

“Echos du temps passé”: plurality, authority and taste in historical performance practice of the pre-Urtext era.

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‘History is not knowledge at all, but only opinion.’

R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946)

Abstract

Since its genesis, the Early Music movement has been confronted with issues of authenticity^[1], validity of method^[2], and even reliability of sources^[3]. The quarrel for authenticity has led “historically informed” musicians to look at any source other than facsimiles or Urtext editions with mistrust, neglecting the knowledge hidden behind a plurality of interpretations from music editors, musicologists, performers, and even forgers.

Through the annotations of the *long 19th century*, the Flemish Archive for Annotated Music^[4] wishes to challenge the established paradigm of historical performance practice by adopting a plurality of historical performance practices. In this practice-based research, we present a critical analysis of performances recorded by an expert pianist based on pre-Urtext editions of keyboard music of Baroque masters. Utilizing previous experience of stylistic exploration^[5], we propose a comparative study of J.S. Bach and Domenico Scarlatti works. Our research compares and evaluates the contributions of performances based on a variety of historical sources containing divergent annotations, additions, and modifications of the same works. A mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis complements our postmodern framework in discussing style, aesthetics, authenticity, and taste.

About the authors

Viktor Lazarov is an interdisciplinary researcher and performer specializing in performance practice analysis. His Ph.D. thesis proposes a model for developing stylistic performance using a qualitative and quantitative analysis protocol.

Viktor has presented lecture-recitals in Austria, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, and the United States. A recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, including the Opus Prize for the “Article of the Year” awarded by the Conseil québécois de la musique in 2021. He writes for the Canadian magazine *La Scena Musicale* and has published in scholarly journals such as *CIRCUIT* and *La Revue musicale de l’OICRM*.

Nicholas Cornia considers himself neither a scientist nor an artist, but rather a special combination of the two. After his studies in Mathematics and Computer Science he decided to dedicate himself to music at the Royal Conservatoire of Ghent, where he studied Classical Singing, Music Theory and Pedagogy.

Since 2018 he has been active as artistic director of the ensemble *Le Vecchie Musiche*, creating original musical projects based on interdisciplinary research. In 2022, he joined the research group *Labo XIX&XX* as the principal investigator of the *FAAM* project, a Digital Humanities platform for music annotations in the *long 19th century*. He is also research assistant at *Orpheus Instituut* working on the *Resounding Libraries* research cluster since 2023.

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