



Flemish Archive

LABO XIX&XX

Annotations in music scores and treatises

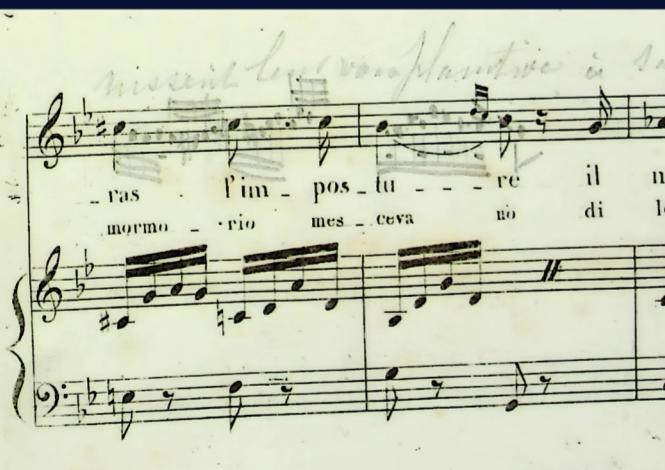
The performance of a musical work is a complex ecosystem, where performance practice, academic research and audience reception interact together. The critical analysis of sources related to a musical work is often a time-consuming and cumbersome task. Critical editions of music scores primarily focus on the composer's agency, neglecting the contribution of a intricate network of agents, ranging from editors, conductors, amateur and professional performers.

Confronted with a plurality of performance practices, the performer of historical repertoire is forced to make interpretative choices, between musicological research, their personal taste, and tradition. As Early Music movement pioneer Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) wrote

"we represent an accumulation" of traditions and interpretations of a ever-changing past.

Recent interest in musicians' annotations has shifted the focus of the musicological community from composers to performers, investigating the vault of information provided by handwritten (and editorial) annotations on musical scores.

Valentine Degivé, Aria from Rossini Semiramide (c. 1880)



The FAAM dataset is a unique and heterogeneous collection of musical scores from the long 19th century. The variability of annotations is a great challenge for both a Computer Science and a Computational Musicology perspective. Alongside the digitized images and dedicated training sets for annotation detection, we are providing metadata concerning annotation types, agents and instrumentation. These annotation labels, such as tempo indications, fingerings and dynamic marks, are organised in an ontology of interrelated entities, identified by unique Wikidata URIs.

Handwritten annotations dataset



Handwritten annotations dataset



Handwritten annotations dataset



Artistic research and performance reconciliation

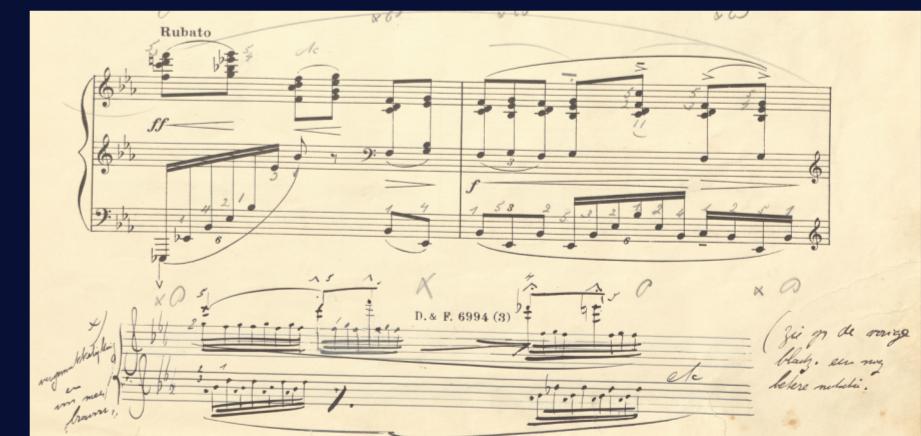
An annotation, such as a metronome mark indication, can be quite objective while others, like an expressive mark or a written comment, leave room for speculation and creative resonance. The performer might even considerably deviate from the composer's instructions, adding their own cadenza and ornaments to the music.

We are working together with several performers to explore the possibilities provided by musician's annotations in the imaginary dialectic between Ancients and Moderns and how this embedded knowledge is challenging their prior beliefs and historical understanding.

Many musicians are not used to interact with annotated scores, while the critical analysis of others' interpretations could enrich their view of a musical work and its performance possibilities, eventually finding a reconciliation between their prior aesthetic believes and those of the annotator.

A first successful project has explored the repertoire of Marius de Jong (1891-1984) through the eyes and fingers of Antwerp based pianist Anna Alvizou. The result of this imaginary conversation has become a documentary, available at...

Marinus de Jong, Debussy Poisson d'Or (c. 1920)



Digital Platform
<https://faam.laboxix-xx.be/>

GitHub repository
<https://github.com/nichalascornia89/FAAM-dataset>

