances are assessed for compliance. It pervades his rhetoric, too, for he frequently refers to what performers 'must' or 'must not' do. Again, referring to a passage from Haydn's Symphony No. 83, he observes that Leonard Bernstein makes 'an obvious mistake', while Julius Katchen's handling of motives is 'inexplicable'. And at one point Narmour's exasperation boils over: "Sometimes", he snorts, "conductors do utterly inexplicable things which make no sense at all". The implication is plain: what performers do is either capable of theoretical explanation, or else it is wrong. There could hardly be a starker contrast with the respectful language which theorists use for composers, or a clearer expression of the performer's place at the bottom of academic-music pecking order. But the second characteristic to which I referred is perhaps the more important: the directness with which Narmour moves from analysis to performance interpretation. The right performance, he seems to imply, is the one that corresponds to the right analysis. Admittedly he shrinks from a direct statement that there can only be one ideal interpretation:

25. Ibidem, ex. 3.
27. A telling contrast is offered by Janet Schmalfeldt's article "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, which is cast in the form of a dialogue between two distinct authorial personas: the analyst and the performer. It has to be admitted that the relationship between them is not very equal, however; Joel Lester has pointed out that Schmalfeldt's "pianist-persona is learning to play the pieces, but it is obvious from her prose that her analyst-persona has studied them long and hard" ("Performance and Analysis", p. 198 n. 1). And the participants seem more inclined to lecture than to listen to one another (this applies in particular to the analyst, of course).
"in an art like music", he says, "there can never be any such thing as the definitive performance".28 But he effectively negates this when he continues: "The point, however, is that, given the analytical theory applied in [the annotated score], we can say more or less objectively that (...) certain performances are subtly though demonstrably better than others". The professional 'we' immediately reinstates the theorist's authority and hence the hierarchy to which I have referred.

In this way the whole thrust of Narmour's thinking is to elide analytical and performance interpretation. Jonathan Dunsby, by contrast, begins to tease them apart when he writes that "A particular analysis may well lead to the conviction that a particular kind of interpretation is essential, but how to convey that interpretation to the listener in performance is a different matter".29 Even if you regard one particular analytical interpretation as right, he is saying, that doesn't mean you can extrapolate one particular performance interpretation from it; any number of different performances might be capable of doing justice to the same analysis. And in saying this, Dunsby is making a distinction that can be traced back to Heinrich Schenker, and specifically to his 1912 monograph on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Schenker's groundbreaking book (which so impressed the conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler that he sought Schenker out and established a long-term professional relationship with him) takes the symphony section by section, analyzing the musical content and drawing conclusions for performance. But in his preface, Schenker is concerned to forestall an obvious objection: that his recommendations for performance are not infrequently opposed to Beethoven's notated directions. The contradiction is only apparent, Schenker explains. And he continues: "it is not the task of the orthography, as is generally believed and taught, to provide the

player with perfectly definite means for achieving effects allegedly specified and attainable only through precisely these means, but rather to arouse in his mind, in an a priori manner, specific effects, leaving it up to him to chose freely the appropriate means for their attainment".  

Schenker's language is perhaps obscure but his meaning is clear enough: in his score Beethoven's concern has been to notate the content of the symphony or, to put it another way, the intended musical effects. The purpose of the orthography (Schenker has in mind slurs, dynamic markings, and so forth) is to convey the effect to the performer. Once this has been achieved, the orthography has served its function; it is now up to the performer to decide through what technical means to create the effect that Beethoven intended. In this way Schenker seems to return to performers some of the freedom that Narmour denies them.

But if the contradiction that Schenker wants to allay is apparent rather than real, so too is the freedom. Performers are free to decide on the technical means precisely because, and to the extent that, their decisions do not bear upon the aesthetic effect. Schenker is not according an interpretive role to performers in any aesthetically significant sense; in another context, in fact, he exclaims "No interpretation!" The reason for this is that, as he puts it, "Performance must come from within the work; the work

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31. For a discussion of this issue see William Rothstein, "Heinrich Schenker as an Interpreter of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas", in: 19th-Century Music 8 (1984), pp. 3-28, especially p. 10. Interestingly, Furtwangler made the same point: "a score cannot give the slightest clue as to the intensity of a forte or piano or exactly how fast a tempo should be (...). The dynamics are quite deliberately not literal but symbolic, not with a practical meaning for each individual instrument but of a broad significance, added with the sense of the work as a whole in mind". However Furtwangler appears to go beyond this to make the same direct identification of the right analysis and the right performance as Narmour: "for every musical work (...) there is only one approach, one manner of interpretation, that consistently proves to make the deepest impression, precisely because it is the 'correct' interpretation". See: R. Taylor (ed. and transl.), Furtwangler on Music. Aldershot 1991, pp. 8-9, 12.

must breathe from its own lungs - from the linear progressions, neighboring tones, chromatic tones, modulations (...). About these, naturally, there cannot exist different interpretations.” In this way the familiar pecking order is once more reinscribed, for the arbiter of interpretation is of course the theorist, who alone is in a position to speak to the linear progressions, neighbouring tones, and the rest. But the delimitation of the sphere of performance goes beyond this, for interpretation is simply removed from it. Schenker’s position ends up little different from Narmour’s: interpretation is either implicit in the work (in which case it is open to analytical explanation), or else it is wrong. We are back at the self-effacing presence, or rather absence, for which Bülow was praised when he played Beethoven. And if this seems a trifle ironic, bearing in mind Schenker’s more or less vitriolic views of his fellow Beethoven-editor, we can refer instead to Brahms’s comments on performing Beethoven, which Schenker quoted with approbation: "When I play something of Beethoven, I have absolutely no individuality in relation to it; rather, I try to reproduce the piece as well as Beethoven wrote it. Then I have [quite] enough to do.”

The story of successive attempts to forge a meaningful relationship between analysis and performance could, of course, be told at greater length. In particular, the varied essays that comprise John Rink’s edited volume The Practice of Performance represent a sustained attempt to get away from traditional ideas of performers ‘bringing out’ analytical structure and to identify some kind of middleground between music-theoretical discourse and performance; the hard edges that characterize, say, Narmour’s position are softened, and entrenched assumptions questioned. For instance, Joel Lester explicitly focusses on the multiplicity of interpretational possibilities routinely offered by any piece of music, exploring the ways in which alternative analytical and performance interpretations may be mapped onto one another. Again,

33. Ibidem, combining two separate statements in the "Enrwurf".
William Rothstein's contribution emphasizes how, given a particular structure, the performer may sometimes be called on to conceal rather than to project structure; it may be "better for the performer to suggest something which is 'false' - or more precisely, something which is 'true' only from a certain, partial vantage point - than to spell out everything one knows."36 He also adds, using an illuminating analogy to which I shall return, that on such occasions "the performer adopts temporarily the viewpoint of one or two characters in the drama, so to speak, rather than assuming omniscience at every moment".

But the bridges between analysis and performance that are built by Rink's contributors are generally flimsy and temporary. They paper over an ideological gulf and in this sense are not supported by the available conceptual apparatus; they are victories snatched from the jaws of theoretical incoherence. And consequently we are left at the end more or less where we began: caught between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one side, the performer is subordinated to the theorist, with his or her freedom of action reduced to the aesthetically insignificant. Or on the other, as in the case of Rink's own writings, the analyst reaches a more genuine accommodation with the performer, but at the expense of what might be termed the epistemology that grounds any kind of analytical explanation. The situation, in short, bears all the hallmarks of a debate that is taking place within an inappropriately constrained conceptual framework, and we shall see that there are good historical reasons why this should be the case.

MULTIPLE AGENCIES

If we are to take seriously the contribution of performance to the aesthetic phenomenon of music, and more, if we are to theorize it, then it will be necessary to reconsider a number of the key concepts of traditional musicology (and not just musicology). Two of these are identifiable less as explicit assumptions than through a

widespread if untheorized resistance to thinking in terms of the opposite: the concept of the single musical work (as represented in the definitive version or Urtext), and that of undivided authorship. The third is represented by a conceptual model in which the author (composer) and listener are connected by a single line, with the performer occupying an intermediate position. All three have their origins in a common aesthetic ideology, but the third is the most deeply embedded and so I shall begin with the other two.

As I suggested, the concepts of the definitive version and of undivided authorship emerge most clearly through the attempt to cling to them against the odds. A particularly conspicuous example is provided by the strategies adopted during the early to mid-1990s by American music theorists concerned to bring the study of rock music within the purview of their discipline. Until the late 1980s or even after, rock music tended to be studied almost anywhere except in conservatories and university departments of music: that is, in departments of media studies, cultural studies, or sociology. And the result was, inevitably, that lyrics, commentaries, fandom, and material or economic infrastructure were prioritized at the expense of ‘the primary text’ (as Allan Moore styles it in the title of his book on progressive rock), \(^\text{37}\) in other words, the music. In view of the persistence within the musical academy of connoisseur-based attitudes long eclipsed in other disciplines, it is hardly surprising that the apologists for rock music adopted what might be termed a conservative stance. Some took this strategy as far as to apply such canonic analytical methods as Schenkerian reduction to rock (the most thoroughgoing example of this trend is Walter Everett’s work on the Beatles). \(^\text{38}\) Others were methodologically more eclectic, but went to sometimes extraordinary lengths to fit rock into the established framework of music-


theoretical discourse, and an outstanding example of this is the work of Dave Headlam on Led Zeppelin.\textsuperscript{39}

It is of course a fact of life that practically all rock music exists in multiple versions, including re-releases, remixes, covers, and any number of legitimate or bootlegged concert recordings, not to mention videos, films, and published transcriptions. (Where this is not the case, as for instance in the case of the music of Van Halen, it is likely to be the result of a carefully controlled policy of dissemination imposed by the artist or artists concerned.) But established theoretical approaches to music, derived as they are from the study of scores, are not well adapted to dealing with multiple versions.\textsuperscript{40} Headlam recognizes that there is an issue here, but he sidesteps rather than confronts it: "One objection to my analytical treatment of the songs", he says, "might be that Led Zeppelin continually changed and evolved in their concert versions of these songs. For instance, concert versions of 'Dazed and Confused' ran to 45 minutes (...). Despite these improvisations, however, each song has a fixed studio version that has become definitive, and formed at least the basis for improvisations on stage. I consider the studio versions justification for my analysis."\textsuperscript{41} In other words, he accepts the original releases as authoritative and simply discounts the other versions. The problem goes away.

It would be easy to condemn Headlam for ignoring the normal conditions of rock music and assimilating to the conditions of classical music, but this would be less than fair since precisely the same objection can be made in relation to the classical tradition. The writings of Lydia Goehr have accustomed us to the idea that the musical work is a historical construct dating from the years


\textsuperscript{40} For an extended discussion, see Nicholas Cook, "At the Borders of Musical Identity: Schenker, Corelli, and the Graces", in: \textit{Music Analysis} forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{41} Headlam, "Does the Song Remain the Same?", p. 332 n. 68.
around 1800, so that the concept of the single and definitive text was foreign to earlier periods (though there appears to be an emerging consensus that her second point is overstated). In effect, Goehr is saying that nineteenth-century composers claimed for their music the qualities of unicity, authenticity, and unchangability associated with the fine arts; hence the conceit of the 'imaginary museum' which gives her book its title. But if this is true for some composers (the paradigm case is Beethoven, the first composer to try and interest publishers in an authoritative edition of his complete works), for others it is simply not: for Chopin, for example, or Liszt, both of whose works often exist in a considerable number of versions, without there being any clear criteria according to which it might be asserted that one version is definitive while others are not. And that is before one begins to consider the significance of the multiple versions in which all nineteenth-century music exists, that is to say, different performances. The wonder, then, is not that Headlam tries to fit Led Zeppelin into the Procrustean framework of the single and definitive version, but rather that the framework was ever considered an adequate basis for understanding any music.

Much the same can be said about the concept of undivided authorship. Here Headlam's problem is even more obvious: just who is the author of, say, Led Zeppelin's "Whole lotta love"? It does not suffice to regard the songwriter as the author (as Everett does in the case of the Beatles, where there is at least the justification of the generally distinctive quality of songs written by McCartney, Lennon, and Harrison), because "Whole lotta love" is adapted from the Chicago bluesman Willie Dixon's "You need love" - and a close enough adaptation, at that, for Dixon to have successfully sued Led Zeppelin on grounds of copyright


infringement. If, following traditional musicological models, we were to regard Dixon as the author, that would reduce Led Zeppelin to the status of performers, whereas Headlam's whole aim is to establish the place of bands like Led Zeppelin within the composer-based canon of Western music. (Hence the prevalence in his article of value-laden terms such as the 'genuinely creative' reworking as against the 'merely derivative' cover - "Whole lotta love", of course, being an example of the former. So he resorts instead to a stratagem that not only constructs Led Zeppelin's status as authors, but in so doing assigns to the music theorist the role of arbiter that I discussed in the previous section.

Headlam shows how songs like "Whole Lotta Love", as he puts it, "share musical elements with the original versions, but are transformed formally, timbrally, rhythmically, motivically, and harmonically into the defining features of the Led Zeppelin sound". In other words, Led Zeppelin integrate elements from Dixon's originals within a new synthesis, in rather the same way as Bach appropriated materials from Vivaldi. Headlam sees "Whole lotta love" as a reworking and not a cover because it has its own structural coherence: "The power and effect of 'Whole Lotta Love', he says, "derives in large part from the formal contrast and combination of the two seemingly disparate elements - driving, rhythmic blues-riffs and free-form psychedelic effects - into a coherent whole". And it is in this distinctive synthesis, in the unified 'sound' that characterizes the band as a whole, that Headlam locates Led Zeppelin's status as authors. But by now the idea of authorship has been transformed from its literal sense (in which it applies to one flesh-and-blood individual or another) to a new, theoretically-constructed sense, which Headlam explains by reference to Michel Foucault: "In this view," he says, "the 'author'

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45. Headlam's distinction between reworkings and covers, borrowed from Arnold Shaw, is closely parallel to the equally value-laden distinction between paraphrases and transcriptions made by Liszt's biographer, Alan Walker (Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1847-1883. London 1983, p. 167).
46. Headlam, "Does the Song Remain the Same?", p. 362.
constitutes a principle of unity among a class of works, somewhat akin to a theory, under which disparate works can be grouped together by their shared characteristics stemming from that authorship”. In this strange blend of post-structuralist theory and very traditional musical analysis, authorial status is not only demonstrable by the music theorist but paradigmatically undivided; after all, it is musical unity, the very stuff of analysis, that underwrites it.

It seems that Headlam is himself less than fully convinced by this convoluted argument, for throughout his article he remains undecided as to whether Led Zeppelin should take a single or a plural verb. And the most revealing thing about the argument is precisely its convoluted nature, which reveals the depth of Headlam’s investment (and, by extension, that of music theory in general) in the concept of undivided authorship. For the multiple authorship that characterizes popular music production goes a great deal further than the collectivity of band composition; it extends to the highly segmented processes in which the roles of song-writers, arrangers, and artists are complemented by those of sound engineers, producers, and A&R personnel. Not infrequently several of these roles are combined in a single individual, but the roles themselves are largely distinct and increasingly credited as such on CDs; even samples may be individually credited. And whereas such credits are in part a response to the actual or perceived demands of copyright legislation, they also reflect an aesthetic valuation, in line with the creative influence that popular music historians have long ascribed to, say, Phil Spector. Multiple authorship, in short, is not only a fact of life but an interpretive principle in popular music.

Lisa Lewis has commented of the current system of assigning credit that it "represents only a small modification in the model of individual authorship in that it maintains the focus on the individual rather than the collective. Because no consensus for collective authorship has emerged to counter the historical focus on the individual author (despite the collectivity of modern production),

authorship discourse has become increasingly conflicted and contradictory under industrial capitalism.  

And she adds that a symptom of this conflicted nature may be seen in the mismatch between the actuality of popular music production and the perception of fans who, in contradistinction to popular music historians, "often assume that the performer is also the composer". But such mismatches are by no means restricted to popular music. Lydia Goehr, citing Daniel Barenboim and Theodor Adorno, suggests that audiences sometimes think of classical conductors as themselves playing or even composing the music. By contrast, histories of classical music (especially popular histories) tend to emphasize the role of composers at the almost total expense of other participants in the creative process; they call themselves histories of music but are really histories of compositions. It would be hard, however, to argue that the production of music in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries was significantly less segmented than that of popular music today. If there is an essential difference, it is that the different creative roles are predominantly simultaneous in popular music (which makes them harder to distinguish from one another), whereas in classical music they tend to be sequential. Paradoxically, then, you might claim that authorship is not less but more obviously divided in classical than in popular music.

If such a claim appears tendentious, the reason lies less in the facts of the matter than in the ideological baggage wrapped up with the concept of authorship. It is easy enough to instance cases in which music received as the work of one composer is in fact the product of a collaboration, though generally at a temporal remove: Mozart/Suissmayer, Mussorgsky/Rimsky-Korsakov, and so forth. (If these names evoke painful critical controversies, that is only

50. Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, p. 276. Schoenberg thought along similar lines when he complained that "Today [performers] stand higher than creators; they were put there not by themselves but by the favor of a public that believes that music comes from reproducers, just as miracles were attributed to the priest, not to God", in: Arnold Schoenberg (Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, ed.), *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of its Presentation*. New York 1995, pp. 291-293.
words about music, or analysis versus performance

evidence of the ideological baggage to which I referred.) And until a generation ago it was quite normal to perform the classical repertoire in versions adapted to the modern pianoforte or symphony orchestra, giving rise to Bach/Busoni, [C.P.E.] Bach/Biillow or Beethoven/Weingartner, for example. (As I have elsewhere written, "The idea of the Urtext, like that of historical performance practice, goes back to the days of Brahms, but its acceptance as the norm of informed performance dates back hardly further than the 1960s. It is as if the tenets of modernism became established in performance only at the dawn of postmodernism." 51) But these examples, together with the overt practices of collaborative authorship characteristic of the opera, pale into insignificance beside the creative collaboration as which performance must be seen, as soon as we acknowledge its significance as a locus of aesthetic effect. Just as in the case of multiple versions (and it is of course here that multiple versions and multiple authorship fuse into a single concept), what is striking is less the phenomenon than the way in which we swerve away from it.

So what is the ideological baggage to which I have referred? To say that as established religion declined its place was taken by art (and in particular music) may be a cliche, but it is also a fact. Again it is Goehr who documents the attribution of divine characteristics to composers by nineteenth-century commentators, revealing a nice hierarchy that begins with Baini's 1828 description of Palestrina as an early 'amanuensis of God', passes through Samuel Wesley's various characterizations of [J.S.] Bach as a 'Saint', a 'Musical High Priest', and a 'Demi-God', and concludes predictably enough with Bizet's description of Beethoven as a God. 52 But it is Schenker, writing in the 1920s, who provides perhaps the most unequivocal testament to the true source of musical creativity when he writes that true coherence - the coherence to which his theory alone gives access - is found only in "God and(...) the geniuses through whom he works". 53 And Peter Ki

Nicholas Cook

has emphasized the extent to which concepts of musical creation current throughout the nineteenth century and into Schenker’s time drew on theological models. The principal witness for his case is the famous letter attributed to Mozart but almost certainly fabricated by Friedrich Rochlitz in 1815, which speaks of the composer hearing all the parts of his music in his imagination not in succession but “as it were, all at once”;\(^{54}\) Kiroy shows through quotation from Boethius and Aquinas that Rochlitz was simply rewriting a standard theological chestnut (“How does God, who is eternal and unchanging, conceive of the course of history?”)\(^{55}\) in terms of music. The fact that Mozart never wrote the words that were attributed to him does not detract from their significance as a reflection and indeed a shaping agent in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinking on the subject, for the spurious letter was widely quoted (including by Schenker).\(^{56}\) Indeed its reflections may be traced in certain twentieth-century views about performance, in particular Erwin Stein’s statement of the performer’s need to have the “whole piece in a nutshell in his mind” \(^{57}\) The high profile which the letter came to occupy is hardly surprising in view of the way in which it brought together a number of highly resonant concepts: the divine nature of artistic creation, the authority inherent in the primordial vision of the work, and the actually or potentially demonstrable unity which underwrites the vision. It is the last two of these which have practical consequences for music and in particular for the conceptualization of performance. Just as the textual criticism practised by biblical and classical philologists


\(^{55}\) Kiroy, “Mozart and Monotheism”, p.195.

\(^{56}\) Schenker, Free Composition (Derfreie Satz), pp. i, 129.

sought to strip off the accretions of time and reconstruct the original version of the text, so the musical *Urtext* strives to recapture the composer's original vision; hence the endurance, long after its abandonment in other disciplines, of a language of intentionality originally associated with 'authentic' editions but subsequently transferred to 'authentic' performances. Authority, in short, is seen to derive from the composer, being delegated (but only delegated) to the editors of 'authoritative' editions and to the conductors or other charismatic performers who stand in, so to speak, for the composer when the music is played.

This is of course the source of the unusually strict hierarchies that characterize the practice of music, as reflected for instance in Leonard Bernstein's not entirely convincing stipulation that the conductor "be humble before the composer; that he never interpose himself between the music and the audience; that all his efforts, however strenuous or glamorous, be made in the service of the composer's meaning - the music itself, which after all, is the whole reason for the conductor's existence". Bernstein's invocation of 'the music itself' as the object of the composer's loyalty is a necessary reminder that the hierarchy of musical authority is not, in the first place, a hierarchy of individuals (composer, editor, conductor, rank-and-file player) but rather what might be termed a hierarchy of content. In calling it this I have in mind the text-oriented concept of music which Schenker evoked when he proclaimed in the preface of his monograph on the Ninth Symphony that "In the beginning was content [Inhalt]!", thereby aligning music with the divine Word of St John's Gospel; the perhaps baleful influence that philology exerted over the early development of musicology is undoubtedly a major source of the difficulties we encounter in conceptualizing music as a performance art in the full sense of this term. But it is more particularly to the third concept embraced by Rochlitz's fabrication that I wish to refer, namely the unity that underlines the composer's vision.

As so often it is Schenker who, through the very extremity of his ideas, reveals what is at issue most vividly. When I spoke of the editor stripping of the accretions of time and reconstructing the original version of the text, I could easily have been quoting verbatim from Schenker. But Schenker distanced himself from the Urtext of his day, which he saw as representing the "letter-worship of antiquarian sticklers for literalness, whose adoration is sometimes extended to misprints". While he shared the same goal as editors like Bischoff, he did not avail himself of their philologically-inspired methods. Instead he relied on analysis of content - analysis of the music itself, to repeat Bernstein's words. A representative example of his approach towards text criticism may be found in the 1925 essay on Chopin's Gb major Study, Op. 10 No. 5 where he discusses the issue of whether there should be a gb³ or (as the autograph and most editions have it) an eb³ in bar 24.

As usual, Schenker begins by setting up a fall guy, in this case Hugo Leichtentritt, according to whom "It is almost impossible to point with certainty to any one reading rather than another as being the authentic one". At this point Schenker jumps in with an ironically self-effacing rejoinder: "If I may be so bold as to say so, authenticity [i.e. traditional text-critical method] does not dictate

61. Schenker, "Chopin: Etude in Gb major, Op. 10, N.o. 5", in: William Drabkin (ed.), The Masterwork in Music: A Yearbook Volume 1 (1925). Cambridge 1994, pp. 90-98, especially p. 98; for further discussion of this example (and more generally of Schenker's editorial work) see Nicholas Cook, "The Editor and the virtuoso, or Schenker versus Bulow", in: journal of the Royal Musical Association n6 (1991), pp. 78-95. Schenker's editorial practice represents only an extreme case of the application of a principle of uniry that is widespread in the Urtext, namely the assimilation of multiply appearing material to a single format assumed to be authoritative. What is at issue is not so much the often arbitrary criteria by which such authoritative ness is judged, but rather the assumption that composers intended near-literal repeats to be identical, or different parts within a homophonic texture to be articulated in precisely the same manner, even though this is not what they actually wrote. For the argument that such small discrepancies were intended, and that the standardization adopted by most editors represents the imposition of an extraneous aesthetic ideology, see Graham Pont, "A Revolution in the Science and Practice of Music", in: Musicology [Musicology, Australia] 5 (1979), pp. 1-66 and Dene Barnett, "Non-uniform Slurring in 18th Century Music: Accident or Design?", in: Haydn Yearbook 10 (1977), pp. 179-199.
For him the matter is settled by analytical demonstration (as shown in his Figure 1, the middleground $ab^3$ of bar 21 falls to $gb^3$ in bar 23 and remains active until bar 41); Chopin simply wrote down the wrong note. And now Schenker presses home his advantage: "it is inexcusable to grant a slip of the pen that produces $eb^3$ on one occasion instead of $gb^3$ the status of an authentic reading. These matters are far simpler than people think: voice-leading is a higher entity than Chopin; had it not governed him, we would have not a single master-stroke by him! How extraordinary, and how utterly typical of man, that he so often takes the genius’s slip of the pen at face value and invests it with canonical status; and, still more often, he has no scruples about taking something that is perfectly correct and imputing an error to the genius, labelling it a 'reading'. Quite extraordinary!"

When Schenker says that "voice-leading is a higher entity than Chopin" he means it quite literally: there is an authority higher than that of the composer, even the genius-composer, and it is to this higher authority that appeal is to be made when the composer does the wrong thing. On another occasion Schenker explains how, in composing the "Heiliger Dankgesang" of the String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132, Beethoven had the clear intention of writing in the Lydian mode, which (like all the church modes, as Schenker explains) represents merely a transitional and imperfect phase in the development of major-minor tonality. But as Oswald Jonas, Schenker’s editor, glosses the text, even Beethoven could not write "in a 'Lydian system' which, in reality, never existed"; the composer, in short, was determined to do the wrong thing. And yet the music turns out to have a deep coherence that derives not from the so-called Lydian system but from the principles of major-minor tonality from which Beethoven thought he was getting away. How could this be? Beethoven had no idea, replies Schenker in a memorable image, that "behind his back there stood that higher force of Nature and led his pen, forcing his composition into F major while he himself was sure he was composing in

62. Heinrich Schenker (Oswald Jonas, ed., Elisabeth Mann Borgese, transl.), Hannony. Chicago 1954, p. 61 n. 3.
the Lydian mode, merely because that was his conscious will and intention. Is that not marvellous? And yet it is so.\textsuperscript{63}

Whether one personifies this higher authority as God or Nature, or characterizes it more prosaically in terms of physical, psychological, or even historical laws, makes little difference in the end: the composer speaks, but with a voice that is not, in the limiting case, his or her own. And here Schenker finds himself in an unlikely alliance with intellectual traditions ranging from Freudian psychoanalysis to French poststructuralism, each of which invokes an explanatory domain removed from individual consciousness. Like Barthes, Schenker proclaims the death of the Author\textsuperscript{64} (and the intersection of Schenker and Barthes provides the model for the hardly more probable linkage of Headlam and Foucault). But there is a significant difference, for the beneficiary is not in Schenker’s case the reader but the theorist, who alone has intellectual access to the truth. Again the model can be interpreted as in essence a theological one: if in Schenker’s system the genius-composers resemble mystics in their direct intuition of a higher plane, the theorist assumes the role of the ecclesiastical authorities, translating higher truths into terms accessible to ordinary people and thereby exercising a mediating function.\textsuperscript{65} (The fact that, in case of difference, it is the latter who have jurisdiction over the former only strengthens the parallel; in religion as in music, the Word may emanate from God but it is subject to interpretation at a more local level.)

There is, then, a hierarchy of authority in music but, as Schenker presents it, it is a hierarchy grounded in musical content and its correct interpretation. And while Schenker’s characteristically fundamentalist blend of extremism and literal-mindedness gives a picturesque quality to his presentation, it embodies (only in more concentrated form) patterns of thought so widespread that we

\textsuperscript{63} Ibidem, pp. 60-61.
\textsuperscript{65} Through "the being who is stronger than they", writes Schenker, the masses "can vicariously entertain elevating thoughts about religion, art, or science; but these heady thoughts are soon gone, and the masses are back where they were" (\textit{The Masterwork in Music, Volume I} p 115).
generally fail to recognize them as such. We may not be able to accept Schenker’s notion of genius-composers or the priest-like role that he assigns to the theorist except by virtue of an effort of historical understanding, but the great chain of being that he outlines between God and the ordinary person is replicated in the hierarchical structures of contemporary music theory.66 (If the bottom level of a prolongational hierarchy, say, represents the moment-to-moment perceptions of a listener, the topmost nodes have no correlate in perceptual experience and so correspond to what might be termed the 'God's-eye view' embraced by Rochlitz's account of the composer's vision.) And we commonly think of performers as exercising the same priest-like function, that is to say as occupying a position intermediate between creation and reception. In short (and here at last I come to the third musico-logical concept to which I referred at the beginning of this section), we think of composer, performer, and listener as occupying successive points within a single, linear structure.

Although it is with this linear structure that I shall finally be concerned, it is worth exploring the affinities between priest and performer a little further. In Bernstein's imprecation that all the conductor's efforts, "however strenuous or glamorous, be made in the service of the composer's meaning", even the subjunctive mode contributes to the religious connotation; it is as if Bernstein were putting himself forward as the Billy Graham of music. And the conspicuous tension in the evangelical community between service on the one hand and glamour on the other, between God and Mammon, also translates to the world of conducting. On the one hand, in his or her interpretive role the conductor is the most visible link in the musical chain; hence Schoenberg's sour reference, which I have already quoted,67 to "the public that believes that music comes from reproducers, just as miracles were attributed to the priest, not to God". But on the other hand the conductor, like

67. See above, n. 50.
Nicholas Cook

all mediators, is supposed to aim at self-effacement; Liszt wrote that "the genuine task of a conductor consists in making himself, manifestly superfluous", and so we are once again back at the ideal of transparency that we have already encountered in relation to Bulow and Brahms. Indeed I have already quoted the most uncompromising statement of this position, namely Schoenberg's assertion that the performer is "totally unnecessary except as his interpretations make the music understandable to an audience unfortunate enough not to be able to read it in print".

It would be silly to equate a statement like this, presumably made off the cuff, with a considered theoretical stance. But it is precisely unconsidered statements that reveal deeply embedded premises most clearly, and the same applies to Schoenberg's even more reckless confession of "dreams of a possibility of expression (…) where one may speak with kindred spirits in the language of intuition and know that one is understood if one uses the speech of the imagination - of fantasy". Whereas in the first of these statements the performer represents an essentially redundant halfway house between score and audience, in the second the score itself becomes transparent: music speaks from mind to mind through some esoteric telepathy, eliminating all mediation. And once again there is a widespread, if on the whole less extravagantly expressed, assumption that scores are merely an intermediate stage in a linear conveyance of content from composer to listener. The demonstration that scores are not just intermediate points in a linear process of communication is easiest in the case of contemporary music. After all, graphic scores like John Cage's *Solo for Piano* or Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* are essentially indeterminate with respect to their acoustic realization, and therefore if they are to be regarded as conveying anything from composer to listener that something must be of a highly abstract or generic nature.

words about music, or analysis versus performance

to take another example, Berio's *Gesti* for alto recorder involves a special notation which separates the two principal sites of activity in playing the instrument: the mouth and the fingers.\(^1\) The mouth part, if it can be called that, is notated with a high degree of specificity (fluttertongue, lip tension, singing through the instrument, inhaling) but the part for the fingers simply calls for repeated playing of one or two bars (any one or two bars) from a particular Telemann sonata. The juxtaposition of the two parts is indeterminate and therefore, as Berio states in the score, "the resulting sound is unpredictable. (...) Sometimes the instrument will produce no sound at all." The effect of the music in performance is attributable less to specific coincidences between notation and sonic outcome than to the way in which it deconstructs and reconstructs the player's technique. In conventional recorder performance, hands and lip are coordinated around the music that is to be played. But Berio's fragmented notation dislocates this coordination, creating an effect that is not so much represented as constructed by the score. To put it another way, the score functions performatively, as a site for the emergence of new sounds and new signification.

Nor need such demonstrations be limited to examples of compositional indeterminacy. Much the same points might be made about music which is, so to speak, overdetermined with respect to its performance. I have in mind music such as Stockhausen's *K/lavierstuck I*, the aggressively complex notation of which is surely to be understood less as the representation of specifically envisaged acoustic effects than as a statement which was on the one hand ideological and on the other hand performative: with its multi-level, irrational rhythms, huge leaps and disdain of familiar pianistic patterns, *K/lavierstuck I* defied literal rendition and so demanded a reconstruction of technique in very much the same way as *Gesti*. Of course there is a problem with this kind of compositional overdetermination, which is that last year's Parnassus becomes next year's examination piece, and the work of certain 'New Complexity' composers (Brian Ferneyhough is a

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\(^1\) This account of *Gesti* is condensed from Cook, "Music Minus One", p. 37.
conspicuous example) can be seen as an attempt to update the kind of performative encounter that Klavierstück I embodied in 1953.72 Such encounters force a reflective distance upon the performer by shattering the apparent transparency of the score as a representation of acoustic intention. Under such circumstances the familiar, if untheorized, identification of work and score becomes plainly inadequate, and Ferneyhough reflects this when he speaks of the "realm of non-equivalence" between score and performance being "where, perhaps, the 'work' might be said to be ultimately located".73 And Lawrence Rosenwald has made the very similar suggestion that a musical piece should be understood as "something existing in the relation between the notation and the field of its performances".74 Seen this way, score and performance are simulacra neither of one another, nor of "the piece itself, whatever chat phrase might mean", as Rosenwald puts it. It is instead the difference between the various representations chat counts.

At chis point I anticipate an objection: "You have shown the lack of transparency between work, score, and sound in the avant-garde repertory. But that repertory is defined just by its oppositional relation ø conventional music styles, in which transparency is accordingly the norm." As it happens, however, Rosenwald is not talking about the avant-garde repertory at all. He is talking about Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, about the way in which 'the piece' (in any aesthetically useful sense of the term) has steadily acquired new signification since its completion in 1824, as a result of successive critical and performance interpretations. When we hear the Ninth Symphony, we hear it against a horizon of expectations established by past performances and especially by recordings: a new interpretation signifies by virtue not only of what it is, but also of the pattern of differences it establishes with respect ø the interpretations of Mengelberg, Toscanini, Furtwangler,

words about music, or analysis versus performance

Karajan, Norrington, Hogwood, Harnoncourt. In acknowledging the co-relativity of score and performance, Rosenwald's formulation asserts that neither can be adequately understood as an ideally transparent representation of a predefined content. Instead, both score and performance are to be understood performatively, as sites for the construction rather than merely the reproduction of meaning. And they operate through a process of dialectic engagement, with performances being interpreted in light of the score, and the score being interpreted in light of performances.

What this amounts to is taking seriously Rothstein's idea, which I have already quoted, that "the performer adopts temporarily the viewpoint of one or two characters in the drama, so to speak, rather than assuming omniscience at every moment." For the deeply-embedded assumptions about performance whose archaeology I have traced might be described as converging precisely on the idea of omniscience. The authoritative understanding nominally possessed by the God-like composer (but actually exercised, in case of dispute, by the theorist) is delegated in the manner of a management hierarchy to the performer, who is expected to convey the same authoritative understanding to the listener; this is the context for the hierarchical relationship between theorist and performer that I traced in the previous section. Rothstein means that the performer should indeed have this knowledge, but should sometimes pretend not to. In other words, like a novelist, he or she should sometimes present the story from a particular protagonist's view, while still of course controlling all the strings. But a more radical reading of Rothstein's formulation would question the very possibility (or desirability) of omniscience, and with it what Kevin Korsyn calls "a central point of intelligibility."75

In contrast to traditional music theory, Korsyn advocates an approach drawn from Bakhtin's theory of the novel, the premise of which is the multiplicity of linguistic levels which Bakhtin terms 'heteroglossia'. For Bakhtin, the meaning of a novel arises from the irreducible heterogeneity of its linguistic constituents,

and is in this sense emergent. And he characterizes the unity of a novel as dialogic rather than dialectic, the difference being that the dialectic resolves opposition into a higher unity whereas, in Paul de Man’s words, "the function of dialogism is to sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice with regard to any other, including that of the novelist himself".76 (From a Bakhtinian viewpoint, then, I should have said ‘dialogic’ rather than ‘dialectic’ in the paragraph before last.) Transform ‘novelist’ into ‘composer’ and you have a formulation that applies as well to musical performance as it does to the novel. For performance embodies in the most literal manner the interaction of multiple agencies. Seen this way, the idea of a linear relationship or great chain of being in which score and performance occupy intermediate positions is replaced by a multi-dimensional structure that incorporates, minimally, the score, the performance, and an interpreter (who will always be a listener and may or may not also be the performer). And even that is an idealization, for a more comprehensive model would also include the multiple agencies of ensemble performance, the composer (now understood as a critical construction rather than a historical agent), and the horizon of expectations constituted, as I said, by performance as well as critical interpretations.

In emphasizing the construction rather than the reproduction of meaning, a genuinely performative model of performance would distance itself not only from the idea of ‘reproducing’ the musical content (as in the quotations from Brahms and Schoenberg), but also from easy and prevailing ideas of the ‘translation’ of structure into performance. In his review of Berry’s Musical Structure and Performance Rink complained with justification of "too simplistic a translation from analysis to performance".77 And while Rink has himself continued to use the term (as in "Translating Musical Meaning"), it might be considered more prudent to avoid it alto-

words about music, or analysis versus performance

gather; after all, when we think of translation, we normally think of the substantive context that can be equally well expressed in French or German, say, rather than the more intangible connotations that defy translation. But it is once again Rosenwald who points out that there is also what might be termed a strong sense of translation which turns on the semantic friction between languages, and he adds that it is precisely through the attempt at translation, through straining at the limitations of any system of representation, that we gain an understanding of content: "we do not know the original", he says, "do not and cannot know it in se, and (...) come to know it precisely by means of reflecting on its translations." 78 And in his commentary on Rosenwald’s article, Fred Maus adds that "in this process of exploration the distinction between ‘making’ and ‘finding’ meanings is obscure". 79

Rosenwald and Maus are talking about analytical rather than performance interpretation, but the distinction that Maus makes is precisely the same as the one I have been making between the constructive and the reproductive aspects of performance. And in truth, a performative approach to analysis and a performative approach to performance will almost inevitably go hand in hand, for the one implies the other. 80

IN PLACE OF CLOSURE

If it is true that, as Lester says, the study of actual performance is singularly absent from music-theoretical discourse, then this may be principally put down to the entrenched ways of thought that I discussed in the previous section. But it may also be put down to something more straightforward and practical. Modern music theory (in contradistinction to pre-modern speculative traditions) is built upon empirical resistance. The interface between word and

80. For further discussion of analytical performativity see Cook, "Analysing Performance, and Performing Analysis", from which the present argument is condensed.
music in theoretical discourse has evolved since the mid-nineteenth century from a purely ostensive one (with music examples, if present at all, being limited to score extracts) to increasingly focussed analysis, with the music being graphically dissected and reconstructed in tandem with the verbal text. In other words, a genre of writing has been established which embodies a relatively stable (if rarely theorized) blend of empirical data, logical demonstration, and rhetoric. But there is as yet no established genre for theoretical writing about performance; we have little idea of what epistemological blend we should be aiming at. And until recently there were no commonly-accepted techniques providing the same kind of empirical grasp on performance that we take for granted when writing about scores. The danger, then, was one of relapsing when writing onto performance into the kind of subjective and impressionistic writing that professionalized music theory had left behind. As a result, and despite the accumulation of a repertory of recordings that now goes back a century, performance analysis remains in a state of academic infancy.

Within the past decade the situation has changed to the extent that there is now a variety of tools for capturing different aspects of recorded sound and translating them (if that is the right word) into a graphic or numerical format. The cleanest data is obtained from MIDI instruments, which in the case of the MIDI-equipped piano enables a concise and comprehensive representation of the different dimensions of performance variance. But such data are, of course, unavailable for the historical repertory of recordings, for which recourse must be made to some kind of acoustically-based analysis. Some techniques, which currently occupy the status of curiosities rather than accepted methods, are at a high level of

81. For an attempt to theorize this blend, with references, see Nicholas Cook, "Epistemologies of Music Theory", in: Thomas Christensen (ed.), The Cambridge History of Music Theory. Cambridge forthcoming.

82. I would also suggest that the process of generic condensation in theoretical writing involved the development of appropriate aural training practices (that is, enabling the linking of graphic representation and experienced effect), and that the need for corresponding skills is another impediment to the rapid development of performance analysis. (For example, you cannot just look at Figure 1 below and know how it will translate into experienced sound, but you can learn to make the link.)
words about music, or analysis versus performance

abstraction (for instance Neil Todd's 'rhythmograms') or provide highly summarized synopses of musical structure (Robert Cogan's spectrographic analyses). Others operate at a lower level and of these the most frequently used by far is duration analysis. In the commonest variant of this technique, the analyst listens to the recording and at certain points depresses a key on a computer, which logs the time at which the key is depressed. These points might be irregularly placed structural divisions, or they might be the beginning of every bar or half-bar; in the latter case, analysis of the logged times will result in a series of tempo values which may be plotted against time. Figure 1 is an example of such a

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graph, representing the first movement development section from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony as performed by Furtwangler on two separate live recordings, dating from 1951 and 1953.

I have already referred to Furtwangler’s enthusiastic response to Schenker’s monograph on the Ninth Symphony, as a result of which he not only established a personal relationship with Schenker but routinely discussed with him the music that he was preparing for performance. It stands to reason, then, that there should be some kind of affinity between Schenker’s analytical approach to the Ninth Symphony and Furtwangler’s manner of performing it (and reciprocally that Furtwangler’s recordings, though dating from more than fifteen years after Schenker’s death, should provide some insight into the kind of performance that Schenker had in mind). And indeed this proves to be the case. In his monograph, Schenker offers a segmentation of the development section (he sees bars 160-179 as a transitional passage followed by four distinct subdivisions at bars 180-197, 198-217, 218-274, and 275-300), and claims that “the performance of the Development will be the better the more its subdivisions (...) are given clear expression as such”. This segmentation is easily detectable in the tempo graph of Furtwangler’s performances, with the first two subdivisions outlined by a pattern of increasing and decreasing tempi (giving rise to arch-shaped profiles), the

85. Figure 5.2 from Nicholas Cook, "The Conductor and the Theorise", in: Rink, *The Practice of Performance*, pp. 85-125, where further discussion of this tempo-mapping technique may be found, and from which the following paragraphs are condensed. (The recordings are respectively available on EMI CDH 7 69801 2 and DG 435 325-2.) For a concise introduction to a range of tempo-mapping applications see José Antonio Bowen, "Tempo, Duration, and Flexibility: Techniques in the Analysis of Performance", in: *Journal of Musicological Research* 16 (1996), pp. 85-156. Mention should also be made of Robert Philip’s *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950*. Cambridge 1992; this is a landmark work in terms of bringing recorded performances within the musicological purview, but limited in its approach to empirical analysis.


third by a passage of relatively stable tempo, and the last by a less clear profile which might be described as an overall accelerando divided at bars 282-283 by a kind of agogic accent.\textsuperscript{88} (The lack of clarity at this point might be put down to the way in which the music wears its structure, so to speak, on its sleeve, thus mandating a relatively neutral interpretation on the conductor's part.) But within these subdivisions Schenker constantly gives the impression of asking for two contradictory things.

On the one hand, in accordance with the demands of articulate performance, Schenker specifies numerous small nuances, which Furtwangler (like other conductors of his day) duly provides. But on the other, Schenker repeatedly insists on the need to create a sense of large-scale movement across each subdivision; one must summon all one's powers, he says, "to direct one's consciousness immediately, exactly upon entering the first subdivision - thus as early as bars 180-181! - toward the cadence of bar 192ff, which awaits beyond the 'mountain pass' of bars 188-194; that is, one must organize the performance of the subdivision according to a kind of bird's-eye view, a premonition of the overall course of the subdivision from its first tonic up to the last cadence. Only then will the cadence be performed as a cadence to the whole subdivision and not, as we unfortunately hear all too often, as a new unit in itself."\textsuperscript{89}

The sort of bitty effect that Schenker is disparaging can be heard on the recording that Mengelberg made with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in 1940; instead of integrating bars 192-197 within the subdivision of which it forms the cadence, Mengelberg drops speed substantially at bar 192, so giving this point as much weight as bar 197. Furtwangler, by contrast, nuances bar 192 (in each of his recordings there is a point of reversal at bar 192) but subordinates it to the main cadence.

\footnote{88. Properly speaking (i.e. as defined by Hugo Riemann), an agagogic accent is a structural note emphasized by lengthening (see Philip, \textit{Early Recordings}, p. 41-42). I am broadening the term to include the emphasis that results from a rallentando or caesura prior to the note in question, i.e. to designate all emphases resulting from rubato.}

\footnote{89. Ibidem. What Schenker terms a 'bird's-eye view' corresponds, of course, to what I previously referred to as a 'God's-eye view'.}
Now it is a generally accepted, though more rarely theorized, principle of performance that agogic accents serve to articulate points of structural division, with the intensity of the accent corresponding to structural embedding depth; in other words, a small agogic accent will correspond to a minor structural division, and a larger accent to a major division. But this principle, based on the assumption of a generally static tempo, establishes merely a linear continuum from minor to major division. Furtwangler's arch-shaped tempo profiles, by contrast, establish a qualitative distinction between what might be termed the structural and the rhetorical: on the one hand, the structural reversal which splits off one arch-shaped profile from another, and on the other the local nuance which, as at bar 192, is embraced within the larger profile. Furtwangler, in short, not only provides a correlate in performance of Schenker's structural spans, but finds an equivalent in performance for the multi-level structure of Schenker's theory (in which a foreground event might be described as 'rhetorical' with respect to a middleground, or 'structural', one). And the result is that Furtwangler is able to synthesize what in Schenker's account look like contradictory demands into a single, compelling interpretation. In short, Furtwangler's performance realizes a meaning that Schenker's words can only hint at.

But how adequate is this as a model for the analysis of performance? We can dispose relatively quickly of some general complaints that have been raised against the analysis of recordings. One complaint is that they are unreliable, in the sense that you cannot tell how far the audible balance is an artefact of the recording process (the position of performers in relation to the horn in an early recording, microphone placement in a more recent one), or how far tone colour has been distorted by technology. Or again, given the variability in speed of early recording apparatus, you cannot tell whether the music you are hearing was performed in one tempo at A=440 or in a slower tempo at A=420. But information does not need to be perfectly reliable in order for you to analyze it; we routinely talk about the effect of early music on the basis of scores, when in reality we have far less idea how it sounded than the music on the records. (And the problem about recording speeds only affects absolute, not relative, tempi.) A similar but
rather more substantial objection relates specifically to reliance on tempo graphs: is it not dangerous to extrapolate from a single dimension of the musical performance to the whole? The answer is, of course, that it is dangerous, but then most attempts at explaining things involve taking risks. And here at least we have some support from Furtwangler, who attributed to tempo nuance the same kind of summarizing value that I previously discussed with reference to Brendel and Rink. (Indeed he went as far as to claim that “it is possible to tell from the treatment of the so-called rubato, as from a barometer reading, whether or not the impulses provoking it are in accordance with the real feeling of the passage or not, whether they are genuine or not.”) But in any case, just as we routinely analyze music on the basis of information that is less than perfectly reliable, so we routinely analyze it on the basis of highly incomplete representations: scores, for example.

In my view, however, there are some more serious objections to this kind of performance analysis, and in the remainder of this paper I shall state two of them. The first, which I can state but to which I do not have a reply, concerns the basic format of Figure 1. The vertical axis represents metronome values, but can one properly speak of a tempo when the values are constantly changing? Or to put the question the other way round, the shapes in the graph represent deviations from a notional steady tempo, but does the notional steady tempo have any phenomenological or psychological reality, and if not how can we justify speaking of deviations? Should we maybe measure deviations not against a steady tempo in which the movement has probably never been performed, but against some grand average of the tempo profiles current at a particular time and place, insofar as they can be reconstructed from the recorded repertory? Or should we be understanding tempo profiles in a purely formal sense, without reference to any concept of deviation (and what exactly might that mean?). Since I do not know the answer to these questions, I shall pass on to the second objection, which will take longer to explain but to which I have a better idea of the answer.

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This second objection involves a return to the opening concern of this paper, to words and music - or, in the terminology I used in the previous section, critical and performance interpretations. For if, as I have argued, it is misguided to look for an unproblematic translation of the one into the other, of analysis into performance, what kind of relationship should we expect to find between them? This question has been posed by the philosopher Jerrold Levinson, according to whom it is a straightforward categorical error to think that a performance can ever embody a particular critical interpretation. Of course some performances are more compatible than others with a particular critical interpretation, he admits, but for any particular performance there could always be another compatible critical interpretation. For him, performances are always underdetermined with respect to critical interpretations, and so he concludes that "Even where a given PI might be said to correspond, in principle, to a particular theoretical understanding of a piece - and I think this is only rarely the case - it does not itself make that understanding available, nor is it good evidence of the possession of such an understanding on the part of the performer who offers it." There seems, in short, to be a locked gate of difference between analysis and performance, although at the end of his article Levinson unbends as far as to concoct a reading of a movement from a Bach violin sonata that illustrates how critical analysis and performance might be connected with one another. But he immediately adds that "what I would emphasize (...) is just the contingency of most of these connections, and thus the implausibility of thinking that any sort of one-to-one correspondence can be demonstrated between given sets of performing choices and given critical conceptions in regard to a musical work."

Levinson's demonstration is more satisfying logically than musically. One of the problems is that, in order to illustrate criti-

words about music, or analysis versus performance

In essence I mapped Schenker’s spans onto Furtwangler’s tempo profiles. In other words, the analytical criterion was the fit or lack of fit between the two, although the process of mapping brought to light what might be termed a penumbra of difference between them. And if this enabled me to draw valid conclusions about the way in which Furtwangler created a distinctive bridge between analysis and performance, the viability of the project depended on a historically documented and quite exceptional bond between analyst and performer; of how many other top-ranking conductors

95. I have presented this argument at greater length in my review of Krausz’s book (Music and Letters 77 (1996), pp. 103-109), where I suggest that if Pls are underdetermined with respect to Cls, then the reverse is also true.
would a commentator be likely to comment that "his interpretation analyzed the structure"? Moreover, my approach created a kind of complicity between subject and object, the most obvious symptom of which is the implicitly positive evaluation of Furtwangler and the way in which Mengelberg, as a less structurally-oriented interpreter, is set up as fall guy. (That in itself, of course, is reminiscent of Schenker's treatment of Leichtentritt.) In short, an analytical method which simply looks for fit or lack of fit between analysis and performance will necessarily fall short of the agenda which I outlined at the end of the previous section.

This situation is a not unfamiliar one in the analysis of performance, except that its results are sometimes less happy than in the alignment of Schenker and Furtwangler. An illuminating example (although one that must be reconstructed from the surviving documentation) is Webern's Piano Variations, of which Peter Stadlen gave the first performance under the composer's direction. Webern's directions were evidently comprehensive, as evidenced both by an article which Stadlen wrote twenty years later and by his performance score, heavily annotated in accordance with Webern's instructions and subsequently published in transcription. The motivation of Stadlen's article was polemical, but the annotated score supports his contention that Webern's performance directions were effectively unrelated to the music's serial organization. For instance, Webern asked Stadlen to bring out the notes at the top of the texture in the first movement, projecting them as a melody line. But the series is distributed homophonically, and therefore this melody line cuts right across it. Stadlen was not concerned to make sense of this (he was more interested in making nonsense of serialism), but a more recent commentator,


words about music, or analysis versus performance

Robert Wason, is. However Wason encounters a great deal of difficulty. After various abortive attempts to find some structure in the music that might justify such a performance interpretation, he suggests rather hopelessly that Webern’s performance indications "point to structural features not immediately retraceable to the row [which] produce a tension against the structural segmentations, while certainly assuming their existence."100

Methodologically this conclusion is not a happy one. Either the performance interpretation is the same as the analysis (thereby confirming the analysis), or else it is different, in which case it confirms the analysis just by virtue of being different. If Webern’s performance directions really did have nothing to do with the serial structure, there is no way you could discover it! For the theorist anxious at all costs to find something, this might be characterized as a win-win situation. But for the analysis of performance, it illustrates the poverty of a conceptual framework in which the only options are that p is the same as or similar to q on the one hand, and on the other that it isn’t. Very much the same problems have long plagued the analysis of film music, for which traditional film theory had two categories: ‘parallelism’, meaning that music and film did the same, and ‘counterpoint’, meaning that they didn’t. A further problem was that the film was assumed to be a semantically self-sufficient entity prior to the addition, normally at the last moment, of the music, giving rise to the paradoxical idea of inter-relating music and ‘film’ (paradoxical because the music is of course an element of the film). But such a conceptual framework is altogether inadequate for the rich variety of possible relationships between music, words, and pictures, or for the manner in which their mutual relationships contribute to the emergence of filmic meaning. More recent approaches101 have not only significantly extended the analytical taxonomy of inter-media relationships, but also predicated an analytical process that models

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101. See Nicholas Cook, Analysing Musical Multimedia. Oxford 1998, where further references may be found.
the way different media interact with one another in the construction of the overall experience. Instead of a prior meaning being mapped onto the music, the analysis effectively works from the bottom up.

I hope it is easy to see how readily all this maps onto the analysis of performance. As in the case of film, we have a dominant discourse (words and pictures, composed structure) which is mapped onto a marginalized one (film music, performance). In each case there is a one-way motion (film-to-music, analysis-to-performance), imposing a model according to which meaning is reproduced rather than emerging from the interaction, as I termed it in the previous section, of multiple agencies. Just as film theorists oppose 'film' and 'music', as if the latter were not already part of the former, so we talk about the relationship between 'music' and 'performance', as if music existed apart from performance. In each case, finally, we may recognize in the marginalized element a Derridean supplement, with all the deconstructive potential that that implies. Bringing performance into the mainstream of analysis, then, may involve some rethinking of established music-theoretical assumptions, but that is one of the reasons why it is worth doing. And the sooner we make a start on it the sooner the job will be done.