Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

The polyphonic touch : coarticulation and polyphonic expression in the performance of piano and organ music

Wright, A.J.

Citation

Wright, A. J. (2016, June 22). *The polyphonic touch : coarticulation and polyphonic expression in the performance of piano and organ music*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/41220

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden

Downloaded from: https://hdl.handle.net/1887/41220

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/41220 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Wright, Andrew
Title: The polyphonic touch : coarticulation and polyphonic expression in the performance of piano and organ music
Issue Date: 2016-06-22

Part I: A preliminary look at polyphony in performance

To begin with, it is important to define the word polyphony, since it is a word used widely with different meanings. Polyphony as a metaphor has become increasingly popular in extra-musical disciplines, and this wider question of what polyphony can mean in social and literary contexts adds resonance to this research. Moreover, as musicologist Lawrence Kramer notes "as a communicative act, metaphor opens the possibility of two-way transfers of meaning between its constituent terms, each of which appropriates elements from the other's characteristic spheres of discourse" (Kramer 1995: 70). The wider context of how polyphony is used as a metaphor, then, can influence how we see the music itself. My starting point will be this wider context, after which I will examine how the word polyphony is used to describe compositional practices. From there I will approach my own definition of polyphony as a kind of divergence in expression, and introduce the various constitutive elements of a practice of embodied polyphonic expression in single-player piano and organ music. Since it is polyphony *in performance* rather than polyphony *as a score-based practice* that is the subject of this dissertation, I will end with a short discussion of what elements in the performance-based practice come to the fore.

1 Polyphony as metaphor

Polyphony is used as a metaphor in many disciplines. Some examples of extensive use of polyphony as a metaphor can be found in theology (Ginn 2007: 157, van Hecke 2005, Biddle 1996), literature criticism (Waugh 2006: 225, Teranishi 2008, Nikolajeva 1996), cultural studies (Harshav 2007, Perianova 2013), philosophy (Ihde 2012, Wallgren 2006, Currie 2013: 171), politics (Koensler 2015: 108, Gjerstad 2013, Schapiro 2009), law (Waldron 1999), education (Lorda & Zabalbeascoa 2012, Schmitt 2011: 322) and many other disciplines. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on how polyphony is used as a metaphor in the writings of literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin and cultural theorist Edward Said. The writings of Bakhtin, a literary critic, are significant because his conception of polyphony as multiple voices and multiple consciousnesses has been widely appropriated by other writers (who may or may not know anything about the musical origins of the word). It should be noted that he was not the first writer to use polyphony as a concept in literature criticism as it had been used before by literary critics such as Otto Ludwig before 1865 and Vladimir Kormarovich and Leonid Grossman in the 1920s (Poole 2001). Bakhtin's ideas about polyphony have in turn come full circle to be applied in music research (see McKay 2013, McKay 2007, Korsyn 1999, Dixon 2007, Hirschkop 1989, Fairclough 2004, Korsyn 1993, Gritten 1999, Hibberd 2005, Fairclough 2006). Said's discussion of polyphony is interesting because of his extensive knowledge of and sensitivity to music, and because of his connection between polyphony and the pressing cultural and political issues of his time. His belief in the social relevance of music was not only theoretical, but was followed through with action in the project of the East-West Divan orchestra, which he cofounded with conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim.

Bakhtin used the word polyphony famously in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (originally published in Russian in 1929) formulating a philosophy of language and

discourse in literature criticism, an effort whose effects has rippled through literature criticism various fields in the social sciences. His use of polyphony as a metaphor has often been misunderstood since he does not explicitly define what he means by polyphony. In the first chapter, he uses the word extensively in articulating responses to existing literature about Fyodor Dostoevsky, giving an impression by context of what the idea means to him, and in later chapter he elaborates on a polyphonic or dialogic understanding of truth (Bakhtin 1984, Morson & Emerson 1990).

> A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (Bakhtin 1984: 6)

Bakhtin's idea of the polyphony of voices in Dostoevsky involves a few key ideas. First was that individuals (or characters) retain an individual freedom or agency and resist complete definition or finalisation by the author. This "unfinalisability" is in a sense related to an idea of soul, and stands in contrast to what Bakhtin finds in previous novelists, where the characters serve as vessels into which the author pours his own consciousness. In this latter situation, the characters are describable, objectified and predictable, but in the case of Dostoevsky they retain their own personal consciousness, their own surprises. "It is above all due to the freedom and independence characters possess, in the very structure of the novel, vis-a-vis the author-or, more accurately, their freedom vis-a-vis the usual externalizing and finalizing authorial definitions."(Bakhtin 1984: 13)

This unfinalisability of individuals allows the individual characters to subvert or interrupt the narrative. Individuals are of course created by the author but allowed their own agency whereby they may even "revolt" against the author (Zhongwen 1997: 779).

"Dostoevsky, like Goethe's Prometheus, creates not voiceless slaves (as does Zeus), but free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him." (Bakhtin 1984: 6)

Bakhtin also highlights the nature of interaction between the individuals and others, whereby the otherness of each is felt as another consciousness without objectification. Bakhtin describes this relationship as "the affirmation of someone else's 'I' not as an object but as another subject," (Bakhtin 1984: 14).

> Consciousness never gravitates toward itself but is always found in intense relationship with another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself- but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person. It could be said that Dostoevsky offers, in artistic form, something like a sociology of consciousnesses -to be sure, only on the level of coexistence. But even so, Dostoevsky as an artist does arrive at an objective mode for visualizing the life of consciousnesses and the forms of their living coexistence, and thus offers material that is valuable for the sociologist as well. (Bakhtin 1984: 32)

According to Bakhtin, thus, Dostoevsky's novel is organised not from a dominant single (authorial) consciousness but as an unresolvable mixture of the consciousnesses of its individual characters, each with its own viewpoint and voice, above which the author does not rise. In the creative process, the author creates the characters but cannot foresee their reactions to various situations, so he must allow them to speak during the writing process. Bakhtin uses the word polyphony as a metaphor which refers not merely to multiple voices (which exist in monologic novels) but to multiple viewpoints and multiple consciousnesses, each with their own sense of agency (Morson & Emerson 1990: 239-240). Bakhtin highlights this distinction in disputing the analysis of Kormarovich, who writes:

> The teleological coordination of elements (that is, plots) which are, from a pragmatic viewpoint, disunified parts, is the source of artistic unity in a Dostoevskian novel. And in this sense it can be compared to the artistic whole in polyphonic music: the five voices of a fugue, entering one by one and developing in contrapuntal harmony, remind one of the 'harmonization of voices' in a Dostoevskian novel (quoted in Bakhtin 1984: 21).

While Kormarovich sees the (imitative) form of fugue as a form of cooperation between voices which are coordinated by the author - a counterpoint of cooperation - Bakhtin on the other hand highlights "combination of fully valid consciousnesses, together with their worlds" - a counterpoint of friction (Bakhtin 1984: 21, McKay 2013: 19). Kormarovich and Bakhtin, then, see two opposite forces within counterpoint - one of cooperation and one of friction. The former represents a unified control, as if looking at the musical score and seeing the regimented patterns and as if this "counterpoint could represent the unified efforts of a population" (Yearsley 2002: 233) whereas the latter highlights the individuality of each voice and the frictions between the voices. These two perspectives will have their correlates in two fundamentally opposed approaches to performing counterpoint discussed in Part IV of this dissertation.

In Bakhtin's view, Dostoevsky's polyphonic conception was not only reflected in the interaction between different consciousnesses, but also in how this interaction resulted in multiple languages and viewpoints within the individual characters themselves. The oft-cited "sideways-glance" refers to the anticipation of a response that is evident within an individual's utterance, and the idea of heteroglossia refers to the different kinds of language used depending on the situation. Thus the individual consciousness is not an isolated entity but is rather formed by interaction with other consciousnesses and the polyphony of interactive space is constitutive of and mirrored in the individual. In this way, Bakhtin introduces a dialogic understanding of truth whereby coexisting (and perhaps disagreeing) viewpoints taken together form a dialogical truth. Contrary to

monologic thinking (in the Hegelian and Marxist tradition) this dialogic thinking depends on the plurality of consciousness from which a single truth cannot be abstracted and repeated. The viewpoints or consciousnesses themselves are integral to the unfinalisability of the dialogical truth itself.

Edward Said's writing about polyphony was consistent with his increasing tendency towards writing about music in the last decades of his life. Polyphony (or counterpoint, a word he used almost interchangeably) provided an attractive alternative to totalising thought (de Groot 2010). He lamented the lack of polyphony in Arabic music, remembering how shocked he was as a child when he attended a concert of Umm Khaltoum, whose music lacked counterpoint (de Groot 2005). Said criticized the idea of absolute autonomy of musical works, instead constantly relating music to its social context (Magome 2006). He applied the idea of counterpoint to his post-colonial thinking, reading novels such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* in such a way as to give voice to the suppressed counterpoint of the colonised without discounting or devaluing the works because of their imperial viewpoint (Said 1993: 19-31 and 160-161). Central to his cultural and political thinking was the idea that the function of a secular intellectual is to provide alternatives - "alternative readings, alternative sources, and alternative presentations of evidence" - alternatives which are to coexist without the need for reconciliation. He writes "we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them coexisting and interacting with others." (Said 1993: 32)

Similar to Dostoevsky's characters in Bakhtin's reading, Said felt the polyphonic nature of coexisting alternatives reflected within himself. Speaking of his own inner experience, Said writes:

> I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They are "off " and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of all kinds of strange combinations moving about, not necessarily forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. […] With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place. (quoted in Stevenson 2003: 65)

Bakhtin and Said's views of polyphony emphasise responsiveness or "responsibility" of characters, viewpoints or ideas in such a way that they may harmonise or clash, but that in any case they are not reducible to one authorial point of view or one subjective sense of personal identity or agency. For both, polyphony is found in alternate voices and viewpoints in dialogue with one another which taken together form truth. The polyphonic nature of the world exterior to the subject is reflected in the subject's own polyphonic currents of consciousness, and the apprehension of "other" points of view or consciousnesses does not objectify or flatten them, but rather affirms their subjectivity. The metaphor of polyphony has gained tremendous currency in many disciplines due to the ideal of democracy it conjures, where ideas or individuals coexist, sometimes in harmony with each other and sometimes with irreconcilable difference. Having studied Western classical music (he played the piano), Said was intimately familiar with the musical phenomenon upon which the metaphor was based. The same cannot be said for all of those who use the term, and an in-depth look at the musical phenomenon lends the metaphor more meaning.

2 Polyphony as a compositional texture

Music theorists, musicologists and musicians also use the word polyphony with differing meanings. These meanings differ in what they address, depending on the historical and practical context. These generally fall into two categories which coincide with two distinctions made by music theorist Heinrich Koch in the early nineteenth-century. Koch made the practical distinction between *monophony* and *polyphony* to contrast music with one voice and music with more than one voice and the stylistic distinction between *polyphony* and *homophony* to distinguish music *with a contrapuntal layering of independent voices* from *melody with accompaniment*. Thus polyphony can be understood with either a practical (broader) definition or a stylistic (narrower) definition.

The practical definition is an inclusive one which looks to the etymology of the word: poly- + *phōnōs* (many + sounds, voices). *Polyphōnos* ('many-voiced') and *polyphonia* were used in ancient Greece to refer simply to music with more than one voice, without any technical explanation (Cooke, Grove Online s.a.). In this context, polyphony refers to any music with simultaneously sounding notes, thus *polyphony* versus *monophony*. In the technical specifications for digital instruments, for example, polyphony is used as a technical measurement for how many notes can be played at once. Such a definition as the one proposed by music theorist Joseph Swain's (2002) emphasises that among multiple melodies "no degree of independence is implied" by the term polyphony, in contrast to the term contrapuntal polyphony which requires such independence.

Counterpoint, a term stemming from the practice of writing notes (*punctus contra punctum*) which coincided with the development of Western polyphonic music, is generally used to imply a greater degree of equality between voices in the sense that each voice has a degree of autonomy in rhythm and contour. Counterpoint is a defining feature in the

narrower definition of polyphony, and makes the stylistic distinction between *polyphony* and *homophony*.

With all respect to Swain, the connotations of the word polyphony in its usage within musical practice often indicate a certain degree of autonomy between voices whereby the contours or rhythms of simultaneous sounding voices are at least somewhat independent, in other words, counterpoint. The use of the word polyphony as a metaphor (or the word counterpoint for that matter, which is often used interchangeably) reflects both this independence and the harmonisation or mutual attunement of voices. For the rest of this dissertation I use this narrower definition of polyphony, which emphasises its stylistic quality of independence between voices. In my use, the word *polyphony* therefore includes counterpoint as a defining feature. I choose the word polyphony instead of counterpoint since it does not call forth the rather formalised or rule-bound training found in counterpoint classes, and because it refers to sounds rather than notes ("points") on the page.

3 Polyphony as an expressive texture

When examining scores, the dividing line between polyphony and homophony is not always clear. Much of the music that is at the centre of contemporary pianists' repertoire, from the Classical and Romantic periods especially, is situated somewhere on a spectrum between homophony and polyphony. Pianist and musicologist Charles Rosen (1995) convincingly showed the contrapuntal nature of early Romantic composers in implicit response to the idea held by many and articulated by Glenn Gould that such composers "were mostly interested in vertical composition" (Said 2008: 199). By doing so, Rosen advocated a more polyphonic reading of these composers based on what he found in the scores. I argue that the performer can advocate for the polyphonic under-layers of the music through use of polyphonic expression, which makes these polyphonic tendencies more audible. In the Chopin *Ballade* above (Example I.1) the divergence in expression constitutes an example of this polyphonic expression, which is clearly notated in the score. Performers can bring out polyphonic expression that follows the contours or rhythms of notes in the score, but which is not explicitly notated with such clear dynamic markings. More radically, the performer can use polyphonic expression as a superimposed layer on music that on paper does not have an obvious polyphonic dimension. This superimposed layer, while not *contained* in the score, also does not necessarily go *against* the score and due to the fact that the score is under-specified with regards to expressive features, it represents an alternative to the fleshing out that a performance anyway provides. This alternative is justified by the metaphorical resonance of polyphony, an idea that I explore in the conclusions of this dissertation.

The precise definition of polyphonic expression that I will propose depends on the ideas presented in the first three chapters of this dissertation, so I will only introduce that more precise definition in Part IV. At this point it is enough to roughly define polyphonic

expression as divergence in expressive change (in articulation, dynamics, and timing) between two or more simultaneous voices over a specific timescale[19] - in other words the expressive parallel of contrary motion. Parts of this definition - such as expression and voices - require their own definition, which I will provide later. For now, it is important to emphasise that the polyphonic expression I am writing about occurs in performance, and not often in the expressive markings in musical scores. It depends, thus, on the initiative of the performer. As I have explained, Kormarovich and Bakhtin saw two opposite functions in a fugue. Kormarovich highlighted the imitation between voices, a comparison made by taking the voices out of time, while Bakhtin highlighted the friction and interaction between voices as they unfold in time. By introducing polyphonic expression into the performance of a musical work, the performer invests each voice with its own individual agency and thus emphasises the friction inherent in Bakhtin's view. While this might be obvious in the case of highly polyphonic forms such as the fugue, it is also true of works that are more towards the homophony side of the homophony - polyphony spectrum, which can be *given* a polyphonic character by the performer.

On the other hand, the performer can downplay this polyphonic friction even when performing works that on paper are very polyphonic. In order to develop what Neuhaus calls "polyphonic technique" (1973), it is easy to recommend studying Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier,* the practising of which in any sort of way will develop the basic polyphonic technical skills (like fingering, memory, development of the ear) which lead to being able to play the notes. The performer might then decide to bring out a voice (for example the top voice, or the subject whenever it occurs). The performer might create oblique divergences by, for example, making a dynamic shape in one voice while the others remain flat. But all of this does not reach what I consider to be polyphonic

[19] A unit of musical time measured in the score, such as one beat or one measure.

expression, which occurs when voices actively diverge, when, for example, one voice makes a crescendo simultaneous to a diminuendo in another voice as shown in the Chopin example above.

4 Single player polyphonic expression

Bakhtin's idea of multiple consciousnesses coexisting without merging is evident in the performance of, for example, a string quartet where each voice is embodied by an individual player. In such multi-player polyphony, the focus of the rehearsal process is often one of mutually attuning the expression of each player so that the parts fit together in expression. The process mostly begins with too much divergence and the players have to find ways to converge or come together. Each player is an advocate for his or her own voice in the musical texture.

In single-player polyphony, exactly the opposite is the case. The performer most often begins with convergence in expression due to the fact that the reflexes of the body (such as bimanual interference, which is the tendency of muscle activity in one hand or arm to be mirrored in the other hand or arm) and the fact that he is one person trying to advocate for all the voices at once. While the string quartet must work to converge in order to make a balance of converging and diverging expression, the keyboardist must work to make voices diverge to achieve the individuality of each voice.

If polyphony of expression is to occur, then the divergent expression must be simultaneously embodied. If expression is viewed as an utterance from a human agent, then the co-creation of divergent expression indicates the dividing of expressive agency within the self of the performer. In a non-divergent expressive texture, the imagination and body work as one in shaping the music. The distinction between mind and body is not problematic because both play a part in the expressive shaping. The inner process of creating expressive divergence feels somewhat different, however. In my own experience, while I do shape each voice intentionally by planning ahead, and I do follow each voice with my ear, it seems like my conscious or analytical mind jumps back and forth between the shaping of individual voices, viewing the shapes of phrases or sections in one glance

rather than in real time. The simultaneity of divergence in real time (whereby each voice displays a continuity of gesture) is sustained by the continuity of embodiment in gesture and its connection to the ear.

At this moment, it is useful to step back and reflect in a sort of phenomenological way about the properties of musical ideas in their mental or physical sublimations. For me, a physical musical idea is a musical gesture, or the embodiment of a musical shape that is characterised by a sense of continuity and direction. As musicologist Rolf-Inge Godøy explains, a prefix gesture is characterised by an intensification towards a point of arrival, and a suffix gesture is characterised by a relaxation after an arrival (Godøy 2011a: 240).

As Husserl noted in his account of phenomenological time, to grasp a melody in its extension over time, we must be able to step out of the continuity of time and grasp the melody in one instant (Husserl 1991; Brough 1991). In its conscious mental abstraction, a musical gesture is represented by goal points or snapshots, which represent salient moments during the trajectory of movement (Godøy 2011b: 69). It is thus like a movie, with frames that might be closer together or farther apart, but still remain snapshots. The mental image of gesture thus can be grasped in one moment and is not necessarily played out over time and space in the way that its physical correlate is. It can be played back mentally, however, using the same motor imagery that might enact it in physical movement.

The abstraction of a physical movement into a mental experience represents both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is that since it can be grasped as one chunk, and perhaps as one piece of a larger chunk, it leads to a possibility for structural thinking. The disadvantage is that because it is an abstraction composed of goal moment snapshots, it dries out the fluidity and expansion over time of an embodied gesture,

without which it can seem angular and unnatural. Of course, notated music itself represents yet another layer of abstraction.

Because of the fact that I can step out of the continuity of time while playing to grasp musical shapes in an instant while the continuity of gesture continues in my body, I am able to shape or plan phrases. In a polyphonic texture, I can plan different shapes for different voices, all out of time, but in order for those shapes actually to be executed I need to have the embodied knowledge of how it feels to execute such divergence, without which the divergence will remain only an imaginary experience that is inaudible. Certain kinds of divergence are quite easy, like divergence where the length of the divergent phrases can be expressed in a whole integer relationship that is not 1:1 (so, for example, 2:1, 3:1 etc.). Also easy to execute is oblique divergence, where one voice remains flat while the other one takes a specific shape. (In fact most pianists when imagining divergence will achieve only oblique divergence. Listen to their fugues where the subject is shaped and the countersubject is flat.) True divergence of the kind that I will specify in Part IV can certainly be achieved through imagination, willpower, an accurate ear, and repetition but practicing and mastering the embodied experience makes it far easier to employ and opens the imagination for its many possible uses.

Such a description gives a fleeting preview of some issues in the relationship between imagination, conceptualisation, embodiment and expression in performance. If simultaneously embodied divergent expressions rely on the body for continuity and shape, then the body features as an essential locus of agency for individual voices in a polyphonic texture, and musical shapes and expressions can be offloaded onto their constitutive physical gestures.

5 Polyphonic expression as a performative turn

It is important to note the difference between a score-based study of polyphony and a performance-based study. In other disciplines, there has been a "performative turn" beginning roughly in the 1970s. In theatre, for example, plays came to be considered as traces of theatrical productions (where the theatrical combines with the anthropological perspective of ritual and its social context) rather than exclusively as literary texts (Cook 2014). This focus on performance studies has penetrated many disciplines but has still failed to adequately challenge the notation-based orientation of musicology and music theory. Despite books such as musicologist Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1992) which have challenged the work-concept of musical ontology and despite some advances in performance study, much musicology and music theory is still based on a text-based analysis, an orientation which marginalises the role of the performer as merely executing the intentions of the composer or worse as merely translating the analysis of the theorist into sound (Cook 2014: 14). Performers have encouraged such marginalisation by insisting that they are merely following the intentions of the composer or playing what's in the score. In describing the role of the performer, Schoenberg did not mince words: "The performer, for all his intolerable arrogance, is totally unnecessary except as his interpretations make the music understandable to an audience unfortunate enough not to be able to read it in print" (quoted in Newlin 1980: 164). As musicologist Nicholas Cook points out when comparing historically informed performance, which claims to come closer to the composer's intentions, with mainstream performance: "the rhetoric of composers' intentions is equally characteristic of mainstream performance, which has the curious consequence that nobody is in greater denial of the creativity of performance than performers." (Cook 2014: 15)

What are we to make of a situation where two pianists, such as Sviatoslav Richter and Daniel Barenboim, both claim to play only what is in the score but end up having such incredibly different results? First, this position of humble servitude to the composer is a sort of ethical claim that many performers make - even such flamboyant personalities as Leonard Bernstein (Cook 2014). Even if the performers actually believe that to be a full description of their interpretive process, their conscious intentions form only part of their agency and creativity as performers. Their physical disposition and adjustment to the instrument, training, embodied knowledge, unconscious feelings and habits are of course equally present in the performance. Their conceptual processes of examining and making decisions about the how to perform the score can be described by the word *interpretation* - and it is in this realm of the inner experience that such a ethical claim of humble servitude to the composer operates. The non-conceptual and partly unconscious or semi-conscious aspects of performance, including but not limited to unconscious feelings, sensations, physique, body schemata[20], habits and training form what can be called *understanding*. Thus a performer approaches a score through conceptual *interpretation* and non-conceptual and embodied *understanding*. Interpretation and understanding are related to each other in phases since conscious interpretive decisions become part of understanding through repetition. An idea that must be executed consciously can be repeated enough that it becomes an embodied habit, after which it functions automatically. But it is important to note that understanding is not only (and not primarily) a result of conscious decisions since bodily habits are formed unconsciously from birth on through interactions with the environment, and in musical study through imitation at a pre-reflective level.

[20] As philosopher Richard Shusterman explains, body schemata "involve entrenched habits, dispositional mechanisms, or tendencies of movement, feeling or attitude that are incorporated in our bodies and enable us to act skilfully and intelligently without having to think about what we are doing with our limbs" (Shusterman 2012: 333)

Since conscious *interpretation* and embodied *understanding* are both parts of the performing process, even the performer who consciously tries only to play what's written is doing a creative act. The role of the performer is one that entails creative freedom because even when conscious freedom is restricted by an imaginary adherence to the intentions of the composer, unconscious and physical habits are necessary to reconstitute pages with the ink-marks into music. Let us not forget that the intentions of dead composers passed on through documents are also more-or-less inaccessible, because these documents are intelligible only by their embeddedness in practices that have changed over time.

In a situation where many of the fetishes that performers cling to are being deconstructed - the work concept, the adherence to composer intentions, the ethical attitude of servitude to the composer - performers are faced with the chance to use research to explore their newly found creative freedom. For some performer-researchers this has involved using historical recordings as inspiration (see for example Scott 2014) and for others this has involved a conceptual reworking of the performance experience through the addition of audio-visual materials or through changing the basic parameters of performance (see for example the experimental approaches of the "Music Experiment 21" project led by Paolo de Assis)[21].

For me, polyphonic expression in performance is both an embodied understanding that can be developed through practice and an orienting performative attitude. This performative attitude is characterised neither by a faithfulness to composers' intentions nor a deliberate negation of these intentions (I neither know whether they would approve or not, nor do I lose any sleep over it, but of course I am aware that my decades of training influence what I find to be appropriate or beautiful). It is also not justified by faithfulness

[21] Details of the individual experiments that constitute this on-going project can be found at http://musicexperiment21.eu/projects/ (Accessed 12/2/2016).

to the work-concept or what Stravinsky called the "law imposed on [the performer] by the work" (quoted in Mitchell 2000: 29). Rather, it is an interpretive stance that I find meaningful and ethically justified because of the metaphorical resonance that polyphony has in an interdisciplinary and social context. The decision to advocate for polyphonic expression is what can be described as an "artistic turn"[22] - in other words a step which I make as an artist after which I can use a research process to describe the issues that such a turn causes me to face and how I face them. This "artistic turn" is only one of many artistic turns that could be taken from the perspective of performer creativity. To be quite clear it:

1. Is not in the score, though it does not wilfully go against the score.

2. Does not originate from a desire to follow the composer's intentions, though it does not wilfully go against the composer.

3. Does not originate from historical understanding, though it is also not anti-historical and historical information is certainly not excluded.

4. Is audible, explicable, disseminable, imitable but not universal - it is not the only way to play. It is a feature that I am working out in my musical practice through this research, and one that I share for others to use as they wish.

5. Balances what "sounds good" and what "feels right" and what "works" for the individual performer in communication with the audience with challenging those very aesthetic judgments. Because of differences in instrument, acoustic, audience and the aesthetic development of the performer, every performance will be different.

6. Operates in one phase in the realm of interpretation as it is mapped to affordances within musical scores and, more significantly, in the pre-reflective realm of

[22] The notion of an "artistic turn" here is taken from the monograph with the same title by Kathleen Coessens, Darla Crispin and Anne Douglas (2009)

embodied understanding as the feelings and embodied practices that it entails become ingrained in the performer's experience.

Glossary for Part I

Affordance - the possibility of some action existing between an organism and its environment (Gibson 1979; see footnote to Introduction).

Body schemata - learned motor patterns, habits, or dispositions that require little mental effort to carry out (§5).

Interpretation - the act of making conscious decisions in shaping a musical performance (§5).

Polyphonic expression - a performative texture characterised by simultaneous divergence in expression (§3). An example of divergence in expression is found in Example I.1. A more precise definition of polyphonic expression will be given in Part IV (§17.5).

Polyphony - a stylistic description of musical texture with counterpoint as a defining feature, characterised by its distinction from homophony (§2).

Timescale - a unit of musical time measured in the score, such as one beat or one measure.

Understanding - a non-conceptual and primarily pre-reflective embodied reaction, depending on the body schemata of the performer (§5).