

Plato's Curse

We call it music, but that is not music: that is only paper.

—LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI¹

For generations musicologists have behaved as if scores were the only real thing about music.

—NICHOLAS KENYON²

SOUNDED WRITING

'Basically', wrote the *fin-de-siècle* Viennese pianist, critic, and teacher Heinrich Schenker (2000: 3), 'a composition does not require a performance in order to exist.... The reading of the score is sufficient'. What makes this negative assessment of the performer's role so striking is that it is the first sentence of his unfinished treatise *The Art of Performance*; how many other books start with a statement that their topic is redundant? What Schenker was actually saying, however, bordered on the commonplace. According to Dika Newlin (1980: 164), Arnold Schoenberg—who himself had ideas of writing a book on performance—once remarked that the performer was 'totally unnecessary except as his interpretations make the music understandable to an audience unfortunate enough not to be able to read it in print'. Rudolph Kolisch, the violinist and quartet leader who was closely associated with Schoenberg—and who at one time planned to co-author a book on performance with T. W. Adorno—echoed this as late as 1978: 'the entire need for performance disappears if one can read music'.³ One might think that such off-the-cuff remarks shouldn't be taken seriously. But in another sense,

1. In Gould (1987: 264).

2. Kenyon (2012: 11).

3. Transcribed and translated by David Trippett from a recorded interview with Berthold Türcke, 18 April 1978 (Houghton Library, Harvard University, b MS Mus 195-2211, no. 32). For Kolisch's co-authorship see Adorno (2006: 12).

just because they are unconsidered, they reveal deeply embedded assumptions or prejudices with particular clarity. And what Schoenberg apparently said to Newlin ties in with other things that he set down on paper, for example in an essay of 1934 where he talks about the 'freedom in the manner of expression' of the old-fashioned fantasia, and adds that such freedom is

permissible in our own day only perhaps in dreams; in dreams of future fulfilment; in dreams of a possibility of expression which has no regard for the perceptive faculties of a contemporary audience; where one may speak with kindred spirits in the language of intuition and know that one is understood if one uses the speech of the imagination—of fantasy. (Schoenberg 1975: 274–75)

This may be no more than a daydream, but it still powerfully articulates the ideal of a music that travels instantaneously from mind to mind, in the manner of telepathy, or perhaps of what was in 1934 the still recent technology of radio. At the same time it resonates with Ludwig van Beethoven's famous inscription in the autograph of the *Missa Solemnis*: 'From the heart—may it go straight to the heart'. In this vision of an ideal music, performers are conspicuous by their absence.

Discourses around musical performance, both academic and vernacular, are strangely conflicted. On the one hand, music is one of the heartlands of the star system, not only in pop but across the range of the classical tradition, from Claudio Abbado to Hayley Westenra, and this has been the case since the days of Enrico Caruso—the first star created by sound recording—and before that Niccolò Paganini, the virtuoso violinist whose achievement Franz Liszt set out to emulate. (Earlier still, the eighteenth-century opera world revolved around stars in much the same way as twentieth-century Hollywood.) And a survey carried out in 2002 by Classic FM, the UK radio station, showed that while only 65% of children between six and fourteen could name a single classical composer, 98% could name a classical performer.⁴ On the other hand the official publications of the classical music establishment tell a different story. The 1983 edition of the *New Oxford Companion to Music*, edited by Denis Arnold, included highly obscure composers but had no entries for performers. And what are sold as histories of classical music represent music as something made by composers rather than performers. The twentieth century emerges as dominated by atonality, Schoenbergian serialism, post-war serialism, and a variety of postmodern reactions against it; depending on the market, there may be a few chapters on jazz and popular music. You could not tell from this that most classical music making in the twentieth century consisted of the performance, recording, and consumption of earlier music. It is like telling the story of the car purely in terms of successive refinements of the internal combustion engine rather than in terms of the innumerable ways in which cars changed people's lives,

4. As cited by Howard Goodall in an unpublished interview conducted as part of the research for Victoros (2009).

not to say the physical environment, in the course of the twentieth century. And the worst thing about this skewing of musicological discourse is it cuts academic studies off from precisely the dimension of music that touches most people's lives.

I originally voiced my complaint about the *New Oxford Companion to Music* more than fifteen years ago (Cook 1996: 33): the 2002 edition of the *Companion*, completely overhauled by Alison Latham, gives proper representation to performance. And during that period there has been a steady, even spectacular, increase in academic studies of musical performance from a wide range of complementary directions, to the extent that today there are perhaps more conferences about performance than about any other area of music studies. Many aspects of the network of interconnected aesthetic assumptions I set out in this chapter have come under scrutiny in recent decades. So it might seem decidedly late in the day to be voicing complaints about the neglect of music as performance. But the claim I would now advance is rather different from the one I made in 1996. It is that this new consciousness of the role and importance of performance has for the most part been grafted onto traditional ways of thinking about music, or squeezed in as a new specialist area, whereas thinking about music as performance should prompt a fundamental rethinking of the discipline as a whole. It is that rethinking to which I hope to contribute.

There is an obvious comparison with theatre studies, which broke away from the mainstream of literary studies as a consequence of a fundamentally different attitude towards the dramatic text. I shall shortly discuss these matters at greater length, but in brief, the literary studies approach is to see meaning as inherent in a written text, whether dramatic or otherwise. The theatre studies approach, by contrast, is to see the dramatic text as one of many inputs into a performance, and to see meaning as something that emerges in the course of performance. In other words, though literary studies and theatre studies both deal with dramatic texts, they do so in terms of different methods and, more important, different epistemological assumptions. Seen this way, traditional musicology is like literary studies: it sees meaning, of whatever kind, as embodied in musical notation, from which it follows that performance is in essence a matter of communicating that meaning from the page to the stage. The performer's work becomes a supplement to the composer's. The musicological approach, then, has been to study music *and* performance, in contrast to studying music *as* performance—a term which in recent years has started to be used within musicology, but has a specific provenance within the field of performance studies.⁵ The difference between 'and' and 'as' stands for the fundamental rethinking to which I referred.

The disconnect between the discourses around music and its performance has a long history: assumptions about the nature of music that marginalise performance go back at least as far as the early middle ages. And this goes beyond a simple contrast between some ideal, philosophical *musica mundana* and a merely practical *musica instrumentalis*. From his study of ninth-to-eleventh-century

5. Frequently abbreviated to MAP, 'Music as Performance' is the name of one of the working groups set up by the (North American) Association for Theatre in Higher Education to forge relationships with neighbouring disciplines.

discussions of chant, Sam Barrett concludes that 'neumatic notation served not simply as a pragmatic *aide-memoire*, but as a reflexive tool for disciplined knowing': it 'mirrors a higher order of being' (2008: 93, 90). Music is in other words conceived platonically, as an abstract and enduring entity that is reflected in notation, with the notation itself being reflected in singing (since mistakes in singing can be corrected by reference to the notation). As Barrett (92) comments, 'The primary melodic reality is suprasensual, an ongoing, unfolding celestial round of praise: the equivalent performance in the world of sense is at best a mere transcription and at worst a deviation'. And he adds: 'between the two domains lies the cognitive domain of memory'. From here it would be possible to trace the idea of music as an abstract and enduring entity through a variety of later sources, though its relationship to notation changes. As Bojan Bujić (1993: 134) says, 'the whole subsequent course of Western notation represents a move away from memory towards the state in which a written document can stand on its own, as it were, representing the work as such and offering to the performer clear indications how to recreate it in musical sounds'.

My purpose is not to trace a history but merely to identify a recurrent idea, so I will use another medieval source as a launching pad from which to jump to the early modern era and beyond: Aurelian of Réôme's account of a Frankish monk who 'heard a choir of angels singing the response that is sung on the birthday of the apostles,' and 'carried it back with him to Rome' (Barrett 2008: 92). The idea of genius as a kind of divinely inspired authorship emerged in the sixteenth century, as exemplified in the artist and biographer Giorgio Vasari's account of Giotto, the painter and architect whose work contributed crucially to the Italian Renaissance: this marked a decisive shift towards what become the dominant paradigm of appreciating artistic products as the work of their author. And the idea of inspiration from a higher authority continued to inform the idea of genius until well into the twentieth century. The connection with Aurelian is made explicit in Karl Bauer's painting of the composer Hans Pfitzner (Figure 1.1), who wrote extensively on both inspiration and genius, and whose opera *Palestrina* revolves around the vision of angelic singing that supposedly inspired the Italian composer's *Missa Papae Marcelli*. Pfitzner's opera was first performed in 1917, but the picturesque thinking that informs it survives to the present day. According to the liner, a 2005 CD by the healer and holistic practitioner Celeste, recorded over a sequence of full moons, consists of 'angelic healing harmonies sung through Celeste'.⁶

At the same time, ideas of authorship, genius, and inspiration were fundamental to the development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of formalistic approaches to music, which transformed ideas of divine authority into those of aesthetic autonomy, and in this way gave a modernist gloss to an older conception. An obvious example is the approach developed by Schenker, who

6. Celeste, 'Celestial Sounds: A Harmonic Embrace for the Soul', Celestial Sounds 5060115940078 (2005).

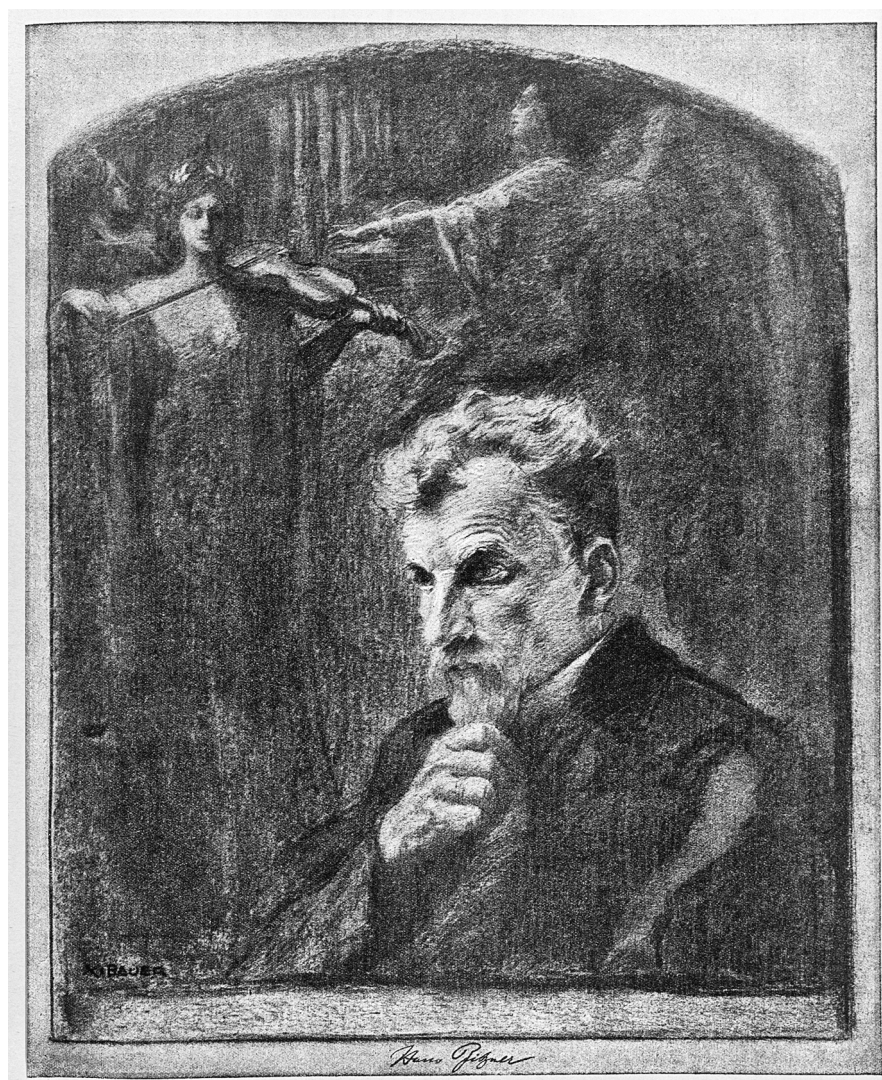


Figure 1.1 Karl Bauer, 'Hans Pfitzner', from *Jugend* (1918). Photo: akg-images

represented musical works as the unfolding of a basic structural idea that can be expressed in notational terms: if for Schenker the structural idea represented the inspiration of the work, then the ability to unfold it was the mark of genius, and it was a basic principle of Schenker's thought that composers were frequently unaware of the means by which they achieved this. Schenker's thinking bears the traces of the late-nineteenth-century context from which it sprang, but was reshaped in line with the values of post-war American academia by his ex-pupils and followers—it was at this point that Schenker was transformed from the pianist, critic, and teacher as which I described him at the beginning of this chapter

to the theorist as which he is known now—and it is in this modernised form that his ideas exerted a wide influence on post-war approaches to musical structure. Meanwhile a parallel development took place in philosophical approaches to the musical work and its performance. Despite their different perspectives, debates between writers such as Peter Kivy, Stephen Davies, Jerrold Levinson, and Julian Dodd have been framed within a conception of the musical work as the ontological basis of musical culture that embodies the two ideas I have described: first, that the musical work is an abstract and enduring entity, conceived in a more or less platonic manner; and second, that it is grounded in notation.

What does all this have to do with performance? In one sense, nothing; in another, everything. Under the shadow of what I call Plato's curse, music is embraced within a communicative chain. Music goes from heart to heart, as Beethoven had it, but—as Schoenberg glossed it—unless you are fortunate enough to be able to read what Beethoven wrote for yourself, it has to go via the performer. To repeat Barrett's words, the performer's role is at best to transcribe the work from the domain of the abstract to that of the concrete, and at worst to deviate from it. The performer becomes a mediator, and as in the case of all middlemen, this involves a kind of contractual relationship: it is the performer's obligation to represent the composer's work to the listener, just as it is the listener's obligation to strive towards an adequate understanding of the work itself. And it is here, in a conception of the relationship between composer, performer, and listener that extends from E. T. A. Hoffmann and Adolph Bernhard Marx to Schoenberg and Pierre Boulez, that the ethically charged language that has surrounded WAM (Western 'art' music) performance emerges: I am talking of the language of 'authority', 'duty', and 'faithfulness', as well as the overall tone of, for example, Schoenberg's reference to 'the Sodom and Gomorrha of false interpreters' (1975: 328). The entire early music revival was built around the claim that certain performance practices were authentic while others were not. Even in the more pluralistic culture of the early twentieth century the moral dimension retains a currency in music for which it is hard to find parallels in other arts. In the theatre, and even in the opera house, it is taken for granted that old works should be reinterpreted for modern audiences and that a director should express his or her own vision. If issues of historical accuracy are raised, then they are likely to be seen as just one of a number of competing desirables. With WAM it is different. I shall come back to these issues at the end of the book.

The idea of the performer's duty has traditionally come in two distinct versions: on the one hand duty to the composer, on the other to the work (sometimes referred to as *Werktreue*). But in practice there is slippage between these. In mainstream repertory composers are safely dead, and various parties may seek to appropriate their authority. When Schenker explains the principles governing Beethoven's compositions—principles of which Beethoven may well have been unaware—and draws conclusions for how they should be performed, he is laying claim to the composer's authority. Performers, too, invoke Beethoven's authority in negotiating interpretations. Robert Martin (1994: 117–18), who was cellist

in the Sequoia Quartet, imagines a rehearsal in which this exchange takes place around Beethoven's notoriously problematic metronome markings:

'Beethoven's marking for the slow movement is perfect (60 to the quarter)—so why should we doubt his marking for the *Allegretto*?'

'Look, we play the slow movement around 60 because that feels right to us—our reaction to the metronome marking is that he got it right! In the *Allegretto* he gives a tempo that feels wrong.'

'It may feel wrong to you. I think we will get used to it, and anyway, it's what he wanted! You're not denying that, are you?'

The absent Beethoven is invoked as a kind of rhetorical construct: the performers do not express their opinions directly but rather ventriloquise them. Faithfulness to the composer is tempered by the essential unknowability of his intentions, which enables them to function as a vehicle for the performers' own judgements about the music.

In practice, then, it makes little difference whether duty is owed to the composer or to the work. In either case two consequences follow, both of which I have mentioned but on which I now expand. The first consequence is that meaning is understood as laid down by the composer, deposited in the work. If, in the words of Nicolai Listenius (the sixteenth-century writer often credited with the first clear formulation of the concept of the musical work), the composer's labour results in 'a perfect and absolute *opus* [*opus perfectum ed absolutum*]' (Goehr 1992: 116), then all that remains for the performer is to reproduce it in sound. This was explicitly stated by Eduard Hanslick (1986: 29), whose *On the Musically Beautiful* was first published as long ago as 1854 ('the performer can deliver only what is already in the composition'), and it still underpins the philosophical approaches I mentioned earlier. 'Reproduction' became a standard term in the discourse of twentieth-century composers, critics, and theorists: it was routinely used (alongside several other German terms normally translated as 'performance') by Schoenberg, Adorno, and Schenker, who approvingly cited Johannes Brahms's statement—as quoted by his biographer Max Kalbeck—that 'whenever I play something by Beethoven, I have no individuality whatsoever, insofar as the piece is concerned: instead I strive to reproduce the piece as Beethoven prescribed, and I then have enough to do' (Schenker 2005: 31). And Laurence Dreyfus (2007: 254) has shown that even the apparently more generous term 'interpretation' draws on biblical and legal contexts where it refers to the clarification of existing content rather than the generation of new insights.

My concern is, however, not so much with the words as with the musical ontology that they express—an ontology that is still influential in discourses around WAM. It is expressed in the legal concept of the musical work, which, as Anne Barron (2006) has shown, developed in parallel—though not always in step—with the aesthetic concept. Perhaps the clearest illustration is provided by the American case *Newton v Diamonte et al.* [2002], in which the jazz flautist James Newton sought recompense for the use in a Beastie Boys song of a six-second

sample from his album *Axum*. Newton's claim was refused on the grounds that 'a musical composition consists of rhythm, harmony, and melody, and it is from these elements that originality is to be determined'.⁷ Seen this way, the sample in question consisted merely of Newton singing the notes C-Db-C while fingering a C on the flute. That was not, of course, the reason the Beastie Boys used the sample: they did so because of the highly distinctive aural effect resulting from Newton's idiosyncratic performance technique. Despite this, the judge took it for granted that meaning inheres in the composition and not its performance.

The second consequence of this way of thinking follows directly on the first and was repeatedly stated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: as a mediator, the performer's highest ambition should be self-effacement. This point is best made by quotation. 'The true artist,' writes E. T. A. Hoffmann (1989: 103), 'lives only in the work that he conceives and then performs as the composer intended it. He disdains to let his own personality intervene in any way; all his endeavours are spent in quickening to vivid life, in a thousand shining colours, all the sublime effects and images the composer's magical authority enclosed within his work'. Hoffmann's image of the painting resonates with the brusque claim, by Hector Berlioz (1918: 101–2), that performers are only there to shine a light upon the canvas, but what is particularly revealing about this quotation is the idea of meaning having been enclosed within (another translation renders it 'sealed in') the work. Again, in the notes for his unfinished book on performance, for which one of his working titles was 'Reproduction Theory: A Music-philosophical Investigation,' Adorno copied out a quotation from Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*: 'the playing of a great musician [is] so transparent, so replete with its content, that one does not notice it oneself, or only like a window that allows us to gaze upon a masterpiece' (Adorno 2006: 119). The organ composer Marcel Dupré concurs, but spells out the hierarchy and ramps up the imperative tone: 'The interpreter must never allow his own personality to intrude. As soon as it penetrates, the work has been betrayed. By concealing himself sincerely before the character of the work in order to illuminate it, even more so before the personality of the composer, he serves the latter and confirms the authority of the work' (Hill 1994: 44). Maybe it is not irrelevant that organists, unlike most other performers, are generally invisible to their audiences. At all events, with this image of the self-effacing performer whose highest aspiration—like that of high-class servants—should be invisibility, we are more or less back at the sentiments of the Schenker and Schoenberg quotations with which I began this chapter.

What Schoenberg was saying was that, in practice, performers (like servants) are a necessity, except of course for those who can read the printed score for themselves, and it is on the role of the score that I would now like to focus. It

7. Quoted by Judge Nora Manella from the standard legal textbook Nimmer and Nimmer (1997). It should be stressed that this case concerned rights in the work, rather than subsidiary rights in the performance, which the Beastie Boys had cleared; the point of the case was that the former are much more valuable than the latter. Further discussion may be found in Toynbee (2006), Lewis (2007), and Cook (2013a).

is a recurring complaint—prominently articulated by James Winn (1998)—that humanities disciplines are driven by textualist values, driving a wedge between text and performance, and Winn traces this back to the disciplining of music by text in ancient Greece. But musicology's version of the text-performance split has more specific foundations. As we have seen, there was a long tradition of seeing music as some kind of abstract entity, closely (though often not very clearly) linked to notation. According to Gary Tomlinson, it was in the late eighteenth century, and specifically with the writings of Johann Nikolaus Forkel, that a decisive impetus developed to identify notation with cultural value: for Forkel, a society's position on the spectrum from musical primitiveness to perfection depended on the sophistication of its notation, so that 'the history of European musical development could be plotted as a story of the progress of writing' (Tomlinson 2012: 65). This view of music as text resonated perfectly with the context in which the modern discipline of musicology first came into being during the nineteenth century, the politically motivated programme of documenting—or inventing—national origins through culture. The retrieval, editing, and criticism of national literary canons lay at the heart of this project, and so it was natural that the nascent musicology should model itself on philology.

That may be sufficient to explain musicology's traditional orientation to source studies and textual criticism. But its orientation to text rather than to performance draws on other sources too. The idea of the text as a repository of meaning goes back to early modern conceptions of authorship and was also deeply embedded in religious thought, particularly that of the Reformation: that is the context of the conception of interpretation that Dreyfus discussed. Charles Rosen (2003: 17) provides a telling example of how such ideas work out in the context of music. He quotes Giovanni Maria Artusi, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, criticising the compositional innovations of Claudio Monteverdi and his circle. 'These composers,' Artusi wrote,

seek only to satisfy the ear and with this aim toil night and day at their instruments to hear the effect which passages so made produce; the poor fellows do not perceive that what the instruments tell them is false and that it is one thing to search with voices and instruments for something pertaining to the harmonic faculty, another to arrive at the exact truth by means of reasons seconded by the ear.

The references to falsity and truth reflect the platonic epistemology I have described, while the idea that composition proper proceeds through the exercise of reason, rather than through experimentation with instrument in hand, still survives in conservative critical circles. And in this context the exercise of reason corresponds to the manipulation of notation. It is then the same textualist mentality that motivates Artusi's criticism and Schoenberg's claim (1975: 319), in an unpublished typescript headed 'For a treatise on performance,' that 'The highest principle for all reproduction of music would have to be that what the composer

has written is made to sound in such a way that every note is really heard'. Seen this way, performed music is notation made audible.

It did not escape Schoenberg's notice that the most direct way in which to achieve this would be through the use of mechanical instruments. In an essay published in 1926 (probably two or three years after his notes for a treatise on performance), Schoenberg writes that 'the true product of the mind—the musical idea, the unalterable—is established in the relationship between pitches and time-divisions'. But under today's conditions, he explains, it is all but impossible to secure adequate performance of anything except the most conventional music, and so he concludes that 'mechanical production of sounds and the definitive fixing of their pitch, their length, and the way they relate to the division of time in the piece would be very desirable' (1975: 326). Adorno thought the same. While reading Frederick Dorian's *The History of Performance: The Art of Musical Interpretation from the Renaissance to Our Day* in preparation for his own unfinished treatise on performance, he made a note headed 'Elimination of the interpreter as "middleman"', and continued: 'We have only to think of the possibility of an apparatus that will permit the composer to transmit his music directly into a recording medium without the help of the middleman interpreter' (Adorno 2006: 23).

I would like to draw three points out of this. The first is that the identification of musical substance with what can be notated—from which it follows that anything attributable only to the performer is insubstantial—is an assumption built deeply into discourses that surround WAM: it might be described as ideological, in the sense that it presents itself not as an assumption at all but just as the way things are. Again the point is made by the way the law treats this principle as self-evident. It is implicit in the judgement on *Newton v Diamonte*, and it also explains why the British fair dealing exceptions for study and research apply to musical scores but not recordings: in the words of MacQueen, Waelde, and Laurie (2008: 172), 'If I want to study the music or lyrics embodied in a sound recording, I will have to do so in ways other than copying the sound recording: for example, by making copies of the musical notation or the text of the words'. The implication is that there is nothing to study in a recording, over and above what is already in the score. The second point emerges from Schoenberg's identification of notational relationships with 'the true product of the mind'. Just as in his telepathic fantasy, music is assumed to be something in people's heads. Once again perpetuating the platonic tradition, social dimensions are eliminated from the understanding of music. It is on the one hand an abstract structure optimally represented in notation, and on the other a paradigmatically subjective experience, transcending its physical surroundings; in Figure 1.2 the performer's presence is reduced to a hand, matched by the hand with which the listener covers her eyes, as it were channelling her gaze inwards. I will have much to say in this book about these missing social dimensions.

The third, and most obvious, point is the denigration of performers that emerges as much from the tone as the substance of Schoenberg's and Adorno's discussions of the desirability of replacing them by machines. In advocating the



Figure 1.2 Fernand Khnopff, 'Listening to Schumann' (1883), oil on canvas, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique. © Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels / photo: J. Geleyns / Ro scan

development of what she calls a 'performer's discourse', the pianist and scholar Mine Doğan-Özkan (2008: 302) speaks of performers' 'notorious image as inarticulate musicians'. (If this echoes Christiani's 'lady pianists with more sentimentality than judgement', it is still a more desirable category than 'musical theorist'.) There is a long tradition of disparaging performers, of which—perhaps because he never had occasion to tone them down—Adorno's notes towards his unfinished book constitute something of a storehouse. 'Most reproducing musicians', he asserts, 'have the perspective of the bumble bee' (2006: 126); by this he means much the same as Schenker (1996: 3) did when he complained that performers 'drag themselves along from moment to moment, with the laziest of ears, without any musical imagination'. Again, Adorno (2006: 10, 78) complains that 'there has been a downward trend as regards what the average musician must know', and that most performers 'know only two characters: the brilliant (*allegro*) and the lyrical cantabile (*adagio*)'; Schenker's writings, too, are full of references to the decline in performance standards, and in particular the loss of nuance. But what is most revealing is when Adorno (159) notes that his wife Gretel has asked him 'how actors, who are mostly of questionable intelligence and always uneducated,



Figure 1.3 Carl Johann Arnold, 'Quartet Evening at Bettina von Arnim's in Berlin' (1856), water colour. Used by permission of bpk, Berlin / Frankfurter Goethe-Museum with Goethe-Haus, Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main, Germany / Lutz Braun / Art Resource, New York

can represent people and deliver lines that convey the most difficult of ideas'. He records his convoluted answer to the question, the conclusion of which is that 'it is a *prerequisite* for an actor not to "understand", but rather to imitate blindly'. And he adds: 'Perhaps include in the theory of musical reproduction'.

Carl Johann Arnold's painting of a musical evening at the home of the writer, social activist, and patron of the arts Bettina von Arnheim depicts a performance taking place under the watchful eyes of the great composers (Figure 1.3). What is puzzling is the extent to which performers have connived in the hierarchy so graphically represented by Arnold. Alongside the proclamations of writers such as Hoffmann and Proust, and of composers such as Dupré and Schoenberg, may be set those of performers such as Sviatoslav Richter ('if [the performer] is talented,

he allows us to glimpse the truth of the work that is in itself a thing of genius and that is reflected in him. He shouldn't dominate the music, but should dissolve into it' [Monsaigne 2001: 153]). Or there is Leonard Bernstein (1959: 56), one of the most charismatic figures in twentieth-century music, who enjoined that the conductor 'be humble before the composer; that he never interpose himself between the music and the audience; that all his efforts, however strenuous or glamorous, be made in the service of the composer's meaning'. And if such asseverations of faith to dead composers or metaphysical entities sound too quaint to be taken seriously, it should be remembered that they still circulate within performers' discourse (recall Martin's rehearsal discussion). They are taken for granted in the discourses of classical record production, too.

As long ago as 1922 Paul Bekker, the German music theorist and critic whose ideas strikingly anticipate a number of major currents in contemporary musicology, launched a full-scale attack on this entire system of ideas, in particular targeting the idea of performance as reproduction. 'The goal of today's reproducing artist', he wrote, is 'to place himself fully at the service of the composer, only following his directions in order to give a true likeness or rather reproduction of the will of the creator. This sounds both attractive and virtuous', he continues, 'but is in reality unrealizable'. And warming to his theme, he speaks of

the monstrous presumptuousness that lies behind the concept of an objectively correct, note-faithful reproduction. . . . This sham objectivity meant in fact the diminishing of decisive values of personality in favor of an imaginary ideal of objectivity, the mechanization of the methods and goals of performing art, the subversion of concepts of quality, the advancement of mediocrity, the insinuation of artistic immorality and a suspicion of the extraordinary.

He pins the blame on 'the luxuriantly flourishing conservatory business', before concluding that 'today's ruling paradigm of objective reproduction . . . is a philistine self-deception and in the realm of music, preposterous' (Hill 1994: 57–58). And what was in 1922 an isolated challenge to the hegemony of composers and works has become increasingly prevalent in writing about music. Extreme examples range from Christopher Small's claim (1998: 51) that '*performance does not exist in order to present musical works, but rather, musical works exist in order to give performers something to perform*' (the italics are Small's) to the philosopher Stan Godlovitch's assertion (1998: 96) that works should be understood as 'vehicles and opportunities' for performance. And Robert Martin (1993: 123), who is a philosopher as well as a cellist, concurs: 'musical works', he writes, 'are fictions that allow us to speak more conveniently about performances'. He even adds that as far as listeners are concerned, 'musical works . . . simply do not exist'.

But in practice, of course, the regime of the musical work and its reproduction never quite conformed to its representation in the writings of musicians, critics, and aestheticians. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the many problems in trying to reconstruct historical performance practices from

documentary sources is performers who say one thing but do another. In his exhaustive study of early piano recordings, Neal Peres da Costa (2012) cites numerous examples of performers who advocate performance practices based strictly on the musical text—fully synchronised hands, avoidance of unnotated arpeggiation, avoidance of tempo modification—but then, on record, disregard their own prescriptions. And there is a more basic problem. What looks like a description of what people do is often really a prescription of what people *should* do, in other words a description of what they *don't* do; the imperative tone that I referred to in connection with Dupré should act as a warning of this. Then again, there survived into the early twentieth century—and, in music pedagogy, arguably still survives—a less formalised conception of the musical work that did not identify it with the notation but rather positioned it *beyond* the notation: as Doğan-Dack (2012b: 7–12) argues, this more liberal approach, which is implicit in the practices of early recorded pianism, has received far less recognition from musicologists than the textualist model of the aestheticians. In all these ways, what might be termed the official discourses around performance are out of kilter with practice. Sometimes this is quite glaringly the case. For example, the discursive framework of composer worship and *Werktreue* is almost completely irrelevant to the major stream of nineteenth-century pianism that centred around the cult of virtuosity and culminated in the 'piano wars' of the second quarter of the century: rival performers mainly played their own compositions, which were often variations on popular operatic arias of the day, and sometimes they improvised them, but in all cases the focus was on the athletic skill and competitive display of the performance. In this context, Small's and Godlovitch's iconoclastic claims are simple statements of fact.

There are also deep contradictions within what, borrowing Bekker's term, I call the paradigm of reproduction. For one thing, the idea that one can conceive a musical work independently of specific assumptions as to how it might go in performance, which is built into the concept of the autonomous musical work, is highly questionable. Peter Johnson (2007) has shown how, when British critics of the interwar and early post-war years talked about Beethoven's op. 135, they were largely talking about features of the famous Busch Quartet recording from 1933, and not about the work as such at all. Anthony Pryer (forthcoming) makes a similar point in relation to the music criticism which formed the core of Hanslick's professional writing: 'whenever Hanslick was reviewing or assessing work', he says, 'he was also, by aesthetic default, reviewing or assessing real (or imagined) performances. And it is this unspoken *performance postulate* that seems to hold the key to the apparent oddities and contradictions of his theory'. Among the contradictions to which Pryer refers is that on the one hand, as we have seen, Hanslick claimed with his aesthetician's hat on that 'the performer can deliver only what is already in the composition', but on the other his critical writings are full of demonstrations of the opposite. As Pryer points out, Hanslick (1963: 167) says of the famous soprano Adelina Patti that 'If we go today to hear operas such as *Linda*, *Sonnambula*, *I Puritani*, etc., we do not go to hear the works themselves—all dull—but to hear Patti. It is her talent and her voice which breathe

new life into these empty and ineffectual melodies'. In other words, what Patti delivers is precisely what is not in the composition.

Hanslick's aesthetic theory underpins the philosophical discourses to which I referred, framed within the idea of the musical work as a more or less platonic entity grounded in notation. (The vagueness reflects significant disagreements within this framework.) Aestheticians working within this tradition take seriously the discourses of duty, and attempt to identify the essential aspects of the musical work on the basis of which a given performance of it can be shown to be (or not to be) faithful or authentic. In other words their approach is basically an ontological one: How can we know that a performance is indeed a performance of the work? It is obviously problematic for this approach if Hanslick the critic blatantly ignores the prescriptions of Hanslick the aesthetician. But it is all the more problematic if it turns out that the work concept, which these philosophers treat as in effect an aesthetic universal, applies to some streams of WAM performance culture but not others—especially in the nineteenth century, when the regime of the musical work is supposed to have been at its height. It is not surprising then that, within the larger philosophical community, a number of assaults have been aimed at this entire edifice, of which I shall mention two. The first is the devastating attack on the ontological approach to performance launched by Aaron Ridley, which turns on a simple question: 'When was the last time you came away from a performance of a piece of music—live or recorded—seriously wondering whether the performance had been of *it*?' (2004: 113). His point is that issues of ontology simply do not bear upon how listeners engage with or value performances, and so he concludes that 'the whole move to ontology in thinking about musical performance is a mistake' (111).

The second assault on traditional philosophies of music, which has perhaps been more influential in musicological circles than philosophical, is Lydia Goehr's attempt (1992) to reformulate the musical work in more realistic and sensible terms. Goehr's crucial move was to think of the musical work not as a set of essential features or compliance classes determining whether or not, in Ridley's words, a given performance is a performance of *it*, but rather as a regulative concept: a way of thinking about music, and structuring its practice, that fulfils a normative function. Built into this approach is the expectation that, at different times or places, or in relation to different genres, music may conform to a greater or lesser degree with the regulative concept. Goehr developed her thesis through historical analysis, concluding that while it was anticipated in many earlier sources (including Listenius), the concept of the musical work achieved its present form and role around 1800, remaining in place from then until the present day. Many musicologists quibbled over Goehr's chronology, putting forward examples of the work concept from before 1800, or cultural practices that were not regulated by it after then: I have already mentioned the nineteenth-century piano virtuosos, and the desire to contradict Goehr's philosophical incursion deep into musicological territory probably stimulated research into WAM traditions that were not regulated by the work concept but embodied different aesthetic assumptions. But in quibbling over the details, these musicologists were accepting the broad framework

that Goehr was proposing, and in a way such objections might be seen as precisely making her point: if the musical work is a regulative concept subject to historical change rather than a timeless ontological principle, then the pattern of exceptions and variations documented by musicologists is exactly what you would expect. And in any case, if Goehr's formulation of the work concept does not map effortlessly onto the historical practices of music, that in no way diminishes its penetration as a critique of received discourses about music and its performance, as well as of the institutions that have been built on these discourses.

The issue of discourse is essential. My concern in this chapter is less with performance than with the discourses around it, and in particular the way they constrain and channel thinking. One might speak of a grammar of performance that inheres in the transitive mode. You don't just perform, you perform *something*, or you give a performance *of* something, and the grammar of performance deflects attention from the act of performance to its object. More specifically, the conceptual system I have been outlining construes the object as something that endures, and as such exists on a different plane from ongoing, experienced time. In other words, performance is seen as the translation into ongoing, experienced time of something that is not in itself temporal. Scores represent pieces of music as spatial configurations (you can flip the pages forwards or backwards), and music theory mainly consists of the elaboration of non-temporal models. Obvious examples are Schenkerian theory, which conceives of music as the unfolding in time of the 'chord of nature' or major triad, or neo-Riemannian theory, which understands compositions as individuated temporal trajectories across pitch space.

To think of a performance as simply the performance of a particular work—or of the structures into which it may be analysed—excludes all sorts of other possibilities as to what is being performed (I shall come back to this, particularly in Chapter 10). But it is not just that. It is that this underlying grammar makes it impossible to see performance as an intrinsically temporal, real-time activity through which meanings emerge that are not already deposited in the score. Not least as a result of Goehr's intervention, musicologists are aware of the shortcomings and distortions inherent in the work concept and the reifying vocabularies that derive from it. But their words still run away with them. The issue is what received discourses *allow* us to think, for—as I said in the Introduction—it is not my contention that musicologists are uninterested in performance. That accusation is frequently made. Bruce Johnson (2002: 103) cites, as if representative of the discipline, the 'eminent Sorbonne musicologist André Pirro', who supposedly said 'I never go to concerts any more. Why listen to music? To read it is enough'. Yet anyone who works with musicologists must know that many are passionately interested in and knowledgeable about performance; some are distinguished performers in their own right. The problem is that there often seems to be an almost schizophrenic dissociation between the discursive, academic knowledge with which they deal as musicologists and the tacit, action-based knowledge that they rely on as performers. The excessively black-and-white aesthetic ideologies I have been describing militate against effective translation between these quite different domains of musical experience. And the trouble with ideologies is that

they represent themselves as just the way things are, suppressing the possibility of alternative views and even the fact that views are involved at all. In short, under the shadow of Plato's curse, received discourses frustrate musicologists' natural inclination to do justice to music as the performing art we all know it is.

PERFORMATIVE TURNS?

Traditional aesthetic and musicological ways of thinking about works and performances, then, reflect an assumption that meaning resides in the former at the expense of the latter. But this is precisely the way of thinking that came under sustained scrutiny across the humanities under the impact, from the 1960s, of reception theory. This was in origin a product of German-language scholarship, and early musicological work in this area, such as that of Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht on Beethoven, adopted an essentially Hegelian framework: processes of reception were seen as the unfolding of meanings that were already latent within the work, so revealing its true value. (The resonance with Schenkerian theory is not accidental but reflects the strong Hegelian component in Schenker's thought.) Understood this way, the study of reception might be seen as perpetuating the platonic model of the musical work, only by other means. But the approach was subsequently developed in a fundamentally different direction by anglophone musicologists, largely influenced by reader response criticism—a field linked (through Wolfgang Iser) to German reception theory, but given a strongly postmodern twist at the hands of French and American literary theorists such as Roland Barthes and Stanley Fish. Barthes (1977: 148) summarised the entire approach in the final sentence of a famous essay ('the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author'); in the same way, Fish saw meaning as produced through processes of interpretation, whether by readers or critics. In this way literary works came to be seen as sites for the production of meaning, and the process through which this happened became the prime focus of study.

There is an obvious parallel between this and the development of theatre studies—or at least a certain strain within theatre studies, for no academic discipline is monolithic. The basic premise of W. B. Worthen's *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (2003: 29) is the 'misunderstanding' that 'a performance "of Hamlet" is a reproduction of textual meanings in some straightforward way'. Worthen (12) explains: 'Dramatic performance is not determined by the text of the play: it strikes a much more interactive, *performative* relation between writing and the spaces, places, and behaviors that give it meaning, *force*, as theatrical action'. In other words, attention is relocated from the dramatic text to the manner in which it interacts with an indefinite number of other factors to produce meaning in the real time of performance. Equally, responsibility for the production of meaning is shifted from authors to interpreters, whether directors, actors, or viewers. And this is the basic approach that performance studies (which in this book I sometimes refer to as 'interdisciplinary performance studies', to distinguish it from musical performance studies) extended far beyond the traditional

domain of artistic practice. There is a probably apocryphal story that the new discipline owed its origin to a chance conversation between the theatre director and drama theorist Richard Schechner and the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, whose work centred on ritual. (The point of such stories is not that they are true, but that they express disciplinary self-identity.) The two supposedly realised that combining the methods of theatre studies with the purview of anthropology could give rise to what Schechner (1988a), in the title of a brief but influential essay, termed the 'broad spectrum approach'. Like Barthes, Schechner (2006: 38) compressed his thinking into a single sentence: 'Just about anything can be studied "as" performance'.

But there was a further ingredient in the mix: J. L. Austin's theory of the performative. As a philosopher of language, Austin (who died in 1960) was concerned to define what he termed 'speech acts'. By this he meant the use of language not to describe some external reality, but rather to intervene in that reality. An obvious example is the point in the marriage ceremony where you say 'I do': this is a speech act, and it is by virtue of saying it—as well as filling out numerous forms—that you become in fact married. (Other examples include curses, christening, or the bestowing of knighthood.) Putting all this together, one might as readily talk about the performance of the Bourbon kingship as about that of *King Lear*, and indeed many of the strategies employed by Louis XIV to construct and maintain royal power are amenable to analysis in theatrical terms (including the design of royal palaces as stage sets). One might also as readily talk about the performance of gender as about that of *Carmen*, and Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble* greatly increased the profile of such performative approaches by interpreting gendered behaviour as not the expression of biological difference but rather a social performance: in a much quoted phrase, she spoke of performative attributes of gender that 'effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal' (Butler 1990: 98). These approaches converged in the so-called performative turn that swept across the humanities and social sciences in the years around 1990.

What was the impact of reception theory and the performative turn on musicology? Reception theory, and the historical approaches that derived from it, were a major influence, reaching musicology rather later than other subjects but developing into a fast-flowing disciplinary stream by the early 1990s. Such work focussed on the critical, social, and ideological meanings constructed through the totality of the discourses that surround music, and through the institutions that mediate musical values. For example, a major focus within the more historical wing of the 'New' musicology that reshaped the discipline during the 1990s was the formation of canons: it was shown that the Beethovenian canon came about through the interpretation of some (but only some) of the composer's works as embodying particular values, and those values were then reinforced through the impact of this increasingly closed repertoire on concert practices, criticism, historiography, and education. Performance, then, appeared on the agenda, but only as considered in terms of its social, institutional, or aesthetic contexts. The discipline consistently shied away from serious engagement with what might reasonably

have been considered the most obvious and salient acts of musical interpretation: actual performances, particularly as represented by the now-century-old heritage of sound recordings.

Why was this? One reason may have been a hostility to traditional practices of close reading that had quite different origins, but was widespread within the same progressive musicological circles that took up reception theory. A probably more significant reason was that sound recordings had not yet become established as sources for music-historical research: there was no equivalent to the source-critical skills for written documents that are routinely taught to graduate students, and so nobody knew quite what to do with them. Whatever the explanation, the consequence was that while the 'New' musicology did a great deal to enlarge and modernise disciplinary agendas, the fundamental rethinking at which it aimed was severely compromised. It continued to adhere to the textualist paradigms shared by traditional musicology and by literary studies, from which 'New' musicologists drew many of their more innovative approaches. The same might be said of the sociological approaches on which they drew through Adorno, and I shall come back to this in Chapter 8.

The difference in intellectual climate between musicology and other disciplines—which I see as reflecting the failure of established musicological discourses to engage with the concept of performance—can be measured by comparing the interdisciplinary performance studies approach with two developments that brought together academic research and performance practice in music: the historically informed performance movement, generally abbreviated to HIP, and the music-theoretical approach that works from page to stage. I will discuss each in turn. HIP has long historical roots, in the British context going back through the Arts and Crafts environment, within which the scholar and instrument builder Arnold Dolmetsch worked, to the origins of musicology in the nineteenth-century quest for national origins. But it took its modern form, beginning in the late 1960s, as a reaction against the established mainstream of post-war performance, and as such was in many ways comparable to the roughly contemporaneous 'real ale' movement, a reaction against the standardised products of the big breweries. And like many oppositional movements, it adopted the discourses of what it was opposing, but turned them to different ends. The ideologues of HIP, among whom were some of the most prominent performers of the day, built on traditional discourses of duty. Indeed, just as in the case of faithfulness to the composer as against *Werktreue*, so one can distinguish two strains of faithfulness within HIP: one, as before, to the composer's intentions, and a second, more tangible one to the circumstances and practices of original performances. (Kivy [1995] identifies a third conception of authenticity in HIP: period sound.) While the second is more open to historical evidence, there is still room for interpretive freedom: it is perfectly clear that for a multitude of reasons, not least inadequate rehearsal, original performances were often far from what composers would have wished, an obvious example being Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In this way the various criteria for faithfulness could be conveniently played off against one another to legitimise a wide range of desired performance options.

It could be argued that the discourses which emerged round HIP—and formed an integral part of it—represented an intensified disciplining of performance, a subordination of practice to the written word. In the first place, period treatises were invoked as authoritative prescriptions for authentic performance practice. But since, as specifications of such practice, words tend to be vague or ambiguous at best and unintelligible at worst, musicologists also played an essential role as interpreters of period documents: in this way they acquired an unaccustomed degree of authority in matters of performance. And as these references to authority might suggest, the imperative tone to which I have already referred was a conspicuous element of HIP culture, generally directed against mainstream performance and building on an anti-romantic rhetoric that was already under way: Robert Hill (1994: 46) refers to the ‘moral imperative to “cleanse” the performance practice of “classicist” works in order to restore to them a purity of which they had allegedly been deprived by late-romantic distortions.’ He reinforces his claims with a specific example: ‘Repugnantly self-righteous, anti-romanticism reached a grotesque institutional extreme with the formation of a *Stilkommission* at the *Academie für Musik und darstellende Kunst Vienna* [i.e. Vienna Conservatory] in the early 1960s’. Appropriately grisly details are provided.

It is obvious that, as I have described it, the relationship between academic research and performance practice in HIP was about as far removed as could be from the basic approach of interdisciplinary performance studies. Instead of seeing performance as a context for meaning production and seeking to understand its operation, the role of scholarship in HIP was to discipline practice. Yet at the same time, when considered in purely scholarly terms, HIP was at best controversial, and at worst obviously flawed. The basic problem is that, to expand on what I said before, written documents are highly problematic as sources of information on performance practice. In addition to the issues of prescription versus description to which I referred, words are capable of any number of interpretations: Robert Philip (1992: 220) quotes a treatise from 1823 that enjoins the performer to maintain ‘an equilibrium between the feelings that hurry him away, and a rigid attention to time’, and adds, ‘One can imagine musicians from the eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries nodding their heads in agreement with this carefully worded advice, without having the least idea how much tempo fluctuation the authors really had in mind’. Then again, it is a truism that scores do not convey unnotated nuance, and even when they do embody specific performance information, as for instance in the case of written-out ornamentation, there are problems as to the purpose and therefore interpretation of the notations. (Were they models for beginners? guides to good practice? pedagogical exercises? demonstrations of skill? attempts to reproduce actual performances?) Similar problems apply to such other sources as drawings and paintings (can we assume the painters were realistically depicting what they saw?) and, where they exist, old instruments: Have they been rebuilt or adapted? How has the ageing of their materials affected their operation and sound? What about perishables, such as felts and strings? What about tuning?

Given the interaction between these multiple uncertainties, not to mention fundamental interpretive questions such as how far there was such a thing as a consistent performance practice at any given time or place, the effect of scholarship was less to contribute to certainty than to create an arena for contested practice. It is no wonder, then, that the view of HIP proposed by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (1984) and Richard Taruskin (1995)—that its authentic value was not as scholarly reconstruction but as a distinctively late-modernist performance style—is nowadays widely accepted; Kivy (1995: 232) similarly refers to ‘the refreshing quality of novelty’ that ‘opacity of medium lends to even the most overworked warhorses in the concert repertory’. One might then conclude that the traditional, ethically charged discourses of performance were invoked in order to sweep away the established style of the post-war mainstream, just as that style had invoked them to sweep away the remnants of Romantic performance style. Seen this way, HIP represented a brilliant exercise in image management, giving credibility and profile to a generation of up-and-coming performers in opposition to an institutionalised performance establishment at that time strongly supported by major record companies and government subsidy. Leech-Wilkinson (2009a: chapter 4, paragraph 47) observes that ‘the HIP phenomenon was... probably the first occasion in the history of music when a change of style was intentionally manufactured by performers’. Under such circumstances style change was not just an aesthetic matter, but one of career advancement, and indeed of financial opportunity, most obviously for small record labels seeking niche markets overlooked by the majors.

But if HIP wasn’t quite what it made itself out to be, neither do the last two paragraphs really do justice to it. In particular, whereas scholarly pronouncements were certainly invoked for their rhetorical force, the relationship between scholars and performers was by no means the one-way street that talk of disciplining performance might suggest. By this I do not just mean that HIP had twin sources in scholarship and performance, which did not always pull together, or that in the end HIP was forged by the performers who decided what to take from the scholars and what to leave. I mean that one of the motors behind HIP was continuous two-way interaction between scholars and performers: scholarly interpretations based on period sources were trialled in performance, leading to revised or refined interpretation of the sources, renewed experimentation, and so on in a virtuous circle. Again, the aggressively authenticist rhetoric that marked the early years of HIP, and that formed the principal source of contention, grew progressively less strident as instrument builders became better at copying period instruments and performers played them better. And leading directors such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Philippe Herreweghe increasingly worked with mainstream orchestras (both, for instance, have been guest conductors with the Amsterdam-based Concertgebouw and the Vienna Philharmonic), bringing to them what they had learned from working with period-instrument ensembles.

The result was a process of hybridisation, with the former opposition between HIP and mainstream performance being replaced by a more diverse performance environment. Perhaps most important, HIP revealed that post-war mainstream performance did not simply embody how music went, but was itself a style, an

option among other options. In this way it returned responsibility for decision making to the performer, licensed the consideration of an unlimited range of historical, hermeneutical, and other perspectives in arriving at a personal interpretation, and in this way might be seen as a means through which performance was liberated rather than disciplined. In all these respects, HIP can be said to have had a transformative effect on the culture of WAM performance as a whole: the conductor Sir Charles Mackerras claimed that 'the insights of period-instrument performance changed certain things beyond recall, and as a result the tradition of performance has been completely altered' (Lawson and Stowell 2012: 829). And in that sense, as documented by the practitioner and commentator John Butt (2002), it can be said to have had a transformative effect on performers' thinking. At the same time, the grounding of HIP in the historical positivism of its early ideologues served to graft new performance practices onto old discursive paradigms, in this way giving them a further lease of life.

I said the second development that brought together academic research and performance practice was in the field of music theory, and because this is particularly relevant to my book, it is the focus of the next chapter. However, theoretical approaches to musical performance are closely linked with, and drew on, developments in cognitive psychology, and so I will start there. From around 1970 there was a remarkable convergence of music theory and psychology, cemented with the establishment in 1983 of the journal *Music Perception*. The basis of this convergence was that on the one hand psychologists saw music as an area that was both culturally meaningful and exceptionally amenable to quantitative investigation, while on the other hand theorists saw psychological methods as offering new approaches to existing problems. At first, as the title of the journal indicates, the focus was on perceptual issues, but in the 1980s studies of performance became increasingly popular. One reason was the difficulty of conducting ecologically valid research into the perception of music (because the process of gathering responses may easily perturb the perceptual process). By contrast, it was much easier to collect performance data without disrupting the phenomenon under investigation. This was particularly the case after the introduction—also, as it happens, in 1983—of MIDI: all that was now necessary to start conducting empirical research on performance was a cheap MIDI keyboard, a standard computer, and a MIDI interface (in those days they were not built in). And while cheap MIDI keyboards were not a good basis for studying the detail of expert performance, weighted keyboards and acoustic pianos with MIDI sensors, such as the Yamaha Disklavier, appeared before the end of the decade. By comparison, previous work in this field had required complex, purpose-built equipment: examples include a system of rubber tubes placed under piano keys and connected to a cylinder recorder, developed by Alfred Binet and Jules Courtier as early as the 1890s (Judd 1896); Carl Seashore's 'Iowa piano camera' from the 1930s (Henderson, Tiffin and Seashore 1936); and Henry Shaffer's use (1980) of photocells to interface the action of a Bechstein grand piano to a DEC PDP-11 minicomputer in the late 1970s.

Although certainly pioneering, both Binet and Courtier's work and Seashore's are of little more than curiosity value today, and for essentially the

same reason. Binet and Courtier claimed for their system that it would enable the identification of faults in piano performance, that is to say deviations from the nominal values represented in the score—according to which each beat has the same duration, each crotchet lasts two quavers, and so forth. This is the most extreme form of musical textualism imaginable, according to which the point of performance is literally to reproduce the score. Seashore and his co-workers studied not only piano but also vocal and violin performance, and aimed to replace ‘the jargon of arm-chair theories’ by ‘an adequate scientific aesthetics’ (Seashore 1936: 5). What this means becomes clear when, two pages later, Seashore writes, ‘One of the first revelations in the laboratory recording of music is the demonstration of an extraordinary disparity between the actual physical performance and the music we hear. . . . We hear but little of what actually exists, and that little is greatly distorted in hearing’. It is the ideas of ‘what actually exists’ and ‘distortion’ that are revealing. Seashore conceives of music having an objective existence which is represented rather inaccurately in perceptual experience. In effect this is the old platonist model in scientific clothing.

By contrast, Shaffer’s approach arose from a much more appropriate and productive conceptual framework, that of cognitive psychology. His work on piano performance developed out of his previous work on typing: his primary concern was with the mechanisms underlying skilled motor control of whatever nature. In collecting and analysing data from piano performance, then, his aim was to explain it in terms of relatively persistent abstract schemata (what you build up as you learn a piece), seen as organising the motor actions of performance through some kind of hierarchy of increasingly complex specifications. The question was what, in music, such schemata and hierarchies might look like. This is where the link between music theory and the psychology of performance was forged, and it came about largely through the presence in Shaffer’s laboratory at this time of Eric Clarke, who had a background in music theory and completed a PhD on piano performance under Shaffer’s supervision.

Music theory provided precisely the kind of schemata and hierarchies Shaffer was looking for. Schenkerian analysis, for example, can be well described as based on an abstract schema (the basic linear and harmonic progression known as the *Ursatz* or fundamental structure), elaborated through a succession of increasingly detailed levels that converge upon the music as composed. In other words, it represents music as a hierarchy of increasingly complex specifications. From this perspective, it became a question of how such a representation might be internalised, and how it might be translated into real-time motor performance. As I shall explain in Chapter 3, Schenker himself worked in the vastly different cultural and intellectual context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. But his theoretical approach was repackaged and supplemented at just this time by Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff: their *Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983) expressed Schenker’s basic method in a more or less scientific manner that could hardly have differed more from the original, but made it much more accessible to music psychologists, and indeed to many music theorists of that time.

Lerdahl and Jackendoff borrowed the term 'generative' from Noam Chomsky's structural linguistics, and though they were not specifically concerned with performance, it corresponded directly to the central insight of Shaffer and Clarke's approach. It seemed clear that pianists did not memorise by precisely encoding every specific finger or wrist movement involved in playing a given piece: not only would that necessitate the storage of impractical amounts of information, but it would also—for example—make it impossible to change fingerings on the fly. (Rudolf Serkin told Dean Elder [1986: 57], 'I change fingers constantly, at the spur of the moment sometimes, according to the piano, the hall, my disposition, how I slept, and so on'.) The guiding ideas underlying Shaffer and Clarke's work were then that, through practice, pianists build up a relatively stable cognitive representation of the music, that there is some system of rules that generates the physical actions of performance in real time, and that these cognitive structures and processes leave their mark on what is played, in the form of the unnotated but apparently systematic and evidently meaningful nuances of expressive performance. The arresting prospect that this opened up was that a common analytical approach could make sense of cognitive structure, motor control, and expressive meaning.

All this meant that, by around 1990, the theory and psychology of music had come to share three characteristics that were inherited from the more traditional discourses of music I have described in this chapter, together with a fourth that was not. The first of these characteristics might be seen as Plato's curse in a mentalistic guise: in the music psychologist Caroline Palmer's words, 'The listener's and performer's experience of a musical piece can be described as a conceptual structure, an abstract message that specifies the relevant musical relationships in a piece' (1996: 25). As in Schoenberg's telepathic fantasy, music is understood to be something inside people's heads, so losing its social dimension. The second characteristic also emerges from Palmer's formulation: as in the formalist version of nineteenth-century idealism, music is understood to subsist in structure, where structure can be more or less resolved into notational categories. Third is the conception of music in terms of a communicative chain that passes from the composer via the performer (Adorno's 'middleman interpreter') to the listener, as epitomised in Beethoven's 'from the heart... to the heart'.

As for the fourth characteristic, this is a slippage between two senses of 'expression': on the one hand its ordinary-language meaning, where it refers to mood, affect, or emotion, and on the other the idea of performance 'expressing' structure. I said this fourth characteristic was not inherited from traditional discourses of music, but it is found in Schenkerian theory, in which it is normal to refer to structure being expressed by compositional parameters such as dynamics or orchestration. And Schenker himself highlighted the reduction of emotional properties to structure when in 1925 he quoted a passage from C. P. E. Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*. While speaking about the fantasy, Bach makes a reference to 'the

passions'. Schenker (1994: 5) takes immediate action to tame Bach's theoretically unruly term:

One must not seek in Bach's word 'passions' what certain aestheticians of the doctrine of affections bring to it....He means by it simply the consequences of a change of diminution: pure musical effects which have nothing in common with the amateurishly misunderstood and so grossly exaggerated ideas of the aestheticians. For Bach, even the individual motives of diminution are really distinct affects, distinct passions, so greatly does he feel their unifying and characteristic properties, and at the same time their contrast to one another....Bach will have wanted to say nothing more than that the creator of a fantasy must have taken pains to alternate motives, in order to produce tension and transmit it to the listener. Nothing more.

It is hard not to read Schenker's excessive, repetitive denials as betraying a certain unease with the tradition of erasing emotion from musical discourse that goes back to Hanslick, and I shall return to this in Chapter 3.

In this way the convergence between music theory and psychology in the years around 1990 gave rise to an approach that drew on key assumptions of the traditional discourses around music, but—as I argued of HIP—gave them a new lease of life. It repackaged them for the knowledge industry of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. But from this point on there is something of a divergence between the two disciplines. As represented by the work of English-language writers such as Caroline Palmer, Bruno Repp, and Luke Windsor, and in other languages of Alf Gabrielsson, Johan Sundberg, Henkjan Honing, and Peter Desain, psychological work on performance has built steadily on, which is also to say that it has developed away from, these foundations: recent work by John Sloboda and Patrik Juslin has put emotional meaning firmly back on the performance analysis agenda, the work of Jane Davidson and Eric Clarke has stimulated rapidly growing interest in the embodied dimensions of performance, and in his own work Clarke has sought alternatives to what he terms the 'information processing' paradigm of cognitive psychology. (In this book I will make repeated references to these developments.) Meanwhile, particularly in North America, the majority of music-theoretical work on performance has continued to be based on the assumptions I outlined in the previous paragraphs. Since this book is at the same time an attempt to build on and a reaction against that approach, the next chapter will examine it in some detail.