
THE ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ANALYSIS

Ana Llorens

In the last three decades, the scientific interest in the study of musical performance has grown exponentially. Whereas this interest came to fruition in the form of dedicated courses, conferences, and research projects outside of borders¹, in Spain the discipline is taking shape very slowly. Truly, the recent demand of academic titles to music pedagogues boosted the proliferation of performative-academic programs at the master's level all throughout the country, in both university and conservatories. Whereas many interesting intersections have arisen, if we define a discipline as a community of scholars supported by institutions and who share “a body of research, [...] established modes of dissemination, [...] beliefs and values, a common discourse, and a perceived identity”², we cannot yet speak of Spanish performance studies in similar terms—and elsewhere just to a certain extent³. Signs of this state are the lack of dedicated courses at the BA level or the inexistence of a specific research group within the Spanish Society of Musicology. While from a theoretical point of view the musicological community has started to embrace performance as a worthy object of study, institutionally reluctances are still perceivable.

Within the broad sphere of performance studies, and aside the investigations on historical performance practices and the psychological reality of music making,

¹ Several projects on the analysis of the recorded legacy emerged around the turn of the twenty-first century, such as those that converged at the Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM), 2004-2009, a joint enterprise between the Royal Holloway (University of London), the University of London, and the University of Sheffield. Similarly, the American Society for Music Theory (SMT) counts with a study group focused on the analysis of performance. In several Anglo-Saxon universities, moreover, scholars direct their careers into that direction. The Performance Studies International Network Conference was born with the intention of gathering scholars and musicians studying musical performance from various angles, not only its analysis.

² John Rink, “The estate of play in performance studies”, in *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher and Listener*, ed. Jane W. Davidson, 37-52 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 37.

³ Despite the advances mentioned in note 1, there are very few dedicated journals. *Music Performance Research* is still active, yet since 2013 it publishes a volume every two years only.

Reception: 06-07-2021. Admission: 26-08-2021.

the analysis of performance has experienced profound changes since the 1980s. In those critical years, a number of scholars raised their voices to claim for the acceptance of performance in music theory and analysis⁴. These revindications developed along theoretical challenges to the idea of the musical “work” as univocally encapsulated in the form of composers’ scores⁵. Conceptually, this made the performer become not so much an “intermediary” between the composer and the audience, but rather a co-creator in their own right⁶. As the only way of preserving sound and posing important ontological challenges, recordings became reified as new objects of inquiry⁷, and literature on the—mostly quantitative—analysis of performance and software for data extraction flourished at the start of the millennium. Yet, in practice and with notable exceptions, the time- and context-dependency or the diversity inherent in music performance were not fully accepted; we were not effecting a true paradigm shift but rather substituting one written object for a recorded one⁸. Also, with the composer and the performer now holding more balanced positions, frequently the analyst occupied a privileged position with respect to the performer and, thus, no true “overlap” between their spheres of action was yet attained⁹.

Within the formalities of academic discourse, various perspectives on the dialogue between performance and analysis have more recently been put forward, warning us against the perils of empty quantification and exploring music’s dynamic and variable nature¹⁰. While some have opted

⁴ In this regard, it is necessary to mention a number of articles that were published in those years. See, for instance, Janet Schmalfeldt, “On the relation of analysis to performance: Beethoven’s ‘Bagatelles’ Op. 126, nos. 2 and 5”, *Journal of Music Theory* 19, no. 1 (1985): 1-31; Eugene Narmour, “On the relationship of analytical theory to performance and interpretation”, in *Explorations in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honor of Leonard B. Meyer*, ed. Eugene Narmour and Ruth A. Solie, 317-340 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1989); Jonathan Dunsby, “Guest editorial: Performance and analysis of music”, *Music Analysis* 8, nos. 1-2 (1989): 5-20; and John Rink’s review of Wallace Berry’s *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), in *Music Analysis* 9, no. 3 (1990): 319-339.

⁵ For a recent stance at the idea of the musical work, see Gavin Steingo, “The musical work reconsidered, in hindsight”, *Current Musicology* 97 (2014): 81-112.

⁶ For a profound discussion of the topic, see Nicholas Cook, “Between process and product: Music and/as performance”, *Music Theory Online* 7, no. 2 (2011): 6, <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html>.

⁷ Foundational were a series of collaborative volumes published by Cambridge University Press: *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Similarly, *The Changing Sound of Music* was the first single-authored volume dedicated exclusively to the analysis of musical performances; see Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html>.

⁸ For further discussion, see Cook, “Between process and product...”.

⁹ I am using the expression coined by Jonathan Dunsby in his “Guest editorial...”, 14.

¹⁰ Nicholas Cook’s book *Beyond the Score* marked a cornerstone in performance studies, and in performance analysis more specifically, at the time of publication. See Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

for pursuing wider paths and studying music making as a holistic artistic practice which even affords auto-ethnographic exploration¹¹, the articles in this monographic aim at contributing fresh views on the analysis of Western recorded music performance. In other words, although a renewed interest in the study of music as an artistic practice more generally can be noted in some academic circles, several others, among which the authors of this monographic include themselves, believe that there is still much to be said in the field of performance analysis. And we dialogue in such a way that each of us analyses recorded music from a different angle and with a particular preoccupation in mind¹². While the first three contributions, by Daniel Barolsky, Adam Behan, and Marco Fatichenti, respectively address the language that we use in performance analysis, the function of performance in a musician's life, and the idea of performance tradition, Jonathan Dunsby, Yannis Rammos, and I resort to quantitative methods to appraise micro-scale performative individualities as regards asynchrony and non-tempered intonation.

Daniel Barolsky opens this monographic by raising the central issue of the—linguistic—dialogue between composition and performance, which he relates to the traditionally privileged stance of both composers and analysts with respect to performers, as commented above. Through the analysis of Ernst Levy's recording of Brahms's Haendel Variations, Barolsky proposes new ways of accepting that performance can create new aesthetic experiences that do not necessarily project something tacitly or explicitly contained in a composer's score. Ultimately, he urges us to study and analyse musical performances as unique events, avoiding the prejudices inherent in comparing them with other recorded interpretations or score-based analyses.

In his article, Adam Behan analyses Glenn Gould's changing performance practices as the pianist retired from the concert hall in 1964 in favour of the recording studio. Across six “overlapping” scenes that explore six facets of Gould's career—as a performer on the stage and in the recording

¹¹ See, for instance, *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher and Listener*, ed. Jane W. Davidson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); *Expressiveness in Music Performance: Empirical Approaches across Styles and Cultures*, ed. Dorottya Fabian, Renée Timmers, and Emery Schubert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, ed. Mine Doğantan-Dack (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015); and *Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance*, ed. John Rink, Helena Gaunt, and Aaron Williamon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). Notably, the last three titles emerged within the CMPCM, a research “Centre for Music Performance as a Creative Practice”, based in Cambridge, UK, and directed by John Rink between 2009 and 2014. To a certain extent, the CMPCM was the continuation of CHARM (see note 1 above), showing a change in the focus of study from pure analysis to a wider approach. In Spain, only last year we witnessed the publication of the first monographic journal volume on the topic, precisely in *Quodlibet* (no. 74).

¹² As examples of the still burgeoning interest in the analysis of performance, see John Rink, “The (f)utility of performance analysis”, in *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, ed. Mine-Doğantan-Dack, 127–147 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015); Jeffrey Swinkin, *Performative Analysis: Reimagining Music Theory for Performance* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016); and Daphne Leong, *Performing Knowledge: 20th Century Music in Analysis & Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

studio, and interviewed and as essay writer, and in front of the photographic and television cameras—, Behan reflects on the ways in which performance and performance-related activities can become acts of self-care. Taking a step forward, the six-scene format is inspired by Gould's own essay "Stokowski in Six Scenes", thus presenting the conscious artist from an internal perspective.

For his part, Marco Fatichenti delves into the relationship between performance, composition, and music theory and aesthetics by exploring a topic deeply rooted in the latter field—nationalism—not through the usual lens of the second but rather observing it from the perspective of the first. More specifically, he analyses performance practices around Enrique Granados' *Goyescas* and explores the ways in which the ideological climate might have translated into a well-defined performative canon both in Spain and abroad. In this way, Fatichenti establishes a close collaboration between analysis and performance by ultimately proposing a renewed interpretive view on *El amor y la muerte*.

To close this monographic, the views on musical performance separate from philosophical and aesthetic considerations and instead focus on interpretive particularities at the micro scale. Jonathan Dunsby and Yannis Rammos turn their ears towards onset asynchrony in Western art music. Their work assesses the idea of embodied, physical creativity in music performance by exploring continuities and various types of asynchrony in a roll-recording of Debussy's "The little shepherd", played by the composer himself. While putting onset asynchrony in the context of historical and theoretical evidence, the authors revalue concepts of audibility and intent in the perception and the performance of music.

Like Dunsby and Rammos, in the last article in this monographic I resort to quantitative methods, in this case to evaluate Pau Casals' intonational strategies in his recording of the Prelude from Bach's Suite no. 4 for solo cello. Through a systematic analysis of the data from various plausible theoretical solutions, I show how Casals' "expressive intonation" acquires new significance in the context of his other performative strategies, all combining to shape the piece in the form of successive moments of tension and relief.

Through the analysis of recorded examples of our musical heritage, the five contributions to this monographic challenge traditional hierarchies in musicology and even in performance analysis itself, placing performance at the centre of the analytical inquiry and reassessing traditional ideas on performance and on performative traits. Ultimately, they illustrate new ways in which theory, analysis, and performance can do justice to one another, in the quest for a true symbiosis between the two fields. Being these the first pages dedicated to the analysis of musical performance in a Spanish journal, we just hope they serve to encourage further research along these or dissimilar lines. ■