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Report from the symposium "Transforming musicianship: Understanding 19th-century historical style and its implications for learning", Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 12 November 2018[1]

I think it's much more important to be us than to achieve historical verisimilitude. Historical verisimilitude is just correctness, and correctness is a very paltry virtue. Correctness is the kind of virtue you demand of students, not of artists.
(Taruskin, 1992)

The symposium started with welcoming words by the author of this report, Dr. López-Íñiguez, followed by an introduction to the speakers and to the symposium's topic, where López-Íñiguez dove into the main aspects of the historical style of the repertoire during the long 19th century. She addressed the importance of using historical instruments (whether copies or originals) to perform these repertoires due to their qualities of expression, colour range and articulation, which are the most easily heard and clearest to perceive for the listener – particularly the fortepianos and romantic pianos, and the set-up of string instruments with their corresponding transitional and classical-romantic bows. She also mentioned the difficulties of accessing such instruments for most music students and musicians (although fortunately, this is not a problem at the Sibelius Academy), and the costs behind the logistics of

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performing on historical instruments (e.g. transportation, tuning and maintenance of keyboards, appropriate halls).

After her opening statement, López-Íñiguez continued with her own talk, "Why Do I Play 19th Century Music on Period Instruments? On Agency, Creativity, and Motivation", which drew upon her personal experiences as a professional musician engaging with period instruments. This particular talk addressed how the learning practices associated with historically informed performance have the potential to inspire, motivate, and influence creative agency. López-Íñiguez critically expressed her ideas on the lack of constructivist training in the pedagogical context of higher music education that takes into account the technical aesthetics and reading of scores particular to this repertoire. She shared a few personal experiences in relation to her training as a modern cellist, to express that very little of what is known about 19th century historical style is reflected in the teaching of instrumental teachers and professional musicians (in line with e.g. Brown 1991, 2010; Haylock 2004; Holden 2012; Pickles 2016; Taruskin 1995).

In that regard, López-Íñiguez stated that the strong conservatoire tradition, with its dominating transmissive teaching practices aimed at isolated specializations, leads music students and musicians to canonise the way that music should be performed, thus affecting our creativity, autonomy, motivation, and artistic ownership. This is because the most valued performances in classical music often "[fall] within well-established traditions" (González-Moreno 2014, 88), with the result that performers are less likely to develop a "sense of exploration, spontaneity and creativity" (ibid., 89) such as that seen in jazz. Following Taruskin (1992), López-Íñiguez finished her talk by describing how performance practice helped her build her own musical identity from a clean starting point as someone not wanting to explicitly fit into any ready-made models of "correctness", and believing that our interpretation of history is subjective and relative in any case.

After López-Íñiguez's introduction and presentation, it was time for the first keynote speaker of the symposium, Claire Holden, a period instrument violinist who plays regularly with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and is Principal Investigator of a five-year project funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council entitled Transforming C19 HIP.[2] This project seeks to reveal why historical performance scholarship has had such limited influence on professional performance, and aims to bridge the widely-recognised gap between performers and scholars. Holden's talk, entitled "The Long and Short of it: Bowing and Articulation in Beethoven's Symphonies", considered approaches to articulation in Beethoven's music. It answered questions related to how our playing might be influenced by our understanding of Beethoven's use of metre and the juxtaposition of long and short elements in his music, and what clues we might discern from the text.

Quoting Haynes (2007) on the challenge of achieving the so-called *Romantic*

[2] https://c19hip.web.ox.ac.uk/home

style, Holden expressed the difficulties of reawakening Romanticist practices by relying exclusively on, for example, the instruments, the score, or the treatises. Thus, Holden presented the audience with the interesting idea that, as German-speaking Europe was arguably the centre of philology in the nineteenth century (Benes 2008), if one expresses her will to understand the style of 19th-century music written by, for example, Beethoven, one must understand the philology (and therefore the style of recitation) behind German grammar study (Marchand 1996). Starting with poetic examples drawn from Goethe's metrical virtuosity (taken from Williams 2002), Holden then explored Beethoven's symphonies to connect the idea of metre and philology.

For this, the following examples from Beethoven's works were described to the audience: 1) Symphony No.7 Op.92 1st movement, bars 63–67; 2) Symphony No.3 Op.55 Finale, bars 254–6; 3) Symphony No.8 Op. 93, bars 28–38; 4) Op.93, bars 100–104; 5) Violin Sonata Op.47 No.9, bars 523–553; 6) Op. 47, bars 79–94; and 7) Violin Sonata Op. 30 No.2 Finale, bars 58–79. To conclude her keynote presentation, Holden suggested critical approaches to Urtext editions, taking the perspective that they did not incorporate such understanding of metre as was presented in her keynote. For this particular issue, Holden illustrated the differences between Beethoven Op.47 1st movement, bars 88–106 (copyist's manuscript) and bars 89–101 (Henle Urtext).

Dr. Tuija Hakkila was the third speaker of the day, with a talk entitled "Making the Score Come Alive: Reading and Understanding 19th-Century Piano Scores". The talk reflected on musical issues such as accentuation, tempo fluctuation, and flexibility of phrasing. Hakkila began by introducing Czerny's (1839) ideas on the major changes that happened in piano compositions during the 19th century, and therefore also in the styles of playing (i.e. Hummel, Ries, Thalberg, Chopin, and Liszt).

Hakkila continued by enlightening the audience on the mechanical/building aspects of the four different fortepianos and romantic pianos present in Wegelius hall, including their technical, colour, volume, range, and expressive potential and the differences among them. The instruments available to Hakkila in the hall represent different compositional stages during the long 19th century and included: 1) a copy of a Clementi fortepiano from c.1790 currently owned by fortepianist Olga Witthauer, and acquired thanks to funds from the Finnish Cultural Foundation; 2) a copy of a Conrad Graf piano from c.1820 built by Rodney Regier (Freeport, Maine, US) in the 1990s; and 3) an original Érard piano from the 1880s built in Paris. Of these four instruments, the last three are owned by the Sibelius Academy, and the first two were brought to Wegelius hall specifically for the symposium. Piano tuner Pekka Savolainen was in charge of tuning all the instruments and ensuring their maintenance for the symposium. Hakkila used the instruments to perform interpretations of piano solo fragments from Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and Schubert.

Hakkila also introduced a particular reference that played an important role in developing her understanding of the interpretation of the main accentuation markings in 19th-century piano music: Mathis Lussy's (1874) ideas on musical expression in relation to accents, nuances, and tempo for vocal and instrumental music, particularly the concepts of Thésis, Arsis, and Ictus in contrast to Anacrusis and Endings. In that regard, Hakkila has applied the readings of main accentuation symbols in her own artistic practice as follows: 1) < > (*messa di voce*) understood as a melodic marking, 2) *fp* as more melodic than the previous; 3) ^ as a rhythmic aspect; 4) ´ as a more rhythmical aspect than the previous; 5) *sf* as a pathetic element; 6) > as a more pathetic element than the previous; and 7) *f* as an acoustic marking. After this, Hakkila played some music samples by pianists Arthur Rubinstein and Aleksander Michałowski via Spotify, to show how these aspects are considered by different musicians.

The last speaker of the day, also acting as a keynote, was musicologist, cellist, and conductor Dr. George Kennaway, who has been a member of CHASE (Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions, centred at the University of Leeds),[3] and whose PhD, directed by Dr. Clive Brown, serves as the basis for the book *Playing the Cello, 1780–1930* (Kennaway 2014). In his keynote presentation, entitled "Sliding, on Thin Ice, to Some Conclusions – Fundamental Aspects of Cello Performance in the 19th Century", Kennaway addressed specifically cello-related issues of performance practice, and looked at the performing editions of Friedrich Grützmacher, 19th-century ideas about posture, and the interpretation of bowing indications.

In particular, Kennaway highlighted some of the main topics included in his innovative study of nineteenth-century cellists and cello playing (see Kennaway 2014). Kennaway started by critically addressing the misuse of concepts such as "authenticity" and "historically informed performance" in relation to 19th-century historical style for the lay audience, to directly engage with an open-minded explanation of several aspects included in his book, such as the fundamentals of posture, bow-hold, and left- and right-hand actions (including *vibrato*), or the inclusion of the endpin.

Kennaway continued by explaining that illustrations and descriptions in treatises must be treated with care by professional musicians engaging in 19th-century performance practice, particularly in relation to controversial matters such as portamento and vibrato, as we must acknowledge that there were many different practices among musicians co-existing at that time, and especially as we have no sound recordings from those performers. At the end of his presentation, Kennaway played some singing tracks from his wonderful collection of LPs to demonstrate the use of *portamento* (shifting) in the early 20th century, and continued by performing on a classical cello by Claude Pierray (Paris, 1725), set in the style of the early 19th century and with a transitional bow by André Klaassen (Zutphen, 2015) (provided for him by López-Íñiguez), some excerpts from the second movement of the Schumann cello

[3] http://chase.leeds.ac.uk/

concerto after the edition by Friedrich Grützmacher, which includes several examples of interesting fingerings, bow-strokes, and use of *portamentos*.

Overall, the symposium was very positively received by the audience, a significant portion of which was comprised of staff and students from the Sibelius Academy's Early Music Department and DocMus Doctoral School, and after all of the talks and keynotes, the speakers came together for a panel discussion during the last thirty minutes of the event. The panel was presented with several interesting questions by the public, particularly those related to the use of temperaments, performing pitches, and *tempo* markings in the long 19th century – all controversial aspects which could be approached as a starting point by reading Haynes (2002) and Brown (1991, 2004). All of the speakers agreed, very much in line with Brown (2010), that recent research has helped us move forward in our understanding of 19th-century music historical style, but we still know much less than we would like to. Before the end of the symposium, López-Íñiguez introduced the audience to a Facebook group called Historical Performance Research[4], which currently has over 7,000 active followers, as a suggestion for those who want to further explore the symposium topics and avail themselves of peer support.

[4] https://www.facebook.com/groups/performancepractice/

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