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## **In Search of a Lost Language: Performing in Early-Recorded Style in Viola and String Quartet Repertoires**

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### **Citation**

Stam, E. W. (2019, October 31). *In Search of a Lost Language: Performing in Early-Recorded Style in Viola and String Quartet Repertoires*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/79999>

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

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**Issue Date:** 2019-10-31

## Introduction

I first came across Lionel Tertis's recording of Benjamin Dale's *Romance* for viola and piano when I was a young viola student at the Conservatoire. What I heard at the time spoke to me more deeply than the performances of well-loved contemporary viola players I had heard in concert or on record. This marked the beginning of a period of dedicated listening to early recordings, and as a result, I carefully began imitating some of the things I heard in those performances. My sentiments about these early recordings, however, were not shared by my teachers, competition and exam juries, and later in my professional life, my colleagues. I was encouraged to conform to modern standards of performance, but from my perspective, I was tapping into our collective heritage of musical performance by imitating early recordings. Hence, I was reluctant to dismiss out of hand the practices of earlier generations that I found to be so compelling.

What I came to understand is that the negative reactions to my adoption of early-recorded performance styles from the 1880s to mid-1930s were the result of a profound incompatibility between this style and the underlying ideologies of today's Western Art Music performance.<sup>1</sup> These ideologies direct performers to adhere to the notated detail, time and structure of musical works, which, in combination with other textual-historical traces, are understood to disclose the enigmatic 'intentions of the composer.' Performers are expected to convey their professionalism by putting these ideologies into practice while demonstrating their technical proficiency. These ideologies, however, are so restrictive that they deter many forms of experimentation with canonic WAM repertoires, including adopting the approaches heard on early recordings. This is because these recordings capture numerous stylistic elements that are uncomfortable or confrontational for many contemporary musicians, as they evidence a performance ideology that was much less predicated upon adherence to the score and technical proficiency. As such, musicians in my immediate environment have described early-recorded performances as 'sloppy,' 'out-of-tune,' 'random,' and most commonly, 'charming but one cannot perform like that nowadays.' This last observation in particular has always fascinated me and has led me to ask: who is invested with the right to object to our use of these performance styles today, and why? And most importantly, by studying early-recorded style, what can we learn about our present culture of musical performance?

Philosopher Hubert L. Dreyfus describes our understanding of our own cultural context as necessarily limited by our immersion within that context: "Our understanding

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<sup>1</sup> From here on referred to as WAM.

of our being is never fully accessible since 1) it is embodied in skills [and] 2) we dwell in our understanding like fish in water.”<sup>2</sup> This insight can be aptly applied to contemporary musical performance—a set of skills and values in which practitioners are immersed in such an all-encompassing way that they often cannot fully grasp the environment in which they function. This immersion can lead modern performers to overestimate the degree to which their performances are intimate, unique, flexible and spontaneous, qualities that are still highly prized today, while achieving these qualities via strict standards of technical proficiency and score adherence. Defining elements of our current performance practices—elements like clarity, accuracy, structuralism, controlled use of tempo and rhythm, and verticality of ensemble playing—are simply taken for granted until they are juxtaposed with alternative ones, such as those heard on early recordings. Through close listening and analysis of early recordings, I have concluded that the qualities of intimacy, freedom, flexibility and spontaneity are conveyed differently in today’s WAM performances as compared to those of the late-1880s to mid-1930s. These earlier performances convey such attributes through a lack of adherence to the notated score, seemingly uncontrolled flexibility of tempo and rhythm, and multi-layering or de-synchronisation of ensemble—all apparently at the discretion of the performers, regardless of the consequences for technical proficiency, intonation, verticality of ensemble and proximity to the notated score. To contemporary ears expecting performances that conform to today’s WAM conventions, such characteristics are often interpreted as sloppy, slapdash and reckless. I argue, however, that early-recorded performances often express performers’ personal, intimate and creative approaches to a work, resulting in a more moment-to-moment and communicative approach to music-making than that which is commonly heard today. This early-recorded communicative style is likely due to the more wide-ranging possibilities performers had within which to exercise their creativity. Indeed, imagine the kaleidoscope of performance practices that might be heard today if we dispensed with the obligations to follow the letter of the score and display our technical proficiency?

My focus on WAM refers to Western musical repertoires from the 18th to the mid-20th centuries, including both their notated scores and the performances derived from those scores—all of which has been colourfully described by philosopher Lydia

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<sup>2</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-In-The-world: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Boston: MIT Press, 1990), 35.

Goehr as “the imaginary museum of musical works.”<sup>3</sup> This museum or ‘canon’ houses the work of composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Johannes Brahms. For my own purposes, however, I deliberately exclude earlier repertoires from WAM’s museum, such as the *Violin Sonatas* Op. 5 by Arcangelo Corelli for example, where the score functions as a rough guideline for ornamentation and improvisation. As musicologist Nicholas Cook points out, “Corelli’s score is...[a] shared framework within which performers improvise,” much like a jazz standard.<sup>4</sup> I also exclude avant-garde works of the 20th and 21st centuries, such as Earle Brown’s *December 1952*, where the underlying relationship between a score and a performance is often itself questioned.<sup>5</sup> These exclusions cover a myriad of WAM works where scores function as rough outlines ripe for the creative intervention of performers in the form of composition, extemporisation or various aleatoric processes. My work here is concerned rather with canonic WAM repertoires composed from the mid-18th century until the mid-1930s. It is in performances of these repertoires that modern notions of fidelity to the notated score are most influential.

Score-based performances of such works are central to a broad spectrum of modern WAM practices, whereby performers are expected to literally adhere to notated pitches, rhythms, and expressive indications. For my purposes, this literal adherence is broadly defined as the tendency to treat every instance of notation as a prompt to *do* something and, most importantly, as essential to the work as a whole. Indeed, this meticulous attention to detail is also balanced by the obligation of making notated structure audible—what Cook calls the display of musical structure.<sup>6</sup> This structuralist approach to performance involves the hierarchical shaping of phrases, sections and movements, as well as their constitutive elements, relative to their notated formal significance within the work as a whole—all within a stable temporal framework. Modern performances that embrace this paradigm are said to successfully communicate clarity of line, proportionality and the division of sections within a work, and although early-recorded performances focus more on moment-to-moment attention to detail, like the unfolding of various events within a story, beginning in the late-19th century performers were increasingly encouraged to play in ways that reveal structure as

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<sup>3</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on *December 1952* see Earle Brown, “Folio and 4 Systems,” The Earle Brown Music Foundation (AMP/G. Schirmer, 1954), accessed July 22, 2018, <http://www.earle-brown.org/works/view/12>.

<sup>6</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 222.

elucidated by theoreticians' formal analyses—from Heinrich Schenker (1868 – 1935) to, more recently, Wallace Berry (1928 – 1991) and his book *Musical Structure and Performance*.<sup>7</sup> Cook calls this the 'page to stage' approach, distinguishing what he calls the Modernist/structuralist approach from the more Romantic/rhetorical one, with the former emphasising larger formal structures and the latter emphasising detailed local ornamentation.<sup>8</sup> Musicologist Daniel Leech-Wilkinson refers to this dichotomy in similar terms, contrasting the more literal and reserved approach of modern performance to the 'emotional-pictorial' playing heard on early recordings, with the latter often including widely-fluctuating tempi, unpredictable localised slowing and rushing (wild rubato), and disregard for notated rhythms, pitches, and expressive indications—all of which can undermine the audibility of notated structure.<sup>9</sup>

The main driver behind the literalist and structuralist performance paradigm underlying WAM's imaginary museum of works is a deep-seated need to convey the ever-ambiguous 'intentions of the composer' as encapsulated by the notated detail and formal arrangement of the score (or, as in the case of historically-informed performance, from both the score and other historical textual sources such as treatises). As a result, a degree of transparency is often expected of today's performers, allowing the composer's intention to supersede their 'ego.' Musicologists Mary Hunter and Stephen Broad summarise what they identify as the three main pillars of this ideology as follows:

The verbal discourse of classical music quite routinely raises three issues peculiar to...this genre. The first involves the concern to divine from a printed score and then do 'justice' (or 'respect') to the composer's intentions...[testifying] to the fundamental sense of a coherent and ostensibly single intention behind the notation...Secondly, concern about the propriety of the overt intrusion of 'ego' in performance and interpretation is especially acute in classical music...Finally, using the score rather than other media or oral tradition as the primary repository of truth is also particularly characteristic of classical music.<sup>10</sup>

As I will show in later chapters, performing in early-recorded style in many cases runs contrary to these three concerns, all of which are of central importance to current WAM performance practices. Early-recorded performances are often not score-based, by which I mean that if one were to transcribe them, the resulting score would diverge

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<sup>7</sup> Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 33, 110.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Recordings and Histories of Performance Styles," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 252.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Hunter and Stephen Broad, "Reflection on the Classical Musician: Practice in Cultural Context," in *Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance* ed. John Rink, Helena Gaunt and Aaron Williamson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3 - 4.

considerably from that notated by the composer in terms of both detail *and* structure. These performances also often emphasize the individual idiosyncrasies of the player, which is seen today as an overt intrusion of their personality or ego onto the intentions of the composer and the primacy of the score. And finally, using early recordings as the basis for one's performance style means privileging sound and oral tradition over the notated score: an approach that, as musicologist Kai Köpp suggests, may encourage "individual, artistic decision-making in performance."<sup>11</sup>

If our duty today is to be faithful to the 'intentions of the composer,' what better way to reinforce this claim than to believe, as many contemporary performers do, that they have inherited unaltered performing traditions that can be traced back to canonical composers. Pianist and pedagogue Megan Hughes, for example, does just that when she writes that her own musical lineage stretches back to Franz Liszt and Ludwig van Beethoven.<sup>12</sup> This is an appeal to authority meant to convey one's qualities as a teacher and performer, whereas the evidence of early recordings tells us that, given the vast stylistic changes that took place over the course of the 20th century, the notion of an unaltered, inherited performing tradition stretching back to Liszt and Beethoven is a myth. Early recordings demonstrate that composers such as Johannes Brahms, Edward Elgar, Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky played their own music in ways that differ widely from our own—challenging claims made by many performers and musicologists that our current approaches to these repertoires are in any way connected with 19th-century composers' expectations, no matter how closely we adhere to their scores.<sup>13</sup> Historical recordings also allow us to examine the performance practices of musicians who made their musical careers in the 19th century, giving us an opportunity to understand the stylistic contexts of many of today's most frequently played works. Indeed, if we truly prize fidelity to 19th-century composers and their works, early recordings suggest that we are under no obligation to continue performing canonic classical works in the score-based ways we do today: an approach that is at odds with the more performer-driven, moment-to-moment and communicative style familiar to many of the composers in our imaginary museum.

As pianist Neal Peres Da Costa has exhaustively illustrated, a significant gap also

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<sup>11</sup> Kai Köpp, forthcoming, "Historischen Interpretationsforschung: Von neuen Quellen zu neuen Methoden," in *Rund um Beethoven. Interpretationsforschung heute*, ed. T. Gartmann and D. Allenbach (Schliengen: Argus, 2019). Translation mine.

<sup>12</sup> Megan Hughes, "Beethoven, Czerny, Leschetitzky, Raab, Lehmann and Me," accessed July 22, 2018, <https://meganhughesmusic.com/2011/08/19/beethoven-czerny-leschetitzky-raab-lehmann-me/>.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 140.

exists between modern understandings of textual evidence from the early-20th century and the actual sounding performances captured by historical piano recordings from the period.<sup>14</sup> Much like musical notation, modern interpretation of performance treatises often involves taking these texts literally and prescriptively by translating them into sound within the context of current pianistic performance practices. Just as it is often impossible to recreate a composer's score from repeated listening to an early-recorded piano performance, Da Costa's work proves that it would be just as impossible to arrive at the same sounds we hear on early recordings through the use of treatises alone. There is no reason to assume these gaps would be any smaller where 19th-century string playing is concerned. This dichotomy between texts and recordings also undermines certain claims to historical accuracy made by Historically Informed Performance (HIP)<sup>15</sup> practitioners who must rely on written documentary evidence in order to supplement their understanding of scores. While many HIP musicians now carefully refrain from calling their performances 'authentic,' organist, harpsichordist and conductor Ton Koopman's comments on the issue illustrate that claims of 'accuracy' are still not off limits:

[J.S.] Bach's own students were not all the same...But they all knew the language of the time, and they were all recognisably students of Bach. When I consider this, I think we have a chance to play more authentically than people sometimes dare to believe: we can learn the language of the time...If I'm found wrong by somebody, I should honestly admit my mistake; and if I still believe that I am right, I should be able to defend my position, both musically and intellectually.<sup>16</sup>

If Koopman's goal is to 'learn the language of the time,' giving him a chance to 'play more authentically,' and if, as he is suggesting, we are able to judge HIP performances on the basis of whether they are 'right or wrong,' then the claim being made here is that some performances are simply more historically accurate than others. Given the substantial gap between current interpretations of turn-of-the-century performance treatises and early-recorded style, however, it strikes me that there is little reason to assume the gap between text and sound would be any smaller when it comes to 18th-century WAM repertoires.

In order for musicians to be successful in today's competitive environment, they are required to demonstrate professional skill to a high degree: in ideological terms, via

<sup>14</sup> Neal Peres Da Costa, *Performing Practices in Late-Nineteenth-Century Piano Playing: Implications of the Relationships between Written Texts and Early Recordings* (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2001), 429.

<sup>15</sup> From here on referred to as HIP.

<sup>16</sup> Uri Golomb, "Interview with Ton Koopman," September 2003, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Articles/Koopman-Golomb.pdf>, 16 – 18.



egoless adherence to the notated score and intentions of the composer as determined by preconceived notions of how a composer's works should sound, and in concrete terms, by displaying a high degree of accuracy with regards to parameters such as tempo, rhythm, intonation, quality of sound, and verticality of ensemble playing. Today, a confluence of ideological and practical requirements weighs so heavily on musicians that, as Cook observes, "modernist assumptions have boxed in performance [while] *different* performance options...have accordingly been ruled out."<sup>17</sup> Such modern standards of professionalism have also been hugely influenced by the sanitized, highly-edited digital recordings that make up the bulk of the music we hear today. By contrast, the more moment-to-moment communicative qualities of early-recorded style, qualities that often sound unprofessional to modern ears, were in large part made possible by the 'live' recording method and lo-fi technology of earlier recording processes, and in particular, by the mid-frequency range focus of the acoustic recording horn, which captures very different aspects of sonic information than modern microphones. Indeed, the ways in which recordings have effected changes in performance style have also recently become an object of study.<sup>18</sup> Early-recorded performers come from a culture where live performances were nearly the only means by which music could be heard, and the practices in which they engage precede the rise of recorded music as the ubiquitous and predominant form of musical consumption that it is today. This leads Cook to observe that early-20th-century recordings tend to sound more like live performances and contemporary live performances tend to sound more like recordings.<sup>19</sup> This means, then, that in order to inhabit early-recorded style today, performers will, to some extent, need to risk their professional reputations in pursuit of a more 'live' manner of playing.

Attempts to explore early-recorded performance style have been few and far between and are frequently limited by performers' and researchers' need to demonstrate their professionalism and skill in the context of current mainstream practices. Many have, as a result, taken what I call a 'pick and choose' approach, stopping well short of fully embracing the musical parameters evidenced by historical recordings. However, because these recordings question current narratives about our own performance practices, and because both personal and professional vulnerability are required in order to perform in early-recorded style, widespread adoption of the stylistic possibilities offered by historical recordings remains unlikely in the short term.

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<sup>17</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 3. Emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup> Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 368.

Despite all this, however, what we hear on early recordings has the potential to open up new terrain for modern-day performance practices, allowing different possibilities for how WAM might sound to take shape. An early-recordings-derived performance style can allow musicians today to explore and express canonic works differently, in a style that is communicative on a moment-to-moment level, and that is more intimate, personal, and deeply connected with performer creativity. A few performer-scholars have used early recordings in such an all-encompassing manner, copying them in a way that is as informed and accurate as possible given their aims and the constraints of time (especially pianists Anna Scott and Sigurd Slåttembrekk).<sup>20</sup> I call this the ‘all-in’ approach, which results in fundamentally altering the way familiar musical repertoires sound while also challenging prevailing assumptions about our knowledge, beliefs and roles as WAM performers. Resistance to this approach is based on the view that it represents a hopeless attempt to either resurrect obsolete historical performance styles or escape the high standards of modern musical performance. The goal of the all-in approach, however, is not to ‘resurrect’ past performing styles but rather to use those styles to make music in an alternative and more personalised fashion; to focus on communicative, moment-to-moment music-making rather than on high technical standards (though, as discussed in Chapter Five, the ‘all-in’ approach itself presents significant technical challenges for the modern performer). I call this the ‘all-in’ approach, which results in fundamentally altering the way familiar musical repertoires sound, while also challenging prevailing assumptions about our knowledge, beliefs and roles as WAM performers. While selectivity is difficult if not impossible to avoid in this kind of work, the term ‘all-in’ is a relative one—referring to a no-holds-barred approach to copying early-recorded evidence as compared to the much looser approach that currently prevails in the field of recordings-informed performance (RIP). Resistance to this approach is based on the view that it represents a hopeless attempt to either resurrect obsolete historical performance styles or escape the high standards of modern musical performance.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Scott copied recordings made by pianists from Brahms’s inner circle and learned to inhabit this performing style in her own playing. See Anna Scott, *Romanticizing Brahms* (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2014). Slåttembrekk copied Grieg’s piano recordings and integrated Grieg’s performing style into his performances of the composer’s piano works, Sigurd Slåttembrekk and Tony Harrison, *Chasing the Butterfly*, 2008, accessed July 25, 2018, <http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no>.

<sup>21</sup> The ‘all-in’ approach brings together two seemingly contradictory elements: on one hand, these are copies of highly personalized past performances in which the agency of performers is emphasised over adherence to composers’ scores; on the other hand, striving to copy these performances could be seen as an activity that limits the agency of the performer doing the copying. Paradoxically, however, because these past performances are so far removed from the ingrained habits and roles expected of modern performers,

In light of these considerations, I feel that studying early recordings is of vital importance—not just for creating alternative-sounding performances of WAM but also for contextualising our current performance practices. Questioning some of the underlying tenets of these practices will likely lead to changes in our own attitudes to performance, thereby opening up the possibility for performers to change the musical content of their performances in unexpected ways—whether the direction taken is early-recordings-inspired or not. Altering how the WAM museum sounds is of crucial importance to rethinking the role of the performer: to moving away from an egoless, transparent, deferent, score-based and composer-intent-focused mode of music-making, and towards a more performer-driven, moment-to-moment, idiosyncratic and communicative one. This would allow us to re-envision these repertoires beyond the constraints imposed by mainstream performance practices and the pervasiveness of thoroughly-edited modern digital recordings, which have become the authoritative standard against which the professional and interpretive qualities of today’s performers are judged.

While pianists have made gains in this direction in solo nineteenth-century keyboard repertoires, it is now necessary for string players to do the same, in both solo *and* chamber performance contexts. The question this project thus aims to answer is: how might viola and string quartet performances in early-recorded style be brought about today? Implementing early-recorded style as a string player involves physical and musical parameters such as portamento, vibrato and intonation, while performing with other musicians (in this case, with a collaborative pianist and string quartet) offers insights into issues such as multi-layeredness and the application of extreme non-score-based practices in group settings—an endeavour viewed by many as impossible and perhaps even fruitless. I am unaware at this stage of another project of this scope in which the ‘all-in’ approach to copying early-recorded viola solo, duo and string quartet playing has been taken: an approach that aims to create new performances that are recognisably derived from the same expressive language, and that create the same tensions with current norms of performance, as their early-recorded models. In the end, the hope is that these performances, the artistic outputs of this research project, capture a more performer-driven, moment-to-moment, and communicative approach to WAM.

The methods used to create these artistic outputs include carrying out historical

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the all-in approach to copying represents one of the few avenues open to those looking to circumvent such norms.

and biographical research into a selection of early-recorded performers, analysing these performers' recordings using sonic visualization software, creating detailed annotated scores based on the results of these analyses, and then using these scores as aids in the process of copying early-recorded viola solo, viola/piano and quartet performances. This last step also involved adapting my physical approach to performance as well as imparting the 'all-in' copying method to my colleagues in chamber music contexts. Finally, the sonic results of this process were recorded using lo-fi recording methods and technologies similar to those used in earlier acoustic recording processes: an approach whose artistic and technological advantages include the lo-fi microphone's focus on the mid-frequency range of sound (thereby focusing the player's attention on more local, gestural information), the non-transparency of the medium, and the intimate contexts in which acoustic recordings were made. Köpp relates this process to experimental archaeology, where researchers use raw materials and historical techniques in order to construct flint blades. This connects more broadly with what he calls "historical interpretation research," and the act of "studying the sounding past through the decisions of historical performers."<sup>22</sup> In my case, this understanding of the decisions of historical performers is gleaned first from gaining inside knowledge of individual performers' idiosyncratic approaches via copying, and second from contextualizing those approaches in relation to their immediate colleagues and historical contemporaries, also via copying.

The written component of this thesis, however, opens with Chapter One, *The Role of the Performer*, which reviews relevant literatures establishing the nature of WAM practices today in contrast to the performance styles evidenced by early recordings. Here, I examine the work of musicologists Cook, Leech-Wilkinson and Robert Philip, and philosopher Goehr, focusing on the concepts of mainstream musical practice, musical works, *Werktreue*, and moment-to-moment music-making. I explore the relationship between early recordings and HIP, and reflect on recent experiments in early-recorded performance practice in reference to the work of musicologist Clive Brown and pianists Scott and Slättebrekk, while elucidating the pitfalls of recordings-inspired performance (RIP). I also reflect on existing literatures dealing with early-recorded viola and string quartet playing through the work of musicologists Brown and Köpp, historian Maurice Riley, violist Heng-Ching Fang and violinist David Milsom, and I explore the role of the performer in 19th- and early-20th-century music-making through the work of Hunter—

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<sup>22</sup> Köpp, Forthcoming: "Historischen Interpretationsforschung." Translation mine.

with a particular focus on the concept of *Werktreue* or being ‘faithful’ to the work or composer in 19th-century contexts. This is all done with a view to establishing a warrant for my analysis and copying of early viola and string quartet recordings as a path towards a more performer-driven, moment-to-moment, and communicative approach to WAM.

Chapter Two, Recorded Sound and Recording Technique, discusses current mainstream hi-fi recording practices, critiquing them in light of the work of Cook and media philosopher Marshall McLuhan. This discussion focuses on how contemporary paradigms can work against the ‘all-in’ copying approach on both artistic and technological levels. I then examine the possible artistic and technological advantages of lo-fi recording technology through the work of engineer Andrew Simpson and recording engineer Geoffrey Miles in order to establish a warrant for the lo-fi recording approach adopted in my own artistic outputs. As part of my investigation into how recording techniques and recorded music itself impact performance practices, I chose to make experimental lo-fi recordings for these outputs using a mid-frequency-capturing microphone that mimics historical acoustic recording processes and that focuses the player’s attention on local gestural information, all while engaging with the recording process in a more ‘live-recorded’ setting, similar to that encountered by the early-recorded performers I copy. I suggest that a rethinking of today’s predominant WAM recording paradigm can yield creative and unexpected results.

Chapter Three, Early-Recorded Viola Analyses, examines all violists active pre-1930 who were recorded in either a solo capacity or with piano accompaniment, and reflects upon the stylistic relationships between them. Recordings by Oskar Nedbal, Léon Van Hout, Arthur Post, and Lionel Tertis are analysed and compared in detail here—including recordings that are as yet unpublished, unavailable and unknown to the wider musical community—and the relationship between early-recorded violists and singers is also discussed. This analytical and comparative work suggests a great distance between current and early-recorded practices, while also being later used as the basis both for my copying of early viola solo and viola/piano recordings, and for my extrapolating of this style to other works for which no early-recorded examples exist. Chapter Four, Early-Recorded String Quartet Analyses, then presents in-depth analyses and comparisons of historical string quartet recordings, including those of the earliest commercially-recorded quartet, the Haagsche Toonkunstkwartet, as well as other prominent turn-of-the-century ensembles such as the Klingler Quartet, the Brüder-Post Quartett and the Czech String Quartet. These analyses demonstrate the wide-ranging

diversity that was typical within the context of early-recorded style, and this too serves as the basis for my eventual copying of diverse approaches, with a view to exploring their integration in chamber music contexts today.

In Chapter Five, *Developing an Early-Recorded Performance Style: Approach and Recorded Output*, I first examine the bodily and instrumental parameters of my own performance practice in relation to that of the early-recorded era. I then describe this project's recorded artistic outputs, noting their aims, findings, and observable connections between my own performances and their early-recorded models. These outputs include 27 recordings of solo viola, viola/piano, and string quartet works by canonical as well as lesser-known composers from Johann Sebastian Bach to Benjamin Dale. The majority of these recordings are copies of early-recorded performances, and the rest are wholly original extrapolations from early-recorded style. Most importantly, however, while this project is positioned within wider philosophical, historical, and musicological discussions as briefly outlined above and as discussed in detail in Chapter One, its main objectives and outcomes should be viewed through the lens of my own performance practice as a viola player. Because I am the subject of musical experimentation here, this study and analysis of historical recordings is undertaken not to describe these traces as fixed artefacts, but rather with the intention of exploring them from the inside out in order to influence my own performance practice. The final chapter, *Conclusion*, then reflects upon the outcomes of this project and discusses the future of early-recordings-inspired performance and its relationship to wider musical, cultural and political trends.

Creating performances in early-recorded style allows us to perform familiar musical works differently, focusing on more moment-to-moment communicative aspects of music-making while leaving behind concerns for notationally-, historically- or professionally-correct playing. This offers the possibility of opening up an alternative performance practice for WAM—a 'de-museumification' in both sound and ideology—giving musicians the opportunity to fundamentally change their relationships with instruments, scores, composers and audiences. A realignment of these relationships within early-recordings-inspired performance style, grounded in thorough analysis and practice, can create the foundations necessary for wider acceptance of a de-museumified approach to performance. My hope is that the performance practices I inhabit will one day be met with understanding rather than derision. After all, we may be surprised by

what we can learn about ourselves and about contemporary musical cultures when these are held up to the mirror provided by the sounding past.