# An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music

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# Part 4
# Coda

# Chapter 14. An improvisatory approach to music theory

## 14.1 Summary and conclusions

In the first chapter, I characterised this study metaphorically as a tour around nineteenth-century musical landscapes. At the end of a physical tour, one typically returns to the point of departure; likewise, it may be expected at the end of this thesis to review the research questions raised at the beginning. Section 14.1 aims to give a condensed summary of what was discussed in the preceding chapters, focusing on the first three research questions, and to formulate answers to them. Section 14.2 will then elaborate on the fourth question.

The context of this study is nineteenth-century Western art music, both as a historical practice and as a body of compositions that are (partly) still being performed today. I argued that within this field, improvisation is not to be seen as a quasi-autonomous skill or art form, but as an aspect of music-making in general. Thus the focus of this thesis is on 'the improvisatory' in all its diversity. Its common denominator is the quality of *improvisus*, the 'unforeseen'[1227] or 'unpremeditated', whereby performers do not consciously plan ahead for certain future actions. 'Improvisatoriness' potentially pervades many aspects of music. Part 2 of this study makes a case for the idea that it can also be detected in score-bound music-making, and that nineteenth-century musicians demonstrably assumed its presence in performances. On the other hand, even improvising 'freely', i.e., without a score, was, at that time, never fully independent of already existing compositions, as part 3 shows.

The first research question, 'To what extent and in what way did nineteenth-century music-making depend on improvisatory activity?', therefore has to be answered differently depending on the situation. The study sketches out a panorama of nineteenth-century spheres of music-making and examines the improvisatory aspects in a diversity of historical situations. Its ultimate goal is to show how, based on such historical information, the current practice of classical music can be enriched. This makes also relevant the question of how nineteenth-century students were trained in this respect (research question 2), and subsequently how musicians today can incorporate an improvisatory approach in their performances (research question 3). These questions provided me with a lens for interpreting the historical material that has been collected and presented in this thesis.

### *An improvisatory approach to scores*

Part 2 of this study ('Improvising with scores') explains how a musician can adopt an improvisatory attitude even when performing from a musical score. It is argued that an influential line of thinking during the twentieth century (and beyond) has viewed classical musical performances primarily as reproductions of fixed musical 'works'. When performance is seen as reproduction, it strives for a

[1227] As I have shown in this study, this term should not be understood in an absolute sense.

specific and well-defined final result; I described this detailed and fixed idea of how the music is supposed to go as 'static'. When it is combined with the idea that a performance ought to be as the composer imagined, this approach entails a musical literalism ('Texttreue') that is still very present in professional music education and in classical performance practice. Its importance is such that it constitutes a true interpretational paradigm that I termed the *Urtext*-paradigm.

By contrast, several nineteenth-century sources give a very different picture. There are good reasons to assume that a performance of composed music was generally seen as recreation rather than reproduction. To the performer, the score served as a conversation partner rather than as an instructor; the musical text functioned as a starting point of ever new musical adventures. Charles Burney described the score of an *adagio* as 'little more than an outline left to the performer's abilities to colour' (→ chapter 3.2), and to a certain extent this can be said about many nineteenth-century scores. This means that an active and participating attitude was expected from performers, not only by the audience and peers, but also by the composers: it is a part of the score's horizon. Such an attitude can be termed 'improvisatory' to the extent it involves ad hoc decisions. To be sure, even a 'reproducing' performer has to make decisions on the spot; but what counts here is the will to 'play with' the score, which arguably was much more present in nineteenth-century music-making than in today's classical musical culture.

This attitude should not be mistaken for an air of self-importance assumed by performers, or for their ignorance of the composer's intentions. This study has proposed that musical 'rhetoric' provides a valuable lens for interpreting the act of music-making. The influence of ancient rhetoric was still very vivid in the nineteenth century, certainly in music which was generally experienced as a wordless language. Comparisons of a musical performer with an orator are countless in treatises and other texts. One of the goals of an orator is to persuade, and I argue that, in a similar way, it was a nineteenth-century performer's striving for musical persuasion that led towards an improvisatory approach to scores. An important rhetorical principle that directly translates into music-making is *varietas*. In music it applies to variety within a performance, but also between performances: never saying (playing, singing) something again in exactly the same way. It is precisely this desire for variety that can be seen as a motive behind much 'playing-with-scores' as it comes to us through nineteenth-century treatises and early recordings. One gets closer to the intention of nineteenth-century musical texts when they are understood not too literally.

However, all this could easily be misunderstood today as a plea for 'do as you please' with nineteenth-century music. That is certainly not my intention: in the very idea of a dialogue between performer and score, a sense of respect for the score as an art work is implied. After all, this is what motivates the modern musician to return time and again to compositions from an often distant past. A crucial question, therefore, is how the 'freedom' that is associated with playfulness can exist

without lapsing into arbitrariness. There is no simple answer to this question; during the nineteenth century, different musical styles and environments show different manifestations of improvisatory activity. Part 2 of this study provides a representative selection of nineteenth-century kinds of score-based music-making that facilitate improvisatory play. It focuses on what is believed to be the two most important manifestations of the improvisatory, both very much related to variety: extempore ornamentation and improvisatory timing.

### *Bel canto*

The first area that is discussed is bel canto. There are several reasons to put this stylistic category in such a prominent position. First, vocal music in general was traditionally considered more important than instrumental music, and this situation only slowly changed during the nineteenth century. Second, Italian bel canto in particular enjoyed enormous international popularity, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is argued that 'vocality' can be seen as a central quality of all nineteenth-century music, and that the influence of specifically bel canto performance habits can also be found in instrumental music until the 1850's. What has been written about bel canto thus applies to instrumental performance practice as well.

Nineteenth-century bel canto shows an unbroken continuation of eighteenth-century developments. One of them is the habit of adding ornamentation, preferably extempore. The goal of ornamentation was to vary: a repeated passage in a composition was supposed to sound different every time it was performed. Another function was to enhance the effect of a passage, or even to 'improve' a composition. From descriptions in several treatises, however, it can be deduced that it is wrong to imagine ornamentation as a feature that can simply be added during an otherwise literal performance. Rather, bel canto ornamentation is to be seen as embedded within an elaborate complex of interpretational habits that include many ways to shape the vocal line. The application of ornamentation presupposes the inclusion of all other means of expression. This is no easy matter for a modern singer: the singing style as it appears from bel canto treatises has changed considerably since 1850 and is very much at odds with contemporary approaches. A reorientation on this forgotten practice would require many years of study and even then, the results of such study would not be automatically usable in present-day professional circumstances.[1228]

Many examples of nineteenth-century bel canto ornamentation were notated and passed on to later generations. An analysis of such fragments reveals clues for modern performers who intend to learn this musical language. In this style, ornaments are always based on the accompanying chords,

[1228] From an instrumentalist's point of view, this may not appear to be a major problem; a player may very well develop and maintain different performance techniques next to one another, and audiences may gradually embrace a historically informed approach. Singers, however, have to choose; developing a singing technique involves developing the voice itself, and it is almost impossible to switch back and forth between the two approaches.

and they tend to elaborate the harmonic voices of a progression. Often the tones of the basic melody serve as what I call 'anchor tones'. Very important is the sense of melodic direction that is often intensified by the ornament: ornamentation enhances the effect of musical gestures. Such intensification of the way music 'speaks' to the listener also betrays a rhetorical motivation. Melodic gestures function clearly within musical phrases, which makes the phrase a key concept in this study. Ornamentation should not blur the phrase structure, though sometimes an ornament may serve as a bridge between two phrases. A remarkable feature of bel canto scores is their harmonic simplicity. The harmonic structure within a phrase is often very 'common' and predictable; it is a harmonic 'locus communis' that prompts a multitude of melodic inventions. This circumstance clearly fosters ornamentation.

Bel canto ornamentation consists of a repertoire of figurations that are often remarkably virtuosic. The fluency of nineteenth-century singers in extemporising with such material can be explained by the vocal pedagogy of that time. A large part of the training consisted of endless technical exercises with precisely such patterns. This is one more aspect of the old bel canto style that is not easy to transfer to our time: early-nineteenth-century singers could afford to focus almost exclusively on technical training, because they were 'breathing' the musical style in which they were trained. To a modern singer this naturalness has disappeared.

Notwithstanding such practical restrictions, it is still true that the bel canto performance tradition as it existed during the first half of the nineteenth century is a part of the horizon of scores from that period. Challenging though it may be, this study advocates enriching present-day performances by exploring this hidden world.

### *Instrumental music*

Several nineteenth-century methods and treatises for instruments clearly refer to aspects of this historical bel canto performance practice. Information about ornamentation in the violin school of Pierre Baillot and the flute school of Louis Drouët, for instance, closely resembles what can be found about this topic in singing methods. Even the types of patterns match: vocal and instrumental ornamentation made use of one and the same body of trans-idiomatic figures.

A remarkable and partly forgotten area is the strongly mutual influence of vocal repertoire and piano music. The piano had a key role in nineteenth-century music: many composers developed their musical ideas at this instrument, music of various instrumentations was transcribed for piano, and fluency on the keyboard was considered a must for any musician. The close connection between piano and singing is seen not only in many song arrangements for solo piano, but even in piano music that was turned into vocal pieces. More importantly, the connection with bel canto provides us with a historically informed view on original piano music, in particular the work of Chopin. The rich bel canto performance practice mentioned above has the potential to be applied to the piano and sheds

new light on aspects of ornamentation, but also on issues such as articulation. In this way, a rhetorical dimension of piano playing emerges that is closely connected with the characteristics of nineteenth-century keyboard instruments. In summary, the cross-fertilisation between bel canto and early-nineteenth-century instrumental music supports the idea of a performer 'playing with' the score, that is, being in dialogue with it. The notion of such a dialogue is reflected in Baillot's juxtaposition of *caractère* and *accent.*

### *Timing*

Another aspect of the improvisatory approach that can be linked to *varietas* is timing. Whereas free ornamentation disappeared from bel canto after 1850, and much earlier from other styles, a free and improvisatory treatment of scores with respect to timing can be discerned throughout the nineteenth century. As for the end of the century, the earliest recordings and piano rolls constitute a unique source of information about timing habits. In much recent research on this topic, timing is understood in terms of deviation from a normative, mathematically regular tempo. In this thesis such a notion is called a 'transcendental' tempo conception. This is an essentially twentieth-century idea. For earlier music a different conception is more appropriate: 'immanent' tempo. Transcendental tempo is an external norm, stable and immovable in itself, against which the performance is positioned and from which it originates. A logical consequence of that mindset is the existence of a regular 'micro-pulse' which controls, e.g., arpeggiated accompaniments in piano music. Conversely, immanent tempo exists 'within' the music: it is the result of the musical ebb and flow and therefore it is in a continuous state of flux. A crucial aspect of nineteenth-century timing is the various types of rubato. The transcendental / immanent pair of concepts makes it possible to understand rubato not as a deviation from a norm, but as an inner necessity that enhances the expression of a passage. Thus within the framework of immanent tempo, a rhetorical understanding of music manifests itself through rubato and timing in general. Whereas the normativity of transcendental tempo belongs to the *Urtext*-paradigm, immanent tempo implies an improvisatory approach because it is almost impossible to pin down – and thus to reproduce.

Therefore, what is often classified as different types of rubato such as the 'earlier' tempo rubato, the 'later' tempo flexibility, and (in the case of piano music) 'dislocation', are in fact nuances of the same phenomenon, namely a search for variety and enhancement of musical gestures, which leads towards a more outspoken individuality of phrases and other musical units. In a polyphonic or otherwise stratified texture, this may result in a 'counterpoint of layers'. A desire to emphasise the rhythmic individuality of phrases arises from a rhetorical impulse; a counterpart in modern drama appears in Stanislavski's idea of 'bits'. Though the emphasis in this study is on improvisatory timing in piano music, the principles apply to all instrumental and vocal music – even to the organ, where it might be less expected.

Embracing the idea of immanent tempo and the metrical flexibility that comes with it implies a break with today's generally accepted performance traditions. This way of thinking can meet a great deal of resistance, especially in institutionalised music education. As in the case of the reorientation of singers with regard to historical bel canto style, it affects almost all aspects of music-making – which is why the term 'paradigm shift' comes to mind.

### *Why did an improvisatory approach to scores disappear?*

This study does not aim to explain how and why the present-day, non-improvisatory approach to scores has arisen, but a few possible reasons can be adduced. Quite obvious and often mentioned is the influence of developments in the recording industry. For the first time in history, a performance was no longer something that was 'gone' when it had finished, only leaving more or less vague memories; from now on, the ephemeral could be in a sense captured and fixed as a timeless object. This very notion must have had a deep influence on the understanding of what a performance is, both for performers and for audiences. There were side effects: not only did it become possible to hear 'exactly' and 'objectively' what a musician was doing, but also, performances could be listened to repeatedly – two phenomena that resulted in a new sense of 'perfection'. Moreover, the ever-increasing sound editing must have fostered the *Urtext*-paradigm. When a recording is in reality composed of (many) dozens of 'takes', it is important that all those fragments are as similar as possible – first of all with respect to tempo. For the same reason, extempore ornamentation, different every time a passage is recorded, would be a recording engineer's nightmare. Another influence could be the increasingly strong orchestral discipline. This dates back to Wagner, but – in combination with the increased expectation of perfection – it exploded in the twentieth century. An orchestral musician with an improvisatory approach to his part is often regarded as a nuisance. Institutionalised musical education has been marked by this sense of discipline, orchestral jobs being a main source of employment until very recently.

In addition, I argued that a transcendental tempo conception discourages an improvisational approach. Outside the context of classical music, this understanding of musical tempo became very prominent in jazz and especially pop music, but it emerged in contemporary styles such as minimal music and serialism as well. As I wrote in chapter 6.8, it is likely that even classical music-making was influenced by the new rigid standards of tempo; especially the fact that in terms of audience participation, pop music has been the dominant musical culture since the 1960's, has led to the ubiquity of a transcendental tempo conception.

Last but not least, an improvisatory attitude towards score-based music-making presupposes the ability to extemporise in the same style; to a certain extent, a recreator has to be a creator. But this is a territory that has become unknown to the majority of classical musicians. The third part of this

study ('Towards "Historically Inspired Improvisation": improvising without a score') broaches this subject.

### *'Fantasieren'*

Part 3 investigates nineteenth-century practices of improvising without the basis of a particular score. In principle, the same research questions apply here. However, the idea of an improvisatory approach now acquires a more inclusive meaning: it is not about the approach to a score, but to music-making in general. The perspective is that of a modern performer who is curious to improvise music that is stylistically connected with nineteenth-century compositions; this correlates with the ability to master nineteenth-century musical languages in an active way. Thus the third research question ('How can an improvisatory approach be incorporated in today's musical practice?') can now be reframed as: 'How can nineteenth-century musical languages be actively mastered again?' The idea that music can be regarded as a language is fundamental to this study; if 'classical' musicians are supposed to gain a sovereign attitude that allows them to 'play with' a score, it will be necessary to be proficient in the musical languages of the (in this case, nineteenth-century) repertoire they perform.

A common thread in part 3 is Carl Czerny's *Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, a book that gives a comprehensive overview of manifestations of 'free' improvising in early-nineteenth-century keyboard culture. This book shows that extempore music-making occurred within a wide range of musical and social contexts, each with its own assumptions and expectations. This is matched in the terminology: the historical terms for improvising tend to indicate the act or the manner of producing a specific type of music. For instance, 'preluding' in the first place meant 'making a prelude', thus signifying a musical genre with a specific function in a particular setting. It is hard to compare the nineteenth-century diversity of situations in which live music was produced with present-day classical music culture, with its strong focus on a very disciplined concert etiquette that emerged only in the course of the twentieth century. Thus in part 3 as well, improvisation can be understood as an aspect of music-making in general, rather than as a separate activity.

Apart from improvisatory approaches to scores, this thesis describes a panorama of improvisatory genres: preludes, cadenzas, dance music, different types of fantasies, and other free pieces. Each one has been discussed along the lines of the first three research questions: what is known about these forms of improvisational activity, how were musicians trained at that time, and how can modern musicians use the answers to these questions to gain an active knowledge of musical languages? Especially for the second and third questions, the rhetorical concept of locus communis, applied to music, proves useful. Indeed, it is possible to indicate loci on different levels that serve as musical guidelines for improvisers, then and now. For instance, harmonic loci play a prominent role in both ornamental preludes and solo cadenzas. From a variety of sources it can be deduced that a repertoire of harmonic progressions and sequences has consciously been used to shape the harmonic structure

of such pieces. This treatment of harmony in nineteenth-century textbooks extends to a consideration of modulation, and the emphasis on common-tone modulation is especially interesting. In dance music, we see the emergence of loci on the level of rhythm, phrase structure and characteristic melodic features. In free pieces, genre-specific loci communes turn out to have been much more important than is usually acknowledged in present scholarship. As for the question of how students learned to apply such loci on the spot, even to the level of improvised fugues, the French organ school of César Franck and Charles-Marie Widor provides valuable insights.

All discussions in part 3, including the second research question, significantly rest on a body of practical and theoretical knowledge that is known today as 'music theory'. In the training of nineteenth-century musicians, the approach to this body was still primarily practical in nature. It entailed a familiarity with harmonic 'rules' (as assumed by Czerny, for instance), and with the principles of counterpoint that had to be mastered before students undertook their first attempts to improvise fugues. It most certainly also entailed a knowledge of the compositional technique that keyboard improvisers needed for their extempore creations. Analysis as a separate school subject hardly existed during the nineteenth century, though a book like Adolf Bernhard Marx's *Kompositionslehre* is often treated as a predecessor of analytical theory today. To a nineteenth-century music student, subjects such as harmony, counterpoint and composition must have had a direct practical relevance. By contrast, post-World War II music theory might better be characterised as reflective.[1229] If the creation of music in the nineteenth century was understood to be based on one's familiarity with compositional technique (in the broad sense, including harmony and counterpoint), why would it be different for students of historically inspired improvisation today? Thus, improvisatory activity makes demands on teachers of music theory. This leads to the last research question: 'What consequences may the rise of stylistically oriented improvisation have for music theory as a teaching subject?'

## 14.2 Music theory as a generative subject

What music theory actually is, and which areas it encompasses, has been the subject of continuous discussions for decades. The scope of topics that are presented in Thomas Christensen's representative *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* is very wide and dates back to the ancient Greeks:[1230] music theory is a pluralistic discipline. With respect to both content and didactics, the differences between national traditions are considerable.[1231] Another topic of discussion is the

[1229] This shift from practical to reflective was the result of (among other things) the academisation of music eduation which took place with different speeds in different countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cf. Holtmeier, L.: 'Feindliche Übernahme: Gottfried Weber, Adolf Bernhard Marx und die bürgerliche Harmonielehre des 19. Jahrhunderts'. *Musik & Ästhetik*, vol. 16, no. 63 (2012); 5-25.

[1230] Christensen, Th.: *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory.* Cambridge, 2002.

[1231] Cf. Schuijer, M.: 'Music Theorists and Societies'. *Music Theory & Analysis*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2015); 129-155.

distinction between music theory and musicology. Jan Philipp Sprick has articulated the situation in German-speaking countries. In contrast with, e.g., the United States, where music theory has developed into an autonomous academic discipline, its German counterpart is primarily allocated at *Musikhochschulen*, where the focus is on the training of musicians. In line with Ludwig Holtmeier's essay 'Nicht Kunst? Nicht Wissenschaft?',[1232] Sprick describes its position as an area between science and artistic practice.[1233] This situation has paved the way for a strong integration of academic and pedagogical / artistic aspects.[1234] The Dutch circumstances which form the immediate background of this thesis resemble the German state of affairs to some extent, not least with respect to the importance attached to artistic and academic integration. I argue that on the basis of this situation, the principles of the time-honoured discipline of music theory should match those of the relatively young field of 'artistic research'.

I have presented this study as a contribution to the field of music theory. Whereas aspects of it can be seen as belonging to specialist disciplines (music history, performance practice, organology, and the various vocal and instrumental disciplines mentioned), only a generalist area like music theory is able to serve as an umbrella to cover the whole range of topics discussed in the previous chapters. I believe that Sprick's characterisation very well fits the approach that was chosen for this study. It is precisely in the process of creating (central to improvisation) that this variety of artistic and academic aspects needs to be integrated. Creating a solo cadenza, for instance, requires musicological knowledge, instrument-specific skills and insights, and experience with harmony and voice leading to work together.

As I stated above, music theory is a pluralistic discipline, which makes it impossible to give a clear-cut and generally approved overview of what it entails. On the other hand, there are certainly common tendencies, and some of them are probably challenged by the ephemeral nature of the topic taken up in this thesis. Music theory as we know it today is, despite the deep historical roots it can boast, an integral part of the contemporary culture of Western art music. The *Urtext*-paradigm, which is especially questioned in part 2 of this study, is also present in traditional music theory with its strong focus on scores. Far from pretending to design a 'new' music theory that addresses the improvisatory as well, I would like use the rest of this chapter to at least raise a few issues in the hopes of stimulating a rethinking of music theory as a discipline. A common thread is the idea that, in addition to its reflective side, music theory might develop a generative aspect by strengthening its focus on musical practice.

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[1232] Holtmeier, L.: 'Nicht Kunst? Nicht Wissenschaft? Zur Lage der Musiktheorie'. *Musik und Ästhetik*, vol. 1, no. 1/2 (1997); 119-136.

[1233] Sprick, J.Ph.: 'Musikwissenschaft und Musiktheorie'. In: Calella, M. & Urbanek, N. (eds.): *Historische Musikwissenchaft: Grundlagen und Perspektiven*. Stuttgart, 2013; 130-146.

[1234] Sprick, J.Ph.: op. cit., 143.

### *Analysis and performance*

At the end of her dissertation on the interpretation of Brahms's piano music, Anna Scott writes:

> All too often I find myself attending lectures wherein a theorist discusses Brahms's formal, harmonic, rhythmic and melodic procedures as if it is a given that everything would have been played exactly as it appears on the score, and in the ways we expect today.[1235]

Scott's criticism brings to mind what Nicholas Cook termed a 'recognized subdiscipline within music theory': the area of 'analysis and performance'.[1236] Cook criticises (in my view with good reason) the 'prescriptive conception of the relationship between analysis and performance'[1237] in which the direction is always 'from analysis to performance'.[1238] It is a prescriptiveness that 'is characteristic of, and even perhaps definitive of, music theory as a whole'.[1239] The idea that the performance is (or should be) some kind of expression of the findings of analysis is challenged nowhere as fundamentally as in the concept of 'playing with' a score. What does it mean for analysis if we know that a piece such as a bel canto aria is supposed to be performed differently every time? What can be said analytically about a melody when we know that it was most likely never played as notated?

Cook suggests a different view: 'analysis and performance are to be seen as interlocking modes of musical knowledge' that 'should be pursued simultaneously and interactively, not in succession. (...) [A]nalysis should be seen as a means of posing articulate questions, and not (...) as a source of answers'.[1240] Incidentally, Cook was not referring to ornamentation and other forms of musical *varietas* here. It seems to me that the implications of the challenge mentioned above go even further than this: if a performance of a composition is expected to be different every time, this imposes limitations on the relevance to the performer of many traditional analytical approaches. I do not consider such approaches to be worthless in themselves; I argue, however, that much analysis should be understood as analysis of the score, not of the music as performed and heard. One may find all kinds of motivic connections in a melody Rossini notated, a clear *Urlinie* in an *adagio* such as the ones Burney was referring to, or striking polyrhythmic structures in a piano piece of Schumann or Brahms; if that is not necessarily what one hears, such findings mainly exist on paper.[1241] Cook's

[1235] Scott, A.: *Romanticizing Brahms* (diss., unpublished). Leiden, 2014; 345.
[1236] Cook, N.: 'Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis'. In: Cook, N., Everist, M. (eds.): *Rethinking Music.* Oxford, 1999; 239.
[1237] Cook, N.: op. cit., 240.
[1238] Cook, N.: op. cit., 239.
[1239] Cook, N.: op. cit., 241.
[1240] Cook, N.: op. cit., 248-249.
[1241] This especially concerns more advanced methods of analysis: it is not my intention to question the value of a propaedeutic level of music analysis. The phrase structure of Rossini's melody, general formal aspects of the aria, the key of a passage: such basic aspects are much less controversial.

analysis, by contrast, is a performative act; he writes: 'I would like to counterpose not so much the analyst and the performer but rather the "writing" and the "performing" musician, or, perhaps more precisely, music as writing and music as performance'.[1242] To Cook, analysis should not be understood as an 'objective representation of reality'[1243] but as a 'fundamentally metaphorical' representation of music.[1244]

Cook's juxtaposition of music as writing and music as performance recalls the distinction made in this study between music-as-a-score and music-as-event (→ chapter 1.3). A logical consequence would be to initiate a second area of analysis, namely analysis of the performance as such; indeed, Cook has done ground-breaking work in this field that has been mentioned more than once in this thesis. Now, in the article cited above, Cook was writing from an academic perspective. In light of the understanding of music theory proposed by Sprick, his point of view is not wholly unproblematic. If music theory 'lives' at conservatories and *Hochschulen* where primarily musical creators (in the broad sense, including performers) are being educated, one may be justified in asking how relevant it is to teach the kind of music analysis espoused by Cook – that is, the kind that sees itself as a 'performance in writing', or that takes the activities of performers as its research material. Cook's observation that 'the paradigm of representation, in so far as such representation is understood as more than metaphorical, brings with it that dogmatic partisanship that characterized music theory only a few years ago'[1245] may free performers from pedantic theorists; on the other hand, his suggestion to 'let a thousand theoretical flowers bloom', that 'each approach creates its own truth',[1246] might be seen by many students as an invitation to decline with thanks this part of the curriculum. Limiting the scope of analysis to the musical text as such, as I suggested, may lead to a similar reaction.

Nonetheless I believe that Cook's idea that analysis and performance 'should be pursued simultaneously and interactively, not in succession' makes a lot of sense, especially in a conservatory environment. First of all, analysis can be a well-developed and sophisticated means of reflection for a performing musician; reflecting on the score and on performances makes one conscious of any tacit assumptions and unquestioned habits, and may contribute to the profundity of a musician. But also on a more fundamental level, there is a deep truth in seeing analysis and performance as 'interlocking modes of musical knowledge'. I have argued earlier that analytical practices tend to be based on interpretational paradigms, even if they appear to prescribe interpretation. Ernst Kurth's description of Bach's counterpoint, for instance, puts a strong emphasis on what he calls the 'kinetic energy' of a

[1242] Cook, N.: op. cit., 250.
[1243] Cook, N.: op. cit., 255.
[1244] Cook, N.: op. cit., 257.
[1245] Cook, N.: op. cit., 261. Cook wrote these words in 1999.
[1246] Ibidem.

musical line. For Kurth, all tones in a melody are equally important; it is a view that is difficult to reconcile with modern 'historically informed' Bach performances, but that perfectly matches the legato style of, e.g., Albert Schweitzer on organ or Nathan Milstein and Yasha Heifetz on the violin.[1247] Another example: post-World War II Schenkerianism flourished in a musical climate that favoured long lines, rhythmic evenness and an architectonical understanding of classical compositions, for instance as exemplified by the pianist Leon Fleisher. Performances of pre-war pianists such as Paderewski and Pachmann, however, seem far removed from this theoretical approach.

Very much in line with Cook's critique of contemporary music theory, and especially its privileging of the score over performance, I argue that music analytical traditions as they developed in the course of the twentieth century should be seen as integral parts of classical music as a contemporary practice. Thus the *Urtext*-paradigm that became so prominent especially from the 1950's on not only governed the way in which performers dealt with scores, but also how music analysis developed to what it is now. Traditional methods of analysis in particular are essentially based on the idea that there is one ideal way to perform a piece, or, as Scott put it, that 'it is a given that everything would have been played exactly as it appears on the score, and in the ways we expect today'.

Which type of analysis, then, would be appropriate for a musical praxis that substitutes the *Urtext*-paradigm with a new paradigm that privileges rhetorical variety, as has been advocated in this study? How should we analyse Rossini's melody if we know that a singer will change it anyway? But even before asking this, perhaps we should ask an even more important question – that is, whether there should be any analysis at all; to some indeed the word 'analysis' itself might feel corrupted already as belonging to a praxis that one intends to leave behind. However, if this (indeed charged) term is replaced with 'reflection', or 'analytical reflection', I think that it is possible to sketch some outlines for such an analytical approach, based on findings of the present study. The concept 'locus communis' has been used throughout, and the importance of recognising loci has been highlighted with respect to score-based performances. This supposes familiarity of a musician with loci that are relevant to the piece that is performed. It seems to me that this is definitely an area of 'reflection' that deserves to be developed. I have emphasised that loci, as the term is applied in this study, should be understood as 'sources of invention'. This means that it is essential that a performer has 'practical' (experiential) knowledge of loci (the next section will pick up on this thread). At the same time, however, loci are features of a style; in other words, musical style can be partly defined in terms of

[1247] Mooiman, B.: 'Theorie en praktijk – of andersom? Een persoonlijke visie.' *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2009); 17-24.

loci communes.[1248] It is my conviction that the thinking through of nineteenth-century musical styles in this way is a direction that has not yet been fully explored.[1249] Thus the topic of musical genres (→ chapter 12) could be developed theoretically as well.

Impulses in this direction have already become well-established in the field of early music. Especially in the German music theory, the concept *Satzmodell* [more or less a (polyphonic) model or formula] has occupied a central position for decades, and whereas it tends to be applied mainly to music before 1800, it is certainly also relevant for the period under investigation, especially when the concept is extended in the sense of loci communes. Another influential concept (closely related to the *Satzmodell*) is the 'schema' as introduced by Robert Gjerdingen in *Music in the Galant Style* (2007). For the sake of completeness, it has to be said that galant schemata as defined by Gjerdingen are sometimes being applied by analysts to nineteenth-century music as well; in my view, however, it will especially be promising to search for loci that are specifically associated with this later repertoire. The value of *Satzmodelle* for improvisation is exemplified by Markus Schwenkreis's *Compendium Improvisation* (Basel, 2018) and by the 'worksheets' harpsichordist Patrick Ayrton has published on his website.[1250]

### *Describing the general*

It is not without reason that concepts such as 'schema' or 'Satzmodell' are so often applied to early music. They describe general tendencies, the stylistically ordinary. As I wrote with respect to genres in chapter 12, this is an approach that works particularly well for music from before 1800. During the nineteenth century, the individuality of compositions became increasingly important. As I argued in the same chapter, however, this was a gradual process, and even in nineteenth-century music, there were many stylistic features shared by composers, and this shared language deserves to be elucidated more clearly. The gradual shift from a supra-personal style to the personal styles of individual composers is an object of further study; in chapter 12, I gave several examples of canonic compositions that became loci communes in their own right. Especially in the music theory taught in the French conservatories, practical descriptions of the styles of composers form a genre in itself.[1251] Unlike the recent developments in the theory of early music, conventional music analysis generally seems to have focused on the individuality of compositions, which is understandable from a

[1248] In fact even analytical decisions on a propaedeutic level (→ footnote 1241) often are based on loci communes, for instance when the key of a passage is established.

[1249] Relatively recent contributions to classical sonata theory such as William Caplin's *Classical Form* (New York, 1998) can be interpreted as examples of this direction.

[1250] http://patrickayrton.net/pa2017/improvisations/

[1251] For instance the series *Les cahiers d'analyse musicale* of Anthony Girard. Olivier Messiaen published his *Vingt leçons d'harmonie dans le style de quelques auteurs importants de 'L'Histoire harmonique' de la musique depuis Monteverdi jusqu'à Ravel* already in 1951.

twentieth-century point of view. However, the creative aspect of the improvisatory, as understood in the nineteenth century, brings to the surface the importance of an increased awareness of the general, as exemplified especially in the loci communes. Thus not only in the field of practical musicianship, but also on a theoretical level, it will make sense to allow a more prominent role to the study of nineteenth-century musical styles.

As I wrote above, identifying loci communes can be a valuable tool for defining styles. *Satzmodelle* and schemata may serve the same purpose, as long as they are understood as loci communes, which means that they are taken as the impetus for concrete musical realisations. However, the latter is not automatically the case, as I will argue in the next section.

### *Reification*

As I wrote at the end of section 14.1, it may seem to be a natural task for music theory to help students actively master the musical languages that they have learned only passively. This is because nowadays, music theory is the only field where the structure of musical languages from the past is systematically discussed. It might be assumed that those theory subjects that focus on writing skills, such as harmony and counterpoint (and in Germanic countries *Satzlehre*), are especially useful in this respect. However, expecting that these subjects will provide a smooth entry into historically inspired improvisation would be over-optimistic. Why is this? As I have argued, music theory as traditionally taught still pretends that it can fall back on an active experiential command of classical musical languages, as was the situation during much of the nineteenth century. It is a 'chicken-and-egg' dilemma: music theory teaches (among other things) how to create music, but it basically assumes that the student already knows how to do so. I think that there is often a mismatch between what traditional music theory has to offer, and what students need. In this section, I will try to analyse this discrepancy.

In its attempts to speak about music, music theory has to make use of concepts. A musical concept is an abstraction, based upon (or rather, induced from) musical events that show a similarity. Something that is experienced in time is attributed to a class with a name, and in this way becomes an object. This already happens with single tones: on basis of a shared frequency (or its multiplication with $2^n$) musical 'events' are defined as belonging to the class of a specific tone, for instance A-flat. What characterises modern music theory is that the concept (the name) is often treated as more fundamental than the event itself. As Oscar Hammerstein put it humorously in the song *Do-Re-Mi* from the musical *The Sound of Music*: 'When you know the notes to sing, you can sing most anything' – referring to the note *names*.

Similar things happen on many levels and in many areas of music theory: a combination of tones might be identified as a 'pitch class set', a particular musical discourse seen as a 'sonata form'. In harmony classes a succession of chords may be labeled a 'perfect authentic cadence', or an individual

chord may be understood as manifesting a specific tonal function. In all cases, music-as-event is represented by a static entity: a concept. As such, there is nothing wrong with that – it is even inevitable when music is to be talked about. But as in the song from the musical, there is a risk that the concept might start to assume a life of its own. As Theodor Adorno pointed out, concepts tend to 'be taken in isolation'; the mind 'absolutizes what it, itself, makes, thereby tearing it from its context and ceasing to think of it further'.[1252] Adorno called this phenomenon *Verdinglichung*, 'reification'. A musical gesture becomes a *res*, a thing, without the temporal dimension of sounding music. Reification is necessary when we want to speak about music, and at the same time it alienates us from sounding music, from music-as-event.

The problematic side of reification in music already becomes obvious in traditional music theory teaching, but it is directly challenged when the educational goal becomes to create new music – as happens when 'improvisation' is being taught. Teaching grammar to a fluent speaker makes perfect sense, because the grammatical concepts refer to pre-theoretical knowledge of the language. Likewise, a music student who has an active command of a musical language – as might still have been the situation in the nineteenth century – has pre-theoretical knowledge of that musical language. This is fertile soil for the application of theoretical concepts. As I argued before, however, most classical musicians today no longer have this command of the musical languages of the compositions they perform. For them, the concepts that are used in the music theory classes form the beginning, instead of the end of the learning process; in fact the teachers put the cart before the horse. The task of a theory teacher should not be to explain his students what a 'fifth' is – his task should be telling the students that a combination of tones with which they are already familiar is generally *called* a fifth! When this experiential basis is not present, there is no short-cut. Experience must be the basis for concepts; otherwise, concepts will not make sense to the student.

At the risk of asking too much from the metaphor: even internalised grammatical knowledge alone doesn't inspire an orator to a good speech. A musician who improvises in a classical style is not much helped by a theoretical concept as such. Speaking from my own experience, what happens during the process of improvisation is that the concrete inner hearing of progressions and melodic ideas is what occupies the mind, not the abstracted names of concepts. Under the circumstances of a real-time musical performance, which include the metric environment, the phrasing, etc, a specific locus 'pops up' in the imagination – which is an *Erfindungsquelle*, an invitation to concrete musical realisations, the choice of which can be left to the spur of the moment. It is especially in this character of an invitation, a promise, a gesture, that music manifests itself primarily as something on a timeline rather than as a collection of concepts. *Satzmodelle* or schemata also easily become reified concepts

[1252] Quoted in Lewis, J.: *Reification and the Aesthetics of Music.* New York, 2016; 5. Thanks to Henk Borgdorff for mentioning this book to me.

that are supposed to be labelled in scores. But improvising is about music as event. Mastering a musical language above all means becoming really familiar with its constituent loci, and knowing them in many variants – not as new kinds of concepts, but as musical invitations.

### *Acquiring a musical language*

What does this entail for harmony and counterpoint classes? First, it is important to acknowledge that theoretical concepts primarily belong to the field of analysis and reflection. Their function is to make it possible to describe music. When they are based on an experiential understanding, they can be very useful, but their role in the process of creating music is limited. When harmony and counterpoint classes are understood as instrumental in the acquisition of tonal musical languages (and there is good reason to see them in this way), they should also focus on developing practical skills. To achieve this objective, it may well be advisable to connect with (or revive) historical methodologies, some of which are still present in present-day curricula (albeit sometimes in a rudimentary form). Interestingly, such historical approaches have always included the possibility of working extempore. Voice leading, for instance, may be addressed through exercises in figured bass playing and / or writing. A more contrapuntal type of voice leading can be trained through partimento-type exercises in which a complete 'piece' is represented in a bass line with or without figures. Harmonising an unfigured bass already brings in the element of chord choice and trains the student to recognise familiar patterns. Generally, working with harmonic loci communes as they have been described in this thesis is an excellent means for combining all these aspects. A Romanesca, for instance, may be used as an 'invitation' to create endless variants with respect to voice leading, chord inversions, melodic voices, metre, rhythm, texture and phrasing. With regard to singers and players of monodic instruments, it will be useful to present such a harmonic locus by auditory means, for instance in the form of a recording on which the model is played repeatedly. In the appendix, examples of such recordings will be shown.[1253] For keyboardists, a generic form of notation (a figured bass, for instance) may be appropriate, too.

Harmonising a melody poses an especially big challenge to the student with respect to chord choice, because the simpler and more diatonic a melody is, the more harmonic possibilities it offers. Developing fluency in melody harmonisation is usually a long and intensive learning process: it takes a lot of experience to see the different harmonic options a melody offers. In my experience, this skill is based on familiarity with harmonic loci. Mistakes in melody harmonisation (besides voice leading mistakes) can often be reduced to a lack of experience with harmonic loci. This happens, for instance,

[1253] In *Upon a Ground*, Martin Erhardt chooses for a similar approach by including two play-along CDs with recordings of the ostinato basses that are discussed in the text. Erhardt, M.: *Upon a Ground.* Magdeburg, 2013.

when a chord progression is not 'right', or when the choice of chords, in combination with the given melody, leads to poor voice leading.

A more traditional, concept-driven approach would in such cases perhaps draw on analytical concepts such as Riemannian harmonic functions to arrive at a good 'solution', but I argue that it is more historical and more in line with the idea of music-as-event to focus on harmonic loci. This is precisely what happened in the 'partimento-tradition', and it is satisfying that this approach has already found its way to some modern harmony books.[1254] The institution where I hold an appointment, the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, implemented a 'practical turn' in music theory subjects in 2014. With respect to harmony, counterpoint and ear training, this entails a strong emphasis on extempore music-making in which the principal instrument of the students (in the case of singers, their voice) is involved; melodic and harmonic formulas play a key role here. Ear training is a rich and important topic that far exceeds the limits of this study. Concerning what has been discussed above, I would just like to mention that a practical approach to music theory continuously makes an appeal to the inner hearing. It seems to be a shared experience worldwide that students enter conservatories with less and less preparation in the field of ear training, and singers and players of monodic instruments with only rudimentary keyboard skills are also rather common. Of all the abilities a musician needs, a well-developed inner ear may be the most important one; for this reason alone, a practical approach to theory subjects seems to be a good idea.

It would be interesting to know whether such an improvisatory focus in theoretical subjects in fact leads towards an active command of tonal musical languages. A full-fledged investigation of this question warrants separate research, but some informal findings have emerged regarding the aforementioned curricular changes at the Royal Conservatoire. On the one hand, many students do indeed develop a noticeable musical fluency. The exercise that was shown in chapter 2.2, for instance, can serve as an indicator; it turns out that students who are several semesters into our new curriculum definitely show an increased ease in finding their way in such duo improvisations.[1255] On the other hand, there seems to remain a rift between the students' involvement with tonal language as described above and what happens in their principal subject lessons (that is, their private studio lessons). As long as no appeal to an active musical command is made in those lessons, it will remain an isolated skill. In addition, the extent to which students 'live' a particular musical language (e.g., of the nineteenth century) is of importance: real fluency in any language usually requires at least a period of

[1254] For instance: IJzerman, J.: *Harmony, Counterpoint, Partimento: A New Method inspired by Old Masters.* New York, 2018.

[1255] For another example of this exercise, → https://youtu.be/h-PfzCvYR9A (the violinist is not a student of the Royal Conservatoire). Especially the category 'Tonal / Classical' on the Metricimpro.eu website offers more exercises that are in line with the approach that was chosen in The Hague, particularly those shown by my colleague Karst de Jong and by David Dolan (GSMD, London).

total immersion. Such an immersion is most effective when it occurs at a young age. This draws attention to the importance of the training of young musicians before they enter the conservatory. In an ideal world, this would be the stage at which musicians acquire an active command of musical languages. Since today's conservatory students are the teachers of tomorrow, the best way to achieve this future seems to be by addressing this group of young professionals.

The idea of a total immersion in historical musical languages is not without problems, though. First, students sometimes tend to see their classical music studies as 'work', and prefer to enjoy very different musical styles (pop music, for instance) to relax in their leisure time. Though they are obviously free to do so, this will make it more difficult to meet the condition of total immersion in the language they want to learn. Second, much more than their nineteenth-century counterparts, today's classical musicians usually perform in a multitude of musical languages (→ chapter 4.6). To be sure, people may master multiple languages (verbal or musical), but after a particular age, most people seem to benefit from focusing on one language at a time during the learning process. Unfortunately, such an approach differs from the way in which a classical musician is usually trained; especially when the development of technique happens primarily by means of the compositions that are being studied, the technical difficulty of the study repertoire will be the main criterion for selection, rather than the stylistic field. Third, one might wonder how students should get immersed in a musical world that is no longer around them. I argue, however, that the inevitable time distance is no reason to see this as a hopeless endeavour. Experiences with 'Living Latin' show that even a 'dead' verbal language can be learnt (I will return to this at the end of the following section). What counts, I believe, is an attitude of unconditional dedication on the side of the student – but that applies to any artistic practice.

### *Concatenationism*

In the preceding paragraphs, I have outlined some ways in which music theory could become a more 'generative' subject, i.e., oriented towards musical 'making'.[1256] I have mentioned the importance of style study and, related to that, the identification of loci communes. Moreover, the question of how music theory may contribute to an active command of musical languages has been discussed. So far, I have emphasised the more general aspects of music: style, genre, musical languages at large, and indeed, I think that these areas deserve more attention than they generally receive in music theory classes. However, it cannot be denied that classical musicians nowadays spend most of their time working on individual compositions; in chapters 4 and 5, I argued for an expansion of the study time that is spent on generic technique, but even if such advice were to be followed, that would not change the central position classical scores have in the world of a musician. In part 2 of this dissertation, I

[1256] Cf. Kofi Agawu's concept of 'generative analysis'. Agawu, K.: *Music as Discourse.* New York, 2009; 122.

have stressed the importance of recognising loci communes in scores; in part 3, I have shown how the same loci function as a guidance for the improviser. As such, this still implies a focus on general aspects of music. But an individual composition, as well as an improvised performance, is more than just a collection of 'commonplaces'; even a piece from before the period of 'composer-centredness' still has an individuality, and this individuality matters to a performer.

How, then, to address this notion of individuality? Is this where we still need traditional music analysis, even though I argued that this should in many cases be seen in a more limited way, as merely an analysis of scores? I think that the way improvising has been analysed in this study might be useful in this respect. Especially in part 3, I have shown how improvisers may be guided by loci communes, not by abstractions in the form of a concepts. It is the imagination ('inner hearing') of melodic and harmonic gestures, musical 'bits' that are to some degree predictable, that drives the musical process. An improviser decides in a split second which locus to follow, and how. This is a 'local' affair: the player is not planning minutes ahead; rather, the short-term memory of what happened immediately before, and the imagination or expectation of the musical gesture that might follow, surround the present moment.

This recalls the listening experience that the philosopher Jerrold Levinson calls 'quasi-hearing' in his book *Music in the Moment.* In Levinson's words:

> No conscious effort is required to keep music that has just sounded, or is about to sound, before the mind; rather, an aural surrounding to the notes then sounding constitutes itself automatically, for a prepared listener. It is useful to have a term for this sort of vivid apprehension of a musical unit, which goes beyond what is strictly heard, but stops well short of merely intellectual contemplation of a recollected event. An appropriate term for this sort of perceptual experience, I suggest, is "quasi-hearing".[1257]

Building on ideas of the psychologist and musician Edmund Gurney, Levinson argues that a listener experiences and understands music essentially from moment to moment, as a succession of events, a view that he terms 'concatenationism'. Levinson criticises the contrasting 'architectonical' view that suggests that large-scale relations within a composition need to be conceptualised before a listener can understand the music at all. I would like to add that this equally applies to the Schenkerian notion of 'long-distance listening' (*Fernhören*).[1258]

It is very interesting that Levinson's view on musical hearing matches so well with what happens when somebody improvises music. It seems not far-fetched to equate Levinson's 'architectonicism' with the principally reified type of analysis that I called 'score analysis'. The idea of concatenationism rather focuses on music-as-event. It is in music-as-event that the experiences of a listener and an

[1257] Levinson, J.: *Music in the Moment.* Ithaca, 1997; 15.
[1258] Cf. Meyer, L.B.: *Emotion and Meaning in Music.* Chicago, 1956; 52-54.

improviser meet, and there is a deep truth in this. Shouldn't a good performer always be a listener to himself? Recalling Gadamer's 'bad actor' (→ chapter 2.3): is it not true that a bad performer gives his audience the feeling that (unlike the listener) he already knows what will come next, and how the story will end? A good performer identifies with the listener, as it were, maybe even to the point of half believing that he really does not know how the story will end.[1259] Analysing music-as-event means taking seriously the point of view of the listener – because that is what a good performer does as well.

The idea of concatenationism emphasises the role of the musical narrative, and therefore correlates with the notion of musical rhetoric. In the history of music analysis, this is not at all a new direction, though it may be a relatively underexposed one. This thesis shows an affinity to such a rhetorical approach to music analysis; a few representatives of this direction will be mentioned here. An early example of an analyst who consciously treated music as narration is Donald Francis Tovey. His *Essays in Musical Analysis* (1935) originated as programme notes, and indeed focused on the experience of the concert-going public. More recently, Mark Evan Bonds explored the language analogy in *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (1991), focusing on music from the Viennese Classical period. Kofi Agawu also takes the 'linguistic nature' of music as a vantage point in *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (2009). Generally speaking, a rhetorical understanding of music connects with the metaphor of the musician as an orator. It shows that what is usually called musical logic does not (necessarily) result from a well-designed master plan. It often rather stems from a musical narrative based on the concatenation of musical ideas, just like an improvising orator who may connect with what he has said earlier without having designed the whole structure of his speech beforehand.

The most extreme position one might adopt to avoid reification is probably to not use language at all. This is what the Austrian-British musician Hans Keller did when he developed his method of 'wordless functional analysis' in the 1950's. Keller applied his method in a series of BBC broadcasts, in which he clarified music by using music itself, showing motivic and thematic connections by actually playing them, which resulted in a kind of dialogue between the performance of a piece and Keller's 'analytical interludes'. Though Keller's analyses were in line with the motivic analysis of Rudolph Réti, rather than with the rhetorical approach mentioned above, the very concept of 'music about music' may have a potential that by far exceeds his purpose of showing motivic connections within a composition.

It is here that the parallel with the Living Latin movement (→ chapter 1.3) is especially helpful. The innovative Latin textbook of Hans Ørberg, *Lingua Latina per se illustrata*, is based upon the principle of the 'natural approach' of language teaching. In this approach, all communication takes

[1259] Obviously, the listeners may already be familiar with a piece as well; even for them, however, a gripping performance may create the illusion of a first-time experience.

place entirely in the language being learned: Ørberg's book only contains Latin text. Starting from a small core of easily recognisable words and syntactic constructions, each new word or construction is explained by its context, gradually developing into a comprehensive understanding of the language. This is a principle that can be translated to music. At my home institution, a subject with the name 'Aural Skills & Improvisation' addresses ear training and inner hearing in a practical way, namely by continuously using the student's own instrument or voice. This set-up makes it possible to have lessons in which there is very little verbal explanation, but in which communication takes place through music: by repeating what someone else has played, by varying upon it, transposing, commenting: in a ceaseless musical flow of 'music about music', students enlarge their command of a musical language. Instead of conceptualising musical sentence building, for instance, the students gain experiential and embodied knowledge of this phenomenon. An important element in these classes is playing or singing over harmonic loci such as the Romanesca or the Monte sequence. The idea is not that this approach replaces more reified forms of analysis, but that it should come prior to it: in this regard, it is quite similar to the idea of the 'natural approach' to learning a language.

***Epilogue***

In this dissertation, I have avoided the detailed description of present-day study programmes and the rigourous evaluation of results with students. In my experience, the differences between students are so huge that it is very hazardous to generalise; an assignment that tends to be too difficult for students at one institute, may cause much less problems at another school – and vice versa. A representative discussion of study programmes would therefore necessarily be an elaborate one; including it in this study would completely change its character. As I wrote in chapter 1.3, this thesis is not intended as a method either. In my view, neither students nor teachers at a conservatory level need ready-made methods; a Socratic approach to teaching is much preferred, in which the conversation between teacher and different students will be unique every time, depending on a student's background, talent and personality. Much more useful is a body of 'raw material' to work with, items that can be used for many purposes. A figured bass, for instance, may be used as an assignment for a written realisation, but it can also be realised directly at the keyboard (with or without preparation), it can be used as a transposition exercise, it may serve as a basis for a richer texture including an independent upper voice, it may be extended to a larger composition, and so forth. Selecting appropriate material, and especially finding applications that are useful for a particular student, appeals to a teacher's creativity.

When the goal is to explore facets of a musical world of almost two hundred years ago, such as in this thesis, and to apply such insights in one's musical practice, there is really no better way than to return to the original sources time and again. They will have to be read and assessed anew by every musician, since each generation will find in them what it feels attracted to. There is nothing worse

than a textbook that pretends to distill a quasi-eternal truth from historical material, thus smothering the dialogue between musician and source.

Therefore, the goal of this study has been to provide a view on the notion of 'improvisatoriness' in nineteenth-century music, to show sources, and to find ways to make them applicable today. The overarching objective is to make a case for classical music becoming more improvisatory in general. This thesis consciously restricts itself to offering a perspective, a travel guide for this vast 'familiar and yet unknown territory', as I called it in chapter 1.1. It does not presume to tell anybody what to do, but it provides 'stepping stones' that may facilitate fellow musicians' own discoveries. It is my hope that this study transmits some of my own enthusiasm for this topic, which has only grown over the period I have been working on it.