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III

ANACHRONISM AND AUTHENTICITY

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Original Ears

Vintage Compared with Style

It has always puzzled me why, if we put old buildings on lists to protect them (I'm talking about pre-twentieth-century buildings), and pay large sums to own and live in them, we do not build new ones in that style. A new house, built using, say, seventeenth-century principles, would inspire enormous interest. People would drive miles to see it. Of course it would be expensive to build, which is the usual explanation for not doing it. But its value would correspond to its cost. And it would be a pleasure to see and to use. Why don't we do it?

The same with furniture: people pay huge amounts for old antiques—far more than they are worth—simply because of their style; but very few furniture stores sell new furniture in authentic antique styles.

Could it be that most people don't actually appreciate the beautiful qualities of old things? That it is the age of the object, rather than the style of its design and construction that gives it its monetary value? All the more reason, I would think, to encourage people to make copies of objects made in older styles. Then they don't have to pay for age.

"Old" evidently has more value than "new." No dealer would sell a Rembrandt as a Picasso. Pico complained in 1512, "Any sculpture which is reported to be of recent make, even if it excels those made in ancient

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times, is considered inferior."[1] Dürer was actually told in Venice in 1506 that the piece he was trying to sell was "not in the ancient manner and therefore no good."[2] It was not, as dealers say, "antique enough." Imagine a composer, or graphic artist, being told that today!

Some people like copies of paintings or musical instruments to have the "look of age," a vintage value. They would prefer, for example, a new "Baroque" violin with an artificial patina of age over its varnish. Given a choice, in other words, they prefer to see "old" things look like they look now (that is, old) rather than how they looked then (which would have been new).

Even Michelangelo passed off some of his statues as antique by artificially weathering or damaging them.[3] People who make fake paintings have to age them because being old is a condition of being original. And for his "Lefébure" harpsichord, Skowroneck used a simulated patina, original old dust, and artificial scratches to make experts think the instrument was old.[4]

I myself like a Baroque violin to look new, like it looked in the Baroque period; I like my music to sound new, as it sounded then. (In fact, I even like the idea of newly composed Baroque music, for the same reason.) Not that I want to be there then, with open sewers, plagues, and absolutist governments. I do want, however, to see the Baroque period as it saw itself when it was the present. When, in other words, all these objects were new. Most of the instruments in old paintings look brand new.

For me, the appearance of age is not what makes an instrument, a performance, or a score authentic. To borrow Harnoncourt's words:

> We must understand the genuine musical concerns of Monteverdi and understand how those concerns are reflected in living music. We must attempt as musicians to see with new eyes everything that was current for Monteverdi and *will remain current for all times,* to reanimate it, to render it with our feelings, our 20th-century mentality—for certainly we do not wish to return to the 17th century.[5]

The italics are mine. The only thing I can think of that "was current for Monteverdi and will remain current for all times" is the style he worked in. Style can jump centuries. It is the only relevant criterion for ascription and for replicating.

Of course, there are those who argue that we can't know what music and even violins were really like in the Baroque; our ideas about these things are always changing. This, we have to agree, is true; art fakes demonstrate that art is captive in its period and place. But if we wait to try to get it completely right, we'll never get it. First, we cannot know if we have succeeded. And whether it's right for all time is not the issue. All we want is to be confident we have realized the style as we perceive it at this particular moment.

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Seconda Pratica

Four centuries ago, in 1605, Claudio Monteverdi announced his intention to publish a book called *Seconda Pratica, overo Perfettione della moderna musica,* in which he would explain the principles of a new, "modern music." "Seconda Pratica" was Monteverdi's name for a music in which priority was placed on the expression of the emotions of the text. Seconda Pratica radically rejected the mainstream and believed it was recovering a tradition that had been lost in antiquity.

The concept of a music in which "harmony is the servant of the words" had originated from research by "the Camerata," a group of poets and musicians in Florence, who for some years had been investigating the history of the Greek drama of antiquity. Their purpose was to revive it if possible, and their reading of the evidence indicated that the texts had been sung rather than spoken. Several members, including Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri, composed dramas entirely in recitative that carefully imitated the natural rhythm and melody of speech. As music, the new style was strange and shocking in sound.

There have been many turns in the road of performing style, but few of the degree these musicians achieved. Seconda Pratica (or *nuove musiche* as Caccini called it in his volume of solo songs) was invented by radical thinkers who were serious about reviving a form of earlier music. Their deliberate rejection of received tradition precipitated much argument and discussion.

In the then-mainstream approach to music, *Prima Pratica,* there was no attempt at realistic discourse or dialogue. The text was pretty much impossible to understand because voices, composed in imitation of each other, sang the text at different times.[6] Prima Pratica was the polyphonic Netherlandish style that flourished all over Europe, represented by composers like Ockeghem, Desprez, Mouton, Clemens non Papa, Gombert, and culminating in the work of Adrian Willaert (d. 1562). Prima Pratica was described and codified in the writings of Gioseffo Zarlino (d. 1590). Here is an example.

AUDIO SAMPLE: 45. Henry's Eight, 1997. Clemens non Papa: Ego flos campi

And here is another example of Prima Pratica by Monteverdi.

AUDIO SAMPLE: 46. Concerto Italiano, 1994. Monteverdi: Secondo Libro, "Non si levava ancor l'alba novella"

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In putting priority on projecting the meaning of texts with complete clarity and great expressiveness, the composers of Seconda Pratica were willing to drop customary musical conventions; rules were changed or ignored so that the music could remain inconspicuously at the service of the text. In addition to Monteverdi, Peri, and Caccini, composers who experimented with Seconda Pratica included Gesualdo, Cavalieri, Fontanelli, Ingegneri, Marenzio, de Wert, and Luzzaschi. Here are two famous pieces by Monteverdi in Seconda Pratica style.

AUDIO SAMPLE: 47. Complesso Barocco, Curtis, 1996. Monteverdi: Lamento della ninfa

AUDIO SAMPLE: 48. Complesso Barocco, Curtis, 1996. Monteverdi: "Or che 'l ciel"

The Camerata unintentionally ended up inventing something quite new, like neither the mainstream nor the Classical past it had hoped to emulate. Perhaps it was opera, perhaps it was a base from which opera developed,[7] as well as the principle of animating spoken text. It inspired all the music prior to the Romantic era. We could call it the basis of Baroque music.

The Camerata were not purposely setting out to invent a new music, any more than modern-day players of Period style are; their idea was historical. The turning of the carousel of time is not a thing that is easy—or even possible—to resist, but there can be very interesting results by mixing ideas from the past (as we dimly perceive it) with assumptions of the present.

The parallel of Seconda Pratica to the subject of this book, our own HIP, is obvious. Like HIP, the Seconda Pratica was reacting from within a venerable tradition (the Prima Pratica).[8] It just might be possible, then, to see in vague terms where our own "Seconda Pratica" is going.

The vision of HIP as meaning something "beyond a dead past" and pointing to "an idiom not yet invented" has been talked about since the 1980s.[9] It would be pointless to force this analogy too far, but the general similarity between Seconda Pratica and HIP is striking: the rejection of the dominant style (Netherlandish polyphony in one case, Romanticism/Modernism in the other), the attempt to substitute a contrasting one (monody/Period style), the resort to history, even the fanaticism and the rules. The new style is invented not out of whole cloth, but is certainly a construct based on insufficient evidence. And finally, the effort ends up serendipitously producing something new and unimaginable in advance.

Of course, musical movements in those days involved more composing than now, but that will hopefully change. In any case, unless somebody can convince us that there is a real difference between performing and

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composing, the point is a minor one. And I can't imagine anyone at the time performing Seconda Pratica with the restraint and refinement that would have been normal for the pieces of Prima Pratica.

In the case of Seconda Pratica we know what happened; where our movement is presently leading will not be clear for a generation or two. We have a great deal more historical material evidence for our case than the members of the Camerata were able to piece together for theirs.[10] What we are now creating has as yet no name, even if we hear it in varying degrees in many contemporary concerts. What we know for sure is that there is no escaping the carousel of time. As art fakes show, every imitation will unconsciously show signs of the epoch that produced it. The harder we work to imitate the past, the more personal and contemporary the results will be. As Paul Henry Lang writes, "it is always our present we are interpreting, but we are doing so by looking into the past."[11]

Monteverdi never finished his book, by the way, but through his other writings it is clear he was moving toward the principle of Rhetoric, an idea already in the air and brought up by Galilei in the 1580s. Later discussions of Rhetoric and musical gestures are common in Germany and France. This perception of music as oratory and musical performance as Eloquence continued to be appealing through the Baroque period. "And if it be sayd," writes Roger North in the 1720s, "that it is impossible to produce speech out of inanimate sounds, or give an idea of thought, as speech doth, I answer that whenever a strong genius with due application hath attempted it, the success hath been wonderfull; as when the great Corelli used to say [of the violin] *Non l'intendite parlare?* ["Do you not hear it speak?"]"[12]

The idea was still strong in Mozart's day. Mozart's correspondence with his father while writing *Idomeneo,* for instance, is frequently on the subject of the cut-off point between speaking and singing, very much the same issue that had concerned Caccini and Monteverdi.

Past Examples of Authenticity Movements

There were other HIPs, like the one that existed in England as early as 1726. Called the Academy of Ancient Music, it was "the first organization to perform old works regularly and deliberately." It had curious similarities to twentieth-century HIP, being at first mostly supported by musicians.[13] Roger North, writing in ca. 1726, might well have been describing it:

> And untill a set of musicall *vertuosi,* well weighed in a resolution, and capable to make the experiment, and of whom none, as thinking themselves wiser, shall put on the contemptuous frowne and seem inwardly to sneer, shall be mett together, with all things fitt for the same designe, there will be no reason to expect the antiquitys of musick should ever be understood.[14]

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The Academy involved many prominent singers and players at the time, such as Tosi, Galliard, Haym, Bononcini, "Il Senesino," Dieupart, Loeillet, Geminiani, Pepusch, and Chelleri. Agostino Steffani acted as honorary president. Handel, interestingly, was not involved. The Academy remained a specialist circle defined by its interest in earlier repertoire that was not shared by the larger musical community.[15]

Despite the similarity of their names, the Concert of Antient [!] Music, which was founded a half-century later in 1776, had a very different purpose from the older Academy. Its members were not an isolated gathering of professionals but a modern concert society led by peers of the realm. The concerts were put on in grand style, and from 1785, the king regularly attended them.[16]

The Concert of Antient Music's repertoire crossed over the great changes from Carissimi and Purcell through Handel into Hasse, Jommelli, and Christian Bach. It defined its repertoire as "no younger than about 20 years," which meant that, in the minds of people in London in 1776, contemporary music extended backwards some twenty years, after which it passed into the category of "Antient." This sounds more like how we think of popular music.

Speaking like a true canonist, Roger North in 1728 wrote of "the works of the great Corelli" in England, which "became the only music relished for a long time, and there seemed to be no satiety of them, nor is the vertue of them yet exhaled, and it is a question whether it will ever be spent, for if musick can be immortall, Corelli's consorts will be so."[17] In England, as Weber shows, North was not exaggerating Corelli's position. Weber wrote of the concertos, "It was not so much that people necessarily thought them better than Vivaldi's, but that the works fulfilled a particular role as a model of taste that kept them in use well after their style had gone out of date."[18]

In Germany in about 1680 when, after the Thirty Years War, the nobility had gained the upper hand, one way they re-enforced their status was by importing French and Italian music to fill the void in the country's musical infrastructure. Instrument makers began copying (exactly, apparently) the new designs of French woodwinds, and there was a great demand for instruction in the performing protocols of Italy and France.[19] We also have the descriptions of playing style by Georg Muffat, who had evidently worked with Lully in the 1660s and some years later went to Rome, where he was closely associated with Corelli. In 1695–1701, Muffat published accounts of his experiences.[20] The German musicians to whom these books were aimed must have been very much like us, concerned with replicating the major seventeenth-century performing styles.

In eighteenth-century France, too, there was an interest in *musique ancienne*. The Atelier Philidor at the court copied many volumes of earlier seventeenth-century examples of "musique classique française." Lully's operas continued to be performed for a century after his death (Le Cerf

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de la Viéville was of the opinion in 1704 that "the public should be given new [non-Lully] operas only for fear of making Lulli's seem old too soon because of being performed continually"[21]). One reason for Lully's longevity onstage was that the bylaws of the Opéra stipulated that one of his operas should always be kept in readiness should a new work fail. Revivals of Lully were consistently successful at the box office, however.[22] From the 1730s, Rameau's operas shattered many people's illusion that Lully could never be replaced. Lully (and Rameau as well) did eventually disappear in the late eighteenth century.

It is ironic to read Le Cerf de la Viéville's proud words, written in 1704, that "The overtures of Lulli have beauties that will be new and admirable through all the centuries."[23] As recently as 1970, practically no one then alive had heard a single note of his music; happily, that is now quickly changing.

The Difference between an Art Fake and a Period Concert

There have always been copiers, inspired by a sentiment expressed in 1607 by Annibale Carracci, the great Bolognese painter. Carracci was quoted as saying that if his pictures were mistaken for those of Titian and Correggio, which he often imitated, "the deception would be to his credit, especially since the painter's goal is to fool the eyes of the viewer, 'making appear to them as true that which is only feigned.'"[24] There is no hint here of a feeling of guilt for copying. And indeed in the eighteenth century, copies must have been viewed in a different light, otherwise William Topham would never have published his edition advertised as *Six sonatas . . . compos'd in imitation of Arcangelo Corelli* in 1709. Corelli was still alive at the time.

We know only the failures of forgers. Fakes that have succeeded are still undiscovered, and remain attributed to other, more famous artists. That is what a successful fake is, by definition. But experts argue that few fakes survive for long. What one generation will accept and spend considerable money for will leave the next cold. They are looking at, and for, different aspects of the work. As Kurz put it, "Every forgery will—unconsciously—show symptoms of the style of the epoch which produced it. Contemporaries may not discern it but, seen from a distance, the signs of the true period of origin gradually become apparent. Friedländer once said that the life of a forgery does not outlast thirty years, in other words its own generation."[25] As forgeries get farther away from the period in which they were made, they begin to betray the attributes of the wrong period. Werness observes, "Characteristics that mark an era may be those that are most universally appreciated at that time. They seem also to be the qualities that become 'dated' most quickly. The generation for which these qualities are in fashion tends to be blind to them, but to the next generation they may become painfully evident."[26]

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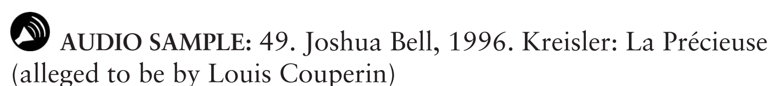
Copies in Period style would presumably share this property of "shelf-life" with forgeries. I am thinking of performance styles, instrument copies, editions, and compositions, even replicas made as authentically as possible. Consider recordings of Period playing from the 1930s and 1940s—those of Landowska, for instance. They certainly sound dated. Instruments made in the same period that were called "copies" seem insensitive and too heavily built, and editions of music are (not always, but usually) difficult to use because of the intrusive additions and directives of well-meaning musicologist-editors. We cannot help it; our view of history is limited by our vantage-point and our imaginations.

Han van Meegeren's paintings are an example. Van Meegeren produced a number of paintings in the 1930s and 1940s in the style of Vermeer and de Hoogh.[27] He managed to fool all the Vermeer experts of his time. When they are viewed today, it is hard to understand how anyone could have thought they were by Vermeer. Werness comments in her article on the famous legal prosecution of van Meegeren, "Some of van Meegeren's beautiful figures curiously resemble Greta Garbo . . . that charm has faded with time."[28] We are indeed captive on the carousel, as Joni Mitchell demonstrated in her two very different recorded versions of "The Circle Game."

In music, a celebrated case is that of Fritz Kreisler, the "last of the violinist/composers."[29] For years, Kreisler played a number of "arrangements" which in 1935 he announced were actually of his own composition. Kreisler had begun using the names of then-obscure composers because he "found it impudent and tactless to repeat my name endlessly on the programs." Kreisler's confession was generally accepted in good spirit, and the predominant opinion was that he was "a paragon of modesty" or "a genius with a sense of humor who played a 'magnificent joke.'"

But Kreisler's confession did elicit a few accusations of "conscienceless forger" and "unethical imposter,"[30] and led to a bitter exchange with the chief music critic of the *London Times,* Ernest Newman, who questioned Kreisler's ethics and abilities. Ethically, Newman had a point; affairs like this undermine confidence in editors, and Kreisler could indeed, as Newman suggested, have just as well used fictitious names instead of real composers.[31] There is thus always the issue of honesty, even though Kreisler had made no effort to conceal the fact that the pieces were fakes. Here is Joshua Bell's recording of "Louis Couperin's" *La Précieuse,* an interesting overlay of style imitations. Kreisler in Romantic style imitates Couperin in Baroque style, and Bell in Modern style imitates Kreisler, with Period style (whether conscious or not) in the background.



AUDIO SAMPLE: 49. Joshua Bell, 1996. Kreisler: La Précieuse (alleged to be by Louis Couperin)

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In the art world, the legal justification for prosecuting artists for imitating style is "fraud," that is, purposely misrepresenting the object to one's advantage when large sums of money are involved. Van Meegeren sold his fakes at very high prices (the prices had to be appropriately high to make his work credible). He himself claimed his motive was purely artistic, but he was convicted of fraud as well as forgery.[32]

One point worth underlining is that the question of fakes is separate from that of artistic quality. Forgeries are not necessarily bad art; quite the contrary. Forgers are deserving of considerable respect; not only are they artists of obvious ability, able to deceive experts on an æsthetic level, but are good enough as historians and craftsmen to be able to mislead curators on details of aging, technique, and materials as well. Haskell mentions a forger named Tobia Nicotra who "convincingly executed 'autographs' of Palestrina, Handel, Gluck, Mozart and others." That these were falsely attributed does not say anything about their musical merit; they could have been excellent.[33] Forgers beat both the experts and the artists at their own games. As Lessing observes, "Considering a work of art aesthetically superior because it is genuine, or inferior because it is forged, has little or nothing to do with aesthetic judgment or criticism. It is rather a piece of snobbery."[34] Thus van Meegeren, whose paintings were greatly admired when they were thought to be Vermeers, should have been honored for being capable of both pleasing and duping his contemporaries. What causes the historical replicas of musicians to be accepted as "authentic" (as we say) but those of artists and composers to be called fakes? (Imagine a concert of a well-known Period group billed as "fake performances!")

Having painted some of the best "Vermeers" in existence, van Meegeren concealed his name for years. In effect, he was pretending to be Vermeer. Musicians and instrument makers do just the reverse; they advertise their own names, worry about their reputations, and spend hours writing CVs (always putting them in the third person, as if someone else had written them) and being photographed in "artsy" poses. In revealing their identities, musicians get the kind of public approval that really should have been van Meegeren's.

How Historical Musicology and HIP Differ

> *Vertubleu, s'écria le Marquis, des sottises écrites! Ce sont celles qui durent le plus.*
>
> (Le Cerf de la Viéville)[35]

Henry Fielding once observed that in books of history "nothing is true but the names and dates," whereas in his own novels "everything is true but the names and dates." Collingwood also discusses this comparison:

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> As works of imagination, the historian's work and the novelist's do not differ. Where they do differ is that the historian's picture is meant to be true.
>
> Genuine history has no room for the merely probable or the merely possible; all it permits the historian to assert is what the evidence before him obliges him to assert.[36]

Collingwood's point is that a legitimate historical construction does not involve creative additions or interpolations.

Performance practice and historical musicology are closely interconnected, but they differ in one fundamental way. While performance practice involves the reconstruction of past common practice, musicology is both less and more. It deals only in verifiable history—that is, evidence that is "meant to be true" (as far as can be established). What is considered verifiable history almost never offers a complete picture; in the case of music, not even recordings (if they existed) could do that. Performers have to fill in that picture and transform it into coherent music. Music historians may not, by the code of their profession, do it for them.

Like Pontius Pilate washing his hands, historians pass over undocumented events in silence, or treat them neutrally, or (as a last resort) admit ignorance of details that are unclear.[37] Somebody has to keep their hands clean; fashions in performing style come and go (they come and go among historians too, for that matter, as scholarly fashions change). "It is the narrative impulse that brings the fictive element into history, for there is both too much and too little evidence for continuous narratives; the historian must both fill in and weed out."[38]

It is not therefore unreasonable of music historians to try to distinguish truth from fiction.[39] Of course, that gives musicologists a nerdish image, obliged as they are to be more concerned with mundane activities like correctness than with the glamour of performing. "Art and Air come seldom from under a Gown," as Roger North put it (referring to the academic robes that are still used in a limited way in universities).[40]

I remember my shock some years ago when attending an American Musicological Society conference here in Montreal. The presenters all wore neckties and were terribly serious (often about silly things), for all the world like businessmen. It seems that whimsy and wit are not part of most academics' idea of how to study seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. I think they haven't read enough Mattheson (the most important Baroque writer on German music) whose style is so delightfully informal. Some day in the not-distant future, I believe, students of music history will smile at the exaggerated formality of their twentieth-century musicological forbears. Let us hope the musicologists of the twenty-first century will learn to wear looser clothes.

Because musicians perform concerts, they can't skip over the bits they are not sure about. The musician is forced to assume "too much": that is, more than can be proven.[41] "It is impossible," as Nicholas Temperley put it, "to sing or play a piece of music using only historically established facts

as determinants of style."[42] Not many musicians can get away with a stunt like the one Toscanini is credited with: at the first performance he stopped Puccini's unfinished *Turandot* and announced to the audience, "At this point the Master set down his pen." The performance was left unfinished.

So Period style is more like a historical novel. Just as a novel must have a form/plot and characters, a successful concert performance of a piece of historical music must perform all the notes and make sense to a modern audience. Continuous narrative and coherence are obligatory for the historical performer.

Pontius Pilate, being an educated man (and apparently not inclined to religious absolutes), responded to Jesus' claim to speak Truth with the question "What is Truth?" (One can imagine Pilate hoping for a fleeting moment for some kind of real dialogue with another thoughtful person—the intellectual stimulus he probably sorely missed out there in a minor posting far from Rome.) Chapter 9 of this book touches on how truth and history interface. My conclusion, like that of most other people, is that when it comes to history, truth is relative.

First, there is the inadvertent fiction that can easily creep into history, created by that sense of narrative that is so tempting. Another obstacle is described by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, writing about music of the Middle Ages:

> Often it's not easy to see exactly where this invention [the inadvertent fiction] happens, because each step that a scholar takes in forming and setting out their view is a small one, and necessarily fits well with views that colleagues already hold. Otherwise it could never be accepted, and scholars never propose views that have no chance of being taken up: there are market forces that limit what they may safely propose if they want any kind of career. But when you add all those small steps together, over a long enough time, a view of the subject gets built up that is far more specific and detailed than can possibly be confirmed by the small amount of hard evidence that survives. Each new step uses some medieval evidence as its basis, but the way that evidence is read is very largely determined by the nature of views already accepted.[43]

The end result, as Leech-Wilkinson explains, is theories "that look plausible but that could be wildly wrong."

As long as musicology communicates by words and not by acts, it can only go so far in helping musicians. There are innumerable details of music too subtle to be described in words that are nevertheless of decisive importance for the character and style of a performance. These nuances can only be investigated and communicated in the context of musical performance; musicologists who are not musicians will never find them. As Leech-Wilkinson wrote, "True, there was evidence brought together that would have been hard to ignore," but "it was music-making, not scholarship, that changed medieval music history."[44] Christopher Page writes of medieval music, "The dilemma faced by musicology has not changed:

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either one works minutely, assembling fragments of evidence that some day in the future may accumulate to such an extent that a picture becomes visible; or one takes what one has and guesses the rest. Only the latter can lead to performances."[45]

I speak here of musicians and musicologists as separate people, but as time goes on, more and more individuals are full-fledged members of both groups. That is not surprising. In HIP, the two activities are part of the same subject.

Dolmetsch mistrusted musicologists, who in his day had little to offer him as a musician. The comments in his book are trenchant, and his impatience is amusing, "What avails it to know when the grandfather's uncle of a certain lutenist was baptized, or how many wives he had, if neither the lutenist's music nor a lute is procurable? We crave to hear the music itself in its original form, and this is what the 'musicologue' hardly ever thinks about."[46] And as Dreyfus points out, HIP has always had a platform that resists and undermines some of the goals of the musicology of the postwar generation as well. Musicologists like Frederick Neumann (with agendas not always fully explained) criticized players for their lack of rigor, and for using empirical methods (i.e., actually trying out historical notions in real music before they had been "proven" to be "true"). This latter is an argument of long-standing.

It has to be said that musicology has not always been HIP's friend. For most of musicology's own brief history it has been under the thrall of Romantic stylistic premises, through which it has systematically misunderstood certain aspects of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. It has ignored fundamental issues and argued over irrelevancies. As Fabian points out, "the scholarly preoccupation with 'local' and 'inessential' issues such as the execution of trills or the use of over-dotting fostered pedantry and diverted attention from the more significant matters of metre, rhythmic flexibility and the improvisatory character of decoration."[47] When it met in Los Angeles, the American Musicological Society twice had Sol Babitz, a distinguished violinist and one of the honored pioneers of HIP, physically thrown out of its meetings by the police. At the time, Babitz's historical discoveries were disconcerting, and his manner of presenting them may have been different from that of many musicologists.

There are also times when musicology turns up information that is awkward for performers, as, for example, Joshua Rifkin's conclusion that Bach's "choirs" were normally made up of only one voice per part (OVPP; the orchestra remains at standard Period strength). The rationale has been explained in a recent book by Andrew Parrott.[48] He suggests that being used to a large choir for Bach's works is like listening to string quartets played by an orchestra. In practice, the effect of OVPP depends on the quality of the specific singers; we have to learn how to make it work. Potential advantages include enhanced drama in the voices (as vocal parts can use much more expressive nuance) and more clearly audible

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instrumental lines. An issue I have not seen discussed is the use by almost everyone nowadays of women instead of boys on the two upper parts. Here's the first OVPP recording of the *St. Matthew Passion.*

AUDIO SAMPLE: 50. Gabrieli Consort & Players, McCreesh, 2002. Bach: "O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groβ," *Matthew Passion*

It's typical of the Period music scene that while there have been great and profound discussions about OVPP, everybody involved—on both sides—makes recordings of Bach's cantatas that involve women instead of boys on the soprano and alto solo parts. That is manifestly not what Bach did, and the difference is musically more significant than if they were to use a piano instead of a harpsichord in the continuo, or a flute instead of a violin in an aria. The result is that there are dozens of Bach cantatas that have never been recorded with the original voice types Bach used!

When all is said and done, historical musicology is still meant to act as a foundation of verifiable history on which performance practice can be constructed. Without it, we easily drift away from Period style, as we are now drifting away from copying original instruments. Performance practice is to performing musicians what original instruments are to makers, and manuscript sources are to publishers: a fund of reliable historical information that can be periodically revisited and reconsidered as both we, and it, change with time.

Romantic and Baroque Audiences Compared

Professional musicians nowadays tend to look patronizingly at amateur performers. In our society, a "professional" is a certified expert, and those who do music for recreation are unlikely to have the same skills (if for no other reason than that they do not devote time enough to developing them). But in the Baroque period, the relationship between performers and audience was different.

First of all, there were many more amateurs who were excellent musicians. The leisured class had time to cultivate and become proficient in music. It is entirely possible (though history is unlikely ever to discover it) that in those days amateurs were sometimes better performers than professionals. Second, making music was not regarded by the upper class as a commercial activity; to make money from music would have been a bit like expecting a monetary reward for volunteer social work today. Accepting payment for music-making was demeaning and distancing; it made one a member of the "staff." Roger North, who was an accomplished amateur player of the viol, violin, and organ, referred to professional musicians as "mercenaries" and considered them "a morose, ungentile and

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unsatisfyed nation."[49] A good "professional" musician in those days was thus a servant, essentially an asset of the better sort, perhaps comparable to a head gardener or a racehorse. The point is he was on a lower level socially than his audience. Few musicians were of Corelli's status, able to count on the indulgence of a patron. "When he was playing a solo at Cardinal Ottoboni's, [Corelli] discovered the Cardinal and another person engaged in discourse, upon which he laid down his instrument; and being asked the reason, gave for answer, that he feared the music interrupted conversation."[50]

People going to a concert or the theater in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were often better heeled than the musicians or, for that matter, the theater owner. There was an element of "audience sovereignty" that is unknown now. Until about the first third of the nineteenth century, sovereign audiences considered themselves ultimately in charge of the event.

Obviously, many fewer Baroque concerts were public, that is, open to anyone who could afford a ticket. Among the private and public rituals of the ruling classes were hunting and shooting, balls, salons and dinners, and musical performances. "Much of the music we hear today in public concert halls was composed to adorn such events in the past, to which the public was definitely not admitted."[51] Nor for that matter were the parts the musicians played from in the public domain either. Music was usually privately commissioned and owned (like paintings still are today), and often existed—deliberately—in only one manuscript that was the patron's private property, just like the products of his court painter or pastry chef.

Musicians in the Romantic age were less concerned with an audience's humour, or how their performances influenced it. The new idea of autonomy, and the waning of Rhetoric, eclipsed the Baroque idea of music as *Klang-rede,* a discourse in notes that was meant to affect the mood of an audience. Nor (unlike their eighteenth-century brethren) were nineteenth-century musicians usually performing music conceived for the specific audience that was listening to it. The Romantic artist was not overly concerned with the taste and judgment of the public; geniuses owe more to their muses.

Being indifferent to the reactions of their listeners would have been unthinkable to musicians of the Baroque period. Musicians were, after all, (a) servants, and (b) writing music that was unlikely ever (they thought) to be heard again. Their listeners were their patrons, and sponsors of the event. The audience for this music consisted of invited guests, often connoisseurs, and the music was created for them only, to be enjoyed at that moment only. As servants to their aristocratic audience, musicians, dancers, and actors were there to divert and entertain, just as the entertainment media are today. They could as easily be ignored. With a snap of his fingers, a patron could have a piece or a movement repeated—or stopped. Like the CD now, a concert existed for the convenience of the user.

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By the early nineteenth century, the new concert decorum of silent attention was being strongly advocated, as E. T. A. Hoffmann's writings document.[52] In 1803 Goethe also went on record as trying to regulate audience behavior. "'No sign of impatience is permitted to occur. Disapproval may draw attention to itself only through silence, approval only through applause,' and he meant applause that did not interrupt the performance."[53] In France, a periodical in 1802 advised its readers that it was improper at concerts to talk, yawn, sneeze, cough, or "blow one's nose [so as] to shake the windows."[54] Such information was evidently useful to readers.

Since the Romantic Revolution, when the idea of universal participation in the arts came in, audiences have tended to be "lowbrow" in relation to the Classical music they hear. There is a general understanding that it was not written for them, and that there are probably parts of it they cannot understand. Gay writes of Romantic audiences "virtually frozen in the seats as they revelled in the spell of sounds, scarcely breathing, consumed with guilt if they rustled with their program, good 19th-century listeners controlled their appreciation until the designated moment for emotional explosion [the applause] had arrived."[55] And according to Finnegan:

> The role of audience too is of greater significance than at first appears: their apparently 'passive' reception is in fact a positive convention of Classical music performance: it has to be learnt by the audience (a point which comes over clearly when inexperienced attenders, including young children, break the accepted norms and suffer consequential disapproval or rebuke), and is the culturally approved form of audience contribution without which a live Classical performance cannot be successfully enacted.[56]

Decorum had become a serious issue by Wagner's time:

> Patrons of the Wagner festival in Bayreuth proved notoriously militant in the suppression of applause. At an early performance of "Parsifal," listeners hissed an unmusical vulgarian who yelled out "Bravo!" after the Flower Maidens scene. The troublemaker had reason to feel embarrassed; he had written the opera. The Wagnerians were taking Wagner more seriously than he took himself—an alarming development.[57]

While this rigid etiquette may be regarded as more of a social issue than a musical one, the audience's level of comfort has a direct influence on its reception of the music. When "good listening" means "well-behaved listening," correctness becomes an end in itself. One of the more innocent examples of "bad" behavior is applause at "inappropriate" moments during concerts. Applause between movements, for instance, reveals that the individual who claps is not aware that the work is not finished; in other words, they have never heard the piece before or have not read the program (or may even perhaps be unable to read): these are all seen as serious blunders. While performers should in theory be grateful for signs of

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appreciation at any point during a concert, the usual reaction of musicians to such applause (which invariably stops rather quickly) ranges from patronizing tolerance to obvious disapproval. The depressing message this gives is that decorum is more important than the pleasure of the audience.

The architecture of a modern concert or opera hall is both symbolic of the prevailing idea of what a concert is and discretely implicated in channeling the behavior of the audience in ways that are considered correct. Christopher Small compares it to the theme park, like Disneyland. Modern technology is used to create an artificial environment, often associated with the past, but without the smells and dirt.[58]

The modern concert hall is normally hermetically sealed from the outside world and rarely even has windows; music is meant for contemplation and needs privacy and distance from the world.

Christopher Small makes some astute observations on concert halls. They usually separate strictly the ceremonies of socializing and listening, by providing a foyer for the former, often with a bar. The hall proper with its seats attached to the floor allows no convenient space for standing and chatting. The seats enforce immobility on the members of the audience, and they all face toward the conductor's podium, which is the center of attention. Priorities were evidently different in the eighteenth century. A French architect observed in the 1760s that, because of the angles of the partitions between the boxes, "one has to stand to see the stage in all our theatres."[59]

Communication among members of the audience is discouraged by the hall's design. That design also lets them understand that they are there to listen, not to "talk back." They are passive recipients, and the days when there were riots at musical premieres, like Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in Paris in 1913, are long gone. Concert audiences today pride themselves on being well behaved.[60]

One very powerful influence on the quality of a theatrical experience is the management of the lights. Darkening the theater during performances was not practical until the advent of electric lighting, developed at the end of the nineteenth century. House lights began to be lowered at La Scala, for instance, in Toscanini's time (1898). This was one of the moves initiated by theater managers during the middle of the nineteenth century, intended to moderate audience sovereignty and to prohibit vocal and rowdy behavior. Chairs began to be bolted to the floor, and the audience's actions and movements were restricted in various ways. The audience was not only fairly helpless in the dark, but contact between the audience and the performers was lost.

Baroque opera houses, by contrast, were normally lit throughout the performance, "a practice that permitted patrons to converse in an intricate social language spoken by the hand, the eye, the fan, and the

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lorgnette."[61] Patrick Tucker writes of keeping the house lights on for his productions of Shakespeare, "to make sure that the actors could see the audience."

> This has an extraordinarily powerful theatrical result. In our modern times, for most productions the audience sit in the dark, and the actors are up there on stage in the light—the event is very much divided into Us and Them. This is, however, quite a recent development, and for much of the history of theatre, audiences were very much seen by their actors. The effect is that the actors and audience share just one space. . . . This leads soliloquies to be debates between the character and the audience.[62]

A paradox of modern concert decorum is the contrast between the intensity of emotional experience and the seemingly reserved demeanor of the participants.

> Such passionate outpourings of sound are being created by staid-looking ladies and gentlemen dressed uniformly in black and white, making the minimal amount of bodily gesture that is needed to produce the sounds, their expressionless faces concentrated on a piece of paper on a stand before them, while their listeners sit motionless and equally expressionless listening to the sounds.[63]

Rhetorical audiences were evidently more expressive of their reactions. Bartel writes of the Baroque period:

> The audience for its part did not assume an aesthetic-reflective or distanced and critical stance [as in Canonic music]. The presented affection enveloped the listener, causing a direct and spontaneous reaction. He was not free to control himself; rather he was controlled by the realized affection, spontaneously breaking into laughter or weeping, sorrow or longing, rage or contentment. Numerous contemporary eyewitness accounts refer to the intensity and grand effect of such affection-arousing compositions, causing the entire audience to break spontaneously into sobbing and wailing.[64]

For modern audiences, even positive reactions are discouraged (except applause, but only at the end of pieces). "To boo at the end of a performance one has particularly disliked is possible, though a bit extreme." It is strictly against etiquette to show any visible or audible reaction in the course of the performance, of either approval or disapproval, the kind that is common and perfectly legitimate at the end of a jazz solo.[65]

In Mozart's and Beethoven's day it was not unusual to applaud after each movement, often with the purpose of getting a repeat. Mozart wrote to his father from Vienna in 1781 how pleased he was with an audience that shouted bravos while he was playing a piano solo. As Gay comments, "He would have taken unbroken silence as a sign of disapproval."[66] In some places, audiences of the nineteenth century applauded during movements; Brahms wrote in a letter that "Joachim played my piece [the

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Violin Concerto] better at each rehearsal, and the Cadenza sounded so beautiful at the actual concert that the public applauded it into the start of the Coda."[67]

To us, the most shocking example of unseemly behavior was at the opera in the eighteenth century. Brought up as we are with the notion that an audience receives an opera with the same devoted absorption as a symphony or indeed a sermon, we are disturbed to discover that "people took for granted that they would socialize during parts of the performance; they had often made appointments to meet and would move between boxes or parts of the hall."[68] Smoke from the stage lights (a mixture of tallow candles and oil lamps) "filled the front of the theatre with thick, ill-smelling smoke," and spectators sometimes saw each other better than the stage.[69]

Burney wrote in the 1770s, "I shall have frequent occasion to mention the noise and inattention at the musical exhibitions in Italy; but music there is cheap and common, whereas in England it is a costly exotic, and more highly prized."[70] Burney elsewhere compared "the silence which reigns in the theatres of London and Paris" with "the inattention, noise, and indecorum of the audience . . . quite barbarous and intolerable" in Bologna.[71]

Well-to-do Italian families went to their box at the opera with their household staff and servants, so they could take meals, entertain guests, and generally carry on their daily business. Audiences, it seems, regarded the entertainment on the stage much like modern families think of television at home, as part of the routine of life (rather than as masterpieces by geniuses).

The Paris Opéra was apparently noisy as well. Johnson quotes the comment of a late eighteenth-century visitor that "a conversation as loud as it was continuous covers the voices of the actors."[72]

From contemporary descriptions, the atmosphere at eighteenth-century operas sounds like that of a baseball or soccer game today. Like at a modern ball game, the crowd may seem indifferent and inattentive, but are instantly focused when something significant happens; it may well have been the same for concerts in the past. Madame de Sévigné recalled that she was unable to hold back her tears at the "Plainte italienne" during Lully's *Psyché* (1678).[73] Le Cerf de la Viéville wrote in 1704 of the Paris Opéra,

> A number of times in Paris, when the duet of *Persée,* so learnedly written and so difficult, *Les vents impétueux,* etc., was well given, I have seen the entire public, similarly attentive, remain for the half of a quarter-hour without breathing, with their eyes fixed upon Phineus and Merope, and when the duet was finished, nod to each other to indicate the pleasure it had given them.[74]

The exceedingly formal behavior protocol in concerts of Classical music actually works to discourage the principal purpose of a concert of

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Baroque music, which is to move the spirits of the listeners. Despite Arnold Dolmetsch's attempts to moderate this formality by putting on his concerts at home, talking with his audience, dressing in Period costume, stopping in the middle of pieces and trying again, and discouraging applause, HIP has not yet managed to differentiate itself from typical Classical concert decorum.

Period Musicians in Victorian Outfits

In the nineteenth century, normal concert decorum prescribed full evening dress for both musicians and audience. Nowadays things are less formal for the audience, who are hardly ever in full formal dress. The musicians are another story: they continue to preserve a custom that was standard a hundred years ago. Frozen in time, their late nineteenth-century clothes are entirely appropriate for the repertoire they usually play and the instruments they play it on.

I wish I could say that Period performers don't engage in Period costuming, but many of them do. What is pathetic is that they don't wear silly, artsy "Olde Englishe" outfits as Dolmetsch used to do, or authentic waistcoats and wigs. Instead, they imitate their Modernist brethren, and dress up as late nineteenth-century musicians. The message they send is that they are *wannabe* "Romantic" musicians too. I see it as no coincidence that the custom of wearing tails for Rhetorical music concerts became common in the 1980s, concurrent with the rise of Strait style and interpretive conductors for HIP ensembles.