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HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE: THEORY, PRACTICE, INTERDISCIPLINARITY
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Hosted by the Historical Performance Institute at the Jacobs School of Music, this conference was organized by Wendy Gillespie and Dana Marsh, who plan to make it a recurring event. This would also correlate with a new journal, thus developing what could be the largest academic gathering for supporting research in historical performance. The conference unfolded in fifteen parallel sessions, with each day concluding in a plenary session addressing one of the main conference themes. Friday and Saturday evenings each ended in a performance: on Friday Opera Nova, an Indiana University student ensemble, provided a preview of their programme of seventeenth-century Italian music for the Berkeley Festival in June, and on Saturday Nigel North (Indiana University) performed a concert of lute music. The conference represented a broad range of current scholarship in early-music performance practice, from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. The organizing of sessions on a broad thematic basis allowed individual papers to interact across sessions, and provided maximum cross-fertilization throughout the weekend, while the plenary sessions focused on larger issues and new directions in the field. In this report I will focus on topics related to eighteenth-century music, which included papers on basso-continuo practice, vocal technique and ornamentation, and theatrical performance, and I will conclude with comments on the plenary sessions. Other significant topics covered during the weekend included improvisation, source studies and historical recordings.

In the field of eighteenth-century music, scholarship on string instruments was more prevalent than that on keyboard and vocal practice. The session on basso continuo (chaired by John Butt, University of Glasgow) contrasted the practices of Handel's London and Mozart's Salzburg. Richard G. King (University of Maryland) explored the instrumental performance of recitative in Handel's operas and oratorios in eighteenth-century London. He argued that the violoncello provided decorative accompaniments, using arpeggiation to flesh out the chordal structure, thus participating in the role that today we normally assign to a harpsichordist or theorist in performances of baroque music. Intriguing evidence describing performances by Giacobbe Cervetto, an eighteenth-century cellist at the King's Theatre, and an early recording of a recitative from a Rossini opera performed at the Teatro alla Scala, suggest that this practice continued from the time of Handel through into the nineteenth century. King also used evidence from orchestra rosters and pay lists, and from iconography, to demonstrate that the double bass had a similar role to the cello in the performance of recitative in Handel's London. Anthony Abouhamad (University of Sydney) examined the performance of basso continuo at the organ in Mozart's church music, showing that compared to seventeenth-century Italian traditions, continuo practice in Salzburg was harmonically conservative.

The session 'Bowed Basses' (chaired by Kenneth Slowik, Smithsonian Institution and University of Maryland College Park) included a paper by Robert Rawson (Canterbury Christ Church University) that resonated with King's paper. He provided evidence that double basses played both in tutti passages and in recitative in theatrical music in early eighteenth-century London. To provide a chronological perspective, the second paper on this session, by Shanti Nachtergaele (Pennsylvania State University), focused on double-bass performance practice in the nineteenth century, advocating a greater variety of pedagogical methods based on primary sources.

Other sessions also included individual papers relevant to our current understanding of baroque string performance, such as Mimi Mitchell's (University of Amsterdam) work investigating the origins of the modern historical-performance movement. She explored the influence of American violinist Sol Babitz (1911–1982), based on interviews and recordings of his performances of Bach, and demonstrating his influence on such notable figures as Sigiswald Kuijken, Marie Leonhardt, Jaap Schröder and others. Kenneth Slowik discussed twentieth-century technological advancements in the violin family, emphasizing how steel strings have affected modern interpretive choices in baroque repertory.

In 'Vocal Practices' (chaired by Nigel North) Livio Marcaletti (Universität Bern) provided a comprehensive overview of terminology used to describe vocal techniques in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources,



which may imply a greater historical prevalence of *portamento*, *glissando* and *vibrato* than has usually been assumed. Interpreting terminology proves difficult when authors described these phenomena in different ways. For example, concerning *portamento* Giovanni Battista Doni used the term *straccinare la voce* where Marin Mersenne used *port de voix*, and Michael Praetorius wrote of what Marcaletti rendered as ‘dragging the throat’ while Christoph Bernhard wrote of *cercar della nota*. Nevertheless, Marcaletti suggested that modern singers could bring a wider variety of vocal styles to their performances, and that informed, tasteful experimentation in this direction could provide richness alongside rhetorical purpose. Talya Berger (Stanford University) focused on vocal ornamentation, by studying published transcriptions of opera arias performed by castrato Luigi Marchesi. Here the challenges were not about terminology, but rather the credibility of sources. To what extent can modern performers trust complicated transcriptions created by aural memory? Stacey Helley (University of Southern California) rounded out the session by using seventeenth-century sources to examine laryngeal position in early modern singing technique, and concluded with a demonstration. The session as a whole highlighted the many still-unanswered questions in the field of historical vocal interpretation.

Chaired by Massimo Ossi (Indiana University), the session ‘Drama and the Theater’ began with two papers concerning music and Shakespeare. While William Lyons (Royal College of Music) examined evidence of who performed the music in plays in Shakespearean London, how music complemented stage action and the role of actor-musicians on stage, Sarah Huebsch (Indiana University) analysed the impact of musical performance in an eighteenth-century production of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* at the Drury Lane Theatre. My own paper (Ayana Smith, Indiana University) demonstrated the multi-layered use of imagery and iconographic typologies, from stage machinery to scene structure and character portrayal, in Alessandro Scarlatti’s opera *La Statira* (1690), while showing how modern performers could use such knowledge. The final paper, given by Dionysios Kyropoulos (University of Oxford), reconstructed historically informed acting techniques, drawn from eighteenth-century sources on rhetoric, gesture, affect, passions and physiognomy, and descriptions of the acting styles of both the actor David Garrick and the castrato Senesino. Kyropoulos gave a brilliant demonstration of his techniques, and concluded by suggesting strategies for teaching and using his methods.

Several papers on eighteenth-century topics worked within other conference themes. For example, Erich Hoepfich (Indiana University) considered pedagogical shifts in wind training at the Paris Conservatoire in the session ‘Music Conservatory Curricula’, and the second of two sessions on source studies and methodology included papers by Edward Higginbottom (University of Oxford), who analysed rhetorical speech patterns in eighteenth-century French instrumental music, and Yo Tomita (Queen’s University of Belfast), who discussed the interpretation of different types of quaver beam in J. S. Bach’s manuscripts.

Outside of eighteenth-century concerns, improvisation was a significant topic of interest. Two sessions on improvisation included papers on music from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, using improvisational methods as a way of understanding compositional construction, of ‘recomposing history’, and as pedagogical strategies for the present. In the first of these sessions (‘Historical Improvisation I’, chaired by Magnus Williamson, Newcastle University), which focused on improvisation as a form of musical literacy and its relationship to composition, Elizabeth Elmi (Indiana University) resituated four fifteenth-century Neapolitan poetic manuscripts within their original contexts of oral culture and improvisatory musical practice. In contrast, Adam Knight Gilbert (University of Southern California) demonstrated that deep knowledge of sol-fa can help us understand the improvisatory origins of fifteenth-century counterpoint, while making philosophical connections between the Guidonian hand and Aristotle’s *Categories*, a treatise popular in the fifteenth century that defines objects and ideas according to attributes such as quantity, position, relation and time, and theorized that Guidonian visualization techniques can be extended to instrumental practice. Philippe Canguilhem (Université de Toulouse) showed evidence of *contrapunto alla mente* and *contrapunctus visualis* – the spontaneous performance of multi-voiced counterpoint – in Italy, England, France and Spain from the late fifteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. He also argued that *si placet* writing, the tradition of composing an optional line to an existing musical work, should more properly be called *si placet* singing, as it derived from an improvised, oral counterpoint. The final paper of this



session was by Jeremy Llewellyn (University of Oxford), who examined the various modes of reconstruction, bolstered by historical improvisation, involved in Elam Rotem's new work *Rappresentazione di Giuseppe e i suoi fratelli* (2014), based on the model of Emilio de' Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Anima, et di Corpo*.

The second session on improvisation ('Historical Improvisation II', chaired by Jeremy Llewellyn) began with Julie Cumming (McGill University) advocating the teaching of renaissance improvisatory techniques in the graduate musicology seminar; Catherine Bahn (McGill University) then demonstrated how one can reconstruct a set of improvisatory procedures by studying Diego Ortiz's *Trattado de glosas* (Rome, 1553). Jonathan Oddie (University of Oxford) gave a sophisticated reading and performance of Orlando Gibbons's keyboard fantasias, using analysis to understand how improvisation and composition interact, and suggesting a link to Frescobaldi's *Primo libro delle fantasie* of 1608. Massimo Ossi then repositioned Monteverdi's approach to composition as a shift from a collaborative act with performers to a carefully controlled authorial rhetoric, citing evidence of his changing relationship to singers and their craft from his correspondence, and noting his intentionally constructed use of improvisational style for the voice in his compositions.

The plenary sessions that concluded each conference day allowed for all attendees and presenters to gather around focused themes, and to engage in discussion informed by earlier papers. The first of these featured Clive Brown (University of Leeds), who used texts and historical recordings by musicians associated with Brahms to provide new ways of interpreting the composer's violin sonatas. The presentation included a recorded performance by Brown and ended with an opportunity to browse the new editions, with extensive critical commentary, that he has published with Bärenreiter. This session connected with the many papers on string technique, while introducing themes explored further in the session 'Historical Performance and Early Recorded Sound' (with papers by Mark Bailey, Head of Historical Recordings at Yale University, Kenichi Ikuno Sekiguchi of the Royal College of Music and George Barth of Stanford University) the following day.

The second plenary session involved a keynote address delivered by John Butt, who spoke to the current state of historical performance as a discipline and how it has been shaped by recent trends in politics, education and culture since the 2002 publication of his book *Playing with History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). He noted several challenges affecting education in early-music performance, a subject that had also appeared in the earlier session 'Music Conservatory Curricula'.

The final plenary session concluded the conference with a lecture by Georgina Born (University of Oxford), who shared the results of her research on interdisciplinarity in her co-edited volume on this subject (*Interdisciplinarity: Reconfiguration of the Social and Natural Sciences*, ed. Andrew Barry and Georgina Born (London: Routledge 2013)). After detailing several methods, and connecting these to historical performance, Born recommended what she termed 'interdisciplinarity in one person', wherein a single scholar (or performer) utilizes the methodologies of multiple disciplines to create something innovative, rather than cross-disciplinary collaborations, which can result in subjugating one discipline to another. A response paper by Magnus Williamson focused on several case studies that demonstrated how interdisciplinarity could serve both to re-enact and to reconstruct musical manuscripts, physical spaces and modes of performance, while Dana Marsh provided the conference with a vision of how we can define historical performance as a discipline while embracing interdisciplinary methods and learning from critical theory. In all, the conference represented an inclusive approach to scholarship, with contributions from students, academics and performers, creating a stimulating atmosphere that one hopes will fulfil the organizers' vision of a recurring event.

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