

Emerging Discourses of Analysis and Music Performance [Editorial]

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With the advent of performer-scholars within Australian Universities, as well as the rise of performance-related doctoral research, the intersections between analytical knowledge and performance, or the application of analysis to music performance, are constantly being re-evaluated and reinvented, with many practitioners moving beyond the traditional paradigm of applied score analysis (the so-called ‘page to stage’ approach).¹ This collection of papers presents several strands of analytical discourse, including: (1) the analysis of music recordings, particularly in terms of historical performance practices; (2) reinventions of the ‘page-to-stage’ paradigm, employing new analytical methods; (3) analytical knowledge applied to pedagogy, particularly concerning improvisation; and (4) so-called ‘practice-led’ research.²

The notion that music analysis is relevant to music performance has been a persistent meme in the later twentieth century, although the idea is not immune from contestation—particularly objections against any presumed *a priori* superiority of knowledge gained through traditional forms of score analysis, or, alternatively, objections against assertions of only *one* correct musical interpretation.³ Nicholas Cook offers a clear corrective, insisting that analysis is also an interpretative act—which he refers to as “performative.”⁴ Similar concerns underlie Kerman’s 1980 critique, which suggests that the apparent objectivity of analysis is a façade, and that rather it should be considered a kind of “formalistic criticism.”⁵ The idea of analysis as performative, and indeed interpretative, has also been recently taken up by Jeffrey Swinkin, who attempts a

¹ Cook applies this term in his recent monograph *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37. He states that he borrows the term from theatre studies, particularly Susan Melrose, *A Semiotics of the Dramatic Text* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

² For a classic definition, see Carol Gray (in “Inquiry Through Practice: Developing Appropriate Research Strategies in Art and Design,” *No Guru No Method Conference Proceedings* (Research Institute, University of Art and Design, Helsinki, 1998), 1, <http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/ngnm.pdf>).

³ Much of this literature is listed in footnotes 1-2 of the paper by Paul Hopwood, and in footnotes 6 and 8 of the paper by Jonathan Paget. A strong example of restrictive dogma was Schenker’s assertion that “each work of art has only one true rendition,” in *The Art of Performance*, ed. Heribert Esser, transl. Irene Schreier Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 77. Quoted in Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*, 37.

⁴ Nicholas Cook, “Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis,” in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 255ff.

⁵ Joseph Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana, 1985), 67. Of course, Kerman particularly had in mind certain schools of musical analysis (namely Schenker and set theory) that had dominated the American academy in the decade prior and whose analytical dogma had an apparent rigour that aspired towards an objectivity that is ultimately illusory.

thought-provoking reconceptualisation of the epistemological foundations of analysis and its relevance to performance.⁶ For Swinkin, “we need analysis to tell us not what a piece *is* but rather what it could *be*; . . . not how we already hear a piece or how we should hear it, but rather how we plausibly *could* hear it.”⁷

While the hegemony of Schenker and set theory has waned, and theorists no longer entertain pretensions of superior knowledge, musical analysis remains integral, and indeed indispensable to musicology.⁸ Nevertheless, as Sally Macarthur recently notes, questions persist with regard to the nature and role of music analysis, its persistent air of positivity, and neglect of historical or cultural considerations:

Music analysis has been preoccupied with structure and with methods designed to determine how the music works. This focus has portrayed it as positivist and lacking the social and cultural critique that has become standard in new musicology.⁹

Another criticism levelled at music analysis is its apparent preoccupation with the musical score and indeed with abstract theoretical conceptions of musical works, which can be quite disconnected from the actual experience of listening or performing music. Paul Hopwood’s paper “Music Analysis and the ‘Drastic’ Challenge” addresses this ongoing epistemological concern, examining the “gnostic” versus “drastic” dichotomy posed by Carolyn Abbate.¹⁰ As Hopwood expounds, “the drastic experience of music, goes the argument, is active, time-dependent and manifests itself in material acoustic phenomena; whereas ‘gnostic’ experiences are metaphysical approaches that encourage a retreat from the actual business of music into technical and hermeneutic abstractions of the ‘work.’”¹¹ Pivotal to this discussion is the potential reframing of analysis to include the examination of music as a performed phenomenon, a call echoed by Nicholas Cook in suggesting multiple strands to music analysis: theorist’s analysis, performer’s analysis, and performance analysis.¹²

Given the fore-mentioned realignment of analytical enquiry to include music as a performed phenomenon, it is no coincidence that a tremendous growth area in recent decades has been the analysis of recordings, which are treated as primary source

⁶ Jeffrey Swinkin, *Performative Analysis: Reimagining Music Theory for Performance* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016).

⁷ Swinkin, *Performative Analysis*, 39.

⁸ See Christian Martin Schmidt, transl. Richard Evans, “Music Analysis: Not Universal, Not Almighty, But Indispensable,” *Music Analysis* 21 (2002): 23-27.

⁹ Sally Macarthur, “Renovating Music Analysis,” *Musicology Australia* 38, no. 2 (2016): 185.

¹⁰ Carolyn Abbate, “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?,” *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505–36.

¹¹ Paul Hopwood, “Music Analysis and the ‘Drastic’ Challenge.”

¹² Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*, 33-90.

evidence for the discussion of performance practice in an historical context. In this emerging field, a number of different approaches are demonstrated here, from the identification of broader aesthetic trends (as seen in the paper by Krista Low, “Changing Aesthetics and Cello Performance: 1920-1960”); or criteria-referenced studies of changing performance practices over time (such as in the paper by Adrian Yeo and Jonathan Paget, “A Longitudinal Study of Performance Practices in Recordings of Bach’s Violin Sonata BWV1003”); the use of spectrograms as a tool for gaining insight into aspects of performance such as rubato, vibrato, or portamento (as in Alix Hamilton’s paper “A Portal into the Past: Lionel Tertis’s Recording of the Arnold Bax Viola Sonata”); or the use of other more-sophisticated technologically-based tools to investigate potential rhythmic complexities in an improvised ensemble context (as in the paper by Lindsay Vickery and Stuart James, “The Enduring Temporal Mystery of Ornette Coleman’s *Lonely Woman*”).

The application of analytical knowledge in the pedagogy of improvisatory practices is another growth area, with several relevant papers here, including those by Carol Williams (“The Tonary as Analytical Guidebook for the Performance of Chant”), Stewart Smith (“From Matrix to Model: Conceptualising Improvised Counterpoint at the Organ”), and also Robin Ryan (“Beyond the Buzzword: Eco-Improvisatory Music in Theory and Application”)—who conceptualises a kind of “multi-species musicking,” whereby performers improvise and interact with the musical sounds of birds and other animals. Also relevant here is the paper by Nicholas Bannan, “Darwin, Fux, and Schenker in the Primary Classroom,” which discusses the notion of “Harmony Signing”—a method of using quasi-improvisatory polyphonic singing along with hand signals as a component of aural training.

That there is potential for reinvention of the more traditional ‘page to stage’¹³ paradigm is demonstrated through Jonathan Paget’s paper “Recent Sonata Theory and the Performance of Early Nineteenth-Century Guitar Sonatas,” which explores interpretative application of recently-developed theoretical understandings of sonata form, namely those of Hepokoski/Darcy¹⁴ and William Caplin.¹⁵

So-called ‘practice-led’ methodologies are also becoming increasingly mainstream in the performing arts in Australian Universities. Such approaches are necessarily pluralistic in methodology and typically place creative practice (such as musical performance or composition) at the forefront as a progenitor and vehicle for research enquiry.¹⁶ The term ‘artistic research’ is arguably a more apt label (and is increasingly

¹³ See footnote 1.

¹⁴ James A. Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ William Earl Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁶ See footnote 2.

prevalent within music) as this formulation privileges neither practice nor theory in the complex inter-related nexus of artistic knowledge. Nevertheless, these approaches embrace both objectivity and subjectivity. As noted in the description of the recent publication *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music*, artistic research “comes from inside the practices and exists in a space that accommodates both objective and subjective observation, and analysis, because the researcher is the practitioner.”¹⁷ Work that is representative of such approaches (in these proceedings) includes Emma Jayakumar’s paper “Facilitating Creative Synergy: An Analytical Approach to the Operatic Creative Process;” that by Cat Hope, “Reading ‘Free Music:’ Adapting Percy Grainger’s ‘Free Music’ Scores for Live Performance;” and Lucas O’Brien’s “Otakar Ševčík’s Op. 18 as a Prescribed Method for Attaining Expert Performance.”

It is hoped that these contributions will contribute to advancing our understanding of the continuing relevance of analysis to music performance, and the complex ways in which they inform each other, presenting several emergent analytical discourses that continue to develop the field of musicology in ever new and exciting directions.

¹⁷ See <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781498544825#> (accessed 24 Feb 2017). The book is *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music*, ed. Robert Burke and Andrys Onsmom (Lexington Books, 2017).