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ON LETTING THE MUSIC SPEAK FOR ITSELF: SOME REFLECTIONS ON MUSICOLOGY AND PERFORMANCE

RICHARD TARUSKIN

The title of this article¹ may suggest that I will give a state-of-the-art report on the relationship between musicology and performance or else outline a program for the future development of that relationship. But neither would be worth my while to prepare nor yours to read. Things are going well. Never, it seems, have scholars and performers worked so closely and happily together or learned more from each other, nor have so many ever before combined the roles as successfully as now. Musicologically trained performers are proliferating in graduate programs around the country. Historical performance practice is now a recognized sub-discipline both of academic musicology and of conservatory curricula. When Mr. Henahan of the New York Times can devote a Sunday column to the merits of historical instruments, or when Mr. Rockwell of the same paper, in a glowing review of *Pomerium Musices*, can actually list among the group's assets that its director is a musicologist, we may all take some justifiable satisfaction in going at last off the defensive vis-à-vis the press and, let us hope, the public. May this trend of recognition continue. We've all worked hard for it, we deserve it, and everything I say here is meant to abet it.

But at the same time I should like, as it were among friends, to examine what Charles Rosen has recently called the "peculiar metaphysical and ontological assumptions"² that underly much current thinking about musicology and performance, or musicology-cum-performance, or even musicology *versus* performance. And if much of what follows sounds like an *apologia pro vita sua*, and therefore immodest, it is because I feel that the only way for me, as a musicologist performer, honestly to approach the question of musicology and performance, is to look within.

So let me take as my point of departure a little colloquy I had some time ago with a graduate student at Columbia. He claimed that performances of Renaissance sacred music by Cappella Nova, the choral group I direct, were arbitrary and overly personal, and that I would be better advised to "let the music speak for itself." Well I can tell you that his remarks rankled in their implication of irresponsibility. I do my homework, after all. I edit the music we perform from its original sources, or at least from pedigreed

¹This article was originally read as part of a panel discussion entitled "The Musicologist Today and in the Future," at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society in Boston, 13 November 1981.

²Charles Rosen, "The Musicological Marvel" (Review of *The New Grove*), *The New York Review of Books* (May 28, 1981), p. 36.

Gesamtausgaben, I have read up on *musica ficta*, on text underlay, on proportions, and we do not gussy up the music with instruments. Yet I knew just what the fellow meant, and also realized that his view of our work was widely shared among scholars, or at least among graduate students. Debating the matter with him did me good. It made me examine my own premises with greater detachment than before, and made me attempt to separate my own musicological attitudes from my performer's attitudes—something I rarely do consciously, any more than I am separately aware of inhaling and exhaling.

It seems a curious request to make of a performer, to "let the music speak for itself." If a performer did not have the urge to participate in it and, yes, to contribute to it, why then he wouldn't have become a performer in the first place. The only time I could recall being told previously to "let the music speak for itself" was when I played the opening movement of Bach's B-minor French Suite to my piano teacher many years ago and ventured a few ornaments. Most of the time the idea of letting the music speak for itself implies hostility, contempt, or at least mistrust of performers. It is what Brahms had in mind, for example, when he declined an invitation to the opera saying that if he sat at home with the score he'd hear a better performance. Or think of Stravinsky, with all his railery against "interpretation," or Milton Babbitt, when describing his motives for adopting electronic media as a way of compensating for what he called the "low redundancy" of his music.³ All three composers seem to share a view of performers as undesirable middle men, whose elimination would further communication between composer and audience. But only in Babbitt's case was letting the music speak for itself in this way a practicable alternative. Stravinsky, for his part, was moved by his mistrust of performers to become one himself, so as to document his music first in piano rolls and then in recordings and thus achieve the inviolable musical "object" he sought. The only trouble was that whenever Stravinsky documented his performances more than once he created quite different objects, particularly with regard to tempo, which was always the main object of documentation to begin with. Moreover, Stravinsky's recorded tempi were almost always faster than his indications in the score, sometimes by a truly bewildering margin, as in the case of *Zvezdoliki*, which I single out because Stravinsky referred to his recording of that piece as a particularly successful documentation.⁴ So Stravinsky, sitting at home with the score like Brahms, heard a performance that was if not better, then at least consistently slower than the ones he himself produced in actual sound. His efforts at documentation have only produced a confusing problem for those who would obey his wishes. But the problems he created are as nothing next to those created by such pianist composers as Debussy or Prokofiev, whose performances on rolls and rec-

³Cf. "Who Cares if You Listen?," *High Fidelity*, VIII/2 (February, 1958) and widely anthologized thereafter, e. g., in Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, eds., *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (New York, 1967), pp. 244-50.

⁴"Contemporary Music and Recording," in Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (New York, 1963), p. 33. Also reprinted in Schwartz and Childs (see footnote 2), p. 56.

ords are so widely at variance with their notation that no one could get away with copying them (as I found out when I took a Gavotte by Prokofiev to another piano teacher). As for Brahms himself, even if we allow that his remark amounted to no more than persiflage, we may ask nonetheless whether the better performance he heard was better because it was more faithful to the music in some obscure way, or because it perfectly suited his tastes as another's rendition could not?

In short, music can never under any circumstances but electronic speak for itself. In the case of notated music there is always a middle man, even if it is only ourselves as we contemplate the written symbols. And if anyone still doubts this, let him drop in on any analysis symposium.

But even if impossible to realize absolutely, "letting the music speak for itself" may still be a worthy ideal to aspire toward. What does it mean, though? For the moment, let us assume it means realizing the composer's intentions as far as our knowledge of them permits. What we are really being told, then, is to let the composer speak for himself. I will not rehearse here the familiar epistemological impediments to learning what the composer's intentions were, especially a composer as remote from us as Ockeghem, whose music it was that I was enjoined to let speak for itself. I wish to go a bit further and suggest that in many if not most instances composers do not even have the intentions we would like to ascertain. And I am not even talking about what are sometimes called "high level" versus "low level" intentions, that is, specific intentions with regard to individual pieces as opposed to assumptions based on prevailing conditions the composer took for granted.⁵ No, I mean something even more fundamental: that composers' concerns are different from performers' concerns, and that once the piece is finished, the composer regards it and relates to it either as a performer if he is one, or else simply as a listener. I'll give a few examples. One is Irving Berlin, who once said of Fred Astaire, "I like him because he doesn't change my songs, or if he does, he changes them for the better." Another is Debussy again. He said to George Copeland on their first meeting that he never thought he'd hear his piano music played so well during his lifetime. No question then that Copeland's playing realized the composer's intentions to the latter's satisfaction. On another occasion, though, Debussy asked Copeland why he played the opening of *Reflets dans l'eau* the way he did. Copeland's response was that old performer's standby, calculated to make any musicologist see red: "Because I feel it that way." To which Debussy replied that as for himself he felt it differently, but that Copeland must go on playing it as he, Copeland, felt it.⁶ So once the pianist's credentials as a Debussy performer were established, his performances were accepted by the composer as being no less

⁵Cf. Randall R. Dipert, "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance," *The Musical Quarterly* LXVI (1980), 205-18.

⁶Cf. George Copeland, "The First—and Last—Times I Saw Debussy," *Music*, Preview Issue (November 1944), 6-9.

authoritative than his own. Debussy, as pianist, was in his own eyes only one interpreter among others.

My next example stems from personal experience. I once sat in as page turner at a rehearsal of Elliott Carter's *Duo* for violin and piano under the composer's supervision. He couldn't have been less helpful. Whenever the performers sought guidance on matters of balance or tempo, his reply was invariably, "I don't know, let's see . . .," and then he would join them in seeking solutions, as often asking their advice as they his. At one point, when the performers were having some difficulty with his very finicky rhythmic notation, Carter said (so help me), "For heaven's sake don't count—just feel it." At the end of the rehearsal he commented that every performance of the *Duo* was very different from every other one, but that "whichever one I'm hearing always seems the best." So much for intentions. If that was Carter's attitude, what do you suppose Ockeghem would have cared about Cappella Nova's *ficta*? We seem to be committing another "intentional fallacy" here, trying, just as Wimsatt and Beardsley said we should never do, to solve our problems by "consulting the oracle."⁷

It seems to me that much of what I will make bold to characterize as the "musicological" attitude toward performance is based on consulting the oracle in an even more spurious, because roundabout, way. We tend to assume that if we can recreate all the external conditions that obtained in the original performance of a piece we will thus recreate the composer's inner experience of the piece and thus allow him to speak for himself. In a lecture I recently attended on the staging of one of Verdi's operas in Paris, a great deal of fascinating detail was recounted on all of the vicissitudes encountered in the course of mounting the work and in making it conform to the special demands of the Paris Opera. The point was constantly reiterated that every aspect of the production was completely documented in surviving records, so that one could revive the work tomorrow just as it was being described. I ventured to ask at the end of the lecture why this would be desirable, and I was told, with eyebrows raised and voice pitched high to show how obvious the answer was, that in this way the composer's intentions would be realized. And this after a lecture in which it had just been demonstrated that the intentions realized in the original production had belonged to many, not just Verdi, and that in a large number of instances the composer's intentions had been overruled and frustrated.

So why *do* we consult the oracle? A simple answer, the usual answer, is that we want our performances to be authentic. But that is no answer. What *is* this thing called authenticity and why do we want it? While most of us would by now agree with the premise, so elegantly and humorously set forth by Michael Morrow in *Early Music* a few years ago,⁸ that authenticity of the kind we usually have in mind when talking musicologically about performance practice is a chimaera, most of us are nevertheless no

⁷W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *Sewanee Review* (1946), 468-88.

⁸Michael Morrow, "Musical Performance and Authenticity," *Early Music* VI/2 (1978), 233-46.

more deterred by this realization from seeking it than was Bellerophon himself. Again I ask, why?

We usually trace the origins of modern musicology to romantic historicism. But it seems to me that musicological ideals of performance style owe as much if not more to the modernist esthetic that rose to dominance out of the ashes of the First World War. We in music usually think of it as the "Stravinskian" esthetic, though it had been anticipated with astonishing, if cranky, completeness as early as Hanslick's *The Beautiful in Music*. It is often described, after Ortega y Gasset, as "dehumanization,"⁹ but since that word (though meant by Ortega with approval) carries such unpleasant overtones, I prefer to use T. S. Eliot's term, depersonalization, defined as "the surrender of [the artist] as he is at the moment to something much more valuable," that thing being Tradition, which, as Eliot warns us, "cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour."¹⁰ And why do we in music want it? So that our performances may capture something of what the folklorist Jeffrey Mark so percipiently described half a century ago in an article entitled "The Fundamental Qualities of Folk Music," but which is actually the best characterization I know of the modernist esthetic as applied to music:

The performer, whether as singer, dancer, or player, does his part without giving any or much impression that he is participating in the act. And his native wood notes wild, far from giving the popularly conceived effect of a free and careless improvisation, show him definitely to be in the grip of a remorseless and comparatively inelastic tradition which gives him little or no scope for personal expression (again as popularly conceived). *Through him the culture speaks*, and he has neither the desire nor the specific comprehension to mutilate what he has received. His whole attitude and manner [is] one of profound gravity and cool, inevitable intention. There [is] not the faintest suggestion of the flushed cheek and the sparkling eye. And [the performance] is ten times the more impressive because of it.¹¹

So here at last is the real challenge my critic issued me in the encounter I began by describing: "Let the culture speak for itself." Ah, would that we could, for this is what real authenticity is, the kind Eliot wrote about, not what Michael Morrow called the "contemporary cult meaning" of the word, which really amounts to little more than time-travel nostalgia. The trouble is that the artifacts of past culture with which Eliot dealt are still intact and available in a way that musical artifacts obviously can never be.

⁹Cf. José Ortega y Gasset, "The Dehumanization of Art," in *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 3-56.

¹⁰"Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Frank Kermode, ed., *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* (New York, 1975), pp. 40, 38. Of course the modernist and historicist positions are in many ways congruent and to a considerable degree symbiotic in their influence on musicological attitudes toward performance. Were it not for the historicist precept, instilled in all traditionally trained historians today, that one's contemporary attitudes and values must be suspended when confronting the past, it is doubtful whether "authentic performance" would have become the musicological issue it has, or whether in fact there would have been much impetus toward the practical revival of old performance practices to begin with. But without the support of the modernist philosophy examined here, it is just as doubtful whether the "Aufführungspraxis" movement would have achieved much resonance beyond the classroom and the Collegium Musicum. The thriving existence of *Early Music* magazine is in its paradoxical way the best testimony to the continued vitality of esthetic modernism. The "early music boom" represents the precise locus of the confluence of historicism and modernism in music.

¹¹Jeffrey Mark, "The Fundamental Qualities of Folk Music," *Music and Letters* X/3 (1929), 287-90 *passim*. *Italics mine*.

Music has to be imaginatively recreated in order to be retrieved, and here is where conflicts are likely to arise between the performer's imagination and the scholar's conscience, even (or especially) when the two are housed in a single mind.

Verdi, speaking ironically about the aims of verismo, said, "it's fine to reproduce reality, but how much better to create it." In a similar spirit I would say, "it's fine to assemble the shards of a lost performance tradition, but how much better to reinvent it." Research alone has never given, and is never likely to give (again for obvious reasons) enough information to achieve that wholeness of conception and that sureness of style—in a word, that fearlessness—any authentic, which is to say authoritative, performance must embody. Here is a paradox: which is more "authentic," an historical reconstructionist performance of, say, *Messiah*, or a Three Choirs Festival performance? Which, in other words, enjoys the commonality of work, performer, and (lest we forget) audience, the certainty of experience and of expectation that lends the proceedings the "cool, inevitable intention" Jeffrey Mark described? The Three Choirs performance surely speaks for a culture, not Handel's perhaps, but that of the performers and their audience, certainly. It gives what Eliot called a sense "not only of the pastness of the past, but its presence."¹² The modernist, avant-garde, historical reconstruction of *Messiah* can only evoke the pastness of the past, and will therefore appeal not to the esthetic sense but merely to antiquarian curiosity—unless it derives its sustenance not only from whatever evidence musicological research may provide, but from imaginative leaps that will fill in the gaps research by its very nature must leave. Otherwise we will have not a performance but a documentation of the state of knowledge. As long as the reconstructionist performer holds himself to the same strict standards of accountability we rightly demand of any scholar, his efforts will be bent not on doing what the music was meant to do, but on simply "getting it right," that is, on achieving what the mainstream performer takes for granted. He will end up, if he is lucky, with what the mainstream performer starts out with.

The most authoritative and compelling reconstructionist performances of old music, as well as the most controversial, have always been those that have proceeded from a vividly imagined—that is frankly to say imaginary—but coherent performance style. They provide themselves with Tradition, in the Eliot sense, and bestow authenticity upon themselves. Where such performers do not know the composer's intentions they are unafraid to have intentions of their own, and to treat them with a comparable respect. I suppose I am thinking now of the performances of the Early Music Quartet and some recent ones by the Concentus Musicus among those I have heard, and among those I have not, of the radical reconstructionist performance of *Messiah* given in Ann Arbor under Edward Parmentier last year, which

¹²Eliot, op. cit., p. 38.

I know only by enthusiastic rumor, and by reports of the uproar it created among some of the scholars in attendance.

In this light, let me return now to the criticisms of Cappella Nova. What was mainly under attack was our approach to phrasing and dynamics, both of which are very sharply profiled in our performances, and which from the very beginning have always been singled out by our hearers either for praise or for blame. The origins of the approach lie, I have no hesitation in admitting, in my own subjective response to the nature of the lines in complex, melismatic and polyphonic textures. I know of no specific historical sanction for it, except insofar as subjective responses of contemporary hearers have been occasionally and vaguely recorded. In the absence of hard evidence I felt not only free but duty-bound to invent an approach. Or, to put things as they really happened, it was because this approach to phrasing and dynamics evolved in me during my period as director of the Columbia University Collegium Musicum, that I felt I had a statement to make about the music and was moved to form Cappella Nova to begin with. Although its origins lay not in certain knowledge but in imagination, the approach is very much an objective feature of Cappella Nova's style. It is an element of what we take to be, and present as, the authentic sound of the music, and its presence is, far from an intrusion, quite necessary if for us the music is, yes, to "speak for itself." Those whose scholar's conscience equates silence with prohibition must invariably regard our performances as arbitrary. But what is arbitrary in my view is the flat dynamic and the lack of phrasing, that is, of molding lines to their high points, which characterize so many so-called "objective" performances of Renaissance music. For these derive not from any demonstrable condition or feature of the music or of its historical context, but merely from the state of evidence, over which the performer can exercise no control. Strict accountability thus reduces performance practice to a lottery. It has nothing to do with authenticity. Authenticity stems from conviction. Conviction in turn stems as much from belief as it does from knowledge. Our beliefs—naïve or sophisticated, to be sure, depending on the state of our knowledge—are what alone can give us the sense of assurance and of style possessed by those fortunate enough to have behind them an unbroken tradition of performance.

This brings me to a perhaps even more fundamental caveat. What, after all, is historical method, and to what kind of knowledge does it lead? If we were to reduce it all to a single word, that word would have to be generalization. Style criticism, often held up as the ultimate goal of historical scholarship in music, is above all the abstraction of contexts from cases, the establishment of generalizing criteria. Think of Riemann, for example, of whom we read in *The New Grove*, that "he was not interested in the individual case as such, but rather in discerning its typicality and its place in the entire system."¹³ And of course most properly historical musicological work is either that or it is a preparation for that. But this is as far

¹³Mark Hoffman, "Riemann, Hugo," in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary*, XVI, p. 5.

from the performer's mentality as it is possible to be. *His* concern is *only* with individual cases, taken one at a time. As George Perle remarked admiringly about Seiji Ozawa, who was performing one of his works at Tanglewood, "When he's playing it his whole repertoire consists of one piece—mine." And here is what Erich Leinsdorf has to say in a recent book which was actually meant as a polemic against interpretive excess: "Every great work is first and last a meaningful musical utterance unlike any other. If it did not have its own unique meaning it would have come and gone and would not be part of our living repertoire." Leinsdorf's words are fighting words, and what he is fighting is what he calls the "sacrifice of the sense of music to a simplistic notion of period style."¹⁴ For him, then, historical reconstruction is just another variety of interpretive excess. But one needn't accept his belligerent equation of style consciousness with simplemindedness to note the real enough danger of our sense of style becoming reductive owing to an insufficient appreciation or response to the uniqueness of individual compositions.

This is a very easy trap to fall into. Our training as scholars gives us very precise and efficient ways of dealing with generalities. We have a vocabulary for them, and the process of framing them invokes reassuringly scientific methods and criteria, many of them quantitative and exact. We have no such aids in dealing with uniqueness. We have no vocabulary: words can no more give an exact representation of an individual piece of music than they can render an individual face. We have to draw the face and play the piece. But a scholar is never so insecure as when he is at a loss for words. And nothing is less scientific than the evaluation not of quantities but of artistic qualities, the specific details, the "divine details" as Nabokov would say. These must be apprehended by imaginative response, empathic identification, artistic insight—all euphemisms, of course, for intuition, which word embarrasses and antagonizes the scholar in us. Unwilling to claim intuition as a guide, both for the reason just given and for the reason given a while ago—that it violates our scholarly principles of accountability—we often tend to flee from characterizing the uniqueness of a piece in performance, and seek our refuge in our objective knowledge, which is in all cases a generalized one. Since it is never possible to talk about the unique with the same objectivity as one can about the typical, we are tempted to ignore distinguishing characteristics and instead parade our basic knowledge of style as if it were specific insight. The results are familiar, typified, if you will, by performances of choral masterpieces by Bach or Handel that reduce them to demonstrations of dance tempi, A-415 and (*pace* Prof. Neumann!) *notes inégales*. There is a corollary to this in the form of reliance upon authentic editions, authentic instruments or authentic performance practices learned from authentic treatises, in place of careful and sensitive consideration of the music. An actual, if extreme, recent example was an advertising flyer sent out by a New York harpsi-

¹⁴Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven, 1981), pp. 88-89.

chordist announcing that his would be the first New York performance of the Goldberg Variations from the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*. This kind of thing is the performer's analogue to what is regrettably becoming a pair of recognizable types among scholarly papers—the kind that merely lists variants between versions or sources, and the kind that makes an exhaustive physical description of a sketch, both kinds purporting meanwhile to describe “compositional process.” This is preparatory work offered as the substance of scholarship. Similarly, a performance that merely sets out to demonstrate that Bach was baroque represents preparatory work, not the substance of performance.

But even at their best and most successful—or especially at their best and most successful—historical reconstructionist performances are in no sense recreations of the past. They are quintessentially modern performances, modernist performances in fact, the product of an esthetic wholly of our own era, no less time-bound than the performance styles they would supplant. Like all other modernist philosophies, historical reconstructionism views the work of art, including performing art, as an autonomous object, not as a process, not an activity. It views the internal relationships of the art work as synonymous with its content, and in the case of music it renounces all distinction between sound and substance: to realize the sound is in fact to realize the substance, hence the enormous and, be it said, oft-times exaggerated concern today for the use of authentic period instruments for all periods. The aim of historical reconstruction is, as Ortega put it, “a scrupulous realization,”¹⁵ and as Eliot put it, “not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; . . . not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality,”¹⁶ the emotions and the personality escaped from being, of course, those of the performer “as he is at the moment.”¹⁷ The artist trades in objective, factual knowledge, not subjective feeling. His aim is not communication with his audience, but something he sees as a much higher, in Eliot's words “much more valuable” goal, communion with Art itself and with its history, and he enlists musicology's aid in achieving it. To return once more to the starting point, this is what is meant today by “letting the music speak for itself.” I am describing no monstrosity, no straw man, but an ideal of beauty that inspired many of the greatest creative minds of our century. And it is only in the nature of things that what dominated advanced creative minds half a century ago should be dominating advanced recreative minds today. The paradox and the problem—or is it just my problem?—is that this way of thinking about art and performance has no demonstrable relevance to the ways people thought

¹⁵“The Dehumanization of Art,” p. 14.

¹⁶“Tradition and the Individual Talent,” p. 43.

¹⁷The invention of sound recording has obviously been a tremendous spur to this tendency, since it offers the possibility of permanence to a medium that had formerly existed only “at the moment.” Most historical reconstructionist performances aspire at least tacitly to the status of document, if not that of *Denkmal*. When the performance is recorded, the aim usually becomes explicit (witness the slogan of the SEON series of historical recordings: “Document & Masterwork”). No less than the score, the performance is regarded as a “text” rather than as an activity, and this creates another pressure toward the elimination from it of anything spontaneous or “merely” personal, let alone idiosyncratic.

about art and performance before the twentieth century. Applied to the music of the Renaissance and the Baroque, to say nothing of the nineteenth century, it all seems exquisitely anachronistic. And what seems to prove my point is that with the possible exception of the rather ambiguous case of continuo realization, the modern reconstructionist movement has produced many scrupulous realizers of musical notation but has yet to produce a single genuine master of improvisation, which we all know to have been nine-tenths of the Renaissance and Baroque musical icebergs.

Some may be wondering now who it is I'm really thinking of. But I am thinking of no individual; I am thinking of a little bit of each of us. We all share these attitudes to some extent if we are at all alive to our own time. Do I seem then to be generally skeptical of historical reconstructionism or of musicology as an ally of performance? Nothing could be further from the truth, as I hope my own activities testify. But I am skeptical of the complacency with which difficult issues are often addressed, and I do deplore the equation of modernist objectivity with scientific truth.¹⁸

To even the score now, and to return to a more personal note, let me attempt to list the assets my musicological training has given me as a performer. At the very top of the list goes curiosity, with its implications, so far as human nature allows, of openmindedness, receptivity to new ideas and love of experiment. It is in this spirit that I believe investigations of past performance practices should be conducted. Let us indeed try out everything we may learn about in every treatise, every archival document, every picture, every literary description, and the more adventurously the better. But let us not do it in a spirit of dutiful self-denial or with illusions that the more knowledge one garners, the fewer decisions one will have to make. Let us accept from the scholar in us only that which genuinely excites the performer in us, if for no other reason than because both the attractive and the unattractive finding are equally likely to be wrong. Above all, let us not be afraid, as Rose Rosengard Subotnik recently put it with respect to criticism,¹⁹ to "acknowledge our own presence" in our work and to accept it, if for no other reason than because it is in the final analysis inescapable. The suspension of personality in a modernist performance immediately stamps the performance as such, and is therefore paradoxically tantamount to an assertion of personality. We impose our esthetic on Bach no less than did Liszt, Busoni or even Stokowski.

¹⁸Having used the word, I feel I must say a thing or two about "scientific" attitudes, though I fear they will be the most controversial of all (perhaps that is why I am seeking the sanctuary of a footnote). Empirical science, as all the world knows, claims to be "value-free." But art is not, and performance must not be. The adoption of the doctrinaire empiricist, positivist, and unprincipled stance of scientific research when investigating performance practice can be pernicious, leading in extreme cases to an evasion of responsibility, something distressingly close to a musical Eichmann defense. I have in mind the perpetration of musical results the performer himself regards as unattractive, in the belief that that's how it was done, like it or not ("I was just following orders"). There have been notable recent instances of this in Bach performance, where the situation is exacerbated by the knowledge that Bach himself did not like certain aspects of his own performance practice, notably involving the size and quality of his choir in Leipzig. Still more disturbing is the "scientific" pressure to keep up with the state of research, whatever one's personal predilections. I know of more than one instance in which performers of Renaissance and Baroque music have followed practices of which they were not personally convinced either historically or esthetically for fear that otherwise they might be suspected of ignorance.

¹⁹"Musicology, Analysis, and Criticism," a paper read at the same panel discussion as the present one.

The second great advantage musicological training confers is knowledge of what there is and where to find it. When one has mastered a scholar's bibliographical and paleographical skills, one need not be limited by the vagaries of editors and publishers. But here too there is an attendant pitfall in the form of an overly bibliographical approach to programming. I have in mind the kind of program that starts off with sixteen settings of *J'ay pris amours*, followed by one bassadanza from each of five collections, and finally a Machaut ballade performed with two voices, then three voices, then four voices, as it is transmitted in three different sources. These are seminar reports in sound, not concert programs. And another didactic programming pitfall is the practice, once far more widespread than it is now (as those who attended the Josquin Festival-Conference ten years ago may recall)²⁰ of presenting a kind of analysis of a piece in lieu of a performance of it—for example, changing the scoring of an isorhythmic motet on each talea, or bringing out by hook or crook the cantus firmus of any mass or motet. In either event, the performer takes it upon himself to throw into relief something the composer in many cases took elaborate pains to conceal, and is being the very opposite of authentic, however the term is construed. We tend, many of us, particularly those of us who teach music history for our daily bread, to turn our concerts into classrooms, and I know from personal experience that no performer's bad habit born of musicology is more difficult to break. It is a case of the scholar's conscience once more, this time actually masquerading as the performer's imagination.

Speaking of teaching and of classrooms reminds me that when thinking of the relationship between the musicologist and the performer we usually assume that the former teaches and the latter learns. But good performers can teach receptive scholars a great deal, and communication both ways is needed if a real symbiosis of musicology and performance is to occur. Sometimes one is lucky enough to have it happen within oneself if one combines the roles. It was the performer in me that taught the scholar in me the extent to which *modus*, the division of longas into breves, continues, though not explicit in the notation, to operate throughout the Renaissance period, at least in church music, as an organizer of rhythm. This is a feature totally obscured by modern editions which base their barring on the tactus—a feature of modern editorial practice which, as Lowinsky demonstrated over twenty years ago,²¹ is perfectly authentic, but, for a final paradox, no less a falsification for that. For *modus* is, as I have come to believe, the operative factor in projecting the rhythmic life of much of Isaac, for example, or of Josquin. It is a matter I intend to pursue in the context of “pure research,” but it was a discovery I made purely serendipitously as a performer.

²⁰See the transcripts of the “Workshops on Performance and Interpretation” published along with the rest of the proceedings of the Festival-Conference in Edward Lowinsky, ed., *Josquin des Prez* (London, 1976), pp. 645-719, and most especially, Ludwig Finscher's paper, “Historical Reconstruction Versus Structural Interpretation in the Performance of Josquin's Motets” in the same volume, pp. 627-32.

²¹Edward Lowinsky, “Early Scores in Manuscript,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XIII (1960), 126-73.

I began this little essay by noting that musicologists and performers are on better terms now than ever before, and I wish to reaffirm this heartening fact in conclusion. It might not be amiss to recall that it was not always so. Dmitri Shostakovich once had a good laugh over a definition of a musicologist he heard at breakfast one day from his piano teacher, and repeated it all his life. “What’s a musicologist? I’ll tell you. Our cook, Pasha, prepared the scrambled eggs for us and we are eating them. Now imagine a person who did not cook the eggs and does not eat them, but talks about them—*that* is a musicologist.”²² Well, we’re eating them now, and even cook up a few on occasion, as when we do a little discreet composing to make a fragmentary piece performable. Now, if we could only sell them . . .

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²²Nikolai Malko, *A Certain Art* (New York, 1966), p. 180.