Artistic practices of historical sound: memory, imagination, and mimesis in contemporary composition and historical performance
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Memory, Imagination, and Mimesis in Contemporary Composition and Historical Performance

Carlo Diaz

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Acknowledgements

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1_Two Icons of Cartesian Musical Practice

Introduction

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Imagine two ideal forms of musician. One is an omniscient historian, the other an omnipotent artist. This imagined historian has all possible information about all actual musical practice throughout all of eternity. They travel freely through time to experience historical sound in full animation and detail, they discuss theory and technique for long hours with well-respected musicians of the past, and they return periodically to the present to imitate what they heard and learned for the benefit of their peers—they sound *the past as it actually was*. The imagined artist, meanwhile, knows all forms and interpretations of all music ever made, and is boundlessly skilled at evading mere imitation of these extant sound worlds. Their music springs forth fully formed from their soul, which is itself born of its own proprietary essence. Every action they take as an artist is purely original, and they grace those of us trapped in the present with *the future as what has never been done before*.

In Christian mysticism, such portraits of an unattainable form of humanity in the image of Christ serve as rhetorical devices for the faithful. Though the perfection portrayed is impossible for any individual to achieve, it provides a model that one *attempts* to emulate, hoping to move *toward* the salvation such divinity promises. Similarly, my imagined perfections of historical and artistic musicianship present similar practical impossibilities and similar objects of idolatry for practicing musicians and scholars today. No historian can travel back in time and no artist can make something from nothing. Yet historians so often nevertheless *strive* to represent the past in perfect and complete detail; to be neutral assemblers of true historical facts and authentic historical objects into simulacra of actuality. And composers so often nevertheless *strive* to make music like it has never been made before; to conjure a music that is unique to themselves and unique among other music. Some might suggest that these categories are *good enough* to be used and *useful enough* to be considered good, and that there are many other criteria by which music can be evaluated and many other reasons for which it's made. This is

considered, in some interpretations, the settled result of the fierce critiques each faced in the 1980s from, most famously, Richard Taruskin on historical performance, and Rosalind Krauss on contemporary art.

But I'm not interested in advocating this sort of impotent striving toward unattainable ideals. Instead, I'd like to pair them together toward a quite different purpose. Viewed together, these dual icons can instead be seen to generate an intriguing paradox. If music can be neither fully original nor perfectly historical, does that mean it's always some combination of these two, or somewhere in between? What form do these myths take today, and what types of documents, cultures, and aesthetics do they quietly render invisible, impossible, impractical, or even unthinkable to this day? Or, better yet, what types of practice might emerge if a musician can escape this binary segregating invention from mimesis?

In this dissertation, I extend this question from fairly specific re-evaluations of the scholarly integrity of certain practices—such as the speculative representation of musical pasts about which only the most barren traces remain—to broader, more meandering explorations of wholly theoretical realms—such as whether and how one might rebuild value systems for musical practice around a framework or frameworks *other than* an invention-mimesis binary. Naturally, this work draws on a multitude of existing theoretical writings and artistic practices. Critical theory has a strong presence, particularly in its forms of postcolonial and anticolonial historiography from authors such as Ann Laura Stoler, and broader emancipatory political projects from others such as Bernard Harcourt. But also important are the deeper foundations of the field as a reconsideration of and challenge to extant hegemonies of power, knowledge, interpretation, and identity, as for example in the writing of Michel Foucault. Postmodern historical theory and art theory are also important resources, representing initial attempts by their participating scholars to disentangle their respective fields from universals of historicity and originality. In historical theory, the long published exchange between Hayden White and Paul Ricoeur over many decades, as well as among specialists of music historiography such as Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and Richard Taruskin, offer crucial exposition and initial reckoning with the epistemological, ontological, and narrative difficulties of the standalone historical discipline since its 19th-century inception. Likewise, art theoretical writings from Stephen Wright alongside compositional philosophies of John Cage and Brian Ferneyhough provide essential insights into the entanglements of artistic practice with what I understand to be specifically *capitalist* modes of production and reproduction, commodification and optimization, and

standardization and museumification. I also draw on many artistic researchers for both foundational disciplinary thought as regards epistemology and methodology in theory and practice, and for specific reference points as regards ideas of historicity and creativity in contemporary music.

Woven through the conceptual work introduced above is my own artistic practice, which at present consists of seeking out, collecting, assembling, and in various ways processing extant historical manuscripts into scores and performances that frustrate and/or supersede classification as either historical or contemporary. These can be anything from the lightest of performance notes on a historical score such that it's unclear whether any composing has been done at all—play Vivaldi three times faster than possible—to the densest of compositional collages of disparate music such that hardly any of the source material's identity remains—play twelve late-Romantic orchestral climaxes simultaneously. And the performative approach is as much part of the question as the compositional/notational remit. In the case of my 2022 album *The Aviary*, which I use as a case study throughout this dissertation, I founded what I called an experimental baroque orchestra—Stile Nu—specifically to attempt these wild types of interpretive exploration. Allowing much further leeway than a typical ensemble of 'historically-informed performers' on historical replica instruments, Stile Nu allowed for a very hands-on, improvisational approach to my theoretical questions about historical epistemology and music ontology, firmly situated in the acoustic realm. This work has been as much an engagement with and critique of ensembles of historical performance as of contemporary composers and performers. Part of the practical and theoretical framework at which I've arrived through my writing about and making of this work involves explicitly drawing from historically disparate reference points in one and the same artistic action. As such, the performances of Stile Nu draw as much on contemporary composer(-performer)s such as Ferneyhough, Merzbow, Heiner Goebbels, and Richard Ayres, and contemporary artists such as William Kentridge and Jean Tinguely, as on the work of Early Music ensembles including the Freiburger Barockorchester, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Dufay Collective, ACRONYM Ensemble, and many others. The simultaneous distance and closeness across these (assertedly) 'new' and 'old' practices is a characteristic of the essential paradox introduced above, and one that has been hugely productive toward my own ability to generate complex and invigorating music, regardless of its intellectual claims.

The structure of the text is as follows. Chapter One casts the problem area of this dissertation—a bifurcation of historicity and creativity in music—as part of a broader set of dualisms initiated by the philosophy of René Descartes [1596–1650] before introducing examples from my own practice that complicate these dualisms. Chapter Two presents an overall research question and begins to unfold many of its underlying theoretical influences, while at the same time serving itself as a further practical experiment intended to complicate a dualistic relationship between authorship and quotation. Chapter Three investigates how my research question may in part find answers in the discipline of *rhetoric*; it begins with an early 18th-century refutation of Descartes by the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico [1668–1744] before presenting several theoretical and practical examples spanning the long 20th century that in diverse ways suggest a relationship to Vico's defense of rhetoric. In Chapter Four, I perform similar operations a bit closer to home, looking at the possibilities for contemporary practices dealing with historical music to benefit from work within the much younger discipline of critical theory, which I see as very closely related to if not a direct outgrowth of rhetoric. This discussion produces the impetus to look closely at historical fragments of music notation, which play a major role in much of the practical work I present in this dissertation, as a kind of off-ramp from both the ability and the desire to make a hard distinction between historical and creative practices in music. In Chapter Five, I return to Vico for an overview of his most well-known work, the third edition of *The New Science* [1744], in which he presents what can be understood as a detailed methodology and theory for historiographical pursuits in which the subject matter is significantly obscured either by great temporal distance or by a severe shortage of documentary evidence. Though this work of Vico's is quite bizarre in many ways, a number of useful lessons can nevertheless be drawn from his text for developing a new theoretical paradigm to accompany my practical experiments with historical fragments of music notation. Finally, in Chapter Six, I present an extended case study from this new practice of mine, in this case based upon selections from the large but often fairly opaque personal music collection of the English poet, musician, and naturalist John Freeman Milward Dovaston [1782-1854], in an attempt to synthesize and further apply the diverse lines of argumentation developed through the preceding chapters.

The overall project here is one that might be considered a somewhat idiosyncratic critique limited to a fairly small subset of musical practice. And on the surface it is indeed pointed very specifically at the

respective roles of historical performance and contemporary composition within institutions of classical music. But there's a deeper level of concept work at play here that I believe to be of vital importance to musical, artistic, and historical practices writ large, and possibly even to more deeply-seated cultural systems of value and of knowledge. At its core, the relationship between impossible replication and impossible originality is for me emblematic of more fundamental questions about what it means to make or to use, to own or to borrow, to participate or to control, to be or to perform as. How one makes these distinctions, or perhaps sometimes refuses to make them, is what sits beneath so many of the vexing social, political, and economic issues of the present moment. A project of artistic research such as this one, distantly sequestered as it is from the more controversial or sensitive aspects of these problems, has the potential to serve as an essential space of experimentation towards alternative core modes of knowledge and systems of value that may later fold back into a broader cultural network to yield unexpected solutions further afield.

The impossibilities of replication and originality introduced above will serve as recurring touchpoints for this work. Like Christian icons, these images are taken to be perfect ideals of the fields they depict, unattainable in reality yet also nevertheless models for and justifications of real contemporary practices. I start with idealized forms of these fields not because I think anyone actually believes they're achievable, but because they may nevertheless still serve as inconspicuous or instinctive guides to local decision-making on the part of performers and composers as well as their many administrative and intellectual interlocutors. My instinct upon starting this research was that there is something amiss in a great many practices of historical performance and contemporary composition that will never be solved by merely further and further optimizing their current, ideal-seeking forms. The problems exist at the level of their foundational theory, and so must be addressed—at least in part—at that same level. By re-evaluating and perhaps re-structuring these foundations, we may find another path.

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Alongside this dual idolatry, another constant point of reference will be a concept that is, ironically, often understood as quite antithetical to a Christian worldview: the *cogito* of René Descartes and the

intellectual methodology he builds upon it. The *cogito* is the thinking self, understood as the only thing that can be known with certainty to exist. To derive this concept, in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* [1641], Descartes first calls *everything* into question:

> Anything which admits of the slightest doubt I will set aside just as if I had found it to be wholly false; and I will proceed in this way until I recognize something certain, or, if nothing else, until I at least recognize for certain that there is no certainty. [...] I will believe that my memory tells me lies, and that none of the things that it reports ever happened. I have no senses. Body, shape, extension, movement and place are chimeras. So what remains true?[1]

Because he has experienced moments wherein formerly held beliefs were proven to be incorrect by some phenomenon of happenstance—he believes himself to be walking through town only to wake up and find that he was actually in bed dreaming—he tries to identify everything he associates with his own selfhood and then to separate out those that are certain from those that are uncertain. He identifies the body, the senses, the imagination, emotions, judgment, and reasoning. One by one, each of these human attributes is questioned and found to be of uncertain existence or reality, except for the last. The thinking mind alone is identified as the only characteristic of humanity certain to be real.

> Thought [...] alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist—that is certain. [...] I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason [...] I am not that structure of limbs which is called a human body. I am not even some thin vapour which permeates the limbs—a wind, fire, air, breath, or whatever I depict in my imagination; for these are things which I have supposed to be nothing. Let this supposition stand; for all that I am still something.[2]

Though any idea gained through perception can be called into doubt—for example, one might be dreaming rather than awake—the fact of one's thoughtful existence is certain. One may not know for certain about any correspondence between one's thoughts, imaginings, or perceptions and the 'real' world

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[1] René Descartes, trans. John Cottingham, *Meditations on First Philosophy* [first published 1641] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35.

[2] Ibid., 37.

outside oneself, but one can always be certain that one does indeed think, imagine, or perceive those things.

If one values and seeks out understanding of the 'real,' as Descartes does, this leads to an intellectual method wherein more and more complex understandings of reality must be built up only from this mere fact that one thinks, perceives, and imagines; not of any objects of those thoughts, perceptions, or imaginings in themselves. Basic arithmetic provides an easy example.

> [P]hysics, astronomy, medicine, and all other disciplines which depend on the study of composite things, are doubtful; while arithmetic, geometry and other subjects of this kind, which deal only with the simplest and most general things, regardless of whether they really exist in nature or not, contain something certain and indubitable. For whether I am awake or asleep, two and three added together are five, and a square has no more than four sides.[3]

One can determine laws of addition and subtraction by grouping together and moving around any number of like objects. And one will find these laws to be immutable—*always* true—regardless of whether those objects 'actually' exist. No matter what object one subjects to the procedures of addition and subtraction, the results of their calculations will always follow those same laws. They are true independent of the veracity of our perceptions of the physical world, which Descartes will always call into question. From here, one can deduce further mathematical laws. From the laws of addition and subtraction, which can be learned by manipulating physical objects in a corporeal world, one can figure out the laws of multiplication and division, which are often much more opaque in terms of their relationship to physical phenomena. And so on and so forth.

This type of logical, objectivist move lies at the heart of modern science, and many humanists and social scientists adopt it within their own research practices to produce a similar sense of authority in their own work. I have no desire to disparage scientific inquiry at large, as building up complex ideas from immutably true statements and isolated repeatable phenomena is essential to establishing dependable understanding of a great many aspects of the natural world. But I will suggest that this approach is not necessarily effective within inquiry that takes human culture as its object, and should therefore not be

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[3] Ibid., 27.

applied to certain types of practice. Music is one such practice. Cartesian reasoning is founded upon the idea that greater truth is produced in an observation by eliminating perceptual idiosyncrasies on the part of the observer. Perception is vulnerable to illusion, so to discover a universal truth one must therefore eliminate reliance on perception. But what is music about if not these exact vagaries of perception? Knowledge of and knowledge within music are manifestly different than the type of knowledge foregrounded in scientific research. One *must* engage perception to study music—unstable as it may be.

Descartes himself leaves a door open to the possibility of a kind of *science of perception* in the initial pages of his *Meditations*. In describing how he can't trust that his perception corresponds to reality, he accepts as true the mere fact that he perceives what he perceives.

> [E]ven if, as I have supposed, none of the objects of imagination are real, the power of imagination is something which really exists and is part of my thinking. [It is] the same 'I' who has sensory perceptions, or is aware of bodily things as it were through the senses. For example, I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat. But I am asleep, so all this is false. Yet I certainly *seem* to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false; what is called 'having a sensory perception' is strictly just this, and in this restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking.[4]

This acceptance of his perception as part of his true existence is just as full as his acceptance of his thinking as part of his true existence. But he does not follow this acceptance of his perception much further, choosing instead to explore the correspondence between his thinking and the immutably true outside of himself. The problem arises in regard to the correspondence of this thought or perception to an outside reality that is true independent of him. Conceivably, he could learn as much about himself by studying his perception as he could about the 'real' outside world by studying his thought. He decides to follow his thought, then, because he *values* this outside more highly than himself.

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[4] Ibid., 41.

In studying historical music, especially of the 19ᵗʰ century and previous, it is always the case that one lacks the full picture. If one wishes to *play* such music, this becomes a problem. Can I play a pitch without an articulation? Can I perform a harmonic progression without it acquiring a rhythm? The problem of historical theory in musical performance is not about *if* these gaps in knowledge are filled but *how*.

It's tempting in such situations to simply separate out what is known from what is not known and use combinations of the former to triangulate plausibilities for the latter. As I understand it, this is common practice in both historical performance and mainstream classical music, and I'd consider it to be generally Cartesian as follows. In looking at notation, one can separate out the correct notes from the errors by amassing many different copies of the same notation and weeding out the idiosyncrasies. In developing an interpretation of that notation, one can study several treatises on ornamentation contemporaneous to the notation in question, find the closest correlation to the marking and context at hand, and combine the two in practice. And so forth through every aspect of interpretive decision making. This approach is believed to dissociate the will or identity of the artist-historian practitioner from the known-authentic historical artifacts they study—scores, books, instruments, and so on. It compiles novel assertions only from known-true premises on the assumption that this authority transitively passes from the former to the latter. Even in methods nominally critical of this steadfastly objectivist approach, such as that of James Grier in the editing of music or of John Butt in performative interpretation—among many others—the basic principles remain unchallenged that one must look at sources objectively and arrive at decisions logically with the composer's intentions as the principle motivating concern.[5] The editor's or performer's self is only valued in such a practice insofar as it is understood to inevitably somehow colour one's idea of the original authorial intent of the historical object of study. This approach is certainly useful, but it has dangerous blind spots, and it precludes the possibility of many potentially vibrant and meaningful musical practices.

Firstly, we must ask ourselves what we're trying to achieve and why. Do we actually care how a composer expected their music to be played? Do we actually want our musical practice to be historical? Even the mere fact that the answer to these questions is overwhelmingly assumed to be 'yes' without a

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[5] James Grier, *The Critical Editing of Music: History, Method, and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

moment of reflection is reason enough to investigate. Is it not one of the most vital and foundational principles of academic research to challenge one's most basic assumptions? And beyond this, I can share that sometimes answering 'no' has given me some of the most artistically, aesthetically, and even spiritually gratifying experiences of my life. Besides which, what happens when the composer's intentions and the historical reality are contradictory? Are we loyal to the past in itself or to a past idea of a future never realized? For the purpose of this chapter, I'll stop this first line of contestation here, allowing it to serve merely as a disclaimer that a musician need not be obedient to historical precedent if they don't want to be. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has written about this at length in his recent book, *Challenging Performance*.[6]

If we do decide at this juncture to proceed on the historical route, there is a second issue to consider. I'll begin with two observations. The first is from John Locke [1632–1704], *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [1689]:

> [T]he ideas we receive by sensation are often in grown people altered by the judgment without our taking notice of it. When we set before our eyes a round globe of any uniform colour, e.g., gold, alabaster, or jet, it is certain that the idea thereby imprinted in our mind is of a flat circle variously shadowed, with several degrees of light and brightness coming to our eyes. But we having by use been accustomed to perceive what kind of appearance convex bodies are wont to make in us, what alterations are made in the reflections of light by the difference of the sensible figures of bodies, the judgment presently, by an habitual custom, alters the appearances into their causes: so that, from that which truly is variety of shadow or colour collecting the figure, it makes it pass for a mark of figure, and frames to itself the perception of a convex figure and an uniform colour; when the idea we receive from thence is only a plane variously coloured, as is evident in painting.[7]

The second is from Maurice Merleau-Ponty [1908–1961], *Phenomenology of Perception* [1945]:

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[6] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them*. 2020, version 2.14 (17.vi.22), accessed 22 June 2023, https://challengingperformance.com/the-book.

[7] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [first published 1689] (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995; originally published ca. 1689), 93-4.

The background continues beneath the figure, is seen beneath the figure even though it is covered over by it. This phenomenon (which encompasses the entire problem of the presence of the object) is itself also concealed by empiricist philosophy, which treats this part of the background as invisible in accordance with a physiological definition of vision and reduces it to the status of a simple sensible quality by supposing that it is presented through an image, that is, through a weakened sensation. More generally, real objects that do not make up part of our visual field can only be present to us through images, and this is why objects are nothing but the 'permanent possibilities of sensations.' If we abandon the empiricist premise that prioritizes the content of perception, we are free to acknowledge the strange mode of existence of the object behind us.[8]

Writing 256 years apart, Locke during a period that many historians and performers of music passionately study, Merleau-Ponty at a moment when those disciplines of historical performance and musicology were crystallizing into the forms we recognize today, both arrived at a similar conclusion when it comes to our most basic perception of the outside world, historical artifacts included. In short, we cannot see, hear, taste, smell, or feel except through our *whole* selves—memories, instincts, habits, desires, aspirations, and all. Thus we do not merely analyse historical artifacts in themselves but co-create *with* them their meaning, their historicity, and even their bare physical shape every time we take a new look. Music is not possible without the self.

Now consider the following:

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[8] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, trans. Donald A. Landes, *Phenomenology of Perception* [first published 1945] (New York: Routledge, 2012; originally published 1945), 26.
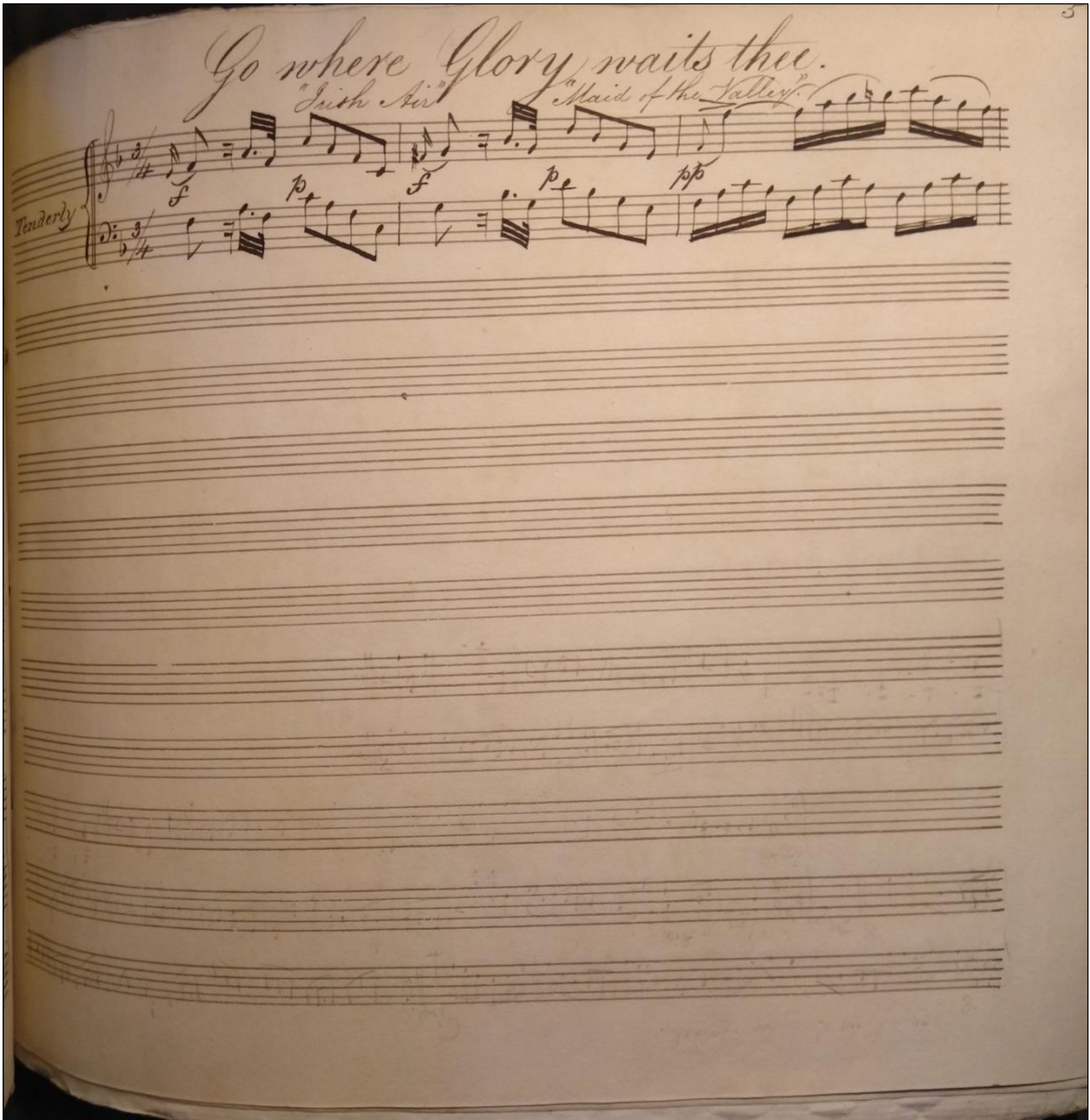
Figure 1.1: A page from "…a very choice and excellent bundle of many beautiful & genuine compositions,"
compiled by John F. M. Dovaston (West Felton, England, ca. 1805), showing a page with three measures
of music titled "Go where Glory waits thee;" Add. MS 63818, British Library, London.[9]

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[9] A song with the title "Go where Glory waits thee" appears in printed collections of Irish music as early as 1796 (Edward Bunting, *General Collection of Ancient Music of Ireland*, 1796, no. 47, 26), but each of these examples appears to be of an entirely different arrangement than this one.

Anyone who is musically literate will feel an absence here; a sense of something missing. But why? Just because there isn't a fourth bar? This isn't specific enough. There also isn't a pencil sketch of a bird, but no one feels *its* absence here. So why do we want a fourth bar?

The omniscient historian knows what was supposed to come next. We, on the other hand, only have a sense of memory in which is stored countless examples of three measures in a row followed by a fourth and a fifth and beyond, but few or no examples of three measures standing alone. And anyone who is musically literate will see that this notation, which memory also demonstrates to be within a particular musical style, has at its end something that is not a cadence; not an ending. It also appears within a volume containing other notation, some complete, some incomplete, giving a sense of what style or styles the scribe tended to write down. This volume also sits within an archive that presents a certain amount of information about it, and wherein it is grouped in various ways with other volumes considered by the archivists to be similar. Upon seeing this very small thing, this single piece of paper with ink on it, a whole world of anticipation is produced.

Just as our eyes cross past the threshold of the final notes, we see or perhaps even hear phantasms of music that isn't there, and we are thrust into an acute awareness of the fact that we had actually been perceiving, remembering, and imagining simultaneously the whole time. For a historian of music, the example above is a particularly vexing one. And there are certainly many other pages—in this volume and others—that one can look at which don't present such a glaring impossibility as this one. But I choose it to illustrate a point about our perception of music notation that does indeed extend even to complete pieces, though it may well be less apparent at first. When looking at a complete piece of music—all parts accounted for, every measure from beginning to end filled in, relatively few possible errors of transcription, and so on—it is easy to fool oneself into believing that we only see what is objectively on the page. In considering the *vast* amount of currently extant historical notation that is *not* presented in the form of complete pieces, as in the example above, the illusion is suddenly revealed.

Additionally, this example is only an introductory accompaniment with no clear similarity to melodic patterns present in the tune published by Bunting or others.

Over the past few years, I have been developing a musical practice that investigates the boundaries of this phenomenon by collecting and manipulating fragmentary and anonymous musical notation—primarily archival materials committed to paper during the mid-18th century in England.[10]

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In the track "Three," on *The Aviary*, an album I made with Stile Nu in 2022 using the above notational fragment among many others, there are three moments when the ensemble lifts away into silence and a single voice remains, fixed in arpeggiation for several seconds:

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[10] I mean this literally. In other words, I specifically mean to include music composed by individuals not resident in England but whose compositions circulated within England.

Figure 1.2: Measures 72–85 of the score used for "Three," from *The Aviary* (2022). For a recording, see
https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary; the excerpt shown here begins at 01:33 of the track called "Three."

As six of seven musicians lift away, a sense of propulsion can be felt. The idiom of the music just preceding this lift might conjure an expectation of its imminent return. A dancer leaping into the air on an upbeat is just as briskly impelled by nature back to the ground on the downbeat. Such a leap and

return is for this reason idiomatic to dance. The leap of a dancer is a metrical figure—a fourth beat produces a first. Yet what is meter but a name for the type of movement each of us learns from the ways in which we are embodied—the cycle of breathing or the momentum of walking? If such an idiom is anywhere to be heard in this music, such balance, completion, and perhaps symmetry—a return of the dancer to the ground—is surely to be expected upon this lift. So for the first fraction of a second as six of seven musicians lift away an imminent return might be expected. In this first instant it is a leap to be followed by return.

What does it feel like when this doesn't then happen? A ball is thrown up into the air and then nothing. It moves upward and that's it, only upward. The seventh musician began this first measure of their arpeggiation as an idiomatic leap into the air that should certainly bring them promptly back to the ground but then does not. Their colloquial gesture of giving a sense of breathing room to the busy saturation of the full ensemble is transformed into something else in the space of that instant where the ball thrown into the air does not slow down and change direction. The aesthetic paradigm cracks, temporality fails to render, the bodily space of the music starts to dematerialize, a mode of listening that may well have served understanding earlier is denied validation. A listener might be stretched in this moment.

Stretched into what? Before I can speak of the endpoint of this transformation I should speak of the transform*ing* itself—the possibility, the rupture, the uncertainty, the grasping for—even if no one can definitively say what it might be like for others. Perhaps mere humanity impels one to grasp for an explanation, but it's one particular background and context as an individual that determines what exactly that explanation looks like. For me, the corporeal experience of dance triggered by the idiom of the music thus far is carried forward into a fantastical form of itself, transcendent of the dancer's physical capability as mass: leap continues on into flight. A feeling of weightlessness emerges. I find myself to be suddenly weightless in the ether. The dancer flies away from their historical idiom. There's an exhilaration to this.

But perhaps it might also be a sudden uneasiness. Walking in an open field I thrust myself into the air and then perhaps I'm not flying but there is simply no longer ground beneath my feet. Has a leap turned into a fall? I feel my insides lurch upwards, I feel adrenaline, I grasp, I fear, I reach up further. Terror. I thought I understood the field in which I stood only to be surprised quite suddenly by something awful.

But then I don't fall, this discomfort recedes, and I find that instead of flying I'm just in featureless space. The physical world is gone so I can no longer be either grounded or afloat, just an abstract something in an undefinable nothingness.

As one falls or floats, fails to grasp, and discovers that it's not the end but rather that movement continues—the ear continues to be fed—one then eventually grasps something. After the initial transformation of perception occurs from the pseudo-historical idiom through its disruption, another transformation of perception occurs into an emergent stasis. That music with which one is left by the seventh musician can be confronted on its own. It transforms from a rupture to a thing, from an event to an object. What is that object once the feeling of rupture has dissipated?

It is static in the sense that it keeps repeating, but it is not static in the sense that it's defined by constant movement. As someone who reads music, I can tell that the performer is probably reading the same few notes over and over again—and indeed the source of this passage is just a single measure of the archival notation shown in Figure 1.1, repeated over and over again. Yet the actual sound coming out of the instrument is different every time we hear that one measure, full of innumerable textures and colours, infinite variation of sonic character in an always slightly ungraspable complexity. Minimalism comes to mind. If the identity of a passage of music is considered to be constituted at any one time by a hierarchical network of characteristics, this passage's musical identity as an instance of Major-key tonic suddenly yields to its identity as the timbral quality of a cello.

One might begin to listen to the instrument as a sound-producing object rather than the music as a piecing together of meaningful symbolic gestures. In this moment between rupture and emergent stasis, temporality shifts from an overlapping cyclical time of the pre-modern to a universal formal time of the modern. While the earlier music was diverse, this music is monolithic. Figure gives way to line. Ornament gives way to material. Gone are mimesis, cadence, and affect; in their place come duration, speed, register, and density. In itself there is no reason for this music to stop at any particular moment. It stretches out in infinite time. But these passages in "Three" come to an end. Because this is not modern music, only perhaps a modern moment within something else. Just as they were slid into they are let go of—unceremoniously.

Aside from how any of us individually hear these three moments in "Three," what's important is that there's an enormous complexity to the formation of meaning in such cases. What meaning is formed? Are several different meanings considered before one is settled upon? Is any one settled upon? How long does all of this take? If there are several either stages or possibilities considered, what causes the change or changes from one to another? Why do these perceptive changes sometimes correspond to objective changes to notation while at other times they correspond to seemingly uneventful moments in the middle of unchanging passages?

As I decided how long these moments in "Three" should be, all these shades of possible experience were present in my imagination, as was the knowledge that there would be many more I couldn't anticipate. I also knew that prolonging these solo repetitions, a bit beyond that moment at which all this experience has taken place, may push a listener further into boredom or confusion, while leaving them a bit too short might make it not even register as a notable moment at all. I wanted these moments to be just long enough for a listener to experience the expectation, rupture, and just a first tantalizing glimpse of a new stasis before being returned back to the original texture.

I didn't make this decision logically. I did not consider the above questions objectively. I did not catalogue every possibility, rank them according to their correlation to broader trends in musical composition or listening, and combine them to optimize the potency of the experience for the broadest audience. And I have no evidence to suggest that such a sound ever occurred at any point in the 18th century, nor am I interested in suggesting that it's possible it may have.

I had my hands and ears on the material as I worked. My whole being developed an understanding of the propensities in the music as I made it. I decided as a craftsman. I felt the problems and I felt the decisions; feeling here being not a *refusal* to think—as it sometimes is for the Romantic artist, or at least for Modernist caricatures thereof—but rather a *human* thinking. A poetic precision, perhaps.

And yet even though it eschews the common practice among historical performers to strive to do as is known to have been done in the musical past, I adamantly defend that this is nevertheless historical performance. This piece represents the careful and informed selection and combination of genuine historical artifacts and information with the express purpose of communicating a specific and fact-based understanding of the musical past to a present-day audience through musical performance.

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And at the same time, I also adamantly defend that this is contemporary composition. As one and the same expression, "Three" is historical performance and it is new music.

There is a common misconception that composition is a kind of *inventio ex nihilo*, as if new music can be brought into existence entirely from within a composer's own self, using no notation, concepts, or sounds related from pre-existing music. So because every note in "Three" can be cited back to a specific note in historical music notation, it cannot be understood as either 'original' or 'new,' and therefore my practice cannot be understood as 'composition.' It is not within the style of the omnipotent composer, an impossible style enshrined as a guiding principal in such culturally powerful institutions as, for example, the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards. As of 2023, their eligibility requirements state that, "Submission[s] must be entirely Entrant's original work (e.g. no sampling, etc.)."[11]

It takes very little effort to show how strange this is. Merriam-Webster defines 'entirely' as "to the exclusion of others: solely" and original as "not secondary, derivative, or imitative."[12] Invent your own instrument that harnesses a completely novel technique for acoustic sound production and that has timbral characteristics unlike any other instrument or music that has ever existed, then write notation for that instrument that uses no rhythmic, metrical, pitch, harmonic, or formal sequences ever used in any other music composed before, and you still won't satisfy this requirement because you're relying on pre-existing concepts like 'acoustic sound,' 'duration,' and 'frequency.' I don't *know* whether this is what ASCAP means, but it's a perfectly coherent interpretation of the words they used.

It's obvious to anyone who has ever written music that composition is always at least in part a practice of assembling pre-existing ideas—harmonic progressions, melodic figures, textural constructions, metrical patterns, ornamental melismas, affective gestures, and so forth. But if musical compositions are never actually "entirely original," then, why is it so often said that they are? And what are they actually?

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[11] "The ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Awards," The ASCAP Foundation, accessed 27 June 2023, https://www.ascapfoundation.org/programs/awards/young-composer-awards, .

[12] "Entirely," *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed 27 June 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entirely; "Original," *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed 27 June 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/original.

Furthermore, if there is no entirely original music, then what is the difference between composing a new piece and performing a pre-existing piece? What is the difference between the reuse of pre-existing musical 'things' done by composers versus performers? Finally, and most importantly, what kinds of music do we miss out on if we try to enforce a distinction between "original" and not?

This idea of originality as the foundation of an artistic value system has a clear history, and one that stretches beyond just music. Rosalind Krauss traces it back to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's [1876–1944] *Manifesto of Futurism* [first published 1909]:

> Marinetti, thrown from his automobile one evening in 1909 into a factory ditch filled with water, emerges as if from amniotic fluid to be born—without ancestors—a futurist. The parable of absolute self-creation that begins the first Futurist Manifesto functions as a model for what is meant by originality among the early twentieth-century avant-garde. For originality becomes an organicist metaphor referring not so much to formal invention as to sources of life. The self as origin is safe from contamination by tradition because it possesses a kind of originary naiveté. [...] The self as origin is the way an absolute distinction can be made between a present experienced *de novo* and a tradition-laden past. The claims of the avant-garde are precisely these claims to originality.[13]

This context adds some telling details about the value system behind a focus on originality as the defining feature of contemporary art. Behind the more abstract idea of 'creating something from nothing' lies a perceived tension between pure organicism and accumulated traditions. There is a parallel here to the purity of God's original creation versus the corruption of humanity's own culture as planted by Satan. In a way, Marinetti's crash into a ditch filled with water is a *baptism*, washing from his soul the original sin of humanity so that he might enter new life on a blank slate. However, instead of the purity of God giving salvation from the cruelty of humanity's own corrupt culture, this time it is one human culture offering salvation from another. Modernism offers salvation from the remnants of the *Ancien Régime*. In one sense, this originality can be seen merely as a pushing away of the old, regardless of whether what replaces it has pure newness. And in another it can be seen as a mimesis of a different kind of purity: mechanical

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[13] Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 6-7.

technology as an analogue to the perfect synergy of organic life. To aggressively cast off received traditions of artistic practice and embrace the raw physicality of mechanized urban spaces as a kind of new aesthetic building material is to be reborn as a naive, pure, liberated, and altogether new form of life.

We are now far beyond the confines of art 'in itself.' It's not difficult to trace a path from here to fascism, for example, founded as it was on principles such as an anti-exceptionalism that considers each individual human to be as individually unremarkable as each of the individual gears in a machine, while at the same time absolutely vital to that machine's collective function. Here too, a received traditional order—this time aesthetic—was violently pushed away in favour of a new one inspired by organics and mechanics.

Likewise, traces of this logic can be found in musical futurism. In *The Art of Noises* [first published 1913], Luigi Russolo [1885–1947] sets up a proposition that musicians embrace mechanical noise as the new raw material for composition by conjuring an analogous image of an ancient world devoid of musical sound:

> Ancient life was all silence. [...] In this scarcity of noises, the first sounds that men were able to draw from a pierced reed or a taut string were stupefying, something new and wonderful. [...] Thus was born the idea of sound as something in itself, as different from and independent of life. And from it resulted music, a fantastic world superimposed on the real one, an inviolable and sacred world.[14]

The invention of a new type of sound anticipates its capture as an autonomous art form superior to the ordinary world of sound. In this formulation, it is its mere difference from the sonic past that enables musical sound to become "inviolable and sacred." Likewise, Russolo states that, "[i]n the 19th Century, with the invention of machines, Noise was born."[15] Thus it becomes the case that,

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[14] Luigi Russolo, trans. Barclay Brown, *The Art of Noises* (New York: Pendragon, 1986), quoted in Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (eds.), *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), 10-11.
[15] Ibid., 10.

[m]usical sound is too limited in its variety of timbres. [...] [M]odern music flounders within this tiny circle, vainly striving to create new varieties of timbre. We must break out of this limited circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds.[16]

Again, the invention of a new type of sound—this time mechanical noises including what Russolo identifies as "explosions," "hissing," "gurgling," and "screeching"—anticipates its harnessing as a new type of art form, the value of which derives solely from the fact that its sonic character is so drastically different than anything heard before. This is music that is good insofar as it is original, and original by virtue of bearing no resemblance to music of the past.

But again, we are not only talking about originality as mere difference or uniqueness in itself. Here, originality is a metonym for freeing oneself from an oppressive past. And the fuel for this revolution is the same fuel that had by then been used for many other revolutions over the preceding 148 years: objectivity. Again, the antidote for an oppressive received society based on centuries of normal and traditional sedimentation was an objectification of nature, both because it is in this case believed to be independent of and contradictory to human culture, and because it can one-up culture's claim to inevitability. We're raising up a new music of mechanical noise, but more specifically, a music of rationally engineered, operationally synergistic, precisely standardized and fully utilitarian combinations of manufactured parts.

It's astonishing how expansive and long lasting this approach has proven to be. Returning to Rosalind Krauss,

if the very notion of the avant-garde can be seen as a function of the discourse of originality, the actual practice of vanguard art tends to reveal that 'originality' is a working assumption that itself emerges from a ground of repetition and recurrence. One figure, drawn from avant-garde practice in the visual arts, provides an example. This figure is the grid.[17]

Here, Krauss turns to a direct attack upon the discourse of originality. If such work is based upon repetition and recurrence, in what sense is it original? The concept of originality now very much needs its

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[16] Ibid., 11.

[17] Krauss, 7.

subtext of being, instead, the revolt of pure logic against an accumulated traditional culture. This logic, this purity of nature, this objectivity toward the outside world, is what is offered by the figure of the grid. And Krauss names an extraordinary number of artists whose work has relied upon it: Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso, Jasper Johns, and Sol de Witt, to name only a few. Taking the example of Malevich, the eponymous painted shape of his famous *Black Square*, from 1915, is an imitation of the basic shape of the canvas that in turn swallows into the artwork the inevitably rectilinear architectural shapes of any typical gallery space. This serves to entirely divorce Malevich's practice from the recent history of painting as a practice of pictographic representation of the three-dimensional space of reality on the two-dimensional plane of a canvas, instead transforming it into a bare exposition of physical space and allowing Malevich himself to claim absolute difference from all other painters. In the case of Malevich, the figure of the grid is somewhat hidden. Each scale of this rectilinear mimesis can be mapped onto the same universal grid, from the smallest painted square up to the largest architectural quadrangle. For others, like Agnes Martin or Mark Rothko, the use of the figure of the grid is more literal.

There are many similar examples in music as well: fantasy upon the natural harmonic series as in the spectralism of Gérard Grisey and Georg Friedrich Haas; equal distribution of pitch, rhythmic, timbral and other aspects of sonic diversity according to mathematical permutations of a sequence of numbers as in the serialism of Anton Webern, Milton Babbitt, or Pierre Boulez; subtle variation around an otherwise very small set of materials repeated ad infinitum as in the minimalism of Philip Glass or Steve Reich; and so forth. As in the case of the 'noise-sound' music of Russolo's futurism, these later compositional styles also arose at least in part as means of casting off an oppressive received culture—serialism of tonal harmony and of melody's stirring of toxic nationalism; minimalism, ironically enough, of serialism's unrelenting monotony. The grid may now—100 years later—be a shared reference point among so many different schools of artistic expression that the mere fact of using it is no longer original in itself. But its absolute neutrality relative to human culture and subjectivity on the whole remains quite the contrary: an inexhaustible resource for those wishing to shed a received practice. It can serve as a stand-in for a simple return to roots—a challenge to cultural sedimentations of meaning. As Krauss puts it,

> [t]he absolute stasis of the grid, its lack of hierarchy, of centre, of inflection, emphasizes not only its antireferential character, but—more importantly—its hostility to narrative. This structure, impervious both to time and to incident, will not permit the projection of language into the domain of the visual, and the result is silence. This silence is not due simply to the extreme effectiveness of the grid as a barricade against speech, but to the protectiveness of its mesh against all intrusions from outside. [...] For those for whom art begins in a kind of originary purity, the grid was emblematic of the sheer disinterestedness of the work of art, its absolute purposelessness, from which it derived the promise of its autonomy.[18]

Alongside faith in God, which may or may not be tenable for a given individual, it's the only absolute truth to which one can return in order to distance oneself from the mediocrity of pre-existing human inventions. It's the primal stew from which one can draw anew the most basic truths about nature and humanity.

The ghost of Descartes *blazes* through these words. Descartes was of course also a mathematician, dealing quite often with that discipline's grid-based form, geometry. And he himself drew the importance of mathematics from its lack of reliance on the uncertainty of perception, the contingence of empiricism, and the transience of judgment. Mathematical principles are true forever and always, and can be accessed in all their perfection despite our own imperfection as mere humans. The three corners of a triangle add up to 180 degrees not because of anything to do with Descartes, but as an absolute, universal, and necessary truth. Like Marinetti and Russolo, Descartes is able to push away and rise above dominant cultural values by situating his work wholly external to those values while simultaneously giving it an autonomous identity external to himself. Only, in Descartes's case, those dominant values are not in neoclassicism as an expressive ideal but in theology and scholasticism as sources of true knowledge.

My concerns with this as related to contemporary composition are more or less the same as my concerns with it as related to historical performance: firstly, that it creates a false binary of original versus unoriginal practices, and secondly, that it's not *actually* possible in the case of fundamentally perception-based activities such as music. Picking up where we left off with John Locke earlier in this chapter, he goes on to share a hypothetical from an exchange of letters with the philosopher William Molyneux [1656–1698]:

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[18] Ibid., 7.

Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man to be made to see; query, Whether by his sight, before he touched them, he could now distinguish and tell which is the globe, which the cube?

[...] Not. For though he has obtained the experience of how a globe, how a cube, affects his touch yet he has not yet attained the experience, that what affects his touch so or so, must affect his sight so or so; or that a protuberant angle in the cube, that pressed his hand unequally, shall appear to his eye as it does in the cube.

[...] This I have set down, and leave with my reader, as an occasion for him to consider how much he may be beholden to experience, improvement, and acquired notions, where he thinks he had not the least use of, or help from them.[19]

Without any previous experience of sight, one would be unable to gain anything but the faintest idea of what one sees, regardless of how well one may understand it through any other sense. It is Locke's steadfast position in his *Essay* that it is only through perception that we come to have any ideas at all. His first axiom is that there are "no innate principles in the mind."[20] We can only come to understand something by first perceiving something. All knowledge comes from the outside, and is channelled through our perception. Even "complex ideas," invented in the mind of an individual, are only possible through the recombination in novel ways of all our memories of past perceptions. In all acts of creation, we are inextricably fused to our past.

In his "Letter on the Blind" [first published 1773], Denis Diderot [1713–1784] could almost have been replying to the very same hypothetical, and he references his point explicitly in relation to Descartes:

Should a philosopher, who has been blind and deaf from his birth, ever make a man in imitation of that of Descartes, I dare affirm, Madam, that he will place the soul at the fingers' ends; as from thence deriving his principal sensations, and all his lights. And who will put him in mind, that his head is the residence of his thoughts? If the labours of imagination impair our brain, it is because our effort in imagining is pretty similar to that which we exert in perceiving very near or very small objects. But it will not be so with him who has been

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19 Locke, 94.

20 Ibid., 12.

blind and deaf from his birth: the sensations which he has derived from the touch will be, as it were, the mould of all his ideas; and I should not be surprised that, after a deep and close meditation, his finger should be as much tired as our head.[21]

In both Diderot and Locke, it seems to be comfortably admitted that Cartesianism can indeed reveal clear and distinct truths about the outside world, but unlike Descartes, they hold that these truths will always be framed in relation to one's individual perceptive nature, and to one's perceptive memories. Even in situations of absolute, universal, immutable truths such as mathematical first principles, we have no ability to come into an idea unless we have already perceived *something*—and remembered it. Regardless of whether an idea is true or false, it is only out of those *memories of perceived somethings* that it can be *made* at all.

Should it not follow from this, then, that a musician can make music by no other method than by reconfiguring what they have already heard? New music is made by imitating older music. But this imitation is not mere duplication. The imitation must be different enough that the new music is perceived by its listener to not simply *be* that older music. The issue at hand is precisely the nature of the relationship *between* the old and the new. I don't suggest that new music should not be novel, surprising, clever, creative, poetic, or many other such things often also described as 'originality,' only that this doesn't require a total independence from all other music. Instead, I tend to prefer thinking of composition as an act of *being in* those relationships, and as evolving those relationships into something else, and then something else again. To be sure, futurism, spectralism, serialism, minimalism and many other discourse-of-originality-based musical practices are extraordinarily valuable and meaningful contributions to the field, but that does not warrant forcing the isolationary aspects of their value systems onto all compositional practices whatsoever.

The good news is that the New Music world is no longer quite as hostile on this front as it seems to have been a few decades ago, though the discourse of originality can indeed still be found within certain large institutions such as the Morton Gould Awards. Still, much work remains to be done. Without continuing to reconceptualize compositional practice as we also retool it, we'll be unable to confront the

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[21] Denis Diderot. *Letter on the Blind* [first published 1773], accessed 30 March 2024, https://archive.org/details/literatureonblin00unse, 22-23.

significant ideological impediments that do remain, such as the current interpretation of copyright law in relation to musical sampling, which is premised upon the idea that what a musical author makes belongs to them alone. We composers with lineage in the Western classical music tradition may be uniquely well situated to do this, owing to the fact that so many of our reference points are squarely in the public domain. And I'd suggest that the way out of this might lie precisely in this relationship we have to our classical lineage, and specifically in the complementary problems that the discourse of originality has created in its other sub-fields of practice.

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The questions here are twofold. Firstly, how can practices of contemporary classical composition contribute to the formation and reformation of musicians' and listeners' relationships to classical music at large? And secondly, what exactly is the nature of the line between producing new music (composition) and reproducing old music (performance)?

In 2017, I composed a seven-movement piece called *visions of small-minded Men*, which was premiered by the Nieuw Ensemble and conductor Ryan Bancroft at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam.[22] This piece draws on my relationship with pan-European and American brass band music from the turn of the 20th century—a type of music for which I have a strong affinity, tied both to my national identity as an American and my playing in concert bands and marching bands as a kid, but which I also recognize has often been instrumentalized in the name of an exclusionary and homogenizing form of patriotism. In this piece, each movement takes notation written between 1880 and 1920 as compositional source material in an attempt to isolate the different characters of this music, to weave them through, across, and against each other, and to tease out for myself whether it's possible to express sincere love for this music without inadvertently bolstering the toxic politics it's often used to propagate. Six movements are based on marches:

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[22] Carlo Diaz, *visions of small-minded Men* (2017). For a recording, see
https://carlodiaz.com/music/visions-of-small-minded-men.

1. "Death or Glory," by Robert Browne Hall

2. "Radetzky Marsch," by Johann Strauss

3. "The Stars and Stripes Forever," by John Philip Sousa

    & "Hail to the Chief," by James Sanderson

4. "Barnum and Bailey's Favourite March," by Karl King

5. "Badenweiler Marsch," by Georg Fürst

6. "Eclipse Gallop," by Karl King

The seventh movement is based on a hymn:

7. "Abide with Me," by William Henry Monk

These pieces were notational starting points for me—raw materials *with* which to try and understand my own musical background and preferences, and *from* which to extract their own constituent influences and characters. And my approach differed for each piece above, both in the amount and the type of alteration to the source material.

Figure 1.3: Measures 89–94 of the score used for the second movement, "Radetzky," of my piece, *visions of small-minded Men.* For a recording, see https://carlodiaz.com/music/visions-of-small-minded-men; the excerpt shown here begins at 02:37.

Though most marches of this period are composed for orchestra, concert band, or brass band, *visions of small-minded Men* uses a very different instrumentation: mandolin, classical guitar, string quintet, and a single percussionist. Even if this group were to simply play the seven compositions listed above 'as written,' one could already start to see a critical commentary on the source material. This instrumentation produces a sound that is much quieter and much darker than an orchestra or band. The mandolin and guitar have relatively delicate sounds, and are without sustain, so the bowed strings and percussion collaboratively adapt their playing to match. Marches can indeed typically be both bombastic and gentle, but in this case they're almost forced into the latter even when it might not seem appropriate.

But these instruments don't simply play this source music 'as written.' I adjust the notation in various ways. In the first movement, based on "Death or Glory," I remove the brief melodic introduction of the original so that we enter unceremoniously into a brief section of accompaniment with no melody, which repeats in short, inconsistent segments for a little while, changing orchestrations here and there a few times, with small interludes of the percussionist flicking a small cymbal with his finger. We only get five or six measures of the original march, all told, but it's almost as long as the original, there are almost as many unique character changes, and the overall form is not significantly different than the original relative to its own melodic and harmonic materials. The movement is cyclical and somewhat unremarkable, but also incredibly soft and easy to understand. My hope is that it's kind of gently pleasant but also strikingly plain. It's clear that this music is based on a march, but not much happens. It's a very simple opening.

The second movement is quite different. Based on the well-known "Radetzky March," it's a bit more of a straightforward parody. The piece's original melodies, harmonies, and form are more or less unchanged, though the piece is shortened overall. The real divergence is in its orchestration. There's portamento and ricochet in the violin part; the harmony can primarily be heard in the mandolin playing chords in tremolo while the other strings provide the rhythmic 'oom-pa'; the sole percussionist is given a bass drum, a snare drum, and a cymbal (all positioned awkwardly far apart) and is asked to play only using his bare hands; and after a few seconds the guitarist starts clapping like it's New Year's Eve in Vienna. It's not at all difficult for anyone familiar with the "Radetzky March" to understand what's going on here. This is basic pantomime, in good fun.

So far, these changes to the source material have been fairly maximal. Beyond their adaptation to a different instrumentation than they were initially written for, I've made significant changes to the notes themselves. In the third movement, however, this is no longer the case. Looking particularly at the first part of the movement, based on "Stars and Stripes Forever," I sought to make a relatively neutral arrangement, though I made exactly one crucial divergence from this neutrality by moving the melody one beat earlier than the harmony for the duration of the piece. Though a very small and simple adjustment from the perspective of notation in itself, the result creates as meaningful a difference in comparison to the usual sound of the piece as do either of the previous two movements. Though subtle, what we end up hearing is music that sounds almost like a straight-ahead performance of "Stars and Stripes Forever," but that also sounds chaotic or sloppy in a peculiarly elusive way, and that has somehow lost the powerful rhythmic drive that is typically one of its most characteristic features. Though each of the performers is playing their part exactly as I wrote it, the result sounds like just the opposite. This is by design. I have the utmost respect for the musicians of the Nieuw Ensemble, but I needed a way to divorce this piece's identity from its aesthetic overtures to militaristic power. Sousa knew what he was doing (I presume this from the way he composes), so this piece sounds louder and prouder the more skilful the musicians are who play it. The only way to deflate such power is to disrupt this construction. And in so doing, my hope is that its sweetness and tunefulness come to the foreground. Perhaps this is a way to indulge in the joy of this music without endorsing its militarism? Perhaps it's a way to become aware of the way these two abstractions—joy and militarism—elide in a traditional performance of this piece? It's not up to me to decide whether this is the experience of those who listen to this music, but I hope this description can provide some clarity as to what I was hoping for and how I worked toward it.

The significant question here is not to do with the artistic intent of this piece, anyway, so I won't present further analysis of the remaining movements. What I'm interested in is whether such music is impeded by the traditional binary of composer as creator of original music versus performer as transparent conduit for past music, and if so, how one's understanding of these roles of composer and performer might evolve in confronting this impedance. In a way, the expressive form of the piece is that of a *critique*, and if a prerequisite to any critique is the identification of its objects, there's immediately a problem with respect to this composer-performer distinction. If I must identify the object of my critique

as a specific musical practice, I must in at least some limited way replicate that practice in my music, and thus exclude myself from the discourse of originality. So perhaps this is just a performative expression, then; an interpretation, and not a new composition. But if a critique is also an investigation, a dissection, a problematization, or a confrontation of its object, then I cannot merely replicate this musical practice as a performer would, always deferring to a demonstrable historical act or intent. So where am I?

In a musical culture where composers invent original music and performers recite existing music, this project is not just prohibited, it's conceptually invisible. There are not even words with which to specifically condemn it. It's simply inconceivable, though often quietly allowed to sit alongside other compositional works thanks to a somewhat agnostic stance toward originality and reuse adopted by many involved in New Music today. There are certainly many examples of such music beyond my own—Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, Charles Ives's *New England Holidays*, Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia*, Wolfgang Mitterer's *Inwendig losgelöst*, Max Richter's "recomposition" of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and Lucia D'Errico's "divergent performances," to mention just a few—but for the time being I'd like to leave them sit. The central problem is that, insofar as composition is the production of original music and the performance of those compositions is the replication of existing music, we lack the ability to effectively name musical practices such as these.

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Coming back to Cartesian reasoning, we find in this example the inverse of the problem of historical objectivity. In trying to divorce ourselves from all outside influence in order to create an entirely original new music, we find that there's actually nothing within ourselves except what has shaped us from the outside. Just as we cannot perceive outside things except through the unique idiosyncrasies of own perception, that unique perceptive mechanism that constitutes our self is nothing other than a complex sum of those same outside influences. The self and the other are inescapably synergistic, so no musical practice can exclusively engage only one or the other. And so we find ourselves in a situation where contemporary composition is ejected from its claim to the originality (or perhaps subjectivity—that originating exclusively within the individuated self) of the omnipotent composer, just as historical

performance is ejected from its claim to the objectivity of the omniscient historian, and both are found in the same ambiguous middle ground between their traditional, idealized conceptualizations. The idol-forms of these practices will only drive one to madness. It is tempting, then, to begin proposing new definitions for each that hold up independent of these impossible perfections of form, but I'd instead like to hold course for a little while longer so that we might find what kinds of music have gone missing in the space between these spaces.

I see it as one in which the ubiquitous expression is the *mimetic*, understood with an eye toward Paul Ricoeur:

> If we continue to translate mimesis by 'imitation,' we have to understand something completely contrary to a copy of some pre-existing reality and speak instead of a creative imitation. And if we translate mimesis by 'representation' [...] we must not understand by this word some redoubling of presence, as we could still do for Platonic mimesis, but rather the break that opens the space for fiction.[23]

Mimesis here is not remaking only with the intent of creatively changing or of faithfully relaying, but something much broader than that. In order to say anything, one must be able to make clear what one is saying anything *about*. This demonstration of the *about what* is precisely the mimetic gesture at issue. In language, this is where we can use names—of genres, of styles, of composers, of melodies, and so forth. But in music itself we have no such luxury. We cannot merely point at what we critique. We must in some way *produce* it anew. Whether I mean to neutrally convey something, critically analyse it, or generatively expand upon it, I must first in some way replicate it for my audience. The nature of this replication, at first agnostic of its relation to existing musical disciplinarities, then building up an idea of the cultures within it and the purposes to which it can be instrumentalized, is the topic of my research. In this context, I look to Maurice Merleau-Ponty for useful ways to understand how self and other—subject and object of study—elide in the perceptive faculties of the artist and historian. I read Paul Ricoeur, Hayden White, and Ann Laura Stoler to understand the co-production of temporality through memory and imagination. I adapt the writing of Stephen Wright for meaningful new ways to conceptualize musical

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[23] Paul Ricoeur, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin & David Pellauer, *Time and Narrative, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 45.

things—whether in sound or notation—tying together objectively different experiences into abstractly comparable classifications. I adopt Bernard Harcourt's stance that it is not only a discipline's methodology and epistemology but also its *purpose* that can powerfully circumscribe its identity. And finally, I look to the early 18th-century Neapolitan philosopher, philologist, and historian Giambattista Vico for a potent route away from the characterization of musical practice outlined in this introduction: the fundamentally *Cartesian* paradox of historical performance and contemporary composition as we know them today.

2_Underlying Attachments, Conscious Desires

Research Question and Literature Review

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The question[i] guiding my entire project is this: "How can"[ii] the "underlying attachments" and "conscious desires"[iii] of "musicians"[iv] in the "impulse"[v] of "collective memory,"[vi] "taste for the past,"[vii] "will"[viii] to "make it new,"[ix] and "eagerness for novelty,"[x] be "extended still forwards beyond"[xi] the "dualism"[xii] of "mind"[xiii] and "body,"[xiv] "subject" and "object,"[xv] "thinking"[xvi] and "doing,"[xvii] "fact"[xviii] and "opinion,"[xix]" "[xx]"theory and practice,"[xxi] that at once constitute and render into paradox[xxii] the "disciplines"[xxiii] of "Early Music"[xxiv] and "New Music?"[xxv]

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[i] As its visual appearance likely makes immediately clear, the form of this chapter is somewhat unorthodox. Because the question of whether or how to distinguish between authorship and recitation is a guiding question of this project, I thought it might be interesting to make an extreme attempt to credit every conceivable influence of a given piece of text. I acknowledge the risk that this may come across as somewhat absurd, but it seemed productive to push through this absurdity as a way of coming to understand just how deeply external influence runs within the theoretical frameworks, auditory aesthetics, and linguistic formations that might otherwise be understood as novel. I do hope it's at least somewhat intriguing to read. I suggest doing so both by glancing back and forth from the research question to the endnotes *and* by reading the question as a whole and then reading all the endnotes sequentially as a self-contained essay. Sometimes these two approaches reveal different parts of the story.

[ii] To quote Henk Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 7:

The principal theme addressed by this book is: What are the characteristics of artistic research? This general question breaks down into a series of more specific questions, explored in different chapters.

a. How can we differentiate artistic research practices from artistic practices?

b. What are the ontological, epistemological, and methodological attributes of artistic research?

c. How can the relationship between artistic research and academia be characterized?

d. What position does the artistic research programme occupy in science and technology policy and classification?

e. Under what terms does artistic research qualify as academic research?

f. What are the similarities and differences between artistic research and other academic research fields and how does artistic research relate to other life domains?

g. What criteria may we employ in assessing artistic research?

h. How is such an assessment framework rendered into concrete practice in a peer-reviewed journal?

The focus in the later chapters turns increasingly to the epistemology of artistic research and the criteria for research assessment. Throughout the work, I urge the acceptance of artistic research as a fully fledged research form, including institutional recognition.

The two words I extract from this quote, "how can," are certainly among the least insightful of Henk Borgdorff's *Conflict of the Faculties*. But I quote them here as a way of signaling the presence of his conceptualization of artistic research as an academic discipline within this project, and especially of its more formal aspects such as the writing of a research question. My own project is very much an outgrowth of a research mindset in which my own long-standing artistic practice as a composer and concert producer interlaces with my more abstract interests in critical theory and the history of philosophy, generating novel questions and perspectives unlikely to have been produced outside the context of this particular interdisciplinarity and/or intermethodology.

As Borgdorff defends throughout his book, artistic practices of varying types have the capacity to produce an embodied knowledge that surpasses abstract conceptual understanding in some ways, and that is deficient to it in others, but that can nevertheless be productively reflected back into theoretical writing. This improves such abstract understanding, sitting within the form of traditional academic scholarship,

which can then be further developed within its own written form before feeding back to re-inform the artistic practice in turn, forming a reciprocal bond between the two.

This idea has been explored further in the past ten years through numerous monographs and edited volumes. Michael Schwab's *Experimental Systems: Future Knowledge in Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013) and *Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2018) have picked up many of the same questions about the epistemological status of artistic research, while Paulo de Assis's two-volume edited collection, *The Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017), and later monograph, *Logic of Experimentation: Rethinking Music Performance Through Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2018), have expanded discourse on the diverse *experimental* methodologies of artistic research as well as the possibility for that experimentation to directly engage and develop more squarely philosophical thought. Borgdorff's own *The Exposition of Artistic Research* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), edited along with Michael Schwab, also provides further investigation of the particular aspect of artistic research that deals with its public dissemination, with emphasis on the close integration of diverse media in the context of a single research presentation, using the development of the Research Catalogue and the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR) as a case study.

My own project flows from this disciplinary tradition. I theorize and interrogate a problem area in writing and reflection, which produces novel questions and ideas that I then investigate in action in the context of my musical practice. My practice then develops from these starting points within its own internal logic and pragmatic boundaries and thereby transforms the questions and ideas in addition to perhaps offering further, unexpected insights that I wouldn't have arrived at through writing and reflection alone. I then return to writing and reflection to dissect this experiential knowledge, and so the cycle repeats.

iii To quote Lisa Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 7:

> [O]ne hallmark of ideological uptake is the disavowal expressed in the famous line 'I know very well, yet nevertheless…' In Syria, as we shall be seeing in greater detail throughout the book, this logic of disavowal has worked in myriad ways: I know very well that the regime is systemically corrupt, yet nevertheless I act as if it will reform itself; I know very well that there is no return to the way things were, yet nevertheless let's act as if things can return to the way they were; I know very well

that the opposition is hopeless, yet nevertheless let's act as if the opposition will make things right; I know very well that the commodity form takes a social relation among human beings and makes it into a relation among things, yet nevertheless I shall act as if the commodity form were a simple relation among things. The *as if* here [speaks] to fundamental fantasy investments like the desire for an unattainable coherence or for an economic prosperity that comes at no one's expense. The political implications of this difference are profound: even though we know better or are educable, our fundamental investments (in, say, comfort or order or the hope that change can happen effortlessly) prove resistant to ideology critique. Thus, we can 'know very well' that a proposition is false or unjust or contingent *yet nevertheless* continue to act as if we believe in it because, at some level, we are still supported by fundamental fantasy investments in the very practices we nevertheless consciously want to repudiate. Our underlying attachments, to express this in a slightly different theoretical register, can be in tension with our conscious desires and the propositional statements that communicate those desires to others. And this tension is what I am indexing as ambivalence, a situation in which the toggle between the attachment to order and the desire for change, for example, results (as it did among key populations in Syria) in the paralysis of political commitment, in the polarization of opinions and the gravitation toward existing comfort zones in some cases, and in a suspension of judgment in others.

My own project has nothing to do with Syrian politics, but Wedeen's observation here, from which I extract the pair of phrases "underlying attachments" and "conscious desires," describes a social phenomenon closely related to the iconographic metaphors of historical performance and contemporary composition I presented earlier. In the case of these musical disciplines, the phrase would go something like this: "I know very well that I'll never authentically reproduce historical music, yet nevertheless it's worth a try." And on the other hand: "I know very well that I cannot produce entirely original music, yet nevertheless—again—it's worth a try." These articulations are somewhat facile and generic, but we can go deeper: "I know very well that fidelity to the past as it actually happened is not a viable criterion through which to evaluate my performances or the performances of others, yet nevertheless I will make decisions about and judgments of these performances as if it is the only relevant criterion." Or: "I know very well that my own personal tastes, preferences, habits, and other idiosyncrasies have a profound and inevitable effect upon the sound of my performances, yet nevertheless I will present these performances as if they are exclusively to do with the isolated historical past of the notation I'm reading." And on the other side: "I know very well

that my own unique subjectivity, creativity, and artistry are the cumulative product of influence by many other artists, scholars, and otherwise peers, yet nevertheless I will take full ownership of every artistic expression I make as solely mine." Or: "I know very well that the lines between an arrangement and a composition, a remix and a new song, a sample and a reference, are vanishingly thin at the very best, yet nevertheless I will perpetuate institutional formations in my field that use them as absolutely clear and discrete categories."

These characterizations may seem like harsh criticisms, but my goal is not to chastise others for applying imperfect logic in the face of incredibly complex expressive ontologies. Rather, I am interested in beginning to distinguish between what Wedeen is calling our "attachments" and "desires," or in other words, between what drives us to pursue a certain goal and how we might practically translate that underlying drive into intentional action. In the absence of any better ontologies than "what music sounded like in the past" and "music that sounds unlike past music," we stay our course within existing practical strategies that we know to be fundamentally deficient. But if we begin to separate out *why* we want these things from *what* we do about it, we may be able to rebuild new types of practice that finally extricate us from these conceptual deficiencies without causing us to vacate our deeply held values and passions in the process. So *why* is it that we want to hear music of the distant past and *why* is it that we want to create music that's profoundly different? In other words, what is it that we want not *within* but *out of* Early Music and New Music?

I should give further explanation here of what might otherwise be interpreted as somewhat of a tangent. I first came upon critical theory through Hayden White's and Ann Laura Stoler's work on historical epistemology. First, the former's *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* [originally published 1973] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), and *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). And second, the latter's *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) and *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). My initial curiosity about these texts came as an outgrowth of my interest in the phrase "historically-informed performance," as adopted by the Early Music movement in the 1980s. In them, I discovered a much broader world of both epistemological and methodological possibility in regard to historical, artistic, and otherwise scholarly practices writ large. In exploring their influences further, I came across the field of critical theory more broadly, and the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory (3CT) at The University of

Chicago in particular. I was fortunate enough to be able to join 3CT's administrative staff in late 2019, staying there until 2021.

Lisa Wedeen is their Faculty Director, and it is through this role at 3CT that I became acquainted with her and with many of her peers working in what they call *contemporary* theory, a refinement of the idea of *critical* theory. Through publications such as Linda Zerilli's *A Democratic Theory of Judgment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), Jennifer Pitts's *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), William H. Sewell Jr.'s *Capitalism and the Emergence of Civic Equality in Eighteenth-Century France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), William Mazzarella's *The Mana of Mass Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), Neil Brenner's *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) and *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), Thomas Dodman's *What Nostalgia Was: War, Empire, and the Time of a Deadly Emotion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), and William M. Reddy's *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200CE* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), I developed a more refined sense of the role of ideology and its many forms of masking, transfiguration, and institutionalization across the political and the social. This sensibility is sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit within my writing, but it very much *provides* the deeper conceptualization of the fields of Early Music and New Music, as well as my relationship to them, that I use throughout the project.

iv To quote John Cage, "Goal: New Music, New Dance" [first published 1939] in "Four Statements on the Dance" [originally four separate essays, published sequentially between 1939 and 1957] in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 87:

At the present stage of revolution, a healthy lawlessness is warranted. Experiment must necessarily be carried on by hitting anything—tin pans, rice bowls, iron pipes—anything we can lay our hands on. Not only hitting, but rubbing, smashing, making sound in every possible way. In short, we must explore the materials of music. What we can't do ourselves will be done by machines and electrical instruments which we will invent. The conscientious objectors to modern music will, of course, attempt

everything in the way of counterrevolution. Musicians will not admit that we are making music; they will say that we are interested in superficial effect, or, at most, are imitating Oriental or primitive music. New and original sounds will be labeled as 'noise.' But our common answer to every criticism must be to continue working and listening, making music with its materials, sound and rhythm, disregarding the cumbersome, top-heavy structure of musical prohibitions.

Because my project deals with such fundamental questions about musical practice, I think it's worth addressing, at least in brief, what I understand music and musicians to be. I am indeed a product of training in music composition in the context of U.S. higher education, a disciplinarity that owes quite a lot to John Cage. In my reading of the quote above as well as my understanding of Cage more broadly, I see not only an aestheticization of noise but an incorporation of *all auditory phenomena*, whether physiological or psychoacoustic, in the basic concept of music. Alternatively, one can interpret this quote as redefining music not in terms of its physical requirements of sound but in terms of a listener's mindset in attending to that sound. In other words, a sound can qualify as musical simply by being *listened to* as music There's also another underlying principle at play in this quote with the suggestion that musical practice should challenge and interrogate received practices and understandings.

In the case of this project, I question whether music is exclusively constituted by the physical sound produced by musical instruments, in total abstraction from all other sensory, psychological, and social phenomena adjacent to and interlocked with that physical sound. Think, for example, of Brian Eno's suggestion in "The Studio as Compositional Tool," *Down Beat* 50, no. 7 (July 1983): 56-7, and 50, no. 8 (August 1983): 50-2. Here, the electrical devices and unique social space of a recording studio are as much musical instruments as pianos or guitars. What is typically treated as mere superficial aesthetic processing of audio—equalization, compression, and so forth—Eno treats as *fundamental* within the compositional act. In my own practice, I extend this to the ephemera of concert production as well, including venue selection, scenographic design, promotional materials, program materials, concert curation, and more. The idea of music as abstracted from its surrounding culture is of course an inheritance from the 19th century—see, for example, William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), David E. Coke and Alan Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), and Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)—that significantly obscures understanding

of earlier musical cultures and furthermore in large part produces the core paradox of historical authenticity in music in the first place.

While Cage's writings can perhaps be read as a kind of call to iconoclasm, they can also underpin vital types of questioning in the context of historical research in music that is *not* so at odds with the preservation of those histories. And beyond providing the bare impetus to confront this received understanding of music, Cage's work also provides an example of what such re-joining of auditory sound to broader accompanying sensory and social phenomena might look like. To me, all this is encapsulated in his understanding of music and musicians, and this is the sense in which I used the word "musicians" in my research question. This sense of the word should be understood to be ever-present in my descriptions of music throughout this text.

I should also be as clear as possible in stating that I understand Cage's idea of music and musicianship not as an *alternative* but as an *expanded* understanding in comparison to earlier ones. So though musicians of the 18th or 19th centuries may perhaps not have seen Cage as a musician, as he suggests, the same isn't true in the other direction, and the suggestion does not disqualify any of my statements in this text as relevant to music of these earlier historical moments.

ᵛ To quote John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [first published 1693] (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), 165:

> For, all power relating to action, and there being but two sorts of action whereof we have any idea, viz., thinking and motion, let us consider whence we have the clearest ideas of the powers which produce these actions. […] A body at rest affords us no idea of any active power to move; and when it is set in motion itself, that motion is rather a passion than an action in it. For when the ball obeys the stroke of a billiard-stick, it is not any action of the ball, but bare passion: also when by impulse it sets another ball in motion that lay in its way, it only communicates the motion it had received from another, and loses in itself so much as the other received; which gives us but a very obscure idea of an active power moving in body, whilst we observe it only to transfer but not produce any motion.

In Wedeen's idea of "underlying attachments," I can't help but see what Locke describes here as an "impulse," and so I present the latter in my research question as a kind of synonym for the former. The key aspects of this idea of an impulse are that it is involuntary, external, and irresistible. It should be noted that Locke's use of the word "passion" denotes what we, 300 years later, would probably call "passivity." He

describes an individual's thoughts and actions as taking place only as the result of outside influences. This sentiment builds from Locke's foundational idea in his *Essay* that there are "no innate ideas in the mind"—our entire understanding of ourselves, our environment, and even the most abstract ideas come from the perceptions and memories we accumulate from the outside world. Thus, all our thoughts and actions can be understood as a kind of unstoppable external impulse—a fast-moving billiard ball hitting a stationary billiard ball. In this light, Wedeen's "attachments" and Locke's "impulses" appear to be precise synonyms, but there's an important distinction that can be made in *how* they package their respective concepts. In Locke's case, what's notable is that he adopts a mechanistic language analogous to Newtonian physics in contrast to Wedeen's more empathic language. To my understanding, the deeper motivating forces of Early Music and New Music reflect aspects of both of these presentations; on the one hand, as an irresistible impulse to think or act in a certain way, and on the other hand, as a set of moral or aesthetic values that need not be resisted, yet the exact translation of which into action can and ought to be consciously decided.

vi This is a reference to Paul Ricoeur, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004). In the chapter "Personal Memory, Collective Memory," Ricoeur turns on its head his initial question of what collective memory is and where it came from, asking instead when, why, and by whom individual memory was ever postulated as something different. His observations on Locke and Descartes are particularly relevant to my project. To quote, from page 93:

> The situation of John Locke within the philosophical current of inwardness is utterly singular. […] It is with Descartes that we believe him—wrongly, we shall see—most closely associated, precisely on the question of the *cogito* [the thinking individual]. However, the critique of innate ideas already served to distance Locke definitively from him, at least on the level of the ideas of perception. It remains that John Locke is the inventor of the following three notions and the sequence that they form together: identity, consciousness, self. […] The *cogito* is not a person defined by his or her memory and the capacity to give an accounting to himself or herself. It bursts forth in the lightning flash of an instant. Always thinking does not imply remembering having thought. Continual creation alone confers duration upon it. The *cogito* does not possess duration in its own right.

One of the impulses that I see in Early Music as a discipline is toward collective memory, which I might simply define as a desire to remember together, or to develop and

preserve a societal memory that stretches farther back than any one person can individually remember. This reminds us both of the fundamental sociality of Early Music as a culture-making music *together* and *sharing* it with others—and of the dependence of its extremely long desired timescale on an *abstraction* of the knowledge that informs it. Because it deals with music older than anyone now living, it is not a practice of individual but collective memory. As Ricoeur points out, Locke argues *against* the coherence of the Cartesian *cogito* by arguing that all human thoughts, ideas, and actions are the result of external influences received through the senses. In this case, the self is not an absolute self-produced, self-contained, and self-perpetuating unity, as it is for Descartes, but something more like a unique constellation of outside influences. As we shall see later on, the difference between these two concepts can play an important part in re-evaluating the role of the self in historical research and historical representation. If the self is already a sedimentation of outside influences, then the incorporation of the self in studies of the past is not necessarily a contamination of those pasts as objects of study because that particular selfhood is not necessarily external to them. It could itself have been constituted *by* them. This will warrant more working out later on.

vii Beyond the idea of history as a kind of collaborative remembrance, there is also a quality of history that is more purely aesthetic. The past has a *feel* to it. Sometimes we want to study the past, not because we want to remember together or remember for others or remember as members of our culture, but because, in relief to all else we see, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch in the modern world, those artifacts of the past somehow stand out as different, and perhaps better. Francois Hartog calls this a "taste for the past," and contrasts it to the futurism of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's musings about the absolute newness of experience made possible by rapid developments in industrial technology at the beginning of the 20th century. To quote Francois Hartog, trans. Saskia Brown, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 149:

> [W]hat regime of historicity is implied by the phenomenon that some have described as the 'meteoric rise of the heritage industry' in the 1990s? Did this taste for the past, for everything old, emerge suddenly as a kind of nostalgia for an older regime of historicity that had in fact long been inoperative? And how could it be reconciled with the modern regime, which for two whole centuries had pinned all 'hopeful expectation' on the future, as expressed in Marinetti's proclamations and prophecies?

This line of questioning helps us further distinguish between various among our underlying attachments to pastness. Is an interest in historical string instruments an interest in using older methods and materials of construction in the present, or is it an interest in the changes to wood and other organic materials that occur over long spans of time? Wood, for example, develops a unique hardness and sheen to it after half a century or so of ageing, which both looks different than recently finished woodwork and, in the case of musical instruments, sounds different. So while it's surely the case that instruments made with different materials and different methods in the distant past sounded different than instruments made with modern materials and modern methods, the task of the historian interested in an abstracted past isn't as simple as playing an instrument made at the relevant time. Historians not only see the past of their object but all the intervening time as well. Which of these qualities are we interested in—if not all—and how can we carry forward those more specific drives in a kind of musical practice that isn't beholden to the same unrealistic standards of achievement that police Early Music today? Here we begin to slowly transition in this project's broader research question from interest in the old to interest in the new, though not necessarily in a chronological sense. Part of what has made Early Music such a peculiarly well-suited partner to New Music, as can be seen in the many collaborations between musicians in each of these worlds, is a disjunction between new and old as a distinction of *either* chronology or proximity. Movement from old to new can be movement from past into present and future, but it can also be movement from familiar to unfamiliar. Pastness can, in this way, feel more new than old simply by nature of its being unfamiliar. This is in contrast to the more traditional type of newness defined by its quality as *production* or *invention*—as not having been found but made or, perhaps, *willed into being*. Shortly after his use of the word "impulse," mentioned above, Locke introduces "will."

viii To quote Locke, *Essay*, 165-6:

> [W]e find in ourselves a power to bring or forbear, continue or end, several actions of our minds and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering, or, as it were, commanding the doing or not doing such or such a particular action. This power which the mind has thus to order the consideration of any idea, or the forbearing to consider it, or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and *vice versa*, in any particular instance, is that which we call 'the will.'

The will is driven by a kind of impulse. It is not yet entirely clear at this point in the *Essay* why we want what we want, do what we do, or think what we think, but the will nevertheless represents only those impulses on which we voluntarily elect to act. As our minds contain no innate ideas, all ideas, it logically follows, come from outside ourselves through the senses. Each course of action we consider taking enters our mind in the same way that the motion of one billiard ball is transferred into it from the impact of another. But the will is an active, self-created force in that we can *choose* whether to allow this inertia to be transferred into our actions. This characterization is the fulcrum point of the subject-object problem, separating a reproduction of an abstracted past from a manufacture of the previously non-existent. We find the two inextricable here, yet not quite identical. What this orientation toward "will" can give us is a much more sophisticated understanding of "new" than simply "didn't exist before." Rosalind Krauss introduces her own work to problematize the idea of the artistic new as the artistic *original*.

ix To quote Rosalind Krauss, quoting Ezra Pound, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 6:

> The avant-garde artist has worn many guises over the first hundred years of his existence: revolutionary, dandy, anarchist, aesthete, technologist, mystic. He has also preached a variety of creeds. One thing only seems to hold fairly constant in the vanguardist discourse and that is the theme of originality. By originality, here, I mean more than just the kind of revolt against tradition that echoes in Ezra Pound's 'Make it new!' or sounds in the futurists' promise to destroy the museums that cover Italy as though 'with countless cemeteries.' More than a rejection or dissolution of the past, avant-garde originality is conceived as a literal origin, a beginning from ground zero, a birth. Marinetti, thrown from his automobile one evening in 1909 into a factory ditch filled with water, emerges as if from amniotic fluid to be born—without ancestors—a futurist. This parable of absolute self-creation that begins the first *Futurist Manifesto* functions as a model for what is meant by originality among the early twentieth-century avant-garde. For originality becomes an organicist metaphor referring not so much to formal invention as to sources of life. The self as origin is safe from contamination by tradition because it possesses a kind of originary naivete.

This is the sense in which I use the words "new" and "original" throughout this text. Whether or not Krauss's appraisal holds true for the work of all 20th-century composers,

it is my understanding that it is the sense in which these words are often used when identifying a broad cross-section of musical culture in phrases like "New Music" in the name or introduction of a concert series or record label. Such monikers are not only about music that is nominally new—anything composed recently—but that is new in a way that does many or all those things that Krauss describes—rejects or dissolves the past, is uncontaminated by tradition, begins from nothing, emerges from a pure individuality. But we do need to address an impulse toward newness as "novelty" as well. Robert Gjerdingen identifies it as an older idea of the proper goal of composition.

[x] To quote Johann Joseph Fux, as quoted in Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6:

> The popular view of the composer—a Romantic view inherited from the nineteenth century—does not fit eighteenth-century reality. The composer of galant music, rather than being a struggling artist alone against the world, was more like a prosperous civil servant. […] He worried less about the meaning of art and more about whether his second violin player would be sober enough to play for Sunday Mass. The galant composer necessarily worked in the here and now. He had to write something this week for an upcoming court ceremony, not tortured masterworks for posterity. Even a conservative musician like Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741), imperial court chapel master in Vienna, had to admit that a court's 'eagerness for novelty' resulted in music changing 'every five years or so.' Comparing music to clothing, he explained that 'if a middle-aged man appeared today dressed in the clothes worn fifty or sixty years ago, he would certainly run the risk of ridicule.' And so he advises a young composer that 'music too must be accommodated to the times.' A court composer, rather than expressing his deep personal feelings for all to share, strove to touch his patron's sentiments.

Whether this idea of the artist as a lone genius more properly belongs in the 19th century, as suggested here by Gjerdingen, or in the 20th, as suggested by Krauss's example of futurism, it certainly does not seem to belong in much of the 18th century, if at all. The type of new 18th-century music Gjerdingen describes departs from the past only insofar as it contains a simple difference to or variation upon the past. It is evaluated by its ability to strike a uniquely delicate balance between being expected and unexpected—falling within aesthetic trends understood and appreciated by its listeners, yet also able to surprise and delight those listeners by finding fresh ways

to articulate or expand upon those trends. This is a kind of newness that emanates not from an isolated self but from a member of a community.

From this point in the endnotes we transition from what I understand to be the underlying attachments and conscious desires fueling Early Music and New Music as cultures into some of their founding conceptual dualisms. Over the course of this text, my goal will be to determine whether and/or how members of these two groups—attachments/desires on the one hand, founding conceptual dualisms on the other—might be untangled from each other. In this sense, my own project might be understood as motivated by a "will" to "make it new." It is, after all, a project of making music other than how I've heard it made before. But I use a different phrase here than "will to make it new," because I don't see it as a project of creation but of reorganization or reconceptualization. These underlying attachments and conscious desires already exist, and I don't suggest they need to be changed. Only that their translation into musical practice needs to be reconceptualized according to foundational theories other than the dualisms I mention in the next endnote. Therefore, I choose the phrase from Locke: "extended still forwards beyond."

[xi] To quote Locke, *Essay*, 149, in full:

> *Our different conception of the infinity of number, duration, and expansion*–It will, perhaps, give us a little farther light into the idea we have of infinity, and discover to us that it is nothing but the infinity of number applied to determinate parts, of which we have in our minds the distinct ideas, if we consider that number is not generally thought by us infinite, whereas duration and extension are apt to be so; which arises from hence, that in number we are at one end as it were: for there being in number nothing less than an unit, we there stop, and are at an end; but in addition or increase of number, we can set no bounds: and so it is like a line, whereof one end terminating with us, the other is extended still forwards beyond all that we can conceive; but in space and duration it is otherwise. For in duration we consider it as if this line of number were extended both ways to an unconceivable, undeterminate, and infinite length; which is evident to anyone that will but reflect on what consideration he hath of eternity; which, I suppose, he will find to be nothing else but the turning this infinity of number both ways, *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, as they speak. For when we would consider eternity *a parte ante*, what do we but, beginning from ourselves and the present time we are in, repeat in our minds the ideas of years, or ages, or any other assignable portion of duration past, with a

prospect of proceeding in such addition with all the infinity of number? And when we would consider eternity *a parte post*, we just after the same rate begin from ourselves, and reckon by multiplied periods yet to come, still extending that line of number as before: and these two being put together are that infinite duration we call 'eternity;' which, as we turn our view either way, forwards or backwards, appears infinite, because we still turn that way the infinite end of number, i.e., the power still of adding more.

As will become clear over the following chapters, this idea of extending trajectories beyond their sensible, real forms can be a crucial bridging point between interpretation and invention. This can exist on the small scale within a single document or on a much larger scale over the entire breadth of a discipline. If I've seen three or four of something across only a few pages, a few books, or a few libraries or archives, I might reasonably expect to see much more of it in further pages, books, or archives. But this can be a temporal concept as well as a spatial one, as our idea of the future is often informed by our understanding of recent trends from the past into the present, whether on a timespan of centuries or milliseconds. My own project is itself one of this same type of projection or, to use Locke's word, "extension." I have seen the aforementioned attachments and desires elsewhere than in Early Music and New Music, so I might reasonably expect to be able to find them beyond those disciplinary bounds as well. Where are they? For a start, I believe they will *not* be in those dualisms I name here of mind and body, subject and object, thinking and doing, fact and opinion, and theory and practice. Each of these dualisms in my research questions are ones I see as further specifications or subcategories of the dualism I introduced in the preceding chapter between idealized forms of contemporary composition and historical performance or, more broadly, between creation and representation as fundamentally different acts. This concept of dualism in itself is fiercely complex, as I hope the following excerpt from Jonathan Israel's long-form history of the Enlightenment will begin to make clear.

xii To quote Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 729:

The main tradition of ancient thought, since philosophy's beginnings, holds [Jean-Baptiste de] Mirabaud, was materialist and monist, based on the idea of the corporeality of the active principle. This original current, he argues, nurtured no notion of Creation *ex nihilo* or immortality of the soul but was later diverted to a different course by a mystifying metaphysics of spirituality introduced less by Plato

(who, he alleges, adduced his notions of soul and world-soul merely as a thought experiment but did not really believe in them) than by the Neoplatonists. Greek philosophy, he contends, following Bayle and Le Clerc, was then further debased by the Church Fathers who severed Platonism from its roots in the idea of an eternal spirit or world-soul pervading, rather than distinct from, the universe and adapted his ideas to Christianity. Claiming immortality of the soul wholly alien to the archaic and classical Greek and Roman culture, Mirabaud notes the absence of such a concept in classical religion, differentiating sharply between Plato and Neoplatonism, and claiming all Greek and Latin words designating soul or spirit to have originally denoted just 'breath' or 'breathing,' there being originally no terms for immaterial spirits. Descartes's and Malebranche's mechanistic dualism Mirabaud deems an absurd diversion from the true path, a duality deriving ultimately from Platonist and Christian tradition. Descartes's and Malebranche's systems he considers self-contradictory monstrosities justly derided by Pyrrhonian sceptics and disciples of Montaigne.

As so many others have done before me—from Israel, here, to Bernard Harcourt, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Giambattista Vico—my own project positions Descartes as a metonym for its central conceptual problem. The word "dualism" is not one that Descartes uses himself, but it is regularly used by historians and philosophers to describe his main philosophical efforts: namely, to unequivocally separate out and distinguish matters of the mind from matters of the body, and matters of absolute certainty from all *other* matters. This idea, both in Descartes's writing and in its long afterlife in the Enlightenment and beyond, as partly evidenced in this quote from Israel, is far more complex than I can expand upon here, but the curious similarity to a Christian dualism of body and soul is worth noting. The dualisms named in the latter half of my research question are what I see as extensions of Descartes's conceptual apparatus into music.

xiii To quote René Descartes, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind" [first published 1701], in *Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 31: Descartes and Spinoza*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 1:

The end of study should be to direct the mind towards the enunciation of sound and correct judgments on all matters that come before it. Whenever men notice some similarity between two things, they are wont to ascribe to each, even in those respects in which the two differ, what they have found to be true of the other. Thus

they erroneously compare the sciences, which entirely consist in the cognitive exercise of the mind, with the arts, which depend upon an exercise and disposition of the body. They see that not all the arts can be acquired by the same man, but that he who restricts himself to one, most readily becomes the best executant, since it is not so easy for the same hand to adapt itself both to agricultural operations and to harp-playing, or to the performance of several such tasks as to one alone. Hence they have held the same to be true of the sciences also, and distinguishing them from one another according to their subject matter, they have imagined that they ought to be studied separately, each in isolation from all the rest. But this is certainly wrong. For since the sciences taken all together are identical with human wisdom, which always remains one and the same, however applied to different subjects, and suffers no more differentiation proceeding from them than the light of the sun experiences from the variety of the things which it illumines, there is no need for minds to be confined at all within limits; for neither does the knowing of one truth have an effect like that of the acquisition of one art and prevent us from finding out another, it rather aids us to do so.

It should be noted that I only extract the word "mind" from this quote, not "body." For Descartes, the mind seems to be bound by nothing except its own ambition against innumerable problems. It can take on whatever form and envision whatever idea necessary to the task at hand. The body, on the other hand, is presented as if it is part of a machine. 350 years later, Foucault had what I find to be a much more useful insight into the nature of the body.

xiv To quote Michel Foucault, trans. Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [first published 1975] (New York: Random House, 1977):

The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it.

What's important here is to see that there is a point in history at which the body *becomes* the mechanistic utility that Descartes sees it as. And as the mind is, in this

view, more agile and prolific as a navigator of reality, it *masters* the body. This is not symbiosis but domination. For Foucault, this capture and rationalization of the body by the Cartesian mind is the conceptual underpinning of a wide range of disciplinary institutions, from the prison and the military to the school and the church. But this view of the body is historically contingent. Other more synergistic understandings of the body's relationship to the mind both preceded and followed it, and it is through these that likely more value will be found for my own purposes.

xv To quote Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 46:

> From the beginning a basic ambiguity had adhered to the science of the self. The object of the investigation was at the same time the investigating subject. The self was both knowing *subject* and the substance to be known. The terms 'subject' and 'substance' were both translations of the same Greek term, *hypokeimenon*, the permanent base that supports the transient qualities of a being. Descartes uses the term 'subject' rarely and never in the pregnant sense here described. The term 'substance,' originally no more than the permanent core that supports (*sub-stat*) all qualities of a being, had gradually come to refer to that being itself. Early Scholasticism had referred to God, the soul, and the world, as substances. Descartes continued to apply that term to the conscious self (*res cogitans*), but because for him consciousness functions as the source of meaning of all substances, that denomination created a major problem. How can what constitutes meaning be, at the same time, a substance endowed with a meaning content of its own? How can there be an *objective* science of what is supposed to be the source of all objective meaning? The problem continues to haunt contemporary thought. Michel Foucault referred to it as the paradox of a 'being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible.' Paul Ricoeur has rephrased the two functions of the self while attempting to avoid the dualism involved in the terminology of subject and substance. He distinguishes the two modes of self-description by the Latin terms *ipse* (the meaning-giving function of the self) and *idem* (the quality whereby a self remains the same substance). The self is both. Yet referring to it through either of those designations singularly is inadequate.

Through Descartes's invention of the *cogito*, the human being is ruptured into the thinking subject and the investigable object. The mind as a source of auto-generated, self-contained certainty is divorced from its fleshy home and thus becomes able to study

that home—the body—as *objectively* as it studies any other outside thing. Reality thus becomes segregated into two parts: on the one hand there is the mind and what it knows, and on the other hand there is that which the mind knows things *about*. But the mind itself is insulated from this logic, from this ability to become an object of study in itself, as Dupré details above. Thus, the Cartesian subject remains something akin to its Christian predecessor in the *soul*—a mysterious, supernatural thing—and transfers that obscurity to everything it produces through itself. Its objects, on the other hand— everything outside that subject or soul—can come to be known through a more scientific (though in the case of Descartes himself, I'd have to say *proto*-scientific) style of inquiry.

One can already start to see ingredients of the Romantic artistic genius in this casting of the Cartesian subject. Reflexively to the logic above, it—and artistic practice itself—becomes almost fully synonymous with that which is unknowable through scientific inquiry. The artist reaches into their inner self and draws out that which is entirely divorced from the outside world, that which is self-sustaining and divine. It aligns in this way also with religion: a relationship whose vestiges can be seen in terms such as the "canon," where the most respected musical works are as culturally cemented into orchestral institutions as the word of God is into the Bible. This grows in the 20ᵗʰ century into the musical version of Rosalind Krauss's artistic avant-garde. Only this time, instead of being invested in the mystery of the self as a producer of true knowledge—the mind in itself—attention is given to the type of *certainty* that self is capable of producing—what the mind knows. Composers from Arnold Schoenberg to Milton Babbitt become increasingly invested in mathematics—the grid, as Krauss specified it for visual media—for the same complete and total self-containment that led Descartes to it. In either version, though, Romantic or Modern, artistic practice is in this formulation a production of and by the self, or subject.

In complement to this stand those musical practices that eschew the self of the practitioner in favor of making a music that belongs entirely to an other, or object. This distinction is what defines the classical roles of composer and performer, with the latter given the very difficult charge of acting as neutral medium for the former. The self of the performer is irrelevant in the context of their performative efforts, as they focus all energy on understanding and replicating the composer's intent. Historical performance takes a more modern historiographical approach to this than mainstream classical music, favoring archaeological and documentary evidence over received tradition or oral culture, but the two practices share the same basic goal. This is why I tend in the context of this dissertation to use "subject" and "object" as metonymic representatives of "New Music" and "Early Music," respectively, though surely the

opposite mapping could be plausible in the context of other artistic research problem areas.

[xvi] To quote Rene Descartes, trans. John Cottingham, *Meditations on First Philosophy* [first published 1641] (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 37:

> But what shall I now say that I am, when I am supposing that there is some supremely powerful and, if it is permissible to say so, malicious deceiver, who is deliberately trying to trick me in every way he can? Can I now assert that I possess even the most insignificant of all the attributes which I have just said belong to the nature of a body? I scrutinize them, think about them, go over them again, but nothing suggests itself; it is tiresome and pointless to go through the list once more. But what about the attributes I assigned to the soul? Nutrition and movement? Since now I do not have a body, these are mere fabrications. Sense-perception? This surely does not occur without a body, and besides, when asleep I have appeared to perceive through the senses many things which I afterwards realized I did not perceive through the senses at all. Thinking? At last I have discovered it—thought; this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist—that is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking? For it could be that were I totally to cease from thinking, I should totally cease to exist. At present I am not admitting anything except what is necessarily true. I am, then, in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason—words whose meaning I have been ignorant of until now. But for all that I am a thing which is real and which truly exists. But what kind of a thing? As I have just said—a thinking thing.

It seems worth noting at this point that the discipline of artistic research, as practiced at the Orpheus Institute and many other European institutions of higher education, is premised upon a similar re-unification of mind and body, subject and object, thinking and doing. I'd like to read this pivotal moment from Descartes's most famous meditation through another set of observations from William Brooks.

[xvii] To quote William Brooks (ed.), *Experience Music Experiment: Pragmatism and Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2021), 10-11:

> At the next [Orpheus Institute fellows'] assembly (8 February 2010), I delivered a short paper in which I distinguished between what I came to call 'test' and 'observation.' This led to additional articles and presentations I gave at Orpheus

and elsewhere, all titled with the form 'In re: Experimental ____,' and all of which applied pragmatist thought to Cage or to the broader domain usually called 'experimental music.' In June 2012, Orpheus fellow Michael Schwab organised a study day with the philosopher and scientist Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, following this with a watershed edited collection of essays; musical applications of 'experiment' were thereby joined with present-day thinking in the sciences. In 2013, Paulo de Assis received a major grant for a five-year Orpheus research project called MusicExperiment21, and the term (and its marriage with 'music') became ubiquitous. A measure of its centrality thereafter can be seen in the titles of publications issued by Orpheus between 2013 and 2018: one-third of these have contained some variety of the word 'experimental.' Partially in response to all this, I was rereading [John] Dewey's *Art as Experience* and many related texts, and a question began to plague me: what was the relationship between the term 'experience,' as used by Dewey and other pragmatists, and 'experiment,' as used by composers like John Cage and Lejaren Hiller and by philosophers of science like Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger? The words have the same Latin root—*experiri*, 'to try, to test,' from *ex*, 'out of' and *per*, 'risk'—but very different implications. […] I have come to think that the distinction between these two words—two sides of a single coin—is much like the distinction I had drawn between 'test' and 'observation.' And it further seems to me that in conducting what we at Orpheus call 'artistic research' both sides of the coin have to be present simultaneously—that 'artistic research' entails tossing *experiri* into the air, spinning it rapidly, so that the whole coin is at once two-sided and a single thing. Like all coins, when it falls to the ground, 'artistic research' shows primarily one face: it appears either as a research report, with the academic trappings of objectivity and reliability; or it is offered as a performance, with all the attendant uncertainties concerning intention, truth, and even 'what happened.' But while it is in progress, both sides are equally in play, and the researcher cycles unpredictably between performance and reflection—between doing and undergoing, in Dewey's influential formulation in *Art as Experience*.

"Thinking" and "doing" are often presented as a complementary pair, and one that can be understood as the core set of activities constituting artistic research. But it's worth noting that this complementary pair can be cast in a number of different ways, each with a unique shade of meaning. Again, I need to be cognisant of how using Descartes as a stand-in for this dualism of "thinking" and "doing" and various other shades of dualism I problematize in this text may oversimplify matters if I'm not cautious. "Thinking," in Descartes's sense, is a valuable concept because it is a single word for that which

belongs to the self or the mind alone—or more properly, the *cogito*. This "thinking" is an extremely narrow one. It is not a thinking *about* anything in particular that gives the self its undeniable existence but the mere fact of thought in itself. In this sense, "doing" is not really its perfect complement, as "doing" implies activities only of the body, while there are other activities of the mind that are not "thinking." Dreaming is Descartes's own example, but there's also imagining, wishing, worrying, and so forth. So Descartes's "thinking" must be broadened before it matches to the "thinking" and "doing" of artistic research. William Brooks offers several other frameworks here: test and observation, experiment and experience, and (John Dewey's) doing and undergoing. Furthermore, Brooks points out a similar type of mode-switching in artistic research as I point out later in this project in the writing style of critical theory. Much as each field may strive toward a dissolution of the hierarchy or even distinction of theory and practice—to give another shade of dualism underpinning my project—they are bound by certain institutional or cultural norms regulating activity in the pre-existing fields they bring together. In this sense, each really is, at least for now, an *inter-* rather than *trans*-disciplinarity. So each of these shades of dualism is worth keeping in mind and revisiting over the coming chapters, but it's also worth considering whether and how any of them might be overcome altogether and what more unified conceptual form(s) might emerge in their place. This problem also appears in the distinction between fact and opinion, or truth and interpretation, that plays a strong role in shaping historical research and writing, as is detailed at length by historical theorist Paul Ricoeur and critical theorist Linda Zerilli, both of whom are quoted in the following two endnotes.

xviii To quote Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 179:

> What at this stage of the historiographical operation [the documentary stage] can be held to have been proved? The answer is clear: a fact, facts, capable of being asserted in singular, discrete propositions, most often having to do with the mentioning of dates, places, proper names, verbs that name an action or state. Here we need to be alert for one confusion, that between confirmed facts and past events. A vigilant epistemology will guard here against the illusion of believing that what we call a fact coincides with what really happened, or with the living memory of eyewitnesses, as if the facts lay sleeping in the documents until the historians extracted them. This illusion […] for a long time underlay the conviction that the historical fact does not differ fundamentally from the empirical fact in the experimental natural sciences. Just as, in dealing below with explanation and representation, we shall need to resist the temptation to dissolve the historical

fact into narration and this latter into a literary composition indiscernible from fiction, so too we need to resist this initial confusion between a historical fact and a really remembered event. The fact is not the event, itself given to the conscious life of a witness, but the contents of a statement meant to represent it.

xix To quote Linda Zerilli, *A Democratic Theory of Judgment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 121:

Let us begin by turning not to 'Truth and Politics' but to a less famous essay by [Hannah] Arendt, 'Philosophy and Politics.' Here we discover that, *pace* her critics, she does not accept the founding Platonic opposition of truth and opinion and then seek merely to revalue the subordinate term (opinion) in Plato's account of absolute truth. Far from simply revaluing opinion in the ineradicable opposition between truth and opinion that Plato bequeathed to political philosophy, Arendt tries to develop instead the Socratic idea of what she calls 'the truth of […] opinion.' She does so to undercut the difference that Plato drew 'between those who know and do not act and those who act and do not know,' for this 'Platonic separation of knowing and doing' obliterates freedom and plurality; it is 'at the root of all theories of domination,' she observes in *The Human Condition* and a concept of politics as *Herrschaft*, or rule.

xx Here I quote a blank space, with credit given to Michel Foucault, as he had a propensity to omit the serial "and" from long lists of concepts. For example, see Michel Foucault, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* [first published 1969] (New York: Random House, 2010), 6-7:

[T]hrough a mutation that is not of very recent origin, but which has still not come to an end, history has altered its position in relation to the document: it has taken as its primary task, not the interpretation of the document, nor the attempt to decide whether it is telling the truth or what is its expressive value, but to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations. The document, then, is no longer for history an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations.

This blank space in which the "and" might otherwise be is what I quote here, as it is a potent example of meaning being contained within and conveyed through a specific type of absence or nothingness. It is also a stylistic trait that others influenced by Foucault have taken on in their own writing, including Hayden White, whose further developments of this meaning of omission in history were a particularly fruitful starting point for my reaction to the authenticity debate in Early Music, and Ann Laura Stoler, whose work provides significant conceptual structure to my own archival methodology along similar lines. Perhaps not by coincidence, this play on style as *generative* of meaning is itself the topic Foucault discusses in this quote, and which others following him, including White and Stoler, have also taken up. The writing of theory can, after all, be understood as an artistic practice in itself.

xxi To quote Henk Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 10:

> In addition to being an essay on artistic research (in relation to academia), this book is also a project and a proposition. It is a project in the literal sense of 'that which is thrown forth', and this is done with a specific purpose: to achieve something in practice, to make a difference there. This performative dimension of the book, as I have pointed out in the beginning, is interwoven with the discursive dimension. Theories are not disinterested attempts to approach an ever-receding practice, nor are they imperfect representations of a constant reality. Theories, including ones about artistic research, co-constitute the practices they address—just as there are no practices that are not permeated by theories and beliefs. This intertwinement between theory and practices—acknowledged both in hermeneutics and in constructivism—is the departure point of my analysis in the first chapter. But this relationship between theory and practice also figures in the entire project of which this book forms a written account. No one, of course, is the sole owner of the viewpoints advanced here, as any certificate of ownership bears traces of things that others have left behind in intertextual space. These shared viewpoints exert their performative force on the practices they become involved with.

xxii This passage is entirely my own composition.

In this context I imagine, and indeed hope, that such a statement comes across as quite strange. Firstly, "this passage" might refer either to the section of the body text of this chapter for which it is an endnote, or it can refer to this particular endnote, which does not cite any external text. Do unquoted expressions demonstrate my sole

ownership of the constituent words? In what relation do these words sit with their context? In other words, is the meaning of this phrase entirely encapsulated within it or does it depend on its surroundings? Or perhaps the meaning would simply change were this phrase to be extracted? And if it depends on its context, how large is that context? How far extends the production of meaning by the assemblage of others' ideas? And how might the meaning of this passage further change as its scale increases or decreases in the interpretation of the reader? Secondly, regardless of the intended object, which I decline to singularize, I imagine that it's further unclear what I mean by "my own composition." The concepts and sentiments leading up to and following from this passage—as the shorter, endnoted member of the main body—are each tied to a diversity of literatures both within and without artistic research in music that exert a strong influence on this project whether or not they play an explicit role in the chapters that follow. Can such assemblage alone constitute knowledge production? Though each book or article from which I extract words or small phrases to build my research question plays a genuinely strong role in my overall project, one could reasonably argue that those specific words I choose to extract are not adequately representative of those works overall. It seems silly to credit such basic words as "opinion," for example, to any specific author. It's simply a word in the English language. But where did I learn what it means except from the document I cite for it? Is *all* writing outside of quotation marks plagiarism? With each set of marks here, and this almost weaponization of endnotes against themselves, I intend to convey the inconceivable depth of meaning implicit in any linguistic exercise. This is an effort to demonstrate the futility of crediting, let alone fully analyzing, all meaningful influences on and adjacents to any such project. The proposition of a founding paradox, in any case, is the observation I shared in the introduction that sets this whole project into motion. The dualisms I mention in my research question are impossible to fully separate from one another, which must mean that any practices following from them as founding principles must be similarly imperfect and entangled. But what are these practices, and what further meta-conceptuality binds them together as apparent wholes?

[xxiii] To quote Michel Foucault, trans. Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [first published 1975] (New York: Random House, 1977):

> In the first instance, discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space. To achieve this end, it employs several techniques.

1. Discipline sometimes requires *enclosure*, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony. [...]

2. But the principle of 'enclosure' is neither constant, nor indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery. This machinery works space in a much more flexible and detailed way. It does this first of all on the principle of elementary location or *partitioning*. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual. [...]

3. The rule of *functional sites* would gradually, in the disciplinary institutions, code a space that architecture generally left at the disposal of several different uses. Particular places were defined to correspond not only to the need to supervise, to break dangerous communications, but also to create a useful space. [...]

4. In discipline, the elements are interchangeable, since each is defined by the place it occupies in a series, and by the gap that separates it from the others. [...]

In this "passage," Foucault is overtly describing "discipline" in its typically non-academic sense; as, perhaps, an

instruction or teaching intended to mould the mind and character and instill a sense of proper, orderly conduct and action; training to behave or act in a controlled and effective manner; mental, intellectual, moral, or spiritual training or exercise. Also applied to the effect of an experience or undertaking (as, study, adversity, etc.) considered as imparting such training.

Discipline (n.), sense II.4.a, *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed 20 December 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1894607904.

Yet I can't help but see shadows of another of the word's meanings.

A branch of learning or knowledge; a field of study or expertise; a subject. Now also: a subcategory or element of a particular subject or field.

Ibid., sense II.7.a.

And perhaps a relation between the two. How often does the maintenance of a consistent coherence of a discipline as a branch of learning or knowledge require the doling out of discipline as an effort to train, control, or mould others toward a pre-determined, value-producing end? Understood in this more complex sense—a cultural or formal institutionalization of a particular type of academic or artistic practice as a partitioning and enclosure of individual humans that transforms them into productive interoperable parts—what does discipline look like in music?

xxiv To quote Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 9:

> What is 'early music'? The concept has meant different things at different periods in history. In 1731, England's Academy of Ancient Music formally defined the ancients as composers 'such ass lived before ye end of the Sixteenth Century'. In the eyes of Brahms and his late-nineteenth-century contemporaries, the early music repertoire encompassed the High Renaissance and Baroque periods, from Isaac, Praetorius, and Schutz up to Bach and Handel. Jerome and Elizabeth Roche stop short at Monteverdi in their recently published *Dictionary of Early Music*, while a prominent German musicologist describes it more broadly as any music having 'an interrupted interpretative tradition'. The definition has gradually been expanded to the point where almost anything from an ancient Greek hymn to an early-twentieth-century orchestral score can qualify as early music—that is, music for which a historically appropriate style of performance must be reconstructed on the basis of surviving instruments, treatises and other evidence. Whether this process constitutes a 'revival' is open to question: much of the music to which the above definition applies—Gregorian chant, Palestrina, Bach, Handel and so forth—is in fact part of a *continuous* interpretative tradition, in some cases reaching back hundreds of years. The conclusion is inescapable that something other than chronological age is the determining factor here. Historical performance, as the musicologist Joseph Kerman has written, 'is essentially an attitude of mind rather than a set of techniques applied to an arbitrarily delimited body of early music.'

There are many ideas of Early Music. Beyond Haskell's naming of the first iteration of the Academy of Ancient Music, Jerome and Elizabeth Roche, and Joseph Kerman, numerous authors have written about the activity of performing music that is older than living memory in a way that is arguably appropriate to it. Consider the compositional medievalism of Richard Wagner or Carl Orff, the historical organology of Arnold

Dolmetsch, the interpretive experimentation of David Munrow, Alfred Deller, and the Dufay Collective, and the historiographical reflections of Richard Taruskin, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Peter Kivy, John Butt, and Barthold Kuijken. Think also of the current popularity of Early Music festivals and ensembles across the U.S. and Europe such as the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, the London International Early Music Festival (formerly Greenwich Early Music Festival), the Boston Early Music Festival, the recent 'revival' of the Academy for Ancient Music, and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin. Keeping in mind Foucault's social techniques detailed above, the phrase "Early Music" can be understood to name this diverse set of activities as a stable, singular "discipline." Over the course of this text I often use the phrases "historical performance," "historically-informed performance," and "Early Music" somewhat interchangeably, but I do see a few important distinctions and strive throughout this project to apply them appropriately. In my understanding, "Early Music" can refer both to a musical culture or cultures of the distant past and to the aforementioned broader cultural movement dedicated to "reviving" it in contemporary practice. So this term can refer to both a particular *past* and a particular *discipline*. "Historical performance" and "historically-informed performance," on the other hand, refer more to a particular *methodology* that is presently hegemonic within "Early Music," though it was not always so. I do understand these two methodological terms, "historical performance" and "historically-informed performance," to be more closely related to each other than either is to "Early Music," but there is a further important distinction between the two. Namely, I find the word "informed" to be problematic in relation to the actual methodology applied, as it is only an attempt to wipe clean the practitioner's hands of their inevitable participation in *selection, interpretation,* and *judgment* of the so-called "historical information." For this reason, I prefer "historical performance," which retains the core idea that one is engaging in music-making as a historical activity but leaves the intense complexity of historical epistemology and ontology fully in play, as indeed it always is in practice.

xxv The other half of this puzzle is "New Music." To quote from the website of the Institute for New Music at Northwestern University, accessed 21 December 2023, [https://music.northwestern.edu/newmusic)](https://music.northwestern.edu/newmusic):

> The Institute for New Music functions as the nerve center of all contemporary music activities at the Bienen School of Music. Founded in 2012, the Institute presents numerous events over the course of the academic year—from residencies of visiting ensembles and composers to workshops, lectures, and masterclasses, to the biennial conference/festival NUNC! Several critical assets make Northwestern an ideal site for

a major new music initiative. These include a corps of talented performance students interested in new music; a strong composition program; the Michael Ludwig Nemmers Prize in Music Composition, which regularly brings world-renowned composers to campus; the Northwestern Music Library, which contains an unparalleled and internationally renowned archive of printed music composed since 1945; and proximity to Chicago's vibrant new music scene.

In lower case, "new music" can certainly be just as neutral a chronological indicator as "early music." When capitalized, however, "New Music" becomes specifically representative of that which intentionally departs from, reacts to, or invents beyond prior music. This framing appears in the pedagogy at Northwestern University—my undergraduate alma mater—as well as in the activities of those ensembles, festivals, and concert series with which I'm most intimately familiar—Ensemble Dal Niente, Eighth Blackbird, the Nieuw Ensemble, New Music Chicago, Gaudeamus, and November Music, among others. Understood through these groups and activities, "New Music" is as well-established and clearly-defined a *discipline*, again using Foucault's sense of the word, as "Early Music." My own expertise and activity in this field lies particularly in what's sometimes called "contemporary composition," which is the term I use more often than "New Music" in this text. In my understanding, "contemporary composition" specifically refers to the inscription of creative musical intent. Music notation is the medium here, though this can be anything from the received tradition of writing notes and rests on a five-line staff to any number of more experimental notations in graphic, prose, or other visual or sensory form. Though there are often aesthetic and ideological affinities between composed music and its improvised or otherwise non-notated cousins in New Music, my own methodology as both a historian and a musician works in and through musical notation, so my focus on it here is mostly a matter of pragmatics.

This can lead to what might perhaps serve as a concluding remark to this research question and (de facto) literature review. Though the scope of this project uses examples from my own highly specific practice as an archival historian and contemporary composer, my findings are by no means limited in relevance to only my own methodologies or interests. I use my own practice as both an experimental arena and a storehouse of examples in and through which to unpack the question above. But it is my anticipation and indeed hope that the novel epistemological, ontological, and methodological formations this project creates will be transferable in relatively straightforward ways to many other practices of music, art, history, and other forms of cultural production and theory.

3_Rhetoric, Knowledge, and Asynchrony in Historical Sound

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In his 1709 lecture *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, Giambattista Vico questions the value of René Descartes's "geometric method," which he presents in opposition to the humanistic-rhetorical mode of argumentation common among European elites for the few preceding centuries. Vico describes this method as essentially just deductive logic: meticulous, step-by-step reasoning that builds from small points of certainty to larger ones, from simple immutable facts to assertions of truth about more complex particular issues. Descartes asks what he knows with certainty, and answers that he knows that he exists, which is the same as knowing that he thinks (*cogito ergo sum*, "I *think*, therefore I *am*"), and then proceeds into a chain of 'therefore x, therefore y, therefore *z*' about geometry, the mind-body relationship, and so on. The geometric method generates knowledge that is objective, or that is true in every place and at every time regardless of the subjectivity from which it is considered. For example, the three angles of a triangle add to 180 degrees. It is universal, immutable, and self-sufficient. This method is what would eventually merge over the course of the 18th century with a long tradition of empiricism to form what we now know as the scientific method.

Vico criticizes it on four fronts. Firstly, it is used by philosophers to treat *all* objects of study, despite being properly applicable only to questions of *natural* philosophy (studies of the non-human). Secondly, it creates a tendency to cloud matters of *judgment*, impertinently and ineffectively rendering them matters of *fact*. Thirdly, it has an inefficacy of practical application, making the use of its knowledge within refined crafts both onerous and ineffective. And fourthly, it is introduced by teachers too early on in the education of young people, detracting from their natural, plentiful, and useful faculty of imagination. In its place, Vico advocates a renewed focus on rhetoric and judgment.

In these critiques, Vico would be by no means alone among today's critical theorists and historians. Many recent authors have similarly demonstrated the fallibility of an overemphasis of objectivity in history and advocated for a renewed focus on the political and aesthetic judgment implicit in historical work. My aim here in giving an overview of Vico's rehearsal of this argument, though, is not to bolster

recent discourse in historiography and critical theory with a supporting perspective but to demonstrate the similarity between Vico's position and this discourse such that Vico's later work might be situated as a possible model for overcoming a vexing impasse faced by critical theory, historiography, and, by extension, historically-informed performance today. In raising these qualms with the geometric method, Vico prefigures his later desire for an altogether different conception of knowledge that can provide the strength Descartes sees in certainty and immutability without succumbing to the pitfalls that are their unattainability and inflexibility in actual practice.

To begin, by pointing out that, "the invention of arguments is by nature prior to the judgment of their validity,"[1] Vico both situates his reader in the vocabulary of classical rhetoric and positions rhetoric ahead of analysis. He argues that before one can "cleanse [one's] fundamental truths not only of all falsity, but also of the mere suspicion of error,"[2] one must know what those fundamental truths are and whence they came. In other words, while it's all well and good to be able to answer difficult questions with precision, clarity, and certainty, the value of such a skill is limited without a distinct method by which to decide which questions are worth answering and why. If "the only target of our intellectual endeavours is truth," we will inevitably "devote all our efforts to the investigation of physical phenomena, because their nature seems unambiguous." This means that, by default, we will also "fail to inquire into human nature which, because of the freedom of man's will, is difficult to determine."[3] In other words, because the geometric method is better able to answer questions dealing with the physical, analytical philosophers tend to neglect questions dealing with the human. This is an ethical crisis for Vico—ethical questions being those which "treat of human character, of its dispositions, its passions, and of the manner of adjusting these factors to public life and eloquence."[4] Its result is that, "our young men [...] are unable to engage in the life of the community, to conduct themselves with sufficient wisdom and prudence, infuse into their speech a familiarity with human psychology or permeate their utterances with passion."[5] By devoting themselves exclusively to the geometric method, philosophers detach themselves

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[1] Giambattista Vico, trans. Elio Gianturco, *On the Study Methods of Our Time* [first published 1709] (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 14.

[2] Ibid., 13.

[3] Ibid., 33.

[4] Ibid., 33.

[5] Ibid., 33.

from the world. They render themselves incapable of discerning what is relevant in their society and what is meaningful to their peers.

But even if we excuse this ethical crisis for a moment, even if an analytical philosopher somehow did happen upon a question worth answering within their society, the geometric method wouldn't necessarily enable them to answer it. And this is the case for a far broader range of questions than those "human" questions mentioned above:

> [A man] built a ship the proportions of which had been carefully calculated beforehand according to the rules of analytical geometry, expecting it to be the swiftest vessel in existence. But as soon as the ship slid from the docks into the water, it sank to the bottom of the sea and remained there as motionless as a rock. Perhaps the reason is that, just as pieces of music composed in accordance with a mathematical formula give no pleasure, so machines built according to the principles of analytical geometry are of no practical use.[6]

The geometric method, in other words, is too abstract for its own good. Because it deals with universality and immutability—that which is true at every moment in time and every point in space—it is unable to be of any practical use in the constantly shifting environment of nature. Though it may succeed in laying out true generalities, it fails to provide any guidance as to how those generalities might be mapped onto particularities. It can tell you the ideal shape, size, and mass for a ship but it cannot tell you how to adapt that scheme to the idiosyncrasies of the actual wood you are using to build it, which differs from tree to tree and board to board.

It may seem that this is an argument for embodied knowledge—good craftsmanship—but Vico's focus throughout the lecture remains intellectual. The plea he makes is for an agility of the mind:

> Those who know all the loci, i.e., the lines of argument to be used, are able (by an operation not unlike reading the printed characters on a page) to grasp extemporaneously the elements of persuasion inherent in any question or case. [...] In pressing, urgent affairs, which do not admit of delay or postponement [...] it is the

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[6] Ibid., 29-30.

orator's business to give immediate assistance. [...] Our experts in philosophical criticism, instead, whenever they are confronted with some dubious point, are wont to say: 'Give me some time to think it over!'[7]

Because geometric analysis is so rigid, it is unable to adapt quickly to new and unfamiliar situations. Instead of allowing one to recognize familiar patterns within new situations and then simply adapt memorized, archetypal lines of argument to those new particularities, the geometric method demands a fresh start each time. The effect of this is that by the time it yields a result, the moment in which that result would have been relevant has already passed. Because it only deals in the immutable, it does not allow adaptation to continual change over time, which, from Vico's perspective, is all that is available to us in the real world.

Furthermore, even for those meaningful questions it *is* able to answer, Vico argues in a later lecture that, "such a method is so subtle and drawn out that if by chance attention to one proposition is broken, it is completely lost to whoever is listening to comprehend anything of the whole of what is being said."[8] The rigidity and plainness of the geometric method, in Vico's view, "constitutes a hindrance in the way of an eloquent exposition,"[9] such that it will never be effective as a mode of *communication*. In this position, Vico once again reveals himself to be fundamentally a humanist. He believes that arts and sciences are created by and for humans. A science that can produce pure, immutable knowledge is of no value if it cannot frame that knowledge in such a way that it can be communicated from one human to another. But Vico is also a rhetorician:

[I]n the art of oratory the relationship between speaker and listeners is of the essence. It is in tune with the opinions of the audience that we have to arrange our speech. It often happens that people unmoved by forceful and compelling reasons can be jolted from their apathy, and made to change their minds by means of some trifling line of argument. Consequently, in order to be sure of having touched all the soul-strings of his listeners, the orator, then, should run through the complete set of the loci which schematize the evidence.[10]

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[7] Ibid., 15.

[8] Ibid., 87.

[9] Ibid., 24.

[10] Ibid., 16.

Not only must we defend our position according to what is true, we must learn to develop awareness of the beliefs, desires, and emotionality of our audience so that the truth of what we are saying finds its way to their hearts. Philosophical analysis, being solely concerned with 'pure' truth and falsity, is unable to do this. It is too abstract.

In summary, at the same time that it is unable to determine which questions are meaningful and unable to answer questions that are too practical, the geometric method is also unable to deliver truth in a way that is compelling. And because of this—because it is "impossible to assess human affairs by the inflexible standard of abstract right"[11]—we must look elsewhere for "human wisdom," which is the ultimate goal of study. In 1709, it is the orator who holds the ideal method to attain this goal. In 1744, Vico passes through his idea of poetic wisdom in order to build a new and improved knowledge system, a 'new science,' upon these rhetorical foundations.

Applied to the practice of history, this early defence of rhetoric by Vico can be seen as analogous to an opposition of objectivist-empiricist historiography to historically-grounded political judgment as defines, in part, the discipline of critical theory. Through both of these domains—critical theory and Vico's defence of rhetoric—as through Vico's later writing, we may be able to find a key to reframing the musicological discourse that began with a question of historical authenticity in performance at the beginning of the 20th century and had evolved by the beginning of the 21st century into the field of historically-informed performance. Instead of pursuing a doomed-to-fail quest for the sound of a musical past in itself, we might begin to ask, "How and why might a historian perform as their musical self and other, as the musical past and present, in one and the same gesture?"

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Asynchrony is a hot topic among musicians interested in historical performance practice, particularly in reference to later 19th-century music, where it can be clearly heard in readily-available phonograph recordings by well-known Romantic composers and their students. But it can be extremely difficult for performers with modern musical training to replicate such non-metronomy. I'd like to use this problem

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[11] Ibid., 34.

to illustrate a case in which a rhetorical (Vichian) historiography might yield a more accurate historical representation than an objectivist (Cartesian) approach.

Pianist Anna Scott has shown the drastic difference between simply imitating these recordings verbatim and any outcomes of the traditionally text- and notation-based research methodologies of historically-informed performance,[12] while musicologist George Barth has traced a clear path from this asynchronous pre-modern performance style between the early 1900s and the 1950s to the rhythmically- and metrically-standardized modern style common today.[13] By Scott's classification, this asynchrony includes upward and downward rolling of chords, temporal dislocation of the left and right hand, local stretching of time, unwritten rushing and slowing of global tempo, shortening and lengthening of individual rhythmic values, placement of individual notes earlier than indicated, or even the addition and omission of notes altogether.[14] Contrasting recordings of Franz Liszt's third *Liebestraum* [1850], as shared by Barth, and as performed by pianists Frederic Lamond in 1936 and Arthur Rubenstein in 1950, illustrate similar effects.[15] While Lamond was revered for "sometimes floating a melody above a more metrical underpinning, at other times playing all parts freely against an assumed regularity, or dispensing with regularity altogether," Rubinstein "perform[ed] every verticality [...] as a simultaneity, while adding a few more of his own by studiously ignoring every one of Liszt's arpeggio indications."[16] Listening across these two recordings, one can hear the same sea change into modernism as Rosalind Krauss described through the figure of the grid. Rubinstein quantizes his rhythms to this very same type of idealized, perfectly consistent temporality. And he does so with the very same disdain for received traditions as Marinetti and Russolo's Futurism, imitating the perfect consistency of modern technology in his

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[12] Anna Scott, "Romanticizing Brahms: Early Recordings and the Reconstruction of Brahmsian Identity" (Doctoral thesis, Leiden University, 2014), accessed 27 March 2024, https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/29987.

[13] George Barth, "Effacing Modernism, or How to Perform Less Accurately through Listening," *Historical Performance*, Vol. 1 (2018), 148-189.

[14] Scott, appendices, xvii.

[15] Frederic Lamond, 1936, accessed 27 March 2024, https://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/media/t34s55nn1n; Arthur Rubinstein, 1950. accessed 27 March 2024, https://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/media/s06415qk0x.

[16] Barth, 154.

performance practice as a way of asserting moral superiority over much more fluid inherited interpretations.

And even though phonographic recording only dates to the late-19th century, an eerily similar "waywardness," to use Barth's metonym for this phenomenon, can be heard in barrel organs, flute clocks, and music boxes from throughout the 18th century. Consider contrasting versions of "Mi paventi il figlio indegno" from Carl Heinrich Graun's 1751 opera, *Britannico*: one from a *Flötenuhr* built around 1790, and another recorded by soprano Julia Lezhneva and Concerto Köln in 2017.[17] While the latter is undoubtedly a skilful and virtuosic performance, it exhibits none of the divergences from a literal understanding of notation as does the former, which incidentally are many of those same features Scott and Barth point out in early 20th-century recordings: rolling of chords, dislocation of hands, shortening of rhythmic values, and irregular rushing and slowing. One could argue that the fidelity of such machines to actual 18th-century musical performances is less than reliable given the age of the extant examples and the difficulty of their manufacture and maintenance, but given the ubiquity of such interpretive quirks among mechanical instruments of the same era, the similarity of these quirks to those described by Scott and Barth in reference to 19th-century pianism, and the clarity with which Barth demonstrates their falling out of fashion over the course of only a few decades in the middle of the 20th century, this seems implausible. I'm almost certainly missing some nuanced amount of difference between Lamond's Liszt and this Graun *Flötenuhr*, but perhaps it's the same kind of nuanced difference I'm missing between Rubinstein's Liszt and Lezhneva and Concerto Köln's Graun, because those two sound pretty similar to me as well.

So if one is interested in imitating musical performance styles of the 18th century, there is sufficient reason to attempt such asynchrony as Scott and Barth describe. How might one go about this? Performer-scholars such as Neal Peres da Costa have expended significant effort to identify such recurring patterns of asynchrony in historical recordings in order to plausibly overlay them onto music of

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[17] Anonymous flute clock [ca. 1790], "Britannico: From the Opera," in *Flute Clocks in the Nydahl Collection* (Robert Holmin Ljud & Bild, 2014), accessed 27 March 2024, https://youtu.be/ao74cfto1pI; Julia Lezhneva and Concerto Köln, "Britannico, Act II, 'Mi paventi il filgio indegno,'" in *Graun: Opera Arias* (Decca Music Group Limited, 2017), accessed 27 March 2024, https://youtu.be/0MqZnEGdXXcW.

which we're not so lucky to have recordings contemporaneous to the date of composition.[18] Though slow and taxing, such work can result in quite remarkable music. But obstacles remain. Firstly, beyond the extreme commitment of time to study and precisely replicate historical musical asynchrony, this becomes significantly more complicated with ensemble music, where there is no longer an *individual* who has full control in real time over every detail of their performance. Yet it's clear from both Barth's article and other early recordings that such rhythmic and metrical diversity was common in larger ensemble settings as well. Secondly—and perhaps the more vexing issue—such performance aesthetics are extremely foreign, and often bewildering or unsettling, to both casual listeners to, and fellow performers of, 18th- and 19th-century music. Yet historically-informed performance has never been a reclusive, fully academic discipline, but one actively involved in public recording and concert-making activities. Each in their own way, these two problems are ones in which a rhetorical approach such as that advocated by Vico in his early writings can pull us beyond the limitations of a more objectivist Cartesian value system.

In 2017, I began experimenting with Stile Nu toward the use of such asynchrony in music for baroque orchestra, one of the more successful experiments of which, "Nine," ended up as the penultimate track on our 2022 album, *The Aviary*.[19] This is a performance of the third movement of "L'Estate" from Antonio Vivaldi's *Le Quattro Stagioni* [1725]. I approached this notation—and my desire to hear it with a degree of musical asynchrony—from the perspective of a composer rather than a performer, albeit a composer who, as described earlier, understands composition not as the creation of original music but as the curation, arrangement, and processing of pre-existing historical and contemporary musical practices through the medium of music notation and other forms of written and verbal communication with performers.

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[18] Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[19] Carlo Diaz and Stile Nu, *The Aviary* (2022), accessed 28 March 2024, https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary
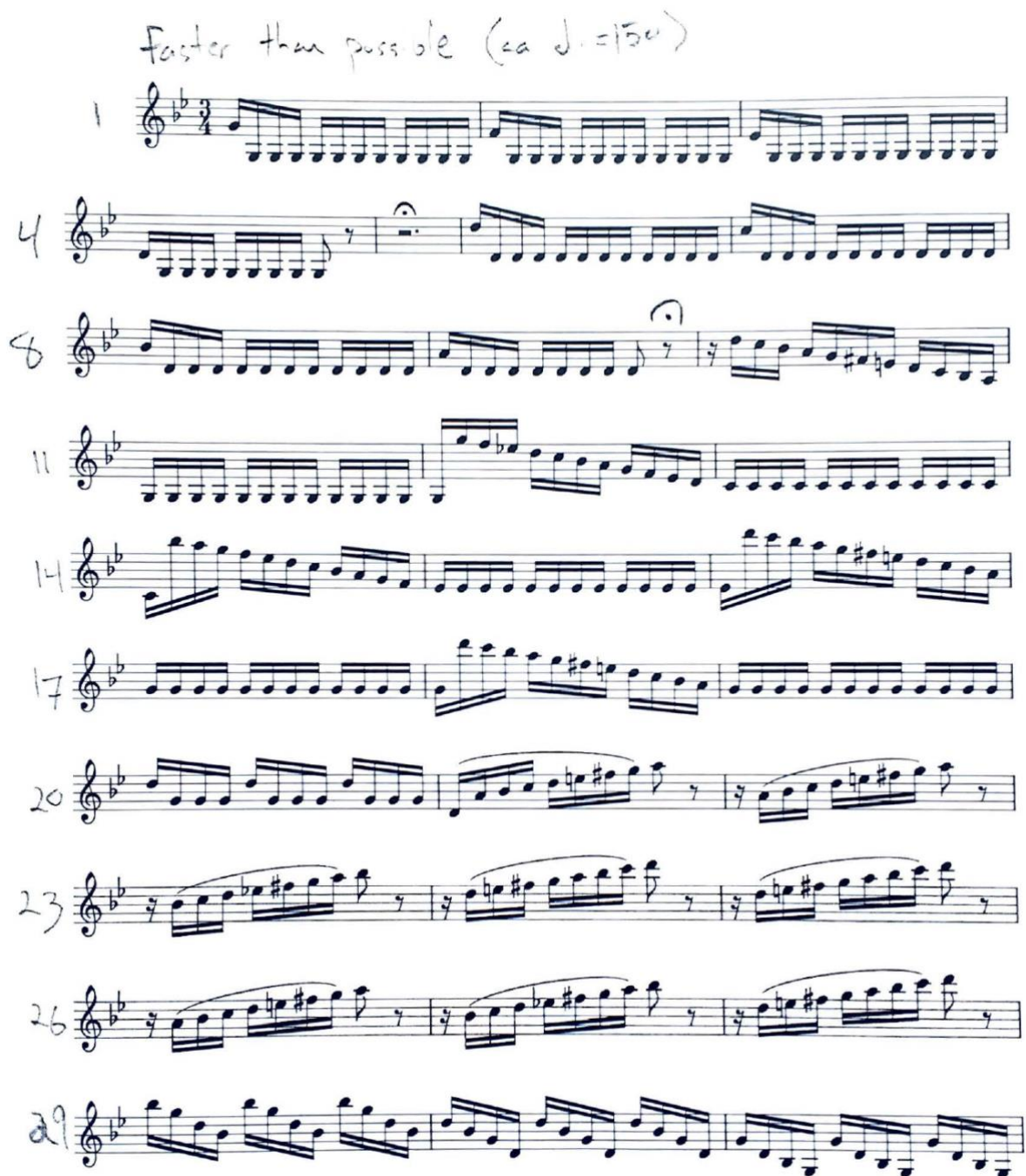
Figure 3.1: The beginning of the Violin 1 part for "Nine," by Carlo Diaz and Stile Nu; or, the beginning of the Violino Solo part for Antonio Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto in G minor*, RV 315, "L'Estate," Mvt. III, with an interpretive note written at the top. For a recording, see https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary; the excerpt shown here is the beginning of the track called "Nine."

For this piece, I simply wrote "faster than possible, ca. [dotted half note] = 150" at the top of an otherwise unaltered edition of the score. This may seem to be an insignificant intervention, but it profoundly disrupts a typical understanding of the piece, as other recent experiments such as Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's and Ji Liu's "transgressive" triple-time performance of Ludwig van Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" have demonstrated.[20] But in the case of "Nine," the idea of 'possibility' is central. If clean and precise recitation of written notes is a classical musician's *de facto* approach, one way to investigate an alternative aesthetic is to disable the possibility of that instinct. In other words, one way to force innovation is to put oneself in a totally unfamiliar situation. One's instinctive strategies for negotiating problems are suddenly untenable, so new instincts must be discovered. At the same time, one's existing framework of aesthetic judgment is called into question, as the standard idea of a 'good' performance is no longer possible. Done in the abstract, this can be an incredibly powerful endeavour for any musician. Done within the context of a marriage to music that one typically understands outside the context of such types of experimentation, the impact becomes even bigger. One must find a new idea for a familiar beauty, and a new way to produce it.

Merely by allowing oneself to sincerely attempt such an impossibility—perhaps absurdity—the composition's polyphony dislocates in time, the placement of each note is sometimes earlier or later than written, dozens of notes are omitted and perhaps some others sneak their way in through the chaos, and there is a rushing and a slowing that keeps everyone vaguely near the same moment on the page. With almost no effort, all those characteristic trappings of 20th-century metronomic and structuralist performance styles—anachronisms to 18th- and 19th-century music—simply disappear. We certainly haven't fully achieved a replication of the above-mentioned historical performance practices, but have we placed ourselves closer? Have we created a new, different kind of blank slate from which to work towards them?

Perhaps one is interested by this experiment in relation to historically-informed performance, perhaps not. It is nevertheless at best only a novel method for disrupting one's anachronistic contemporary interpretive instincts in what is otherwise still simply the practice of discovering and replicating older, historical performance practices wholesale. It's still merely a different methodology for

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[20] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them*, (2020), 23.1, accessed 22 June 2023, https://challengingperformance.com/the-book-23-1/.

the very same objectivist historiography that I'm trying to problematise. But there's more to unravel. Consider an analysis of a much more recent composer than Vivaldi:

> In [Brian] Ferneyhough's case, [...] [i]t is not just the listener, but the work itself that escapes the composer's control. Ferneyhough mentions the work's autonomy and 'subjectivity:' 'a work entering into conversation with the listener as if it were another aware subject.' At the same time, he stresses that in conflict with the 'figural energies' embodied by a composition, the composer by no means gains the upper hand: 'when one composes, one is constantly in dialogue with one's means and, in order to enter into fruitful concourse with them, there has to be some common denominator, on the basis of which the equality of conversation partners can be assured.'[21]

This is musicologist Ewa Schreiber describing (and sometimes quoting) Brian Ferneyhough [1943–], famous since the final quarter of the 20th century as a composer of music often labelled "New Complexity." In Ferneyhough's music, the "escape of the composer's control" occurs in the limited physical properties of musical instruments and the limited bodily agency of the musicians who play them.

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[21] Ewa Schreiber, "In the Face of the Other: Contemporary Composers' Reflections on the (Ideal) Listener," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (December 2017), 231.

Figure 3.2: Measures 131-134 from the score for Brian Ferneyhough's *String Quartet No. 2*.

In scores such as that for his *String Quartet No. 2* [1979/1980], Ferneyhough provides vastly more information than can possibly be replicated precisely in musical performance. Even in measure 131 alone, as shown in Figure 3.2, gradations in rhythm between 8th notes and 64th notes are augmented by tuplet markings of 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, and 23, which are themselves sometimes nested within each other. Dynamic markings from *pp* to *fffff* imply the differentiation of loudness into no less than nine distinct, identifiable gradations. And if all that weren't enough, the sheer speed of all this variation could be seen as an impossibility in-and-of itself, the first violinist alone being asked to play forty-seven notes in about five seconds. The purpose of this extreme notational specificity is to create a situation in which it is no longer possible for what composer Sam Hayden describes as "a linear progression from the composer's sublime thoughts, through their representation in notation, to their perfect rendering in performance, 'communicating' those thoughts directly to the listener."[22] Facing an overabundance of specificity, a performer must choose *among* the indications in front of them, and might even decide to choose a new path through the notation each time they play. The composer is no longer in sole control of the music

22 Sam Hayden, "Complexity, Clarity and Contemporary British Orchestral Music," *Tempo*, Vol. 70, No. 277 (July 2016), 77.

that is made, but enters into a discursive relationship with the performer on the topic. This creates an ephemerality to each performance of a kind one might associate more closely with improvised music, wherein no performer or listener has heard any part of the performance before it actually happens. It's unpredictable to a certain degree. And the instruments themselves contribute to this unpredictability as well. Asked to sound particular frequencies for less time than is minimally needed to form their resonances within their physical, vibrating bodies, we sometimes hear the 'non-musical' sound-production capacity of those instruments leak out. Strings squeak instead of resonating clear pitches, the bow ricochets off the strings instead of running along them, the left hand's fingers audibly percuss against the neck of the instrument instead of merely determining the length of string for the bow to sound. The impression of stasis created by a modern musical *work* is disrupted. No longer is it the case that each notational marking is merely communicated from composer to performer to listener, or that any performance can be sonically indistinguishable from any other.

This interpretation of Brian Ferneyhough's music was a significant part of the inspiration behind my "faster than possible" indication at the top of the performance parts for "Nine." And it is also the case in "Nine," I believe, that this designed impossibility prevents us from giving the false impression that we've somehow found *the* static, settled, uniform identity of this music. The notated rhythms, dynamics, and articulations remain very straightforward, but to Ferneyhough's aforementioned forty-seven notes in five seconds, "Nine" asks for one hundred and one. Again, one is faced with an absurdity so far beyond possibility that the only option is to find a narrow, barren, far-from-perfect reduction of what's on the page and *throw* yourself at it.

The decisions made in such a situation demonstrate how one makes sense of the compositional structures at hand. The first three measures each contain twelve notes but only two unique pitches, so one might decide to clearly articulate those first two notes of each measure, a high and a low before sustaining a tremolo on the lower note until the next measure comes along. Then beginning at measure ten, some descending scalar patterns come in, and again a decision might be made to merely preserve the highest and lowest points of these patterns and to merely approximate the downward motion as more of an articulated glissando figure than a precise series of individual pitches. And so on and so forth. One might call this a structural approach, as it prioritizes those notes that give a sense of the broadest, most

zoomed-out curvature of a melodic line—this is a choice, and it is tied to a value judgment that is not necessarily inherent in the notation itself but in the person who reads it. One further decision we made along these lines, as a group, was to stay as close as possible to each other in the notation at all times. At this extreme tempo, it's quite difficult to keep one's eyes moving ever forward, wilfully omitting and omitting and omitting information at one's fingertips, but we found it necessary in order to retain the identity of the piece. It turned out to be inevitable that some degree of elision between harmonies would emerge—a slight elision was of course one of our initial goals, as it's a form of the musical asynchrony described by Barth and Scott—but we found that there was a limit to the width of these elisions beyond which the music began to sound a bit too much like a somewhat shapeless cluster chord instead of gestural melodic figures within a specific harmonic structure. In the end, it was gesture and harmony that became the guiding features of this music for us. Freed from the imperative to 'play all the notes correctly,' we found ourselves solely concerned with drawing shapes in the air, and with the broader patterns of resonance discoverable within our source notation. Again, we found ourselves with a new, different kind of blank slate than usual from which a door was opened to make music out of sound.

We performed this piece on two separate occasions and recorded it in a studio on a third. Over the course of these activities, I reflected on the experience and on the sound, and arrived at the conclusion that one of the most interesting things about it was the way it sustained such a powerful forward motion. I started to hear what I had understood George Barth to mean by the idea of a musical "floating," and a sensation of weightless not dissimilar to what I attempted to describe earlier in my reflection on the sudden breaks into arpeggiation in "Three," so I wanted to push further into that character. If you've listened to "Nine" while reading this, you'll probably have noticed that there's another significant set of changes to Vivaldi's notation that I haven't mentioned yet—large sections of the score have been omitted, and others are often overlapped by a beat or two. Wanting to really focus in on this feeling of perpetual motion, I produced a version of the score that isolated it.

Even if one permits the extreme tempo as simply an interpretive choice, one might still ask whether these larger-scale changes to the structure of Vivaldi's notation constitute more an act of re-composition than performance. Indeed, this is the moniker used by composer Max Richter [1966–] for his own

treatment of this music in *Vivaldi's Four Seasons: Recomposed by Max Richter* [2012].[23] Though he works in a somewhat different aesthetic idiom than me, Richter's descriptions of *Recomposed* share some similarities with mine.

Shortly after the album's release, he's quoted in an article in *The Guardian* as saying that, "*The Four Season*s is something we all carry around with us. [...] It's just everywhere. In a way, we stop being able to hear it. So this project is about reclaiming this music for me personally, by getting inside it and rediscovering it for myself—and taking a new path through a well-known landscape."[24] Though my own impetus behind "Nine" was a more squarely historical question—how might musical asynchrony as heard in early recordings of piano music and early mechanical instruments be replicated in live ensemble performances—instead of a desire to breathe new life into a piece thought to be worn out by its ubiquity in contemporary popular culture, we share the idea that our work represents a coming together of our contemporary subjectivity as musicians, and the piece's long history of being performed or otherwise presented in ways that feel somehow lacking. And the internal structure of our work with Vivaldi's notation is not necessarily dissimilar either.

In another article in 2015, Richter says that, "Just 25% of Vivaldi's original notes remain. [...] But that's not to say the DNA of Vivaldi isn't all over the place [...] He's there all the time, but in terms of dots on the page he's almost never there!"[25] Overall, the score and parts for "Nine" also contain fewer than 50% of the notes from Vivaldi's composition, but the identity of "Nine" as at the very least a *version* of Vivaldi's piece is nevertheless unmistakable. One could question to no end whether a more significant change is constituted by omitting full sections wholesale versus rearranging notes internal to each section while leaving the overall form untouched, by my drastic increase in tempo, or by Richter's repetitions

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[23] Max Richter, Daniel Hope, Andre de Ridder, and Konzerthaus Kammerorchester Berlin, *Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi, The Four Seasons* (Deutsche Grammophon, 2012).

[24] Tom Service, quoting Max Richter, in "Max Richter spring-cleans Vivaldi's The Four Seasons," *The Guardian*, 21 October 2012, accessed 11 July 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/oct/21/max-richter-vivaldi-four-seasons.

[25] Susie Burge, "Back to baroque: Max Richter's Vivaldi remix comes full circle in Sydney," *The Guardian*, 6 May 2015, accessed 11 July 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/may/06/max-richters-vivaldi-remix-comes-full-circle-in-sydney.

many times over of certain of Vivaldi's phrases, but the fact remains the same that each of us selected *from* the notes on the page instead of merely reading them all through.

The role of Richter's *Recomposed* as a conversational exercise also comes through. In an interview with NPR, Richter states:

[M]y piece doesn't erase the Vivaldi original. It's a conversation from a viewpoint. I think this is just one way to engage with it. [...] The first thing that was sort of difficult—and I wasn't expecting this, actually—was trying to understand who I was at each moment of writing it. [...] That sounds a bit crazy, but in the piece, there are sections which are just Vivaldi, where I've left it alone. I've done sort of a production on 'Autumn,' but I've left the notes. And there are other bits where there's basically only a homeopathic dose of Vivaldi in this completely new music. [...] So I have to figure out how much Max and how much Vivaldi there was going on at every moment.[26]

Though the aesthetic paradigms are again *drastically* different, this sentiment is not at all dissimilar to the idea that Brian Ferneyhough's notational impossibilities induce a conversational relationship with the composition on the part of both performers and listeners, an idea that's carried into my approach to "Nine" as well. Questions of artistic originality and individual identity come through: 'Is this my music or someone else's?' If each composition is never *purely* original and each performance is somehow unique, how does one decide what's a premiere of a new piece versus a performance of an existing one?

In summary, it's clear that, for Richter, *Recomposed* represents a discursive interaction between himself and his understanding of Vivaldi's music. It also represents a desire to reflect, as an avid listener to classical music himself, on the effect of canonization upon such works. Through *Recomposed*, Richter can be seen to articulate a distinction between the fossilized traditional forms of popular masterpieces and alternative, either aesthetically autonomizing or historically contextualizing approaches to them. What's also clear is that these explanations offer no precise reasoning behind the use of the term 'recomposed,' and furthermore admit a sincere ontological anxiety around what exactly such a project is.

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[26] "Max Richter recomposes 'The Four Seasons,' *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio (NPR), 21 November 2012, accessed 11 July 2023, https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2012/11/21/165659291/max-richter-recomposes-the-four-seasons .

Again, we find a conceptual insecurity when classical music's foundational boundaries between creation and representation are approached. I don't yet have any evidence to suggest that 'recomposed' is anything more than an expedient marketing strategy to indicate to consumers that this music is something like 'Vivaldi but also not Vivaldi.'

It is for this reason that I want to delay too rigidly defining "Nine"—and especially to avoid defining it as a 're-composition'—in favour of exploring its function as a complex *rhetorical* expression within the context of both historical and creative fields of musical practice. Anna Scott enters her doctoral research with an intriguing observation:

> I began to wonder [...] why modern historically-informed (HIP) and even recordings-inspired performances (RIP) of [Johannes] Brahms's music sound nothing like Brahms as captured on [historical recordings]. [...] The[se] stylistic gaps [...] suggest that there is an unseen process of selection being carried out with regards to what types of historical evidence are deemed authoritative, while some guiding framework is dictating how this evidence should come together to form a meaningful whole.[27]

What so often speaks through encounters with early recordings is the deep *foreignness* of their expressive character. There are extant recordings of Brahms [1833–1897] playing his own music, yet performances of the same music by recent proponents of historical performance often bear little resemblance to them.[28] Confronted with an incongruity between historical artifact and contemporary historiography, an unequivocal 'this is how Brahms played his music' adjacent to an entirely different-sounding existing practice of 'trying to play Brahms's music in historical style,' we grasp for some explanation—not only that we haven't made a grave error in our historiography, but also, much more importantly, that we haven't done all this historical work only to find that the answer isn't what we wanted to hear. It isn't a lack of knowledge but of *understanding* that's preventing sincere use of historical recordings as models for historical performance.

Though an objectivist approach to historiography has yielded an answer to the question of how Brahms played his music, its sheer factuality alone is not enough to stay our *indignance* toward it. In a

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27 Scott, vi-vii.

28 Scott, 305.

sense, we have an answer with no explanation—'how could someone think this sounds good?' This is a problem precisely because historical performance is not concerned with *knowing about* but rather *performing as* the musical past. The foreignness of early historical recordings is quite simply scary, discomforting, and confusing. This is where history must not be scientific but rhetorical. Per Vico,

> in the art of oratory the relationship between speaker and listeners is of the essence. It is in tune with the opinions of the audience that we have to arrange our speech. It often happens that people unmoved by forceful and compelling reasons can be jolted from their apathy, and made to change their minds by means of some trifling line of argument.[29]

It is not enough to simply arrange true facts into a coherent argument. One must understand that this is not a situation of depicting a reality divorced from human subjectivity but of communicating one form of human subjectivity to another, a perceived beauty in unfamiliar and linguistically slippery sonic patterns to an imperfect, impassioned, and often prejudiced (being traits we all possess as humans) audience.

Vico follows this up with the suggestion that, "[c]onsequently, in order to be sure of having touched all the soul-strings of his listeners, the orator, then, should run through the complete set of the loci which schematize the evidence."[30] Here, loci schematizing evidence refers to the rhetorical canon of *inventio*, or the 'discovery of arguments,' wherein the geometric path is only one among many. Per Cicero,

> the mind will more easily come upon 'inventions' if one examines frequently and carefully one's own narrative of the events and that of the opponent, and eliciting any clues that each part may afford, ponders why, with what intent and with what hope of success each thing was done […] When the mind studies so attentively every part of the whole affair, then the topics mentioned above which are stored up will come forth of their own accord; and then sometimes from one, sometimes from a combination of topics definite arguments will be produced, part of which will be classed as probable and part as irrefutable.[31]

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[29] Vico, *Study Methods*, 16.

[30] Ibid., 16.

[31] Marcus Tullius Cicero, trans. H. M. Hubbell, *De Inventione* [first published ca. 85 B.C.] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 46 (II, XIV).

For me, the analogy to Ferneyhough's music was an outgrowth of my own such schematization of the problem area surrounding a hypothesized historical asynchrony in performance of Vivaldi's *Quattro Stagioni*. The type of anxiety Scott describes in recent performers of Brahms is a type of anxiety I knew from experiences with a very different kind of music. Early encounters with contemporary music can produce this type of reaction as well.

The early atonal harmony of composers such as Anton Webern, for example, can give the impression of a simple randomness, implying a meaninglessness or apathy. Neither of these impressions is sustained for very long, however, if one simply studies the music and its historical context. In context, one might listen to his 1905 and 1939 string quartets across each other and hear their increasing harmonic complexity as part of a broader historical transition following after such music as Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* [1865] or Alexander Scriabin's *Poeme de l'extase* [1908]. At the same time, anticipating such music forwards into art historical time might yield other meaningful experiences. Consider the way tone-row compositions such as the 1936 *Variations for Piano* evenly distribute pitch content across the keyboard and rhythmic variety across a wide array of durations. This can be understood as a kind of methodical anti-representationalism anticipating Clement Greenberg's identification, in the 1960s, of modernist art as that which performs self-critique of the most basic physical attributes of its medium.[32] In this way, one can learn to hear such music not as the artistic creation of an individual composer using the piano as an instrument, but as a kind of blank exposition of the acoustic physicality of the piano in itself, an unmediated display of a physical object that divides the audible spectrum into twelve distinct pitches repeated at the octave, and that allows a performer to make them resonate through a mechanical linkage of wood, felt, and steel.

Ferneyhough's music can be seen in part as an outgrowth of these examples, taking aboard the complex and widely diversified rhythm and harmony of earlier atonal music while further intensifying the focus on the core physicality of the instruments and musicians involved. And this time, instead of only the traditionally, culturally representative role of music being called into question, it is the even deeper building blocks of those traditional musical languages that are challenged; namely, the specific delineations of frequency, time, and tone that music notation is typically used to precisely codify. In one

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[32] Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art & Literature*, No. 4 (Spring 1965), 193-201.

sense this can be seen as a fairly intellectual exercise, simply taking the next conceptual step beyond questioning harmony by raising the same questions about pitch and clarity. In another sense it can be seen as quite expressive, by newly aestheticizing auditory experiences typically classified as 'mistakes' in mainstream classical performance. There's genuinely a profound beauty to be heard in this music, if only one can figure out what it feels like to hear it. This beauty instead sits latent within the notation as an unwritten subtext.

The Romantic notation described by Scott and Barth also contains this type of subtext. Only in this case, it remains permanently hidden unless a performer knows it's there and competently attempts to do something with it. What's especially interesting about Ferneyhough's subtext, though—and what makes it relevant to music such as "Nine"—is that, though invisible on paper, it forces its way out into the sounding world whether or not the performer wants it to. Ferneyhough does not ask for a wild, wayward, messy, noisy, or chaotic sound in his scores, he instead creates a situation in which these aesthetic features are the only possible result of a fastidious attempt to exactly replicate the notation in sound. Aligning again with Greenberg's model, Ferneyhough locates his music's critical function within the most basic physical materials and methodological operations of music itself. He problematises notation's ability to fully concretize musical sound as static visual information, and he pushes towards the limits of the physical sound-production capabilities of the instruments and musicians for whom he writes.

Upon first reading about and listening to asynchrony in 18th- and 19th-century musics, I immediately saw viable pathways through the problems surrounding their contemporary revival because I had already seen and been working within such a revival for what is, at least on the surface level, a very different kind of music. Many musicians I've worked with regularly jump back and forth between historical and experimental musical practices within their broader careers, and so shared this reference point. Thus, we could very quickly and effectively communicate with each other about possibilities for an asynchronous Vivaldi by making analogies for each other to problems in notating and performing New Complexity.

"Nine" is not only about exactly what Vivaldi certainly or even plausibly did or didn't do, should or shouldn't sound like, it's a rhetorical turn of phrase within a broader conversation among and between musicians and listeners about the ways in which we're controlled by our habits and assumptions, and about how we might discover something new about the past and ourselves by disrupting those habits and

assumptions. I don't mean to say that extreme tempo and haemorrhaging of notes is the right way or the best way to play Vivaldi, I mean to illustrate just how important it is to ask ourselves how little we know about what's right or what's best in this music.

To listeners, "Nine" reveals how one might hear beauty, meaning, and intention in a performance of Vivaldi that is considerably messier or more 'wayward' than usual. To musicians, "Nine" provides an accessible starting point from which to step beyond an explicit and metronomic interpretation of notation. All the while, that old stalwart of historiographical apologism that "this *might* have been a plausible interpretation in Vivaldi's time" could even remain on the table as well. Furthermore, understood in relation to the performances of others—whether traditional or not—such a divergent approach serves, in following Vico's advice to run through the complete set of topics, to only further diversify the historically-grounded perspectives through which one might confront this music, such that many more possible 'soul-strings' might be 'touched.'

"Nine" can represent the idea that one might perform, embody, become a foreign musical identity while simultaneously releasing oneself from any obligation or desire to merely replicate it. We don't recreate Vivaldi, we *become* an idea of him and then act according to how that conjoined monster of a new subjectivity sparks our imagination to act. We speak *through and as our understanding of him*. And in so doing, we communicate to our audiences an idea of Vivaldi not as a static, settled, uniform historical plausibility but as a complex field of particular certainties and uncertainties about his musical historicity.

It may be important to make clear that "Nine" is merely my own result of this, and one that was tied to a particular moment in my artistic development and in collaboration with a particular set of individuals comprising the ensemble we performed as. If such a practice is the speaking of one's subjectivity *through and as* one's object of study, the result will vary significantly from subject to subject, practitioner to practitioner. Each individual's version of this practice will sound as different from each other as each individual *is* from each other. I have little ability to guess what music others might arrive at through the same reasoning, but I'd be eager to find out.

All this is not even the only front on which such a rhetorical approach to historical performance has potency, but we'll need more than only Vico's advocacy, and more than only "Nine" as an example, to reveal it fully.

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There's a big problem with conceptualizing historical performance as rhetorical: its disciplinarity as history can quickly recede. Simply put, if history is accepted to be 'study of the past,' and historical performance in music is then accepted to be something like 'study of the past *in and through* musical practice,' then it's very easy to exclude such rhetorical practices as "Nine" from the disciplinarity of historical performance in music based on the mere fact that it's not *exclusively* to do with the particular musical past in question. Such music gets classified as 'new' and therefore puts forward no problems or insights relevant to what might be considered to be these other, 'properly' historical practices. The good news—for me, at least—is that this type of conceptual manoeuvre (rhetorical in itself, really) has been imposed upon other historical methodologies and epistemologies in the past, so there are some useful examples to consider in trying to overcome it. Historical theorist Hayden White [1928–2018] described something similar:

> For better than a century many historians have found it useful to employ a Fabian tactic against critics in related fields of intellectual endeavour. [...] When criticized by social scientists for the softness of his method, the crudity of his organizing metaphors, or the ambiguity of his sociological and psychological presuppositions, the historian responds that history has never claimed the status of a pure science. [...] But when reproached by literary artists for his failure to probe the more arcane strata of human consciousness and his unwillingness to utilize contemporary modes of literary representation, the historian falls back upon the view that history is after all a *semi*-science.[33]

One could read from this that history merely sits somewhere in between science and art, and one who reads this way might also happily admit that it is nearly impossible to define where exactly the boundaries

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[33] Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27.

are at either end of that spectrum. Yet White rejects this suggestion, instead outlining a much harsher interpretation that this rhetorical manoeuvre is no more than a strategy of diversion to insulate the historical discipline from conceptual accountability.

Clear analogies can be drawn from White's characterization of the 'harder' or 'softer' aspects of historical practice and many issues raised around the epistemology and disciplinarity of historical performance in music. A "failure to probe the more arcane strata of human consciousness" can be analogised to an interpretive strictness, treating notation not as collections of structural and aesthetic schemata for a sensitive musician to *make music out of,* but as a rigid and precise fossilization of *the music itself.* The ambiguity of music notation is seen as a bug rather than a feature, an imperfection that must be resolved by finding external evidence that allows for triangulation toward an appropriate interpretation. Therefore the generative capabilities of the ambiguity of notation are rendered impotent. Notation can no longer serve as a productive interface through which a musician stretches their intellectual, feeling, and instinctive self. One does not probe one's own instincts as a historian in and through one's work in history because the self is believed to be irrelevant, or even a direct hindrance, to a 'plausible' musical result. Yet at the same time, one can see what White described as the "softness of [...] method, the crudity of [...] organizing metaphors, [and] the ambiguity of [...] sociological and psychological presuppositions," in the many impossibilities of such aspirational objectivity in the historical performance of music. One invariably lacks the amount and specificity of information necessary to achieve a genuinely scientific result. Descriptions of ornamentations are extrapolated across half the length of Europe and applied several decades out of date. Tuning systems are simplified and homogenized to increase the efficiency of contemporary concert-making. Yet somehow the mere *idolization* of scientific precision is assumed to nevertheless bestow its intellectual authority upon historical performance.

To be clear, I don't suggest such practices aren't valuable, historical, or artistic. But operating within such a practice while simultaneously pushing away adjacent practices as 'not historical'—differently flawed and differently insightful as they are in their historicity and their anachronism—seems short-sighted, hypocritical, and frankly anti-intellectual. White implies that he sensed a similar frustration within academia broadly construed at the time he published *Tropics of Discourse* in 1978:

> The opinion seems to be growing among non-historians that, far from being the desirable mediator between art and science that he claims to be, the historian is the irredeemable enemy of both. In short, everywhere there is resentment over what appears to be the historian's bad faith in claiming the privileges of both the artist and the scientist while refusing to submit to critical standards currently obtaining in either art or science.[34]

These words—White's here, and mine above—are aggressive, sharp, fighting words. And they've been fought through many times before among musicians. I don't wish to re-tread that ground. Quite the contrary, it's my impression that the result of the authenticity debates of the 1980s was not and never will be to solve the *problems behind* calling certain practices 'authentic,' but simply to produce new strategies for deflecting scholarly criticism while still continuing to do exactly the same thing as before. The problem was identified, confessed, and further entrenched.

But something different happened in history more broadly. And the reason for this difference is crucial to the conceptual and methodological framework I'd like to suggest for sincerely trying to move past it within music as well. White suggested that,

> the current generation of historians will be called upon [...] to expose the historically conditioned character of the historical discipline, to preside over the dissolution of history's claim to autonomy among the disciplines, and to aid in the assimilation of history to a higher kind of intellectual inquiry which, because it is founded on an awareness of the *similarities* between art and science, rather than their differences, can be properly designated as neither.[35]

This has been achieved since then in significant ways, though perhaps not to the full extent White suggested. There is certainly still an academic discipline called history—no doubt about that—but the discipline's traditionally objectivist or neutralist approach is no longer the status quo. Recent titles including Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon's *Permanent Crisis: The Humanities in a Disenchanted Age*, Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, and Ann Laura Stoler's *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in our Times,* as well as now-classics such as Benedict Anderson's

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[34] Ibid., 28.

[35] Ibid., 28-29.

Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*,[36] indicate both a connection between the past and present and an intention to operationalize historical understanding toward immediate ends. Other volumes in more traditional forms sometimes find the need to explain those now rarer means, like Jonathan Israel's *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790*.[37] History has not been erased by this dissolution of its autonomy, but merely synthesised in various ways with anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, philosophy, art theory, and many other disciplines. Now, history is not only understood as the pursuit of true knowledge about the past in and of itself, but also as a way to enrich research within practically any other discipline by investigating their topics *through* time.

Far from a radical tirade against a great many scholars' means of livelihood, White's argument is one in favour of simply correcting what he described as a historically contingent attitude underlying the writing of history.

> Since the middle of the nineteenth century, most historians have affected a kind of wilful methodological naivete. Originally this naivete served a good purpose: it protected the historian from the tendency to embrace the monistic explanatory systems of a militant idealism in philosophy and an equally militant positivism in science. But this suspicion of system has become a sort of conditioned response among historians which has led to a resistance throughout the entire profession to almost any kind of critical self-analysis.[38]

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[36] Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon, *Permanent Crisis: The Humanities in a Disenchanted Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Michel Foucault trans. Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

[37] Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-8.

[38] White, *Tropics*, 28.

In the face of an environment wherein grand theories of human nature and comprehensive schematizations of all time were commonly published—consider for example Lewis H. Morgan's [1818–1881] *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* [1877]—a more sober, specific, and localized objectivist approach may well have been an appropriate corrective.[39]

The same corrective was performed in music performance studies as well. One can read a similar narrative as outlined by Morgan in relation to societal "progress" toward an ultimate goal of "civilization" in Francois-Joseph Fetis's [1784–1871] *Outline of the History of Harmony* [1840].[40] Fetis traces the "progress" of music from a "barbaric system of diaphony"[41] to "a [metaphysical] principle, both subjective and objective, [that is] the necessary result of the sensitivity that perceives the relationship of sounds, and the intelligence that measures them and deduces the results."[42] He routinely describes particular historical systems for the theory of musical harmony as "arbitrary and false"[43] and "destined to

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[39] Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1877).

[40] Francois-Joseph Fetis, trans. Mary I. Arlin, *Esquisse de l'histoire de l'harmonie* [first published 1840]; *An English-Language Translation of the Francois-Joseph Fetis History of Harmony* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1994).

[41] Ibid., 1.

[42] Ibid., 158-159. Per Fetis:

> If it is recognized that these foundations of the system are deceptive, that they have misled all those who have taken them as a point of departure, and that they are powerless to support the edifice of tonality, it is evident that there remains no other principle for the construction of the scale and of tonality than the metaphysical principle; a principle, both subjective and objective, the necessary result of the sensitivity that perceives the relationship of sounds, and the intelligence that measures them and deduces the results. [...] The ear perceives the sounds; the mind compares their relationships, measures them, and determines the melodic and harmonic conditions of a tonality. This laid down, the science of harmony is all done.

[43] Ibid., 2. Per Fetis:

> It would take too long to examine the principles that led Franco [of Cologne], or rather his contemporaries, to such a classification. But it is evident that these principles were arbitrary and false, because the *tone*, as well as the semitone, is a dissonance, and sixths bring nothing but a sense of concord to the ear and do not imply a necessity for resolution.

search for some elements of interest,"[44] while early signs of a harmonic ontology similar to those of the 19th century are either said to have "presented [certain chords] in their true character,"[45] or are celebrated as "cause to marvel."[46] Overall, there is a clear moralizing intention running throughout Fetis's *Outline* that presumes the present state of harmonic understanding to be the perfect and complete state, imbuing all others leading up to it with the inevitability of a secularized notion of divine providence, or in other words, scientific progress.

In 1915, Arnold Dolmetsch [1858–1940] looks to provide an antidote to this universalism and historical disdain. He ends his introduction to *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries* with a piece of advice for readers: "We should take warning from the 18th century connoisseurs, who declared Gothic architecture barbarous, or the early 19th century art critics, who could see no beauty in pre-Raphaelite art."[47] Isn't Fetis's *Outline* a perfect example of an early 19th-century critic failing to see

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[44] Ibid., 23. Per Fetis:

Such are all the consonant and dissonant harmonies used by these composers in the second half of the fifteenth century. [...] Limited to such a small number of harmonic combinations, it is easy to understand that musicians were destined to search for some elements of interest for their works in a sequence of musical ideas richer in variety.

[45] Ibid., 47-48. Per Fetis:

The theoretical science of harmony made progress in the hands of Friedrich Erhard Niedt. [...] [I]t cannot be denied that he imparted a salutary impulse to harmonic theory with the first two parts of his book on this science. The first, *Guide musical*, contained a *basso continuo* treatise. [...] The natural dissonant chords of the seventh and ninth are presented there in their true character, i.e., as able to be attacked without preparation.

[46] Ibid., 103. Per Fetis:

Truly there is cause to marvel at seeing that, guided by analogy and the musical feeling that was in him, Roussier foresaw the possibility of making good use of certain harmonies that only Mozart's genius and a small number of his contemporaries and successors had known how to bring into play.

[47] Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries* [first published 1915] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), viii.

beauty in pre-15ᵗʰ-century music? Dolmetsch's refrain throughout *The Interpretation* is that, though one may be able to intuit appropriate interpretive decisions about their own contemporary music—as related to, for example, tempo, rhythmic execution, or ornamentation—the same will not necessarily be true for older types of music. Thus, one should "guard against prejudice and so-called tradition" in order to avoid "committing the most glaring absurdity when 'old music' is concerned."[48] It's the classic assumption of an aspirationally neutral, objective approach to historical interpretation in the face of moralizing, assumed-superior presentist readings as described by White in *Tropics*. By deducing plausible historical interpretations from written sources contemporaneous and geographically proximate to a musical practice in question, one can determine how such music was 'intended to sound.'[49]

But strangely enough, a very similar historiographical ideology can be seen in the early writings of Heinrich Schenker [1868–1935], better known for his later, again, universalizing methodology for the formal analysis of 'common practice' tonal music. In his 1904 *Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation,* Schenker uses very similar reasoning to Dolmetsch:

For C. P. E. Bach, richness of ideas is paramount. It is this richness alone that bestows on his ideas the gift of sounding spontaneous—eternally improvised. It allows for his use of the technique of group formation; it permits his concomitant use of the resources of tonality and rhythm. It allows him to rise above the mechanical aspects of modulation and frees him from all concern for 'form.' In short, his entire technique is derived from this richness; ideas are everything to him. Change, mobility, and freedom are everywhere; the schematic and the purely mechanical are nowhere to be found! [...] How the presence of this freedom, which was indeed the highest ever attainable, could have been overlooked during the past century remains one of the deepest riddles in the history of art. Musicians lost their ability to appreciate such freedom and even thought it necessary to draw on new resources in order at last to give music its true liberty. Suddenly, the form of all quartets, symphonies, and sonatas were seen as nothing more than mere 'sonata form,' a supposedly rigid form, fixed and unalterable as given—in short, a formula. One listened to works for nothing but their

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[48] Ibid., 27.

[49] Ibid., 7.

cadences, half or full; one imagined that the form of such works could be reduced to a combination of the so-called first, second, and closing themes, development, and recapitulation. What a misconception![50]

Here again, it is a distancing of oneself from one's contemporaneous knowledge systems and aesthetic paradigms that generates new and vital appreciation for historical arts. One can learn to see them as if on their own terms. Schenker disparages universal concepts such as the idea of sonata form prevalent at his time of writing, which he understood as reducing the formal characteristics of 'common practice' tonal music to a select few assertedly pivotal moments towards and out of which *all* other musical content was supposed to develop. Instead, he praises the "freedom" and "spontaneity" in the music of C. P. E. Bach [1714–1788], a quality one might be able to imagine Fetis naming as an "arbitrary" construction.

This would seem to stand in the face of Schenkerian analysis more broadly construed, but already in this 1905 text on ornamentation, inconsistencies in his neutrality can be seen. Schenker's introduction suggests that C. P. E. Bach is not *really* what he's interested in:

> A welcome new edition of C. P. E. Bach's *Versuch uber die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* has appeared. It is a pity, though, that the otherwise praiseworthy editor, Dr. Walter Niemann, thought it advisable to abbreviate certain chapters in Part II which according to him, were 'from the present point of view technically or theoretically obsolete or contained nothing that was new or unusual for the period.' [...] Beethoven himself, not only in his youth, but even at the time of the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis*, drew instruction and enlightenment from precisely those chapters that are now imparted to us only in extracts. Surely this proves that we are not dealing with an 'obsolete' point of view, but with one from which knowledge may be derived; one which I think even today could provide useful stimulation.[51]

C. P. E. Bach is given relevance here in relation to a later composer, Ludwig van Beethoven [1770–1827], whose relevance Schenker apparently believes he can take for granted. Because Beethoven was interested in C. P. E. Bach, we have reason to be interested in C. P. E. Bach. It's still unclear *to what* or *for what reason* Beethoven is relevant to anything at all, but some further evidence follows:

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[50] Heinrich Schenker, trans. Hedi Siegel, "A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation" [first published 1904], *The Music Forum*, Vol. 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 33-34.

[51] Ibid., 11.

The works of the Stamitzes, Cannabichs, Christian Bachs, etc., did not survive, while Emanuel Bach has been held in high artistic regard until the present day. Thus we may wonder why music historians have not taken this fact into account. [...] Fortunately, the power of art and of genius is stronger than that of the historian. Those exhumed by the historian do not necessarily come to life again simply by virtue of the exhumation. [...] Let each professor of history work his way through the Stamitzes—the true history of art can be learned, however, only from the geniuses.[52]

Without exactly stating why or to what Beethoven was relevant, we now know. Schenker is not interested in C. P. E. Bach, or even Prussian *galant* music more broadly, but in seeking out further examples of a chronologically- and geographically-independent character of artistic genius. This character is measured in an individual by their ability to produce works that remain in cultural use in perpetuity and that ought to be celebrated through that very same unceasing perpetuation of use. By suggesting that Beethoven admired C. P. E. Bach, it is suggested that a *known-genius* considered C. P. E. Bach to possess similar merits to himself. In a sense, this is a sort of hybrid form of the earlier, moralizing historiography of a Fetis and the contemporaneous, aspirationally neutral historiography of a Dolmetsch.

The appearance of this type of historiographical hybrid form is one of the reasons why White argues that such an objectivist corrective against "monistic explanatory systems" needs to yield a bit now that a respect for clarity of factual representation and a value for objective methodologies has been re-established. In his words, by the 1970s,

[t]hat supposedly neutral middle ground between art and science which many nineteenth-century historians occupied with such self-confidence and pride of possession has dissolved in the discovery of the common constructivist character of both artistic and scientific statements. Most contemporary thinkers do not concur in the conventional historian's assumption that art and science are essentially different ways of comprehending the world. [...] [M]odern criticism—mostly as a result of advances made by psychologists in the investigation of the human synthesizing faculties—has achieved a clearer understanding of the operations by which the artist expresses his vision of the world and the scientist frames his hypotheses about it.[53]

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[52] Ibid., 12.

[53] White, *Tropics*, 28-29.

In other words, though the objectivist corrective to 19th-century moralizing approaches to historiography may have been necessary in the specific context of such adjacent scholarship, it didn't represent an absolutely ideal concept of historiography more generally. Developments in psychology, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ability to cogently elide the imagined and the perceived, had demonstrated that such a neutrality as practiced by scientists was not actually possible in history, and that it was barely on sure footing in the hard sciences themselves. Instead, as White described in the *Tropics of Discourse* and elsewhere, historians *constructed* ideas of the past in the particular choices they made about which documents or artifacts to study, which analyses to include in their books and articles, and through which conceptual frameworks to assign them meaning and compare them to each other. And not only was the objectivist historiography of the mid-20th century not possible, White argued, it morphed into a kind of toxic knee-jerk reaction on the part of historians to critiques of their self-awareness, or lack thereof. Instead of objectivism itself serving as a critique of moralism, it was a shield against calls for the historian to incorporate sorely needed self-knowledge into their research.

4_Illusion, Capture, and Aphasia in the Negative Archive

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One discipline that has sincerely attempted to play this mediating role between subjective and objective inquiry since its inception is critical theory. In his recent history of the field, the critical theorist Bernard Harcourt [1963–] introduces it with a quote from Karl Marx [1818–1883]:

> 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways,' Karl Marx wrote in his notebooks in 1845, 'the point, however, is to *change* it.' These now-famous words sealed the birth certificate of critical philosophy, although many had foreshadowed it earlier, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Levellers, Saint Francis, or even, on some readings, the prophetic traditions long before. What they all shared—and would share with later critical theorists such as Max Horkheimer, Michel Foucault, Angela Davis, Judith Butler, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—was the ambition to infuse the world with the values of compassion, equality, solidarity, autonomy, and social justice. To turn the contemplative philosophical tradition into a practice of emancipation. To push thought in the direction of action and toward human liberation. To convert theory into practice.[1]

Allow me to segment my interest here. There are a few key ingredients of such a proposition that will be useful to my purposes, but others that are simply circumstantial. What's key is the particular combination of a foundation in philosophy, broadly construed, an attachment to practical concerns of individuals in their own present context, and a desire to marry these two. What's a bit more circumstantial in this case is the desire to instrumentalize such a practice towards "compassion, equality, solidarity, autonomy, and social justice"—this is certainly a worthy cause, just not one I see as particularly relevant to the topic at hand. It's also important to segment my interest in critical theory chronologically, as it also underwent the very same transition Hayden White described for the historical discipline, which Harcourt describes as an "epistemological detour" for critical theory. This allows him to place the work

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[1] Bernard Harcourt, *Critique and Praxis: A Radical Theory of Illusions, Values, and Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 1. Harcourt quotes Karl Marx, "Eleventh Thesis," *Theses on Feuerbach* [first published 1845], in *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1938).

of Max Horkheimer [1895–1973] and Theodor Adorno [1903–1969] not as eponymous stand-ins for the discipline at large—as others have done—but simply as instigators of a more localized crisis moment. The following will sound familiar:

> The tension at the heart of Horkheimer's project for critical theory stemmed from the conflict between two intellectual tendencies [...] The first tendency was a certain type of reflexive and historical constructivism; the second, a deep commitment to Marx and an aspiration to scientific Marxism. The confrontation between the two pushed early critical theory toward a scientism that was entirely at odds with its own constructivism and antipositivism.[2]

This is another observation of tension between a self-oriented constructivism and an other-oriented positivism—in other words, the subject-object problem. It can be analogized to White's observation that the traditional historian resisted engagement with, on one side, "the arcane strata of human consciousness and [...] contemporary modes of literary representation,"[3] and, on the other side, "the monistic explanatory systems of a militant idealism in philosophy and an equally militant positivism in science."[4] But while White places the traditional historian in the middle of this tension between a perceived opposition of art and science, Harcourt paints his intellectual landscape as one of more direct opposition between the two, with traditional Marxists on the scientific side and participants in the post-1950s epistemological detour on the other.

Harcourt's reading of critical theory is not as dire as White's of history, as "new ways of thinking about truth and ideology emerged, liberated from the deceptive charms of analytic philosophy."[5] Writings such as those by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, or Bruno Latour could be incredibly powerful as an *unmasking* of epistemological fallacies or of latent value assumptions embedded within powerful political and social institutions, especially those of an aspirationally scientific sociology or economics. The problem was that this conceptual labour "subtly diverted critical philosophy from its

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[2] Ibid., 56.

[3] Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 28.

[4] Ibid., 27.

[5] Harcourt, 8.

true ambition—to change the world. The task, once again, was to *know* it."[6] This detour in essence reverts critical theory back to the abstract philosophical origins out of which it grew in early Marxism. Yet at the same time, critical theorists' anti-foundationalism makes that task of *knowing* with any degree of certainty so vexing that it becomes impossible to say much of anything meaningful at all.

> At the core of the contestation, there was an epistemological disagreement about foundations that kept pushing the controversies and debates further down the epistemological detour: whether and how critical theory could ground itself in truth, such as through notions of progress, reason and rationality, learning processes, or communication and discourse; whether and how critical theory needed to be correct and objective; whether and how it needed to resemble a sociology and incorporate empirical research, or achieve something that could be thought of as objectively right [...] Of course, critical theory would always remain reflexive, and in that sense postpositivist; but the antifoundational contestation kept raising epistemological questions that challenged the foundations of critical theory.[7]

In short, critical theory became seized with uncertainty and disagreement over the most fundamental principles of its observational and explanatory mechanisms. The essence of the discipline was therefore no longer really the goal of "transforming human existence," as it was first necessary "to clear the epistemological ground, to unveil the ideological interferences, and to let others see properly."[8] The discipline became more about a conceptualization of truth than a practice of social emancipation. It reverted to a kind of philosophy that was divorced from general practicality.

There are clear parallels to the historical performance of music. This same clearing of the epistemological ground was the topic of the authenticity debates of the 1980s. At that time, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson observed that,

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[6] Ibid., 9. Emphasis mine.

[7] Ibid., 96-97.

[8] Ibid., 7-8.

[h]istorical research may provide us with instruments, and sometimes even quite detailed information on how to use them; but the gap between such evidence and a sounding performance is still so great that it can be bridged only by a large amount of musicianship and invention.[9]

Alongside others at the time, Leech-Wilkinson pointed out that there simply isn't enough information about music that predates phonographic recording to actually verify whether an 'authentic' interpretation has been achieved. So 'authentic' performance—being the output of practices in Early Music—becomes a kind of *illusion* of historicism.

At each stage his own contribution is that of a contemporary (i.e. late 20th-century) musician, subject to the assumptions and tastes of his time. And the illusion that he has, on the contrary, been involved in an 18th-century experience is sustained only by the larger illusion that contemporary performance styles—in contrast to the interpretative excesses of earlier 20th-century artists—are largely uncoloured by personal involvement.[10]

This is an observation of the inevitable role of the self in shaping practices that aspire to scientific objectivity and neutrality. In all cases of musical performance, the individuality of the performer gets fused to the (metaphorical) objecthood of the music they play. And when one wishes to play older and older music where less and less information is available about it, the impact of this performative individuality becomes more and more pronounced. Musicians involved in historical performance practice have known this for a long time. It's evident in the quotes in the previous chapter from both Arnold Dolmetsch and Heinrich Schenker. The issue at hand is not *whether* the subject of the performer colours the object of the historical music, but *what should be done* about this.

Richard Taruskin extended this interpretation of aspirationally 'authentic' performance practices to aspirationally neutral editorial practices in musicology.

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[9] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "What we are doing with early music is genuinely authentic to such a small degree that the word loses most of its intended meaning," *Early Music*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1984), 13-16.

[10] Ibid., 13.

All too often the sound of a modern 'authentic' performance of old music presents the aural equivalent of an Urtext score: the notes and rests are presented with complete accuracy and an equally complete neutrality [...] Nothing is allowed to intrude into the performance that cannot be 'authenticated'. And this means nothing can be allowed that will give the performance, in the sense in which we first defined the word, the authenticity of conviction."[11]

And this is a trend Leech-Wilkinson saw as well:

Criticism presupposes a critic, and a critic is one who judges and chooses. But we often encounter a curious reluctance on the part of textual editors to exercise that function. Instead there has been a quixotic quest for mechanistically infallible techniques. The ostensible motive is to eliminate human error, but the underlying motive is the wish to eliminate the responsibility of applying judgement.[12]

In the terminology of my opening icons of Cartesian musical practice, the trends Taruskin and Leech-Wilkinson describe all land squarely on the objectivist side. The performer or editor goes to great lengths in their methodologies for research and practice to erase themselves as fully as possible such that their work may deal with its object as if 'on its own terms.' If successful, this will allow them to claim truth for their research outputs analogously as strong as Cartesian truths about geometry and other abstract mathematical and logical concepts.

But what happens if we admit this to be impossible, and if we truly look for an alternative? Perhaps not all participants in what became the historically-informed performance movement after the 1980s actually lost faith in the possibility of an at least semi-objective practice of recreating historical music, but Taruskin and Leech-Wilkinson certainly did. Yet I've always found a bit odd what this debate led Taruskin to suggest:

It seems to me that the special opportunity, and the special task, of a movement in musical interpretation that aspires to authenticity is to foster an approach to performance that is founded to an unprecedented degree on

personal conviction and on individual response to individual pieces. Such an approach will seek to bring to consciousness and thereby to transcend the constraints that are variously imposed by fashion, by conventional training, by historical evidence, and even, or especially, by our intuition. And this means, ultimately, cultivating an essentially sceptical frame of mind that will allow no 'truth' to pass unexamined.[13]

For some reason, Taruskin decides in this moment to skip over what I'm certain he knows to be the underlying attachments that *drive* the Early Music movement, and instead fixates on the mere word 'authenticity' itself. He points out the alternate definition of 'authenticity' as "knowing what you mean and whence comes that knowledge. And more than that, [...] knowing what you are, and acting in accordance with that knowledge."[14] In this moment, he seems to merely deflect the actual difficulties of historical epistemology. We are again in a situation where we could achieve a kind of rhetorical musical practice that presents the performing subject in relation to the historical music they play, but along the way we've lost any indication that what that performer is doing is a historical act. We regain 'authenticity,' but at the expense of historicity. We've only moved ourselves into the other side of our founding paradox—that of a perfect originality. This binary of historical versus personal authenticity simply isn't good enough. We need a more sophisticated epistemology than we'll be able to find through a binary of true and false.

What Taruskin could have suggested, instead of taking his lexical turn toward alternate dictionary definitions of 'authentic,' was that the problem with the Early Music movement in the 1980s was an oversimplification of the relationship between evidence of historical performance practices and their use in the present. This would keep us more firmly within the initially identified problem concerning the *truthfulness to the past* of a musical performance. And this is precisely the problem Harcourt identifies in the "epistemological detour" of critical theory. Harcourt begins to unpack this by asking *why* this concept of truthfulness has value to critical theorists.

The claim to truth, validity, and certainty in political, legal, and moral philosophy is nothing more than the quest for a solid foundation on which to ground oneself or to convince others—to assure oneself that one is

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[13] Ibid., 8.

[14] Ibid., 3.

living a good life, to persuade others that one is right, to convince others that one's way of living is good or better, to induce others to do as one says.[15]

This exposition of the *use value* of claims to truth is a crucial move in escaping the epistemological detour for Harcourt. He makes a distinction along the lines of Giambattista Vico's "physical phenomena" and "human nature." The claim to truth is, in Harcourt's formulation, something like a rhetorical analogy that lends strength to the political, legal, or moral assertions to follow, rendering them—the critical theorist may hope—more likely to be adopted by their readers.

But humans are not mere physical matter, so the same level of *immutability* that is essential to the rules governing physical matter is not actually appropriate here. Alongside Vico, Harcourt identifies and laments a persistent mistranslation into the humanistic realm of a type of epistemology that's only really suited to abstract mathematics and the physical sciences. The resemblance between them is striking. Per Harcourt:

> *It is precisely at those moments, when we claim truth, when we claim validity for others, that we have exceeded the bounds. We have borrowed from metaphysics a type of certainty that does not belong in politics or law or morality.* And it is precisely here that we need to be more careful and honest about the noun *truth* and the adjective *true*. This is especially the case for critical philosophers who know that they should limit truth to ontology and epistemology at most, and yet they extend it or its cognate family of terms (reality, certainty, rightness, correctness) to the political and moral realms, and even the ethical realm. Critical philosophers claim to understand the family kinship and parallels, the differences between an assertion of truth in the context of a statement of fact and in the context of a moral judgment; but as evidenced above, so often they simply elide the differences and call for truth in politics. When they deploy that term, they gesture toward a more permanent or universal statement about the human condition. But that is actually unnecessary. At most, they may have temporary, punctual determinations about what all the best evidence suggests right now, which they should call their better interpretation. When we have to act, of course, we need to decide on the better interpretation. We may engage in the epistemological work of unmasking to try to rid ourselves of an illusion.

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[15] Harcourt, 185.

But at some point, when we must act, we do, and the model we use, most often, is a rough-and-ready juridical model: we review the evidence and decide based on a burden and a standard of proof.[16]

Per Vico:

Since, in our time, the only target of our intellectual endeavours is truth, we devote all our efforts to the investigation of physical phenomena, because their nature seems unambiguous; but we fail to inquire into human nature which, because of the freedom of man's will, is difficult to determine. A serious drawback arises from the uncontrasted preponderance of our interest in the natural sciences. Our young men, because of their training, which is focused on these studies, are unable to engage in the life of the community, to conduct themselves with sufficient wisdom and prudence; nor can they infuse into their speech a familiarity with human psychology or permeate their utterances with passion. When it comes to the matter of prudential behaviour in life, it is well for us to keep in mind that human events are dominated by Chance and Choice, which are extremely subject to change and which are strongly influenced by simulation and dissimulation (both pre-eminently deceptive things). As a consequence, those whose only concern is abstract truth experience great difficulty in achieving their means, and greater difficulty in attaining their ends. Frustrated in their own plans, deceived by the plans of others, they often throw up the game. Since, then, the course of action in life must consider the importance of the single events and their circumstances, it may happen that many of these circumstances are extraneous and trivial, some of them bad, some even contrary to one's goal. It is therefore impossible to assess human affairs by the inflexible standard of abstract right; we must rather gauge them by the pliant Lesbic rule, which does not conform bodies to itself, but adjusts itself to their contours.[17]

Embedded within both of these quotes is an assumption that political or otherwise human-institutional situations are so constantly shifting and open to innumerable divergent interpretations that to enter them with a rigid, scientific (or scientistic, perhaps) idea of truth is wholly unproductive. The relevant questions in such contexts are not what is correct, true, certain, universal, or real, but how an individual

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[16] Ibid., 186; emphasis his.

[17] Vico, *Study Methods*, 33-34. I should point out that in the context of the present quote, clear theories of gender roles or characteristics are not presented; Vico's contrast between inflexibility as masculine and compliance as feminine seems merely incidental to the point at hand, and doesn't rely on this characterization of gender actually being true for its rhetorical efficacy.

might *decide* to live and why, or how we as groups of people might decide to structure our social institutions and why. If humans are believed to have free will, structures of knowledge designed only to correctly describe what they *see* are of limited value. The pertinent questions are those, to use Leech-Wilkinson's aforementioned descriptors of a proper critic, of *judgment* and of *choice*—they are about what people *do*.

An objectivist approach to issues of human culture fails because it neglects to understand its assertion of truth as a rhetorical move, as simply one more persuasive tool within a skilled orator's collection—and not a very sharp one, at that. In Harcourt's opinion, the implication of truth within matters of moral or critical philosophy

> actually weakens arguments because it allows the other side to seize on any bit of uncertainty and use that differential to demonstrate that we are making truth up. It also distracts from the larger political question of the kind of world we want to live in and of what we believe in.[18]

By critiquing both the positivists and the sceptics along these lines, Harcourt strives to place a new conceptual framework somewhere beyond each of their pitfalls and their antagonisms toward each other. He names this new framework a "radical critical philosophy of illusions," which I believe, along with two adjacent problematizations from Ann Laura Stoler and Stephen Wright, can provide case studies toward a more *rhetorical* musicianship.

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Harcourt pushes beyond his dialectic of positivism and scepticism by reclaiming a productive potential he sees in the exchange of diverse and ephemeral instances of critical judgment. A "radical critical philosophy of illusions [...] unveils not to discover truth, rather to offer a productive interpretation that can animate praxis, but that will quickly need to be critiqued."[19] This productive interpretation is what he calls an 'illusion,' in quite a strikingly indignant counter to Cartesian or otherwise scientific ideologies

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[18] Harcourt, 187.

[19] Ibid., 190.

that can only equate illusion with *defect*. This may offer a path beyond the problem of subjectivity in the historical performance of music. The unmasking, the problematization, and the deconstruction from critical theory's epistemological detour remain, though not to identify the *actual* or *deeper* truth, but rather the most just form of action for the present moment. The conceptual and practical result of this process is a new illusion, which will in turn need to endure that same process of critique and re-evaluation of practice shortly after it is created. And so on and so forth.

In a radical critical philosophy of illusions, each utterance, every instance of critique and iteration of a practice, is cast as a fiction: not a fiction that pushes its practitioner to scepticism or esotericism but that provides insight into real problems in the real world. However, it is also a fiction that yet still must almost immediately be subject to new critique, to a further revision of practice, to adaptation to a yet further changed understanding. Theory here does not uncover the essence beneath the façade. Each moment of theorization overcomes the inevitable shortcomings of one illusion by replacing it with yet another illusion with different shortcomings of its own. Productive potential lies in those points of misalignment, those moments where the present illusion in some way fails and in so failing instigates a reformulation of understanding that will be effective in a limited way for a limited time before itself failing and needing to be reformulated. All the while, praxis must be kept up. The right answer or the best approach will never be found. One must simply continue to work, theorize, adapt, work more, theorize more, and adapt again.

It's possible to see parallels with historiographical approaches such as Niall Ferguson's "virtual history," in which plausible imaginings of what *might have been*—but never actually was—are placed alongside traditional historical narratives as a way of complicating the historian's presentation of the systems of imagination, hope, fear, and desire that motivated human action in the past, just as they do now.[20] But Ferguson's approach leaves the idea of a known truth intact—to suggest that something *might have been but wasn't* implies that you already know what *was*. So it's perhaps more similar to recent work by John Conway, Darren Naish, and C. M. Koseman in the field of paleoart, the visual depiction of prehistoric life, which negotiates information scarcity by presenting many diverse guesses alongside each

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[20] Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

other instead of a single 'best' guess.[21] Instead of asking oneself what was *most* likely, Conway, Naish, and Koseman ask what possibilities may seem incredibly *unlikely* yet are still technically *plausible* given the available evidence. In other words, instead of asking what is the *most* plausible explanation, one asks what are *all the* plausible explanations?

Harcourt's idea of illusion, as well as the other examples from Ferguson, and Conway, Naish, and Koseman, were the inspiration behind the final track, "Ten," on the album *The Aviary.*[22] Like "Nine," it uses notation from Vivaldi's *Quattro Stagioni*, only this time the second movement of "L'Autunno." But the historiographical conceit is different than in "Nine," using instead this idea of a production of critical illusion following Harcourt, and a stretching of plausibility following Conway, Naish, and Koseman.

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[21] John Conway, Darren Naish, and C. M. Koseman, *All Yesterdays: Unique and Speculative Views of Dinosaurs and Other Prehistoric Animals* (UK: Irregular Books, 2012).

[22] Carlo Diaz, *The Aviary* (2022), https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary.

Figure 4.1: The first page of a score for the second movement of Antonio Vivaldi's "L'Autunno," RV 293, edited by Newell Jenkins.

Instead of asking what the most historically plausible interpretation of this music might be, I was curious to understand just how far I could push away from other interpretations I've heard without explicitly contradicting the instructions in the score. This composition, like all movements of Vivaldi's *Le Quattro Stagioni*, is matched to a poem, and it's tempting to use the analogical vagaries at such an interface between music and poetry to inspire deviant interpretations. The poem for this movement reads as follows:

Fà ch' ogn' uno tralasci e balli e canti	They all forget their cares, and dance to greet
L'aria che temperata dà piacere,	The air that is with joy and pleasure filled,
E la staggion ch' invita tanti e tanti	The season that holds out to all and sundry
D' un dolcissimo sonno al bel godere.	The sweetest slumber with delight instilled.[23]

It could be easy to let one's imagination run with such a depiction of careless indulgence, perhaps by adding improvisational flourishes atop the tranquil chorale of the given notes. I'd be eager to hear such a performance, but in the case of my work with Stile Nu for "Ten," my desire to present a critical perspective on and within historically-informed performance ultimately made me decide against this. A commonality between my approach in "Nine" and "Ten" is an interest in the ambiguity of—or perhaps interpretive capaciousness of—notation that might otherwise be understood as explicit and inflexible. Were I to add improvisational or otherwise melodic figures to the notated score, my intervention could be mistaken for a mere fantasy *upon* Vivaldi's composition rather than a performance *of* it. In order for my critique of notational ambiguity and interpretive breadth to remain intact, I needed to resist the tempting ambiguity of this relationship between music and poetry, and restrain myself quite closely to the printed notation, however 'inauthentic' this may actually be to how notation was used at the time Vivaldi composed the piece.

So I decided instead to look upon this notation as if from a dogmatic, literalistic perspective, but at the same time with a desire that is often antithetical to such ideology—a desire to make the furthest possible music from my own imagining of historical plausibility. I sought to understand for myself just

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[23] Antonio Vivaldi, trans. Armand D'Angour, *Le Quattro Stagioni* (sonnets) [first published 1725], accessed 24 July 2023, https://www.armand-dangour.com/2017/07/vivaldis-four-sonnets/.

how far this notation could be bent, toward however inauthentic a result, while never allowing one to suggest that I explicitly strayed from the indications on the page. Looking at the score, the most potent critical locus of such notational ambiguity seemed to sit in the basso continuo part. Basso continuo is, of course, always something of an improvisational instruction. It provides an explicit bass line and harmonic progression but leaves the exact voicing and ornamentation to the discretion of the performer. The basso continuo part of this piece is also a particularly interesting case as regards my critical desire to push the boundaries of notational ambiguity: its bass line is extremely sparse, yet the explicit instruction to arpeggiate indicates that the desire is not for stasis but for some kind of constant motion pushing the sound forward at all times. But in how many diverse characters, and how far from a 'typical' interpretation, can this stasis-cum-motion be animated?

Basso continuo is certainly not a naïve or unknown improvisational practice. It doesn't allow any imaginable possibilities fitting within its indicated harmony at a given moment in musical time. It's believed by most musicologists to be have indicated a significantly more predetermined set of metrical, textural, gestural, and formal possibilities, which would be learned over a musician's many years of disciplined training. Partimento books—something like compositional and keyboard performance training textbooks for young musicians in 18th-century Italy—have been an invaluable resource for understanding these otherwise opaque cultures of continuo playing. Often giving basso continuo lines alongside several possible 'realizations' of them, these books allow a historian to find correlations between specific bass-line and figural patterns and similarly consistent patterns in their right-hand realization. As the music theorist Robert Gjerdingen shows in detail,

> a boy [a music student] was not allowed to fumble around the keyboard trying anything that might pop into his mind. The masters required a boy to operationalize memories of the basic partimento patterns by playing them in various positions in various keys. [...] [T]his involved learning [...] cadences, the Rule of Octave, some simple suspensions, and a number of interval sequences for a bass. Practiced first were the cadences and the Rule of the Octave. With those items securely in memory a boy could venture to realize [...] partimento.[24]

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[24] Robert Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories: How Orphans Became Elite Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 115.

In essence, students would memorize a wide array of what Gjerdingen and others have called musical 'schemata,' which would over the course of their adult lives as professional musicians constitute the raw materials for 'free' composition and for the performance of basso continuo at the keyboard. So even though continuo lines may look, to the uninitiated, like invitations for an *extraordinary degree of musical freedom* as may be seen in the use of lead sheets by modern jazz musicians, the reality of their use throughout the 18th century seems to have been a bit more regimented. However, my impression is that there was still an *extraordinary degree of freedom* in the performance of basso continuo in early 18th-century Venice, just of a different kind. Even given a relatively strict set of rules for the selection and arrangement of notes when following a written basso continuo part, there remains an extraordinary amount of expressive flexibility possible in exact rhythm, meter, dynamic, texture, articulation, and phrasing.

In the case of the second movement of "L'Autunno," this type of expressive flexibility lies particularly in the written call for arpeggiation; namely, how fast and how consistent should it be? There's also some, though perhaps less, flexibility in the exact voicing and registration of the figured harmonies. It is at the sonic boundaries of these parameters of the music that decisions must be made principally by imagination. My critical objective in "Ten" was to provoke this strange boundary between empirical and imaginative choices. Both are certainly at play in all performances of historical music, but often one's goal is to render the boundary invisible—to suppress it. I wanted to make it the explicit purpose of my performance. So for me these interpretive parameters of arpeggiation and voicing were those for which I chose to pursue what one might call 'minimally plausible' choices, going *against* any instinctive or imaginative idea I had of what choices 'might have' been made by Vivaldi or his contemporaries.

Figure 4.2: The beginning of the keyboard part for "Ten," by Carlo Diaz and Stile Nu; or, the beginning of the basso continuo part for the second movement of Antonio Vivaldi's "L'Autunno," RV293, with interpretive notes added. For a recording, see https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary; this is the beginning of the track titled "Ten."

These decisions were principally to arpeggiate "very rapidly" across the "full range of the instrument," which emboldens the overall difference in note density between the harpsichord and the strings. In practice, this also ended up creating a significant disparity in dynamic level between the harpsichord and the strings, even with the sparsest of registrations on the instrument we had available, so we made the further decision to dampen the harpsichord by placing very light fabric over the strings.

As with "Nine," the idea was, again, not to create an authentic or even historically plausible performance of Vivaldi's piece, but to present a rhetorical turn of phrase within a broader conversation among and between musicians and listeners about the ways in which we're controlled by our habits and assumptions, so that we might discover something new about the past and about ourselves by disrupting those habits and assumptions. By showing just how far the notation can stretch without making any alterations, I hope to suggest that even one pursuing a 'plausible' interpretation could easily stray much further from the interpretive norms of 21st-century historically-informed performance, and would stand to do well by the discipline at large in offering such a *broadening* force to their peers' and audiences' imagination of the musical past.

Considered as what Harcourt would call an "illusion," then, "Ten" puts forth *an* understanding of Vivaldi's music alongside an explicit demonstration of what we *don't* know for sure about how Vivaldi might have played it. This illusion—historical in some ways, inventive in others, correct in some ways, ready for further critique in others—allows our escape from what can be understood as the

epistemological crisis of historically-informed performance without simply regressing into an assertion of plausibility that's impossible to assess or into an entirely personal self-reflection with no relation at all to the past in question.

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In *Along the Archival Grain*, Ann Laura Stoler [1949–] examines the epistemological limitations of applying a positivistic archival-historical practice to the study of institutions that were themselves prolific producers of documentary archives. Through several case studies of "failed projects, delusional imaginings, and equivocal explanations" of colonial administrators in the 19th-century Netherlands Indies, she recasts the identity of empire as fundamentally built not upon order and reason but upon anomaly, indeterminacy, and exception. Here, archives are not sources of true knowledge about the events and people they concern but sites for the politically instrumentalized performance of aspiration and fear, and for the wilful and unwilful muddying of truth as it is actually understood at the time.[25] "In these chapters Dutch colonial archives serve less as stories for a colonial history than as active, generative substances with histories, as documents with itineraries of their own."[26] Crucial within this sentiment is the demarcation of temporality. In the moment of their writing, documents are not recordings of events gone by or facts presently observed but practical weapons in the socio-political arsenal of imperialism. Their orientation was toward their own future, and not even as a passive prediction thereof but as a will to purposefully shape it. As Stoler continues, her project is about

> archiving-as-process rather than archives-as-things. Most importantly, it looks to archives as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources. These colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves.[27]

This metaphor equating written documents to photographic transparencies performs significant conceptual work throughout the book, and is paired with another photographic metaphor—negatives.

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[25] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 21.

[26] Ibid., 1.

[27] Ibid., 20.

Both are metaphors for light and inscription—in perspective, projection, and inversion—and their role in the production of knowledge. What is developed is the mirror image of what is committed to film. Sometimes what one sees is the space in which ink was *not* deposited or off of which light did *not* reflect. And how one looks can have profound effects on what one sees.

These visionary narratives were colonial negatives in more than one sense: they were cropped and re-cropped. Some were never developed. Some faded as they were overexposed to what was transpiring [...] Others were blown up and distorted out of all proportion to the social realities in which people lived. Most are absent from the historiography because they appear to be colonial debris, unfulfilled visions discarded in process. But as a pulse on the tensions and uncertainties that pervaded these moments, such refracted images command attention.[28]

Negatives and transparencies are also tools and technologies that stand in complement—but difference—to their finished-product counterparts of the photograph and print. Not all negatives are developed nor all drafts saved. What Stoler shows us in these documents is governance in the making. She makes a distinction between this project and a history of ideas:

How much historical weight should be assigned to such a set of improbable visions that were, for the most part, never implemented? How should we treat the history of what was deemed possible but remained unrealised? What can we learn [from] aborted projects, from proposals whose circulation was interrupted, from (blue)prints that were ultimately scrapped? *This is not a return to a history of ideas, mentalities, or representations*. Instead my attention to "non-events" takes as its subject the uneven presence of what was imagined as the possible, the tension between what was realizable and what was romance, between plausible plans and implausible worlds. At issue here is not the relationship between 'text' and 'context,' but the changing force fields in which these proposals were produced. I think here for a space for 'developing historical negatives.' The analytic shift from the high-gloss print of history writ-large to the space of its production, the darkroom negative: from direct to refracted light, from 'figure' and 'field'—that which is more often in historic relief—to the inverse, grainy texture of 'surfaces' and their shifting 'grounds.'[29]

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[28] Ibid., 138.

[29] Ibid., 108. Emphasis mine.

For Stoler, the archive is not an evidence room for historians but an active battlefield. Not only must we be conscious of the ways in which our own subjectivity influences our interpretation of historical documents, but also of the ways in which many of those whose hands are involved in the creation of our archives play a similar role. And much can be learned on this front by looking not only at formal records of true events and real policies but also at those other seemingly insignificant ephemera surrounding them on the uncertain ground from which they were lifted into a firmer reality. This approach further sophisticates one's ontology. No longer are empirical facts and verifiable realities the only stuff of meaning for historical research—so too are the many confused and conflicting expressions of will, fear, and desire uttered in uncertain and inconsistent terms that occur alongside them. Yet this is only possible to reasonably incorporate within academic scholarship—in other words, it is only *not* random conjecture—when one marries it to a less universalizing epistemology such as Harcourt's radical critical philosophy of illusions.

But what does this look like in music? Think of an early sketch of a known composition—perhaps Beethoven's sketches of his *Ninth Symphony*, for a copiously documented example. One can see in these sketches some kind of prescience of the completed work. There are familiar bits and pieces that can be traced forward to their fully-formed, published versions in the final score. As Nicholas Cook points out, even this is extremely uneven epistemological ground: "Like a mirror, the sketches for the Ninth Symphony reflect the assumptions of those who interpret them."[30] To extend Stoler's metaphor, these sketches would be the archival negatives that *were* developed into formal events, laws, policies, or trends. But now imagine that the symphony was never finished and performed, or somehow went missing before it could be canonized. Imagine the sketches of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* as one of those negatives that were discarded, abandoned, forgotten, or otherwise never really made into much of significance. What do they now become? They are now dissociated from their finished product, and so perhaps come to look like raw potential instead of early prototype. But they may also become dissociated from each other, no longer bound together by their shared fate as components of a soon-to-be-finished work,

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[30] Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 2.

suddenly positionless and purposeless within a broader and undifferentiated mass of other sketches in Beethoven's hand.
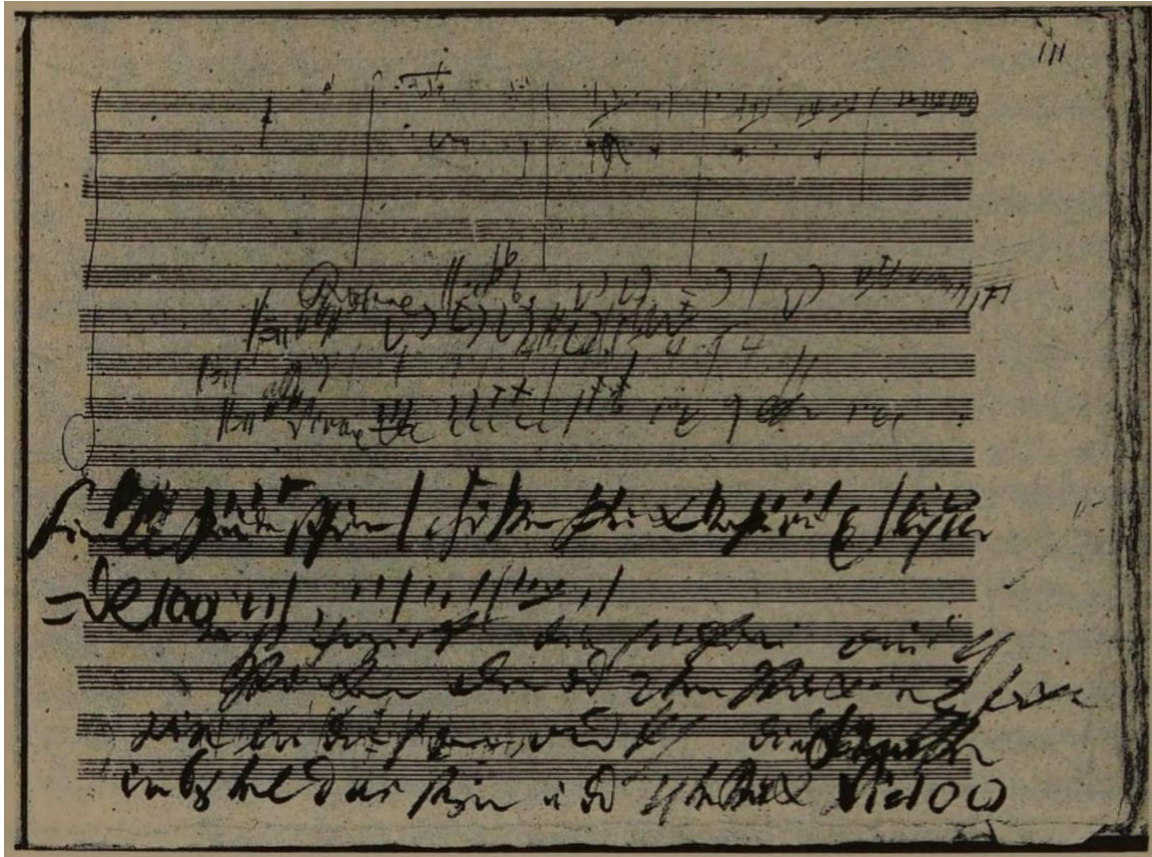
Figure 4.3: A sketch by Ludwig van Beethoven; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin,

Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Artaria 201, 111.

Stoler's negatives in a musical archive would thus not be sketches of known compositions but perhaps simply sketches; unjustified, unqualified, unreferenced; notation that has no name, no beginning, no ending, no context. It doesn't come from a work and its composer will never put it into a work. It perhaps even lacks a tempo, a key, a clef, or even sometimes rhythm or pitch. To borrow Stoler's word, it is what one might at first see as a mere "debris" of the musical archive—marginalia, backsides, pages that only seem to be between other pages.

But how does one find such material when its very definition is its lack of those usual identifying features typically used to describe, classify, sort, and locate archival documents? Here, it's worth taking

Stoler's idea a bit further than just an analogy to photographic negatives, thinking about not only archival negatives as discrete objects, but also the negative space of the archival institution as a whole, or what I've taken to calling the *negative archive*. Though Stoler's metaphors of perspective and inversion in photographic negatives certainly remain valuable in my work, this concept is different, and is more akin to something like John Cage's reflections on silence.

> [T]ry as we may to make a silence, we cannot. For certain engineering purposes, it is desirable to have as silent a situation as possible. Such a room is called an anechoic chamber, its six walls made of a special material, a room without echoes. I entered one at Harvard University several years ago and heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation. Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music. But this fearlessness only follows if, at the parting of the ways, where it is realized that sounds occur whether intended or not, one turns in the direction of those he does not intend.[31]

What we think of as silence, then, is not the total absence of sound but its *notable* or *relative* absence. In this comparative lack of sound, one still hears, and the key question becomes: *what*? Depending on where we are, we'll always tend to find the same specific types of sounds when we decide to listen to silence with a little intention, for a little while. In a loud, highly urbanized space this might be the sound of my building creaking in the wind, which becomes noticeable only when I listen carefully during a sudden absence of the usual traffic noise. And in the quietest possible space, as Cage points out, this might be the sounds of my own body. The negative archive is not dissimilar to this. Just as one can hear silence simply by listening to it, one can see the negative archive simply by looking for it.

Its first glimmer can be found through the many possible search terms that *negate* information yet are nevertheless included in catalogue entries: 'anonymous,' 'unknown,' 'missing,' 'incomplete,' 'unfinished,' 'damaged,' 'fragment,' 'sketch,' 'miscellaneous.' These words indicate assumptions made about documents; assumptions that are in some way disrupted by the actually perceived form of those documents. 'Anonymous' is typically used when a composer is not indicated or otherwise known, rather

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[31] John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 8.

than when the scribe, compiler, or owner can't be determined. 'Unknown' appears before these latter, non-composer contributors to a document, though 'unknown' can also describe many other characteristics of a document such as its chronological or geographic origin. 'Missing,' 'incomplete,' and 'unfinished' all suggest there is a clear enough idea that some kind of grouping of notation *would* constitute a *piece of music* if something weren't lacking. 'Missing,' though, tends to imply that the piece was actually finished at some point in time but lost something in the interceding years. Perhaps something is labelled a duet but there's only one part, for example. 'Damaged' points to a similar kind of relatively clear physical lacking, but in this case obviously as the result of destruction or deterioration of the physical artifact of paper and ink. Perhaps a section of a page is ripped, or ink was smeared and blotched by water, or there's a stain that obscures the writing, or the paper is crumbling away due to age. 'Incomplete' and 'unfinished,' on the other hand, tend to refer to notation that is otherwise in good physical condition but that has no indicated ending—no double bar—but they can also refer to something less definitive such as notation that seems to be a bit sparse in the middle, as if some additional melody or countermelody ought to be there. Yet all of these are different than 'fragments' or 'sketches,' which could of course also be understood as 'incomplete' or 'unfinished' pieces, but that are perhaps deemed not to have reached enough maturity to even constitute apparently discrete notational *things*— they're still a kind of musical shrapnel not (yet?) giving impressions of a singular composed form. And 'miscellaneous' implies that either the creator of the document or the creator of the catalogue entry did not see logic to its particular grouping of notation.

These search terms yield fascinating results. Consider the following:
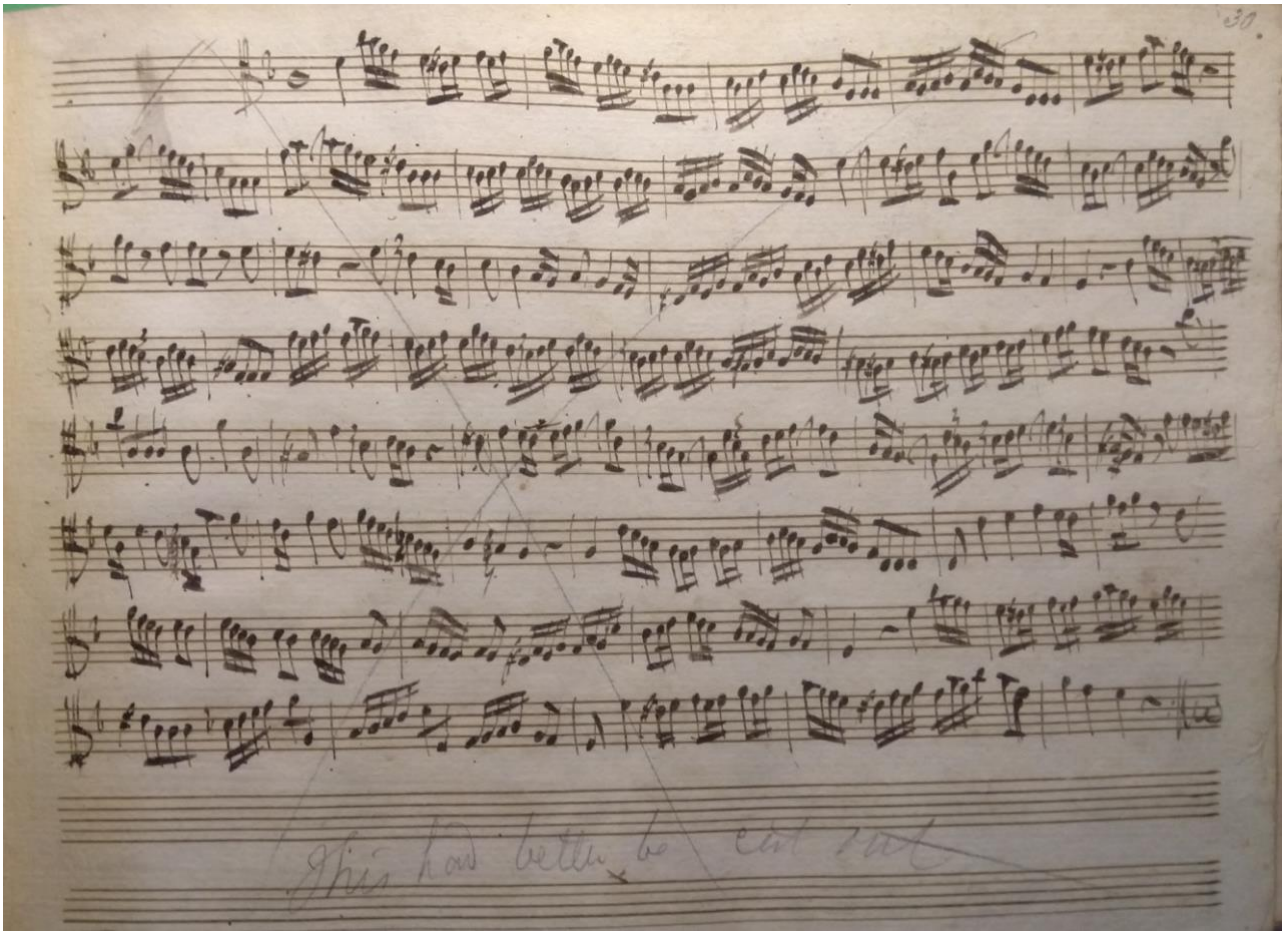
Figure 4.4: A page from Add. MS 14245, British Library, London

This page is from a document in the British Library that was likely penned sometime between 1726 and 1761.[32] At the bottom of this page there is writing in what looks to be a much later hand than the music notation, in pencil: "This had better be cut out." Clearly, whoever wrote this was not obliged, or perhaps I'm looking at this page in its newly "cut out" and relocated position, but the remark nevertheless makes visible the nature of archiving as not only the guardianship but also the *production* of reality. Not every document can be kept, so decisions must be made. Archivists today decide what to acquire and what not to acquire. Musicians of the 18th-century—both professional and amateur—compiled personal collections of notation for everyday use and long-term remembrance. We know this because a lot of

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[32] Add. MS 14245, British Library, London.

people—archivists, musicians, heirs to collections, and so forth—decided to keep these collections, and then more people a generation after that, and then another, and another.

What does it mean to keep something? Or to simply not throw it away? Inversely, what does it mean to throw it away? Or even to destroy it? Each of these actions or inactions is an assignment of value and a shaping of historical time and conceivable reality. *What* exactly is kept in one moment determines what the past can look like later on. And this doesn't always have to be an active decision that something is valuable and must be preserved, or that something is harmful and must be destroyed. It can also be an *indecision* about what to do with something, which typically defaults to keeping it—perhaps tucked away in a drawer or a box or a corner or an attic or a basement somewhere. Maybe somebody else will want it later?

What we see shapes what we anticipate, and on a variety of scales—from note to note, phrase to phrase, excerpt to excerpt, document to document, archive to archive, and discipline to discipline. In this way, our ancestors shape our worldview and, a step further, the outputs of our research. Should we carry on studying historical musical cultures without asking why we're interested in what we're interested in, without asking why we're trying to answer the questions we're trying to answer, without an understanding of why we feel the way we do about what we see? The structure of the archive is itself informed by the ideologies of previous generations of historians. Are we happy to tacitly accept this or should we begin to look for their cracks and spillover?

The initial search terms I used to find such an artifact, and the only such words I believe will ever be effective in such a search, at least in the near future, are still laden with value judgments that prioritize complete pieces by known composers over these documents' quality as "expectant and conjured,"[33] to return to Stoler's language. As words of *negation*, 'anonymous,' 'unknown,' 'missing,' 'incomplete,' 'unfinished,' 'miscellaneous,' 'fragment,' 'sketch,' 'damaged' do *reveal* the musical archive as an active battlefield, a continual gestation, an infinite recycling of the raw materials of musical sound akin to musical versions of Stoler's archival negatives. Yet they don't on their own render this *meaningful*. They keep our eyes fixed upon the seemingly inescapable, seemingly *natural* end goal of complete pieces by known composers. I need something else at this point. I need to escape the grip of the composer-work

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[33] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 1.

model so I can see these artifacts not as inferior precursors to fixed musical objects but in their actual present state as alive with potential.

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There is a manuscript in the British Library that mostly contains music for two violins and basso, and seems to have been compiled in the late 18th century.[34] The fourth page has a piece marked "Sonata," which is unique in that it has a substantial and apparently complete beginning section and a "da capo" indicated at the end but is missing most of its middle section. The basso part simply stops short. No double bar is written and no clef or key signature is written on the following blank staves. Additionally, the writing stops at the end of a staff line, which may suggest that it was not a compositional end but something like the end of a transcription session that was then *not* picked back up later—a scribal rupture rather than a musical one. Furthermore, the violin parts that continue through the rest of the "Andante Larghetto" and on to a third section in 3/4 before the "da capo" indication (up to this point the piece had been in 4/4)—all after the basso part fell off—contain considerable portions of simultaneous rest. This suggests that either the basso may have filled in those rests or that a fourth or further part is missing entirely.

Before encountering this manuscript, I had already found a substantial number of short melodic fragments in other manuscripts. But I was worried that simply piecing them together at will would lead me to create something that was perceived as new music—new altogether, having nothing to do with the past at all. As I gathered these materials and started to play around with them compositionally, I started to realize that they didn't necessarily come across as historical if not placed in particular kinds of contexts or played in particular ways. I recognized that I would have to undertake some kind of balancing act in order to both convey a sense of historicity in the music I made with them while still acting critically in regard to the concepts I began my research intending to problematize. The extant larger-scale structure of this particular fragment was appealing in this respect. It gave me the ability to create something that sounded like it might be historical music, even if all else failed. It was a moderately complete form that

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[34] Add. MS 34,074–34,076, British Library, London.

would allow me to simply 'fill in' the gaps. So that's what I did, in a piece with Stile Nu that I've called, as pragmatically as I could muster, *One*.

Figure 4.5: Measures 30–38 of the score used for *One* (2019). The "*2" in measure 31 indicates the beginning of the first fragment incorporated from a different notational source. For a recording, see https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Carlo_Diaz__One_(alternate).mp3; the excerpt shown here begins at 01:07.

However, this first attempt was a failure to a significant degree. The style of *One* remained relatively consistent with complete pieces written around the time of its most significant contributor of source material because the relationships between discrete fragments did not work to dislocate the characteristics of that style in any significant way. If you look closely there are of course numerous harmonic 'errors' with respect to any such style. Consider for example the simultaneous C, E, and F in beat three of measure 35. The F in the violin 1 part could have become a dissonant passing tone if the following note was an E, or even if any of the following sixteenth notes were an E, but this is not what happened. The violin 1 part here, as in several other places, reveals itself *not* to be truly linked to its nominal accompaniment. However, this understanding presumes a fairly sophisticated understanding of historical music theory. To someone without that background, as I have confirmed through informal conversation with several listeners, the overall impression was of something that could plausibly have been written in the 18th century by a single composer. Any listener not tipped off in advance about the provenance of this music, then, would not have noticed anything out of the ordinary. So the first impression of this music does not satisfy my goal.

But *One* was successful in a different way, almost *because* of this superficial plausibility. It sparked conversation about the issues at play in this research. Because it sounded so innocuous, the effect of learning its provenance was even more startling. The moment any of us involved in the ensemble tried to answer one of the inevitable questions from the audience—"what was that piece?;" "who composed it?;" "when was it composed?"—any understanding those audience members thought they had of this music was instantly muddied. We were forced to equivocate; to reveal that the piece was composed by me but also that the fragments were composed by other people, that we didn't know who those other people were, that we didn't know when those other people composed them, that we didn't really know how they 'would have been' played or how they 'would have been' incorporated within a larger composition, and therefore that the way we performed this music was very much of our own invention. But it also wasn't of our own invention in the sense that we still built it from some sense of style and desire for coherence conjured by the notation's seeming to be still somehow from the 18th century. Though this being was not differentiated according to how historians often geographically and temporally classify their objects of study. We combined several different moments, places, and people into this music, from

which follows that the style of our interpretation was more temporally broad than any performance of the 18th century 'probably would have been.' So...*what was it that we played then?*

Armed with all the tools of university-educated, conservatory-trained, professionally experienced historically-informed performers, we still lacked any tool that could enable to us to answer. We had no idea, and our audiences didn't either. We failed to produce the new conceptual vocabulary we were searching for, but the very structure of our music denied us the option of falling back into old ways. We confounded our own understanding in order to evade a received knowledge system. The task now remained to rebuild from this spot.

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This kind of unknowing is a phenomenon Stoler refers to as "aphasia," a central topic in her later book, *Duress*. Here, Stoler describes empire as a continuously shape-shifting assertion of the self-evidence of its common-sense epistemologies and structures of power, and she works to re-claim scholars' critical vocabulary in the face of these oppressive forces, which persist even into our own time.[35] *Duress* focuses explicitly on the persistence of colonial formations in a present understood as deeply entangled with multiple layers of pastness. At particular issue here are racial categories devised by colonial administrators as mechanisms of segregation and control that have persisted within individuals' self-identities long after those governments and policies have been overturned.[36] This problem is largely a linguistic one. Stoler defines aphasia as

> a condition in which the occlusion of knowledge is at once a dismembering of words from the objects to which they refer, a difficulty retrieving both the semantic and lexical components of vocabularies, a loss of access that may verge on active dissociation, a difficulty comprehending what is seen and spoken.[37]

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[35] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 169.

[36] Ibid., 72.

[37] Ibid., 12.

In a sense, aphasia is a type of confusion about what things are and how to name them. But in Stoler's use it's not merely an idiosyncratic psychological condition akin to amnesia or dementia but a core socio-political feature of the post-colony.

> [V]ery little of these histories has been or is actually forgotten: it may be displaced, occluded from view, or rendered inappropriate to pursue. [...] It is not a matter of ignorance or absence. Aphasia is a dismembering, a difficulty in speaking, a difficulty in generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts to appropriate things. Aphasia in its many forms describes a difficulty in retrieving both conceptual and lexical vocabularies and, most important, a difficulty in comprehending what is spoken.[38]

This is an experience I've encountered repeatedly in my own work. Earlier, I defended "Three" as a legitimate example of both historical performance *and* contemporary composition. Yet the understandings of these two practices that allowed me to arrive at such defences were premised upon their incommensurability with each other. The two practices could *both* be identified as members of a mutually exclusive pair. Absurd. Each line of reasoning seems sound in isolation, but looking *across* the two reveals the paradox, and I find myself unable to retrieve the words or concepts necessary to comprehend the piece in any other way.

Perhaps this is too harsh; a moment in which I simply need to accept that no analysis can fully explain a phenomenon in its full vitality. After all, isn't that what Harcourt urged in his idea of the illusion? That no explanation is entirely adequate? That the work of the critical theorist is therefore to challenge and revise a received understanding, and to do so again and again? Not quite. Accepting that others will challenge and refine one's critique is different than putting forth what one already knows to be incoherent. Harcourt advocates humility in critical theory, not approximation. Stoler, too, urges us to

> resist the reversion to received terms or the retreat to those in our ready repertoire—when one knows (in those dark conversations with oneself) that one has compromised, too quickly finessed what matters, and impatiently settled for a gloss.[39]

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[38] Ibid., 128.

[39] Ibid., 21.

In her usage, aphasia is the result of domination, and therefore the proper response is resistance. Inherited terminology that has lost its historical potency—or that retains lasting power of a kind that one now believes to be inappropriate—should be supplanted. Because words don't only describe phenomena but they *create* their meaning. They have political force.

> Concepts [...] do work and work on us to authorize some questions, to refigure what questions are worth asking, and, not least, to foreclose others. Concepts have a force of their own whose gravitas can be measured, in part, by the spaces they are called on to inhabit and by the constellation of concepts that congeal around them. With respect to imperial practice, they shape the parameters of what can be construed as the 'facts of the matter.'[40]

As with *One*, "Three" doesn't neatly fit within existing models of musical performance. When dealing with a *complete* piece of music, one can at least plausibly suggest that they are only engaged in an act of interpretation. However authentic or inauthentic, it is still nevertheless an act of recitation. Similarly, when composing music in front of a blank piece of paper, one can suggest in a plausible way that they are engaged in an act of invention. However much the result may sound like other music by other people, it is still nevertheless a creative act. But these pieces are somehow both of those acts. There is historical notation to be interpreted and there's blank paper to be invented upon.

One could perhaps suggest that they're a hybrid of these two practices, but there's more to be gained by resisting this ready solution.

> The sort of conceptual labour I work through here attempts a venture unyielding to easy fit, one that is about neither the 'usage' of concepts nor acts of 'borrowing.' It is, rather, an exercise in attentiveness and vigilance in a provisional, active mode. The challenge is both to discern the work we do with concepts and the work that concepts may explicitly or inadvertently exert on us. Rather than acquiesce to the resolute security that concepts may be marshalled to confer, we might better look to the unmarked space between their porous and policed peripheries, to that which hovers as not quite 'covered' by a concept, as 'excess' or 'amiss,' that which

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[40] Ibid., 173.

cannot be quite encompassed by its received attributes, when 'portability' is not self-evident, to that which spills across its edges.[41]

What conceptual work have historical performance and contemporary composition already *done upon* me in approaching the source manuscripts I look at, in attempting to answer questions about them, and in my use of them? How can I clear all of this noise to make space to think about this work and, if I succeed at this, what conceptual tools will I have left? To how far an extreme should I extend my own conceptual "attentiveness and vigilance" to the inherited concepts acting upon me and how might I open myself up and allow myself to identify, in an "active and provisional mode," those candidates for a new ontology that better fits my task at hand?

And what might happen to these inherited concepts of historical performance and contemporary composition in the process?

A concept accumulates force from the other concepts that congeal, collide, and rearrange themselves around it. Replacing a concept not only displaces another. It breaks up contiguities and can render invisible the mutual dependencies [...] that join them to a problem, the articulations through which they do their work.[42]

This operative question is not only about abstract ontology but also about the practical place of this type of work in musical culture and its meaning and effect in the context of artistic research. It's also about the roles of and possibilities for innumerable further practices, experiments, and studies of this kind. How do the many institutional and social structures of the *communities* of historical performers and contemporary composers encourage certain types of practice and discourage others, whether by steadfast rule or quiet disinterest? Even something as seemingly innocuous as an administrator of a concert venue asking for a composer and title to print in a program can have extraordinary significance. Who composed this piece and what is it called? I don't know! But do I need to find an answer or is it the wrong question?

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41 Ibid., 9.

42 Ibid., 19.

In *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, Stephen Wright [1963–] critiques, invents, retools, and retires terminology in the lexicon of art theory in light of what he calls a "usological turn" that has occurred over the past several decades as a rejection of Modernist notions of authorship, spectatorship, and expert culture.[43] In simple terms, its an act of trying to figure out what the wrong questions are. His effort is partially in line with Postmodernism in that it problematizes Modernist notions of art practice, but it displays a similar disenchantment with Postmodern critique to that of Harcourt in that it is more concerned with recalibrating toward a better future than analysing (or deconstructing) a past in-and-of itself. So really it's more about finding the new right questions.

Wright offers a lexicon rather than a theory, a toolkit rather than a description. As much as it's infused with theory, his work is not merely an image of the art world at present or past but a provision of effective methods for active practitioners and theorists in contemporary art to use right now. He strives not for reflection alone but for action *through* reflection; to reshape the field via his critique of it. His lexicon is inseparable from a *historical* understanding of the art world's pre-existing conceptual foundations. It is only by looking to the origins and development of the terminology he questions that he is able to identify and—via new vocabulary—transcend the ways in which they shape the artistically *thinkable* when left unproblematized, even by an otherwise highly critical and reflexive artist.

The crucial point in relation to the authenticity debates in Early Music, however, is Wright's very choice of the *lexicon* as a form of publication. At its heart, the authenticity problem was one of language—it was as much about the identification, justification, and description of a musical practice as it was about that practice in itself. By framing his intervention as a lexicon, Wright centres this linguistic aspect. Instead of lingering on the inadequacy of received art-theoretical concepts—whether by theoretical analysis or practice-based disruption—he works to proliferate alternative conceptualities, and does so in the understanding that they may both prove to be more effective descriptors of current art practices and that they may open up further ground for new art practices suddenly rendered thinkable. By framing his work as lexical, Wright demonstrates that he understands words as not only *descriptive* but *generative* of practices.

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[43] Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013).

The term Wright uses to describe this phenomenon throughout his lexicon is "capture."[44] Capture can take many forms—lexical, ontological, institutional, ideological, logistical, operational, performative[45]—and is precisely the phenomenon I described above with regard to "Nine" and "Ten" being classified as New Music. Using Wright's terminology, this is an instance of *lexical* capture, which occurs when critical, nuanced, or otherwise complex phenomena are shoed-into existing terminology. Sometimes this happens naïvely, as a mere misunderstanding or oversimplification. Other times it's a malignant force, either a conscious or subconscious attempt to disarm what might otherwise be potent challenges to pre-existing ontological structures. This is the type of danger that forces Wright to move beyond an ontological view of his field, in which something must be either 'art' or 'not art.' Within this framework, boundary challenges at either side don't actually problematize the binary but simply expand each group. What may otherwise become new conceptualizations end up being wedged into these pre-formed categories. What are intended as challenges to these classifications only end up reinforcing them. The new or radical is 'captured' by the old or traditional.

This is what happens with projects like "Nine" and "Ten." In institutional structures that starkly divide music into 'new' and 'old' (or perhaps 'historical'), practices that challenge the distinction between these two simply end up being forced onto one side or the other. Historical practitioners have often suggested to me that these projects are just new pieces—part of my creative practice as a composer. Composers and improvisers have suggested exactly the opposite, that I'm not really composing anything, just playing the same old music again and again—taking a novel and intriguing approach, but still just playing the same old music. This is a problem that *One* solved, to a certain extent. On a surface level the project was still captured, though primarily from the side of historical performance. But upon digging deeper, this fit became much less clear. As is likely apparent, Wright's concept of 'capture' sits in important relation to Stoler's concept of 'aphasia.' Avoiding capture is a necessary but insufficient step toward an adequate conceptual framework for this music. It buys me some breathing room away from received notions of artistic invention and historical representation within which to hypothesize new

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44 Ibid., 23; also see page 1.

45 Ibid., 23; also see page 1.

possibilities, but in this breathing room I discover a sudden feeling of aphasia, an inability to now properly name or identify the parameters of this practice. I still need a way to rebuild.

Beyond his overriding attention to the idea of lexical capture, a few specific entries in Wright's lexicon bear mentioning on this front, as his base goal is to overcome a similar dualism in the field of contemporary art. Through both revised definitions within and new additions to contemporary art vocabulary, Wright works to collapse the space between an independent, institutionalized art world (a sort of cloistering of affected *subjectivity*; analogous here to contemporary composition) and any kind of "proposition having consequences beyond the aesthetic realm"[46] (including more purportedly *objective* fields of practices; analogous here to historical performance).

Wright's entries for "1:1 scale" and "Autonomy" illustrate this move. He classifies the former as an "emergent concept (underpinning usership)," and the latter as a "conceptual institution to be retired." He introduces autonomy as a term that, "has come to denote almost the opposite of what it set out to name," shifting from a desire for greater say among artists over what work they do and how they do it to a more general cordoning off and guarding of art from anything and everything that isn't art—particularly economics and politics. But "the price to pay for autonomy," Wright argues, is that "[a]rt judged by art's standards can be easily written off as, well...*just art*. Of contemplative value to people who like that sort of thing, but without teeth."[47] Art becomes relativized. One can't argue that artists should be able to do whatever they want because art is divorced from the outside world only to turn around and expect art to have some impact on the outside world. This is why it is a *danger* for pieces such as "Nine" and "Ten" to be relegated to classification as New Music. They lose their purchase as a critique of *historical* epistemology and methodology.

The corrective for this error, this "conceptual institution to be retired," is in part located in what Wright calls 1:1 scale, drawing on Lewis Carroll's anecdote about 1:1 cartography. A mapmaker who wants to achieve perfect accuracy in their work ends up creating a 1:1 scale model of the place they are mapping. The city becomes indistinguishable from its map. The 1:1 map

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[46] Ibid., 12.

[47] Ibid., 12.

undercuts some of the fundamental assumptions about scaled-back representation: its role as surrogate, its status as an abstraction, and its use as a convention that references the real to which it is subordinate. [...] It evacuates the mapping event altogether. The territory is neither mapped nor transformed in any way.[48]

It's important to note here that Wright is not instrumentalizing this concept as it might be instrumentalized by historians; not according to the idea that one might write a history by merely replicating all its objects, characters, and phenomenon as precisely as possible, but as a way of disrupting the separation of art from the 'real' world. If art moves toward 1:1 mimesis *of* the real world instead of abstraction departing *from* it, it may just be able to exert real forces upon that real world. For Wright, 1:1 scale offers an escape route from the hegemony of artistic autonomy. When artistic practices no longer "look like anything other than what they also are" they obtain what he calls a "double ontology."[49] They are neither art in a non-art context nor non-art in an art context; the distinction simply becomes moot. They can have all the effect upon the world that any other kind of action or object outside art spaces can have, and yet they are still able to retain all the critical and aesthetic specificity that has come to define artistic sensibility. They unite art and non-art. They transcend autonomy.

But beyond this rescaling of art, Wright is still not satisfied with 1:1 practices being framed as *merely* double-ontological. He pushes to transcend the ontological framing altogether, because perhaps "this is not an ontological issue at all, but rather a question of the extent to which [practices] are informed by [...] artistic self-understanding, not framed as art." Having demonstrated how a practice can be seen as both among two options present in modernity, Wright moves toward a new paradigm in which this 'both' is no longer a dualism but its own singularity.

These three terms—capture, scale, and autonomy—may prove useful in my own efforts to retool the conceptuality of musical practice that is also historical practice. One interesting observation from the authenticity debates of the 1980s was that shifting one's understanding of the word from a historical to a personal authenticity didn't actually solve the problem either. As Taruskin pointed out,

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[48] Ibid., 4.

[49] Ibid., 4.

> [O]ur intuitions are not the fine, free, feral things we may think they are. They are thoroughly domesticated beasts, trained to run along narrow paths by long years of unconscious conditioning, endowed with vast reserves of cliché, naïve posture, and nonsense. If you are a trained musician, what you will find if you scratch your intuition will be the unexamined mainstream, your most ingrained responses, treacherously masquerading as imagination.[50]

Though the problem of an authentic historical performance movement may be a naïve belief in the possibility of objectivity, the corrective may not merely be a folding back inward to the subject. As I pointed out earlier in the work of both John Locke and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, our basest instincts and most deeply held assumptions are not 'innate' within us as individuals but have come from the outside world. This makes the pursuit of self-knowledge not merely a looking inward at the self in isolation but an attempt to dissect the relationship between the self and the outside world across a broad temporal and spatial narrative of one's life. Such a simplistic ontological binary between self and other, composer and performer, artist and historian, just isn't meaningful except on an extremely superficial level.

What's needed in music is quite similar to what Wright proposes for contemporary art: a double ontology that simultaneously encapsulates this music's abstraction from and situation within the present, its production by both the other of the past and the self of the practitioner.

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[50] Taruskin, 10.

The catalogue entry for document #77796 at Travis & Emery Music Bookshop in London reads:

Sonata a 3. G major. Parts.

[England]: 1737.

Folio (33 x 20cm). 2, 1, 1ff. Manuscript in brown ink on 13-stave hand-ruled paper, front of basso used as title page and giving incipit. The incipit has not been found in the RISM Online search. With *fragments* of another trio in similar format and the basso part of a Concerto a 5 (violins, flute, viola, basso) in G major; all dated "1737 Scrip." £400.[51]

The following are photographs of excerpts from this document, which I took myself in 2019.

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[51] #77796, Travis & Emery Music Bookshop, London. Photographed 15 December 2019. This document no longer appears in the Travis & Emery catalogue as of December 2023.
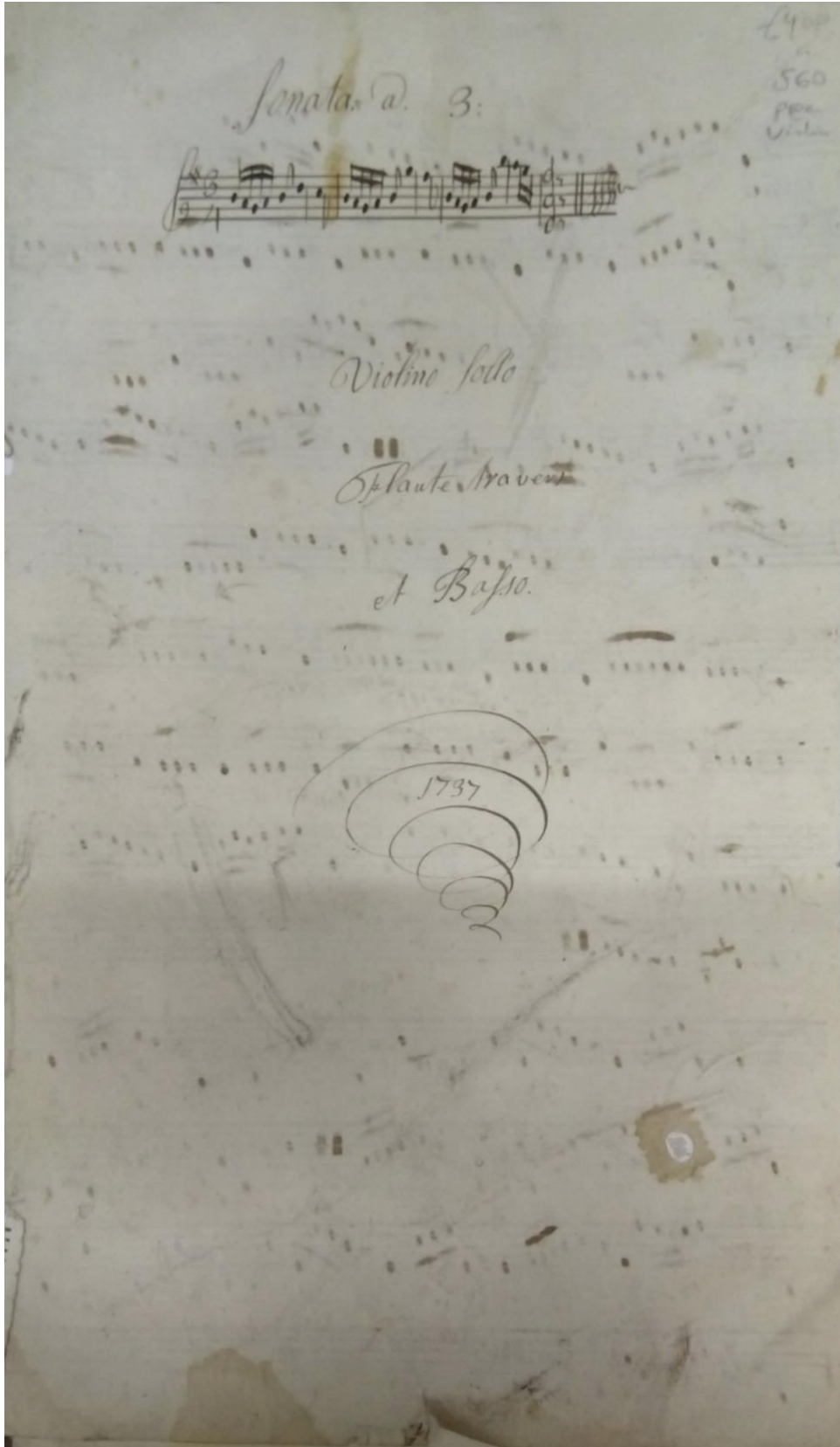
Figure 4.6

Here is the "Flaute Travers" part from the first mentioned "Sonata a 3" in two pages.
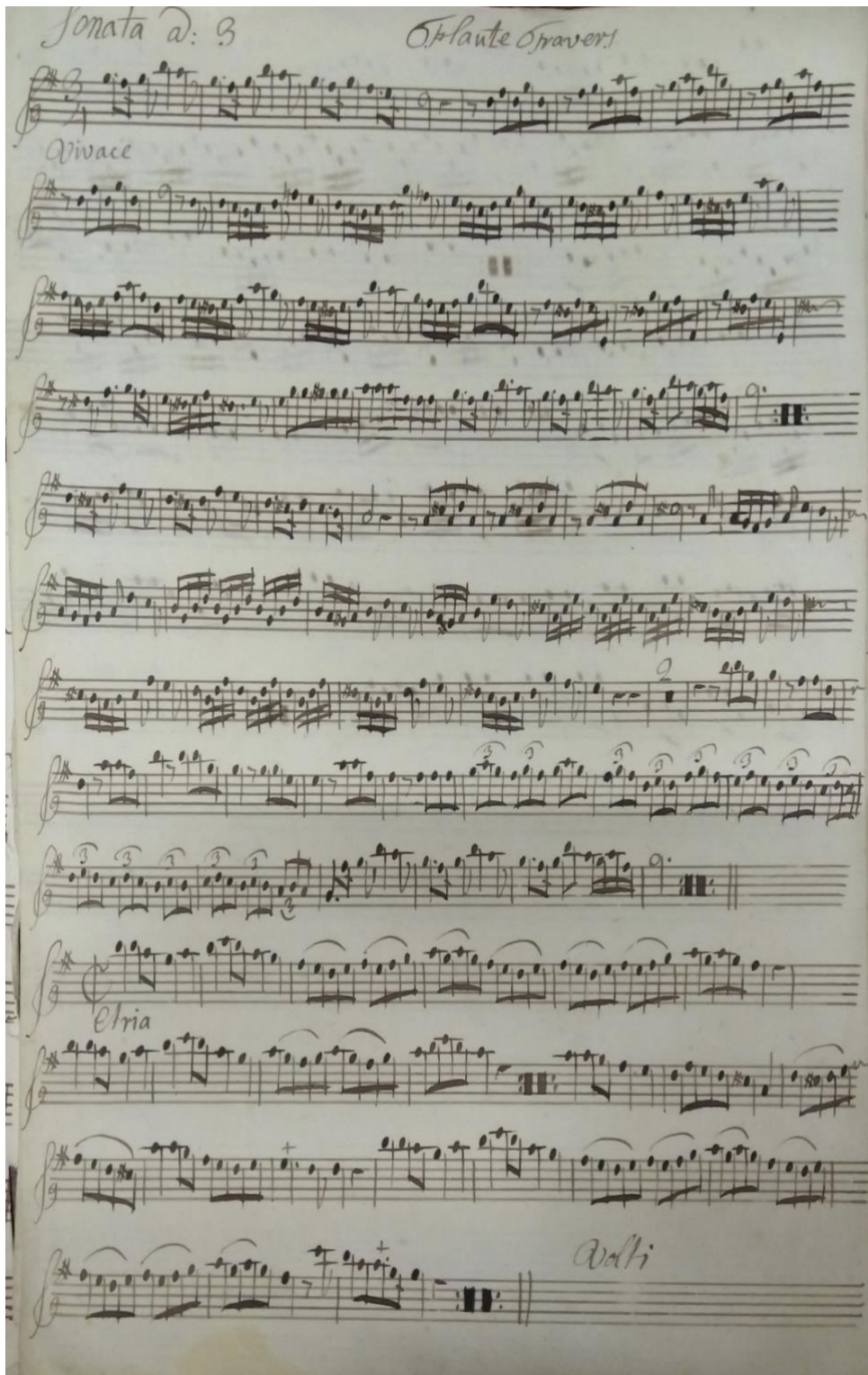
Figure 4.7
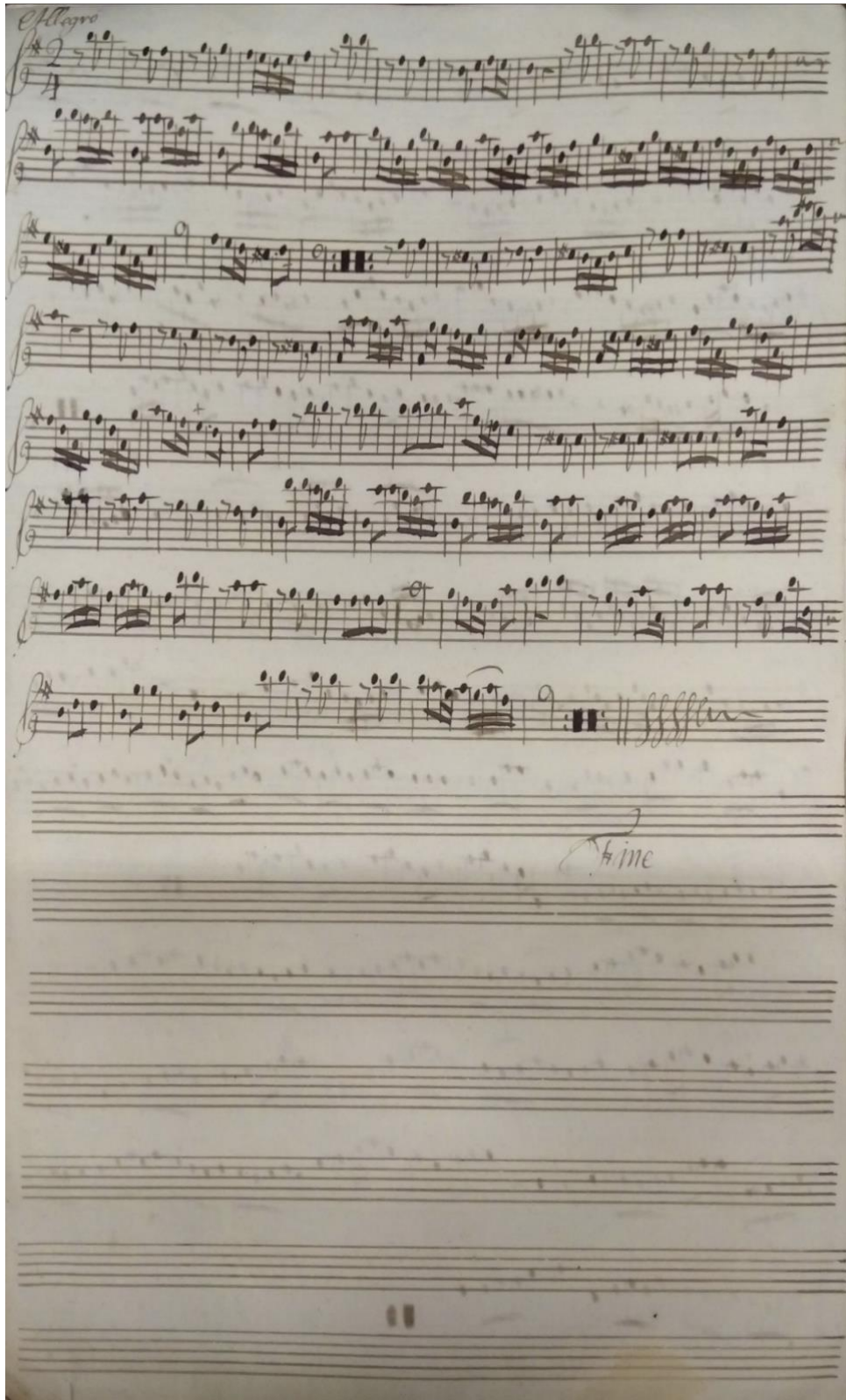
Figure 4.8

And here are some example pages of the "fragments"—the search term that enabled me to find this document—of "another trio."
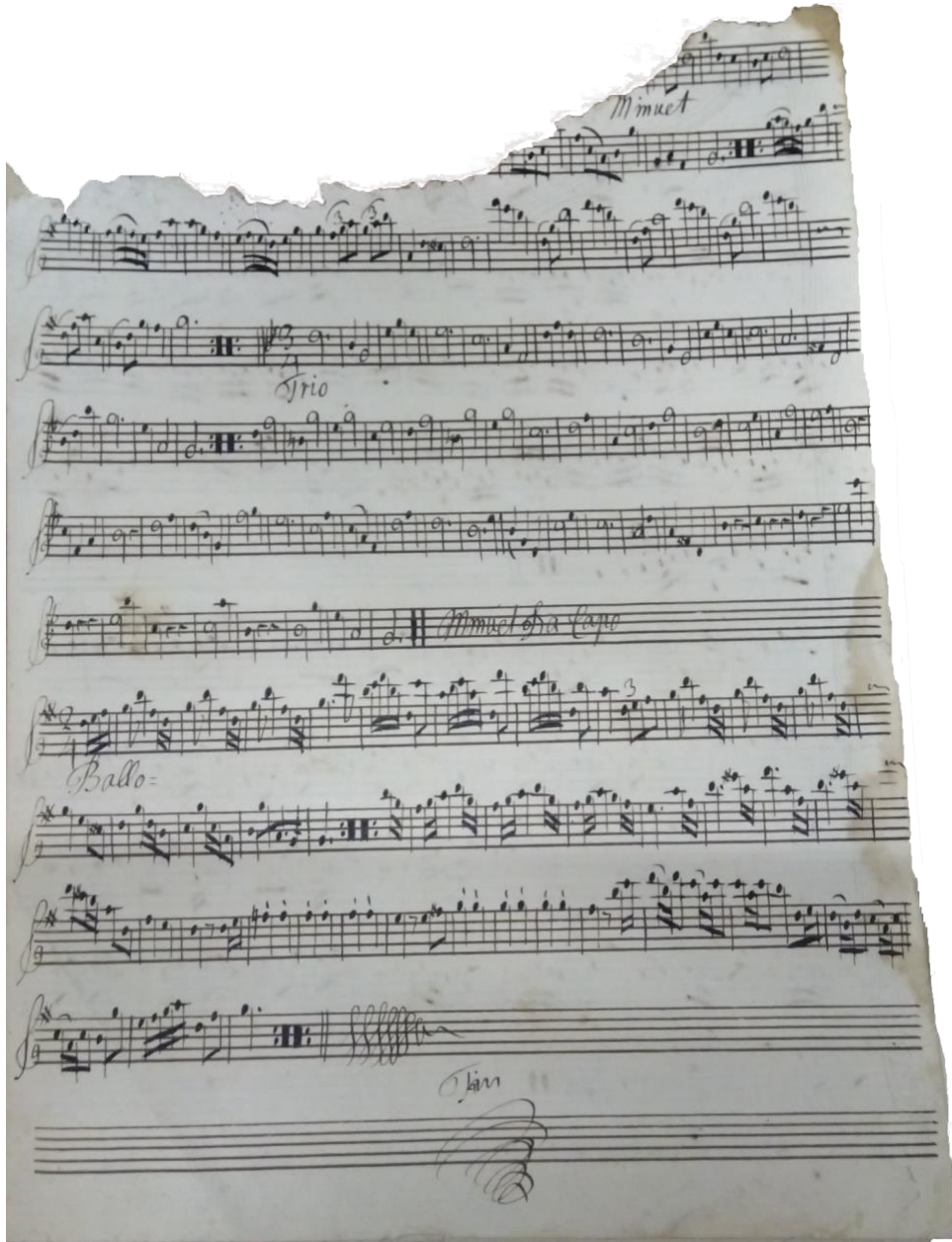
Figure 4.9
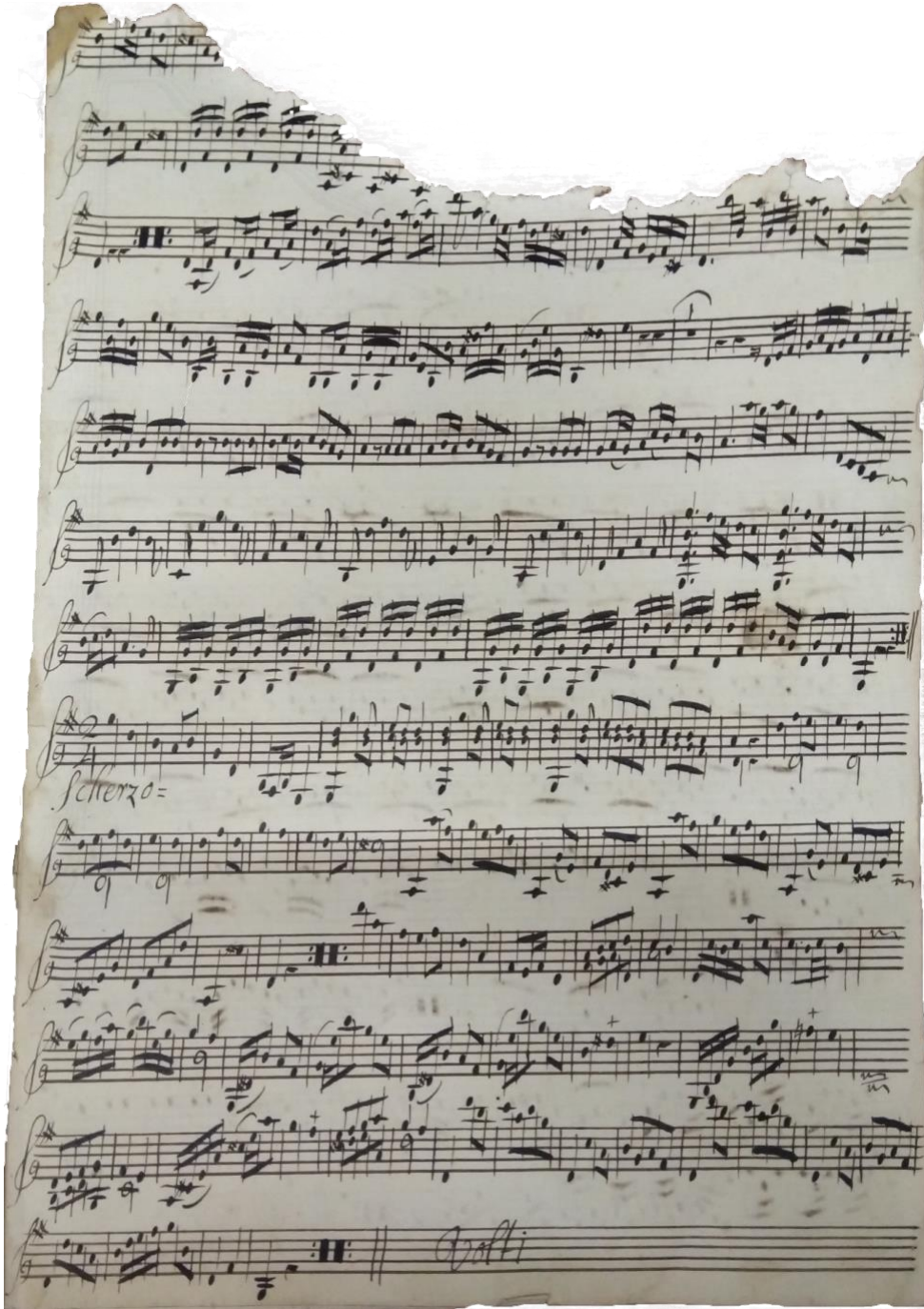
Figure 4.10

And here are the first two pages of the "basso part of a Concerto a 5."
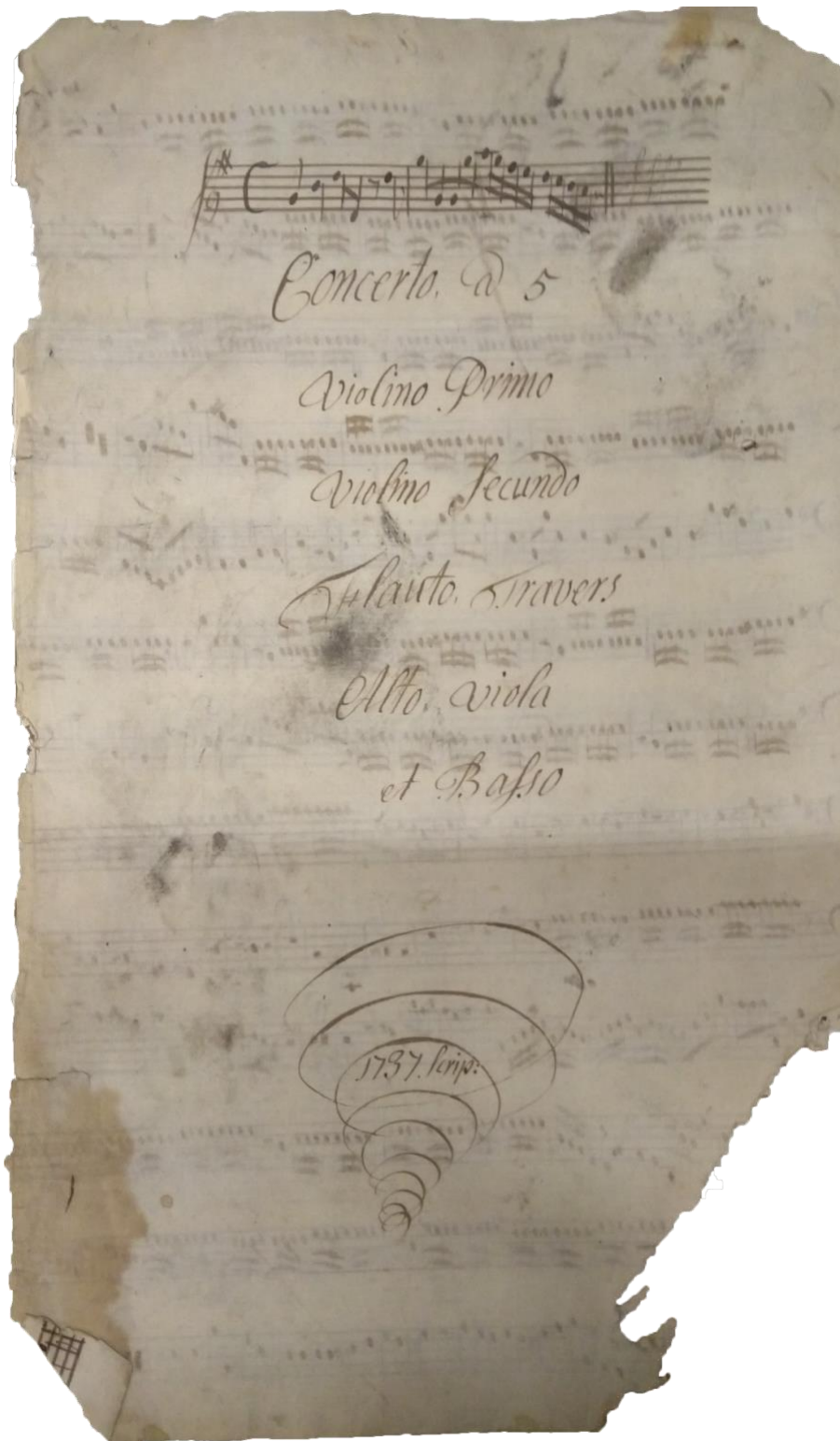
Figure 4.11
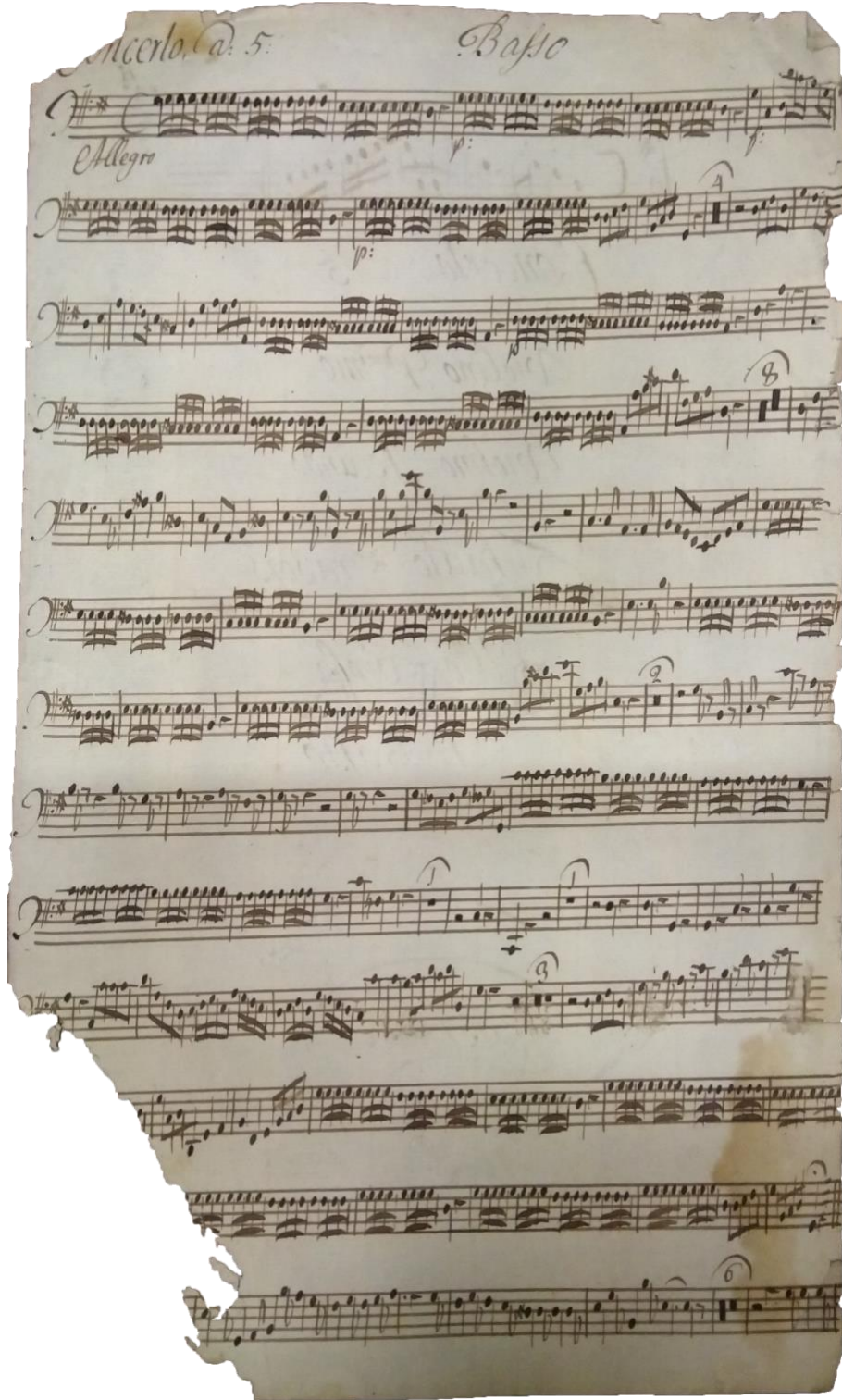
Figure 4.12

To work through the concepts from Harcourt, Stoler, and Wright introduced above, I'd like to briefly analyse this document at a set of increasing scales—note, phrase, form, document, archive, and discipline.

The Note Scale

Figure 4.10.1

In the second example page of the fragmentary three-part sonata, in the third measure of the second line (Figure 4.10.1), I see an A3 followed by an A4 and then a C#4, all as consecutive sixteenth notes. Here, I resist the urge to say that there's another sixteenth-note A4. If I look very, very closely, I actually *cannot* see this. But the instinct that tells me it's there is incredibly strong. Why?

In the preceding measure I see a pattern of four sixteenth notes repeated three times—D4, D5, F#4, D5. Now returning to the third measure of that line, I can see that every visible note conforms to this same pattern transposed down a fourth, diatonically. There is an additional A3 and C#4 in the second beat, as well as what looks like a third instance of A3-C#4 approximately where the third beat would plausibly appear. I should note, however, that even this carries assumptions. I can't actually see the first ledger line below the staff of what I identified as the A3 in beat three, nor can I see anything of what I've identified as the C#4 in that beat except for what looks to be the bottom edge of a sharp sign.

Here, I'm looking for local similarities on a *note-by-note* scale between the passage that is interrupted by the rip in the page and its immediate still-extant surroundings.

The Phrase Scale
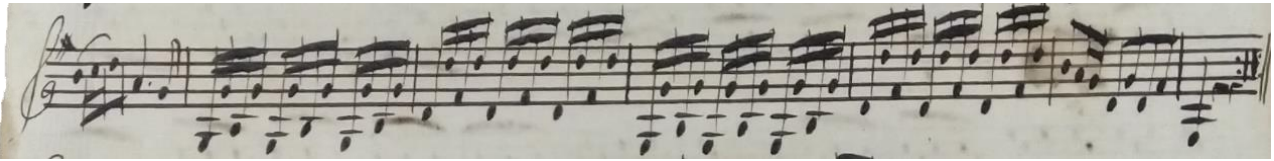
Figure 4.10.2

Further down on this page, there's a passage that looks similar (Figure 4.10.2). In this seventh line of the page, the second through fifth measures show the same pattern moving back and forth between G Major and D Major in a one-measure harmonic rhythm. This further reassures my assumption that the composer of this piece likely wrote the D Major to A Major pattern I described above. The final two measures of this line also provide a possible cadential schema for that earlier phrase, again assuming their composer treated them as analogous phrases all the way through their respective cadences.

Here, I'm looking for a type of logic that exists on the scale of the musical *phrase*. I'm treating the full phrase as an integral musical object that can be transported elsewhere within its broader context, and I'm assuming that each appearance of such a phrase will retain the same internal patterning of pitches and rhythms.

The Form Scale

Figure 4.10.3

There is notation between the two passages I isolated above, and my assumptions about their relationship to each other also implies a certain type of relationship with these intermediaries. The intermediary lines—the third through sixth lines shown in Figure 4.10.3—contain significantly different notation than that of either the second or seventh lines. What I'm assuming with the idea that the second and seventh lines are analogous is that what happens in the third line is more of a section break than a smooth transition. I'm reassured of this at the beginning of the seventh line, which suggests that the overall role of the third through sixth lines on this broader scale of the compositional *form* of this movement is a kind of departure from, a 'B' section of, or an interruption to, a cadential move that is missing at the end of the second line, which is then finally satisfied immediately preceding the double bar that ends the movement.

The Document Scale

Figure 4.9
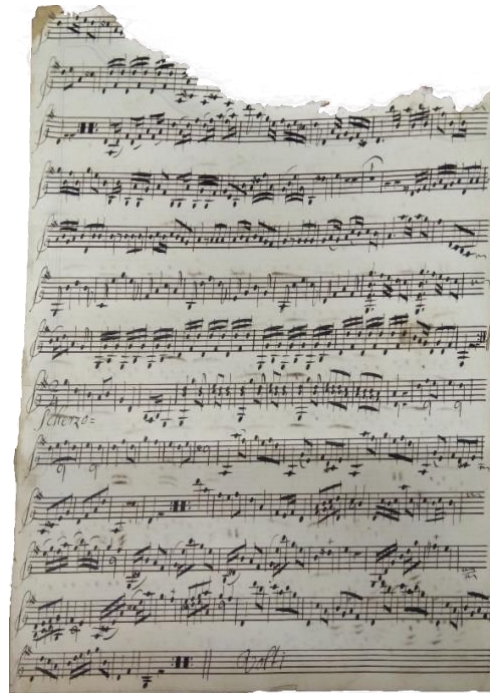
Figure 4.10

The second of these options—the 'B' section—seems most likely because the first line of this page seems to be the first measure of this whole piece. Even though the tempo indication usually stated at the beginning of each movement is missing—whether by compositional omission or by the rip at the top of the page, I don't know—none of the surrounding pages in this document end in measures that seem plausible predecessors to the first measure of this page. It's actually fairly difficult to determine the original page order of this document, but the above is the order in which I found it and I see no other logic suggesting the other possibilities to be either more or less plausible than this one. Also notable in this broader view at the *document* scale is that my working hypotheses above find support in similar overall formal schemata appearing in other movements. Furthermore in the interest of 'filling in' sections that appear to be missing from this page, the other parts to this piece—the traverso and the basso—can provide further context clues. Except in passages where all three parts are compromised, each part can give clues as to the harmonic, melodic, and/or rhythmic content of simultaneous sections of each other part.

The Archive Scale

So far I've assumed that this document has an internal logical consistency on four separate levels—note, phrase, form, and document—that will continue beyond where physical ink and paper exist. In a Cartesian mode, I do *not* have certainty that what used to fill these voids didn't completely depart into full-on chromatic serialism. In a Cartesian mode, I don't even fully know that there was ever ink and paper where these voids now are. I'm assuming that they're voids and that the physical form of this ink and paper isn't actually the original intended form. Of course, all this seems unreasonable to suggest given everything else I see, but through a strict Cartesian framework, it can't be ruled out.

But a more traditional epistemology might encourage one to move outward from the present document toward others extant in archival form that seem to share many of its both formal and incidental qualities. These formally similar documents might have notation for the same instrumentation, in the same key, at the same tempo, with the same nomenclature, or of the same length as the notation here. These incidentally similar documents might have been purchased or inherited from the same collection, traceable to the same geographical and/or temporal origin point, or tied to the same or related individuals near the time of their commitment to paper. Analysing these larger groups of documents across each other at the scale of the full *archive* can provide a knowledge—and instinct, even—of common trends that can allow me to statistically extrapolate which scenarios are more likely than others where individual documents on their own leave unanswered questions.

The Discipline Scale

But this is complicated by the fact that this type of broad corpus study is of course the underlayment for music education at large, as a storehouse of examples for how to write good music and/or imitate various styles. This means that the logic of past work in archival collecting and cataloguing, historical research and interpretation, and contemporary application of all these resources in living cultures of musical practice, feed back into the primary shape of those archives, which then return again to (re-)constitute them in the future, and so forth. In turn, this means that my own understanding of what music is, how it works, and what I understand to be historically plausible, is itself informed by decisions others have made in similar analytical work throughout the course of the very long documentary past of music. It's a continual feedback loop that produces the shape of this culture at once *of the past* and *in the present*.

The only thing that I will insist upon here is that it is a matter of *judgment* whether one meets this phenomenon as a source of fascination or of inconvenience. It's not a matter that can be solved through the application of scientific principles because it's a matter that sits at the very same level as that which confers value upon scientific principles in the first place. The theory can't serve as its own proof. I, for one, am certainly more interested in meeting this problem as a source of fascination.

In relation to Stoler's archival methodology, the issue is not even whether we can or cannot be reasonably sure of the complete form of this document prior to its incurring damage. The issue is that this presumptive work to fill in the gaps is aimed at delivering an image of the past that is free from the instability, sediment, flux, and punishment of historical time. It erases the intervening temporality between the abstracted *then* of the document's creation and the abstracted *now* of the historian's efforts, presenting the former to the latter apparently unadulterated. In the particular case of this example—a damaged manuscript—the story I see on this front is about decay over time. There are perhaps other questions to be explored about why this particular manuscript was not better cared for and, from the inverse perspective, why it survives at all. But what is apparent is that this composition *was* finished at some point in time and is also, in my opinion, quite good. This is not a case, then, of what Stoler called "failed projects" or "delusional imaginings"—though other manuscripts I've introduced in this text certainly are. It has more to do with an understanding of the passing of time as the accrual of sediment, of

archiving as in part the enablement of forgetting, and of historical research as *generative* of both the known and knowable past.

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I'd like to now move back through these scales of analysis of this manuscript, bringing this more pointed understanding of archival and historiographical processes in tow. Beginning on this disciplinary scale, what's vital in reference to the image of a disciplinary feedback loop above is that there are also *cracks between* and *contestation within* these disciplines.

Sonata a 3. G major. Parts.

[England]: 1737.

Folio (33 x 20cm). 2, 1, 1ff. Manuscript in brown ink on 13-stave hand-ruled paper, front of basso used as title-page and giving incipit. The incipit has not been found in the RISM Online search. With fragments of another trio in similar format and the basso part of a Concerto a 5 (violins, flute, viola, basso) in G major; all dated "1737 Scrip.". £400
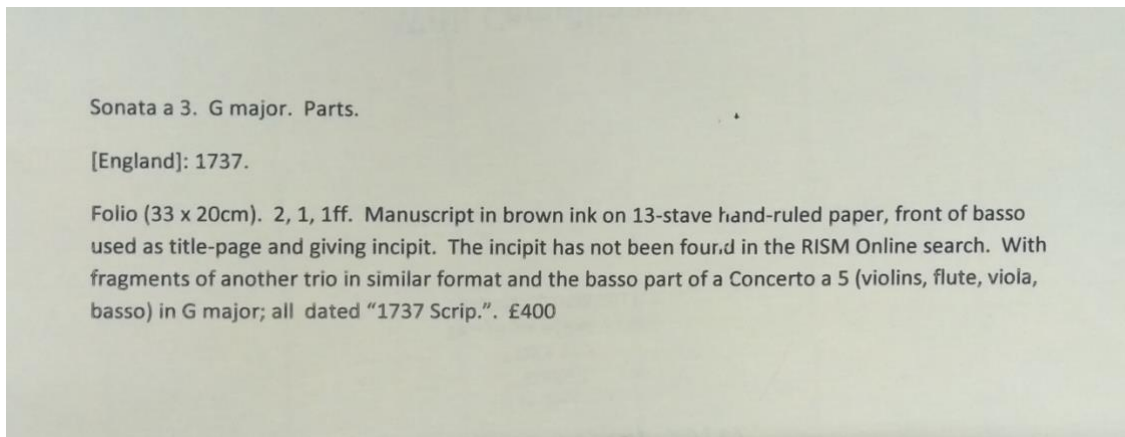
Figure 4.11

Returning to the catalogue entry, it's difficult to see why anyone not specifically looking for 18th-century fragments would look at this manuscript at all. In one way of looking at it, there's not really anything here. No composer is given and the titles of the included pieces are the extremely generic terms "Sonata" and "Concerto." A date is given—1737—but the geography of the document is not particularly clear, with "England" appearing in brackets because it's inferred from context rather than explicitly indicated. From any of the terms typically used to organise sub-disciplines of classical music—period, geography, composer, style, form, theme—there is nothing that makes this manuscript stand out. Furthermore,

given this, the added *inconvenience* of having to reconstruct a plausible completed piece from these fragments would surely not be considered worthwhile.

But if one doesn't assume a completed piece to be a prerequisite of activity in historical performance, and if one organizes archival material according to metadata other than period, geography, composer, style, form, and theme, then there is suddenly much more historiographical potential in this manuscript than others. This manuscript becomes worth a look only after a shift in the disciplinary underpinning of one's visit to the archive. It only becomes an object of research *after* the disciplinarity of the historian is reoriented against the grain of their institutional support system. For me, this shift occurred, as I've illustrated in this chapter, through exposure to the adjacent disciplinarity of critical theory, where I found Ann Stoler's idea of archival negatives. Because I don't fully sequester myself within music as a self-sustaining discipline, I came across this idea external to the musical discipline and have been able to translate it into musical research.

But for this translation to be worthwhile, I need to have some idea that the written documents Stoler described from 19th-century Dutch colonial administrators might have extant analogues in 18th-century music. We only search through archival catalogues because we think something *might* be there— something that we haven't actually seen. Our knowledge of what a particular archive *does* contain and how those contents are structured creates within us an anticipatory sense of what else it might *also* contain. Having not seen every single document within the archive, our memory of what we have seen there, how we found it, and how any particular archive presents itself as an institution, creates in us an idea of what *might* be there. When we search, we are projecting possible realities beyond what we have seen, much in the same way we look at a line of music notation that is interrupted by a rip in the page. Much as one might reasonably anticipate unknown pieces or unknown copies of pieces by known composers to be sitting in an archive waiting to be found, I reasonably anticipated upon starting my own search that such archival negatives as Stoler described might sit within those same archives.

But I also needed to know how I might conjure them from archival catalogues not specifically designed to yield such cross-sections of their content. This is where those terms of negation come in— 'anonymous,' 'not found,' and 'fragments.' 'Not found' is a particularly interesting one here in that it doesn't actually describe a quality of the document itself but a disruption to the archivist's ability to

understand and describe that document according to their usual methods. In this case, the specific language is, "The incipit has not been found in the RISM Online search," indicating that the first few notes of the manuscript are not the same as those in any other manuscript or piece entered into the *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales,* one of the largest aggregated catalogues of archival music manuscripts in existence. On its own, this is not necessarily enough for me, as this often happens for pieces that can be tied to specific composers or are otherwise complete. But in combination with the other search terms of 'anonymous' and 'fragments,' what is indicated *to me* is that the given manuscript is perhaps an entirely singular object and that it is for some reason unpliant with regard to traditional archival methods. In one fell swoop, this trifecta of search terms places all the archival negatives in a neat list.

Figure 4.10.3

On the document, form, phrase, and note scales, something else peculiar begins to happen. When one's priority moves from plausibility to possibility, the task at hand quickly becomes overwhelming. Even from a perspective of actively seeking the most plausible complete form of this piece beyond the tear in the page, it wouldn't be inconceivable that there might have been some sudden melismatic, soloistic, or punctuating interruption of what otherwise appear to be rules consistently applied through the course of this document. It becomes impossible to make a single decision, and all these stacks of possibilities suddenly outweigh even the full scale of the document at hand. These alternate pasts, these imaginaries into the space beyond the rip in the page, become much bigger than the page itself. This task is a very different one now. Furthermore, the position of this task in relation to this notation alone is no longer clear. Part of the idea was to *not* render away the decay and sedimentation that make its temporality so rich. I don't see how merely filling in these gaps—regardless of what I fill them with—will achieve this at all.

It becomes apparent to me at this point that applying Stoler's reasoning actually *within* the medium of music itself will not be at all straightforward. Her work—like Wright's and Harcourt's—is based in written language, a medium that comes with unique capacities to describe the same object in multiple ways and to make clear the distinction between a retracing and a revision, between a known and a postulated, and, crucially, between a quotation and a reaction thereupon. In no way can I satisfyingly make clear within music itself the dividing line between what I see on this page and my additions to it. Work in critical theory *always* retains these divisions. As a property of academic research, it is a medium in which there is *always* a distinction between the evidence being analysed and the analysis in-and-of itself.

I could imagine various strategies for segmenting these aspects in music, and I've indeed tried several. Each could be given to a different instrument or performer; each could be separated by a brief pause; the fundamental stylistic characteristics of the additions could depart drastically from the archival source. But still none of these would be clear without verbal explanation accompanying the music. And even so, I would have to give those extant archival notes from the source an actual sounding form in music. If I'm to separate these historical sounds from my interpretations around them, how could I possibly present the former at all? A musician cannot merely *give* a quotation of a historical source. They must *make* it in

music. They must become their object in order to describe it. As indeed Taruskin, Leech-Wilkinson, and many others made so abundantly clear a few decades ago, no true separation of this type is possible.

This exploration of the kinds of conceptual or expressive inertia or potentialities in this document, at many perspectival scales, certainly makes significant headway toward a re-evaluated practice capable of overcoming initial assumptions about objective historical work as separate from creative, inventive, speculative, or otherwise artistic work. But the thinking-, looking-, and writing-based methods of critical theory will not suffice on their own as complete correctives to a field so immediately bodily, instinctive, and visceral as music. Physically speaking, acoustic sound is so fundamentally different than physical matter that the methods developed to treat artifacts of the latter will not be fully transferable to those of the former. Harcourt's, Stoler's, and Wright's workings through broad problems of historical theory and artistic ontology provide excellent tools with which to escape and rebuild away from received methods and ontologies in historical performance and contemporary composition, but I'll need something further to meaningfully achieve this in musical contexts.

Another way of putting this is that perhaps Hayden White's outward assimilation of history was never actually realized in critical theory. Perhaps the mutual suspicion and ignorance he identified between artists and scientists was never really overcome. Critical theory has embraced subjectivity and affectivity, but more as a sedimentation than a fusion or transcendence. It retains an underlying belief that meticulous segregation between fact and judgment is an absolute necessity. As outlined above, critical theory is a challenge to much the same core historiographical problem faced by historical performance practice since the 1980s, but it leaves the fundamentally Cartesian dualities of true/false, subject/object, and description/interpretation intact—because it *can*. Music unfortunately has no such luxury. This is where Giambattista Vico's later concept of poetic wisdom, as presented in the 1744 edition of his *New Science*, will therefore be vital.

Harcourt, Stoler, and Wright exhibit the same urge as mine to complicate the relationship between subject and object, both by laying bare the personally-driven politics, judgments, and aspirations of their work, and by approaching the past as more of a quality or gradation that can be perceived within present experiences of the present world, than a rupture between a foreign historical time and the present moment of the historian. But Vico represents a further—and essential—opportunity to move beyond

what is simply a renewed attention to subjectivity and ethics toward a communicative performing of metaphor and a subjective embodying of or transformation into otherness.

5_The New Science of Giambattista Vico

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Vico is bizarre. The philosopher Louis Dupré warned in 2004 that, "even today, a first encounter with *The New Science* is disconcerting."[1] This should not be taken lightly. Given the breadth of its intellectual scope, the extreme idiosyncrasy of its vocabulary, and the distance at which its basic conceptual framework sits from any modern knowledge system, an engagement with *The New Science* [1725/1730/1744], the three published versions of which constitutes nearly the entirety of his later intellectual work, is likely to come across as at best esoteric and at worst simply absurd, not to mention extremely sexist and racist. But if one is willing to push through this discomfort, they may also find an astonishing and valuable form of understanding that can be extracted from within this chaos.

We can choose to see the degree to which Giambattista Vico's [1668–1744] later epistemology is not only bizarre but also *unthinkable* to the modern reader as a marker of its great potential to positively influence present-day musical practice. I believe it will be essential to overcoming the overwhelming hegemony of an objectivist historiography and the oversimplification of artistic invention that are the dual impetuses behind this dissertation. In a sense, it's not dissimilar to Ann Stoler's or Stephen Wright's efforts, as detailed above, to dissect the latent value systems and structures of knowledge that underpin modern thought, and to capture the slippery, shape-shifting obstacles they place in the way of even the most well-meaning projects of social change. Stoler develops her concept of 'aphasia' as a way of pinning down the inconspicuous persistence of colonial power structures long after new states have won 'independence' from their colonizers.[2] Wright employs his phrase, 'lexical capture' to describe the near impossibility of articulating what an artistic culture might look like beyond what he argues is an outmoded concept of authorship.[3] Their efforts to dredge deeper into knowledge and meaning

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[1] Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 189.

[2] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 12.

[3] Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013), 1.

production within their respective fields or, in other words, to render visible not only the invisible but the *unimaginable*, may hold a key to understanding Vico in a similarly productive way, and in a way that might reveal a path forward from the paradoxical contradictions and impossibilities I see within the bifurcated field of artistic practices in classical music right now. In other words, a peek behind the veneer of received knowledge systems is always disconcerting.

Also, much like Stoler and Wright, Vico's effort in *The New Science* is also significantly to do with language—in his terms, it's a *philological* exercise.[4] On a surface level, he seeks to discover what ancient and pre-historic cultures—the 'first peoples'—meant by the language they used, and thereby how they understood the world they inhabited. But what starts to happen over the course of the book is that he gradually develops an entirely new idea of what language is and why it has changed so drastically over time. This deeper level of linguistic interpretation allows Vico to make the remarkable move of claiming to know humanity's prehistory—to know about human social events that took place before humans began writing, and without the use of archaeological evidence. He finds a logical rationale for using ancient Greek mythology as a rubric for understanding Native American cultures, Roman law to describe Egyptian religion, and so forth, all of which grants him access to knowledge about cultures for which concrete, factual evidence is entirely absent. But most importantly, he develops through this philological and (pre-)historical exercise a novel *epistemology,* which he asserts holds significant value for philosophers, politicians, and other cultural leaders in his own present and in the near future.

I should be clear—and this is probably one of the most disorienting things about reading *The New Science* for the first time—that I am not concerned with whether Vico's particular beliefs about particular ancient cultures and deep historical events and chronologies are *true*. What I'm interested in are the novel understandings of knowledge and its communication that he puts forth as rationale for those beliefs.

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[4] "Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human choice is author, whence comes consciousness of the certain. This axiom by its second part includes among the philologians all the grammarians, historians, critics, who have occupied themselves with the study of the languages and deeds of peoples: both at home, as in their customs and laws, and abroad, as in their wars, peaces, alliances, travels, and commerce." Giambattista Vico, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico: Unabridged Translation of the Third Edition (1744) with the addition of "Practic of the New Science"* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1948), 63.

This rationale differs from the scientifically-derived certainty we usually think about when we say 'knowledge' within or after Modernism. I'd also like to segment my interest in Vico's historiography even further, as many other analyses of or references to his writing over the course of a long 20ᵗʰ century— including Dupré's—have focused on the *universality* of his historiography as something akin to the mechanistic teleology of Marxism. Vico declares in no uncertain terms that every nation goes through the same three phases of development—the divine, the heroic, and the human—and that this trajectory can be mapped onto contemporary cultures by anyone at any time in any place in order to understand how those cultures, too, will inevitably progress into egalitarian, democratic, proletarian nations. I don't doubt the pertinence of Vico's thought to projects interested in such types of social or political theory, but my own interest in Vico has little to do with this aspect of it. Simply put, I'm interested in Vico's concept of the poetic and how it fuses memory with imagination, and subjectivity with objectivity, in a broad reconsideration of historical epistemology and contemporary rhetoric.

My own experience with Vico tells me that Dupré's use of the word 'disconcerting' was an exercise in understatement. I myself felt nothing short of bewilderment upon first reading *The New Science*. But this angst and my exposition of it here will, I believe, demonstrate the resilience of the historical practitioner and the creative artist—the persistence of our ability to reframe theory and revitalize practice against all odds—and the possibility that it is perhaps only in these moments of disconcerting rupture where the formulation of powerfully new knowledge is possible.

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After setting out his 'idea of the work' via a highly detailed description of an allegorical frontispiece, Vico opens his argument in the 1744 edition of *The New Science* with a chronological table of the history of what he calls the 'first nations' of the world—Hebrews, Chaldeans, Scythians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans—and how each of their independent national histories line up with each other in time.[5]

[5] Ibid., 28.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

BASED ON THE THREE EPOCHS OF THE TIMES OF THE EGYPTIANS, WHO SAID ALL THE WORLD BEFORE THEM
HAD PASSED THROUGH THREE AGES: THAT OF THE GODS, THAT OF THE HEROES, AND THAT OF MEN (I)

HEBREWS (II)	CHALDEANS (III)	SCYTH-IANS (IV)	PHOENICIANS (V)	EGYPTIANS (VI)	GREEKS	ROMANS	Years of the world	Years of Rome
Universal flood							1656	
	Zoroaster, or the kingdom of the Chaldeans (VII).						1756	
	Nimrod, or the confusion of tongues (IX).				Iapetus, from whom spring the giants (VIII). One of these, Prometheus, steals fire from the sun (X).		1856	
				Dynasties in Egypt.	Deucalion (XI).			
Call of Abraham				Thrice-great Hermes the elder, or the Egyptian age of the gods (XII).	The golden age, or the Greek age of the gods (XIII).			
					Hellen—son of Deucalion, grandson of Prometheus, great grandson of Iapetus—through his three sons, spreads three dialects in Greece (XIV).		2082	
					Cecrops the Egyptian brings twelve colonies into Attica, of which Theseus later makes up Athens (XV).			
God gives the written law to Moses.					Cadmus the Phoenician founds Thebes in Boeotia and introduces vulgar letters into Greece. (XVI).		2448	
						Saturn, or the Latin age of the gods (XVII).	2491	
				Thrice-great Hermes the younger, or the Egyptian age of heroes (XVIII).	Danaus the Egyptian drives the Inachids out of the kingdom of Argos (XIX). Pelops the Phrygian reigns in the Peloponnesus.		2553	
	Ninus reigns with the Assyrians				The Heraclida, spread abroad through Greece, bring in the age of the heroes there. Curetes in Crete, in Saturnia or Italy, and in Asia, bring in the kingdoms of the priests (XX).	Aborigines.	>682	
			Dido of Tyre goes to found Carthage (XXI).				2737	
			Tyre celebrated for navigation and colonies		Minos king of Crete, first lawgiver of the gentle nations and first pirate of the Aegean.		2752	
					Orpheus, and with him the age of the theological poets (XXII). Hercules, with whom the heroic time of Greece reaches its climax (XXIII).	Arcadians		
			Sancuniates writes histories in vulgar letters (XXIV).		Jason gives a beginning to naval wars with that of Pontus. Theseus founds Athens and establishes the Areopagus there. Trojan war (XXV).	Hercules with Evander in Latium, or the Italian age of the heroes	2800	
					Wanderings of the heroes, and especially of Ulysses and Aeneas.		2820	
Reign of Saul.						Kingdom of Alba	2830	
				Sesostris reigns in Thebes (XXVI).	Greek colonies in Asia, in Sicily, in Italy (XXVII).		2909	
					Lycurgus gives laws to the Lacedaemonians.		2949	
					Olympic games, first founded by Hercules, then suspended, and restored by Iphitus (XXVIII).		3120	
					Homer, who came at a time when vulgar letters had not yet been invented, and who never saw Egypt (XXX).	Founding of Rome (XXIX). Numa king.	3223 / 3290	1 / 37
				Psammeticus opens Egypt, but only to the Ionian and Carian Greeks (XXXI).	Aesop, vulgar moral philosopher (XXXII).		3334	
					Seven sages of Greece: of whom one, Solon, institutes popular liberty in Athens; another, Thales the Milesian, gives a beginning to philosophy with physics (XXXIII).		3406	

					Seven sages of Greece: of whom one, Solon, institutes popular liberty in Athens; another, Thales the Milesian, gives a beginning to philosophy with physics (XXXIII).		3406	
	Cyrus reigns in Assyria with the Persians				Pythagoras, of whom, according to Livy, not so much as the name can have been known at Rome during his lifetime (XXXIV).	Servius Tullius king (XXXV).	3468	225
					Pisistratid tyrants driven from Athens.		3491	
					Hesiod (XXXVI), Herodotus, Hippocrates (XXXVII).	Tarquin tyrants driven from Rome	3490	245
		Idanthyrsus king of Scythia (XXXVIII).			Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, who writes that up to his father's day the Greeks knew nothing of their own antiquities, therefore set himself to write of this war (XXXIX).		3500 / 3530	
					Socrates originates rational moral philosophy. Plato flourishes in metaphysics. Athens is resplendent with all the arts of the most cultivated humanity.	Law of the Twelve Tables.	3533	305
					Xenophon, carrying the Greek arms into the heart of Persia, is the first to learn of Persian institutions with any certainty (XLI).		3583	333
					Alexander the Great overthrows the Persian monarchy and subjects Persia to Macedonian rule. Aristotle visits the Orient and observes that previous Greek accounts of it were fabulous.	Publilian law (XLII).	3618 / 3660	416
					War with Tarentum wherein the Latins and the Greeks begin to know each other (XLIV). Second Carthaginian War, with which Livy begins the certain history of Rome, though he professes to be ignorant of three important circumstances (XLV).	Petelian law (XLIII).	3661 / 3708 / 3843	489 / 509 / 552

Figure 5.1: The "Chronological Table" from the 1744 edition of Giambattista Vico's *The New Science.*

This table looks unfamiliar in a way that illustrates a crucial difference in historiographical priorities between Vico and many present-day academic historians. Instead of dating events according to the physical characteristics of the evidence that describes them, Vico dates them according to their conformity to what he sees as universal and absolute principles of human collective behavioural development. And he combines what are typically considered as separate chronologies—one mythical, the other historical.

It's easy to see how such a method may lead to a representation of the past that is less 'true' in the objective empirical sense typically used in the natural sciences. It may well transpire that an incorrect date is given for a certain event due to the greater emphasis he places on qualitatively assessing the type of spirituality exhibited in an archival document, than on material evidence about the method of production used to make the paper it was written on. But Vico's position is that the purpose of history is not to neutrally relay factual information about the past, but rather to investigate human nature in a way that effectively informs political action in the present. Vico's history is a mapping of human thought and action that cuts across the grain of Newtonian space-time, and between the Cartesian absolutes of reality and imaginary.

Vico is driven to this stance because of a lack of faith in humanity's ability to achieve knowledge of itself via the geometric method (i.e. scientific objectivity), and because of a preponderance of faith in humanity's ability to gain quite certain knowledge of its own creations (social institutions and mechanical arts), as discussed in Chapter Three. Here, he addresses the more positive side of this argument:

> In the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modification of our own human mind.[6]

This assertion that civil society is a human creation and can therefore be understood by the self-reflection of humanity is central to Vico's distinction between philosophy and philology; philology being "the

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[6] Ibid., 96.

doctrine of all the institutions that depend on human choice,"[7] and philosophy being "the study of the world of nature."[8] Philosophers err, in Vico's formulation, by framing a *general* pursuit of knowledge around principles only rightly applicable to the study of purely physical phenomena. Implicit within this position is the belief that it leaves scholars wanting for an effective way to study human institutions, interactions, and experiences—the stuff of history. An impermeable division between subject and object, as is necessary for objective empirical science, leaves one unable to study either oneself or one's relation to the outside world.

This philological framing of the problem appears in Vico's work as early as his 1701 oration "On True Learning." Here, Vico expresses distaste for scholars who claim to know more than they do about ancient languages and who are therefore unduly condescending about ancient peoples:

> Ten years is not sufficient to learn the Latin language in order to appreciate fully its elegance and richness, even though today we speak a language derived from it with only a few changes. [...] And in a short time we pretend to know languages totally other than ours, even those no longer spoken! Authors of our times thoroughly acquainted with the Greek and Latin languages claim that Homer, compared to the example of Virgil, is sordid and inept, Demosthenes, compared with Cicero, is stale and frigid. Ah, listeners! To quote Sallust, we carry our faults into our occupations. Homer is not sordid, nor Demosthenes stale. It is we who do one thing and pretend to do another. It is our ignorance of this language that does not permit us to know how great is the weight of the function of its words, the elegance of its expression, the resonance of its sound.[9]

Vico goes on to disparage his Neapolitan contemporaries, who considered Homer inferior to Virgil merely because they were more accustomed to Latin than Greek (the former being more similar to Italian). In other words, their disdain for Homer has nothing to do with Homer, but rather with their own lack of cultural self-knowledge. This is why Vico goes on to take a Socratic turn in his argument, which he once again frames as a plea for humanistic over geometric methods:

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[7] Ibid., 6.

[8] Ibid., 96.

[9] Giambattista Vico, *On Humanistic Education (Six Inaugural Orations, 1699-1707)* trans. Giorgio A. Pinton and Arthur W. Shippee (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 85.

Why do we pretend to impose on a man of sane mind geometric demonstrations which he cannot follow? Such a one, although he has unobstructed vision and is vigilant, is still not able to see the sun in full daylight, even though we know that the mind is attracted to truth as the eye is to light. Let us at last confess our natural limitations. Our studies are valuable insofar as we learn that we do not know or we know only a few things.[10]

The axiom underlying this passage and the last is that to learn is to build an understanding of the innumerable ways in which we do *not* understand and to build awareness of the innumerable things of which we are *not* aware. In a kind of inverse form of a Cartesian logic—building absolute compound truths out of simple facts—Vico advocates throughout *The New Science* for a method of blindly accepting as true even the most seemingly absurd statements or descriptions in ancient texts, and he then works to refine his understanding of their authors' language and culture such that such absurdities gradually begin to make sense. He assumes that *he* is the one lacking in knowledge, not the authors of the texts he reads. The corollaries that follow this passage are that, in the study of ancient languages and cultures, we must assume we know very little and so build up our knowledge from what historical authors tell us, divorced from our own beliefs about immutable certainties and historical events.

Vico refers to this problem as the "conceit of scholars." For Vico, it is problematic that his contemporaries believe that, "what they know is as old as the world," because this leads them to "convict of fraud the oracles" and to "condemn as impertinent all the mystic meanings [of the] hieroglyphs."[11] Instead, Vico's view is that the very earliest human writings must be taken as true, without question. But this doesn't mean simply employing a presentist reading of their words at face value, which in the case of ancient mythology would suggest that the basic laws of physics have changed drastically over the intervening millennia. What must be done instead is to seek understanding of how language might have functioned differently within ancient cultures in order for the received meaning to regain coherence. Instead of assuming oracles, fables, and myths represent ancient peoples' inadequate knowledge of the world around them, we should instead assume that we simply have an inadequate knowledge of how they're using language.

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[10] Ibid., 89.

[11] Ibid., 61.

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Throughout *The New Science*, Vico likens the development of humanity as a whole to the development of any given human as an individual. Humanity in its early stages is as curious and imaginative as a child. Humanity in its latest stages is as wise and reflective—but also as jaded and inflexible—as someone very old. From this metaphor it follows that the first people of the world saw and understood their world as children of any time understand theirs. They lack abstract, universal ideas, and instead think only in terms of particulars. Because of a general "poverty of language and need to explain and be understood," [12] they speak through grounded metaphor. Vico calls this type of language "poetic locution." So "the first gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters," which were "certain imaginative genera (images for the most part of animate substances, of gods or heroes, formed by their imagination) to which they reduced all the species or all the particulars that appertain to each genus."[13] In other words, poetic characters were abstract concepts—ways of grouping together a number of particular objects or events under a single banner. Whereas modern languages use abstract concepts such as 'law' and 'power,' first languages use personified divinities such as 'Orpheus' and 'Jove.' This is why Vico argues that oracles, fables, and myths "contain meanings not analogical but univocal, not philosophical but historical, of the peoples of Greece of those times." Talk of Orpheus is not an analogy to Greek law, it is *explicitly* talk of Greek law. Orpheus is not a metaphor for law, he is simply the poetic character the ancient Greeks conjured in order to speak about what we now call law.

But it is not merely the case that moderns and ancients understood the world and spoke about it in the same manner, only using different words to name its parts. Wrapped up in this poetic locution is a visceral, grounded experience of the world that stands in stark contrast to the founding principles of the geometric method. Poetic wisdom takes the feeling and self-awareness of individual humans as essential ingredients in knowledge production. Whereas knowledge derived by the geometric method may have higher value in isolation, poetic wisdom is more useful in actual practice because it is produced through the *exchange* of common, habitual, instinctive, or otherwise pre-existing forms of knowledge. "Poetic

[12] Vico, *The New Science*, 22.

[13] Ibid., 21.

sentences [...] are formed by feelings of passion and emotion, whereas philosophic sentences are formed by reflection and reasoning."[14] Vico's first people were so utterly wrapped up in the world that the modern concept of objectivity, of removing oneself from a situation in order to reflect upon it calmly and neutrally, was totally non-existent. And it doesn't stop at objectivity either. Spirituality as we know it today—the belief that there is a higher power controlling the world—was also absent for Vico's first people. Instead, words we understand now to indicate divinities were merely names for tangible forces in the real world. It is a nonexistence of the *abstract*, of anything removed from immediate experience. And this nonexistence is profound for Vico. It speaks to the near total impassability of the intellectual distance between the first peoples and ourselves.

> It is [...] beyond our power to enter into the vast imagination of those first men, whose minds were not in the least abstract, refined, or spiritualized, because they were entirely immersed in the senses, buffeted by the passions, buried in the body. That is why [...] we can scarcely understand, still less imagine, how those first men thought who founded gentile humanity.[15]

But it is the task of the historian/philologist/philosopher, the practitioner of 'the new science,' to bridge this gap. As the modern world is *not* the ancient, as the modern human speaks in the abstract while the ancient speaks in the poetic, the task to be done is to 'apply philosophy to philology'—to translate the impenetrable poetic language of the first peoples into an abstract form more palpable to modernity.

Vico starts this work of translation by citing and tying together examples of poetic locution from both ancient Rome and his own eighteenth-century Neapolitan present: "The farmers of Latium used to say the fields were thirsty, bore fruit, were swollen with grain; and our rustics speak of plants making love, vines going mad, resinous trees weeping. Innumerable other examples could be collected from all languages."[16] In one manner of speaking, this is the *giving* of human agency to inanimate objects and non-sentient life forms. But to say 'giving' already assumes a mode of natural philosophy that ought not be assumed. It assumes that these objects and life forms *in fact* do not have agency, and therefore need to

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[14] Ibid., 76.

[15] Ibid., 118.

[16] Ibid., 129.

be given it, instead of being *in fact* nothing more than sensible phenomena, which humanity can then consign to modes of knowledge that understand them as either animate or inanimate. But one should not assume here that any structure of knowledge is fundamentally contained within its object. Knowledge can also be understood as a framework that is *mapped on top of* such objects through human ingenuity and agency. It should be remembered that the inanimacy of the physical world was not a given in Vico's time. Newtonian physics and Cartesian epistemology were undergoing active debate. So rather than *giving* human agency to inanimate objects and non-sentient life forms, we might instead consider Vico's poetic locution as a way of navigating a world in which what we now call inanimate objects and natural phenomena are very much active, thinking, feeling agents in the world. And Vico's first people experience human agency within these non-human entities *viscerally*. To say, "the fields were thirsty, bore fruit, were swollen with grain," is not a metaphor. Through these observations, "the farmers of Latium" bear witness as those fields *become* pregnant, as a human being might. Those fields were transformed into such a being and so are understood as able to exhibit all her agency.

Early humanity, then, is not rul*er* but *rule* of the world. It doesn't command the world, it uses itself as the world's system of measure. Vico's first people do not force their will upon the inanimate and the non-sentient parts of their world as modern people do. They interact with it as they do with other people. All those things they see in the world are actors in that world. Some are human and some are not, but all are treated as human. In Vico's analysis, this is the core metaphysical framework of prehistoric human culture:

> [M]an in his ignorance makes himself the rule of the universe, for in the examples cited he has made of himself an entire world. So that, as rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them (*homo intelligendo fit omnia*), this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by not understanding them (*homo non intelligendo fit omnia*); and perhaps the latter proposition is truer than the former, for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in the things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them.[17]

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[17] Ibid., 129-130.

The human body, mind, and soul are the rubric for understanding everything. One can understand the behaviour of animals by reflecting upon one's own behaviour. One can understand the interrelations between weather, geography, and agriculture by reflecting upon one's own interrelations with other humans. When it rains, we experience that rain alongside our environment, we commune with our neighbours in that environment through this shared experience of being rained upon, we *empathize* with dirt and trees and frogs and crops as all of us are wetted together. "The vulgar […] say that the magnet *loves* the iron."[18] Our experience becomes their experience. What we come to know about these things is what we see both in them and in ourselves. And so knowledge has nothing to do with how things 'really are' independent of our experience of them. Rules that govern human behaviour, which are learned through reflection upon our own behaviour, our internalized experience of ourselves, become rules to govern the external, non-human, natural world.

Yet this is not only about a kind of mental agility but a pervasive embodiment of the world. It's just a different kind of metaphor that functionally still reaches abstraction through personification instead of an independent conceptual vocabulary. It's an instinctive becoming of the things with which one engages. It's an embodiment of others and objects in order to share ideas with others. For Vico, this is what makes understanding mythology so incredibly difficult for us, with our entirely literal minds. Knowledge of the other is fully elided with knowledge of the self. Vico's 'first people' lacked any ability to tell the two apart. And this was not their weakness but their strength. For Vico, it is *we* who are 'corrupted' by abandoning this elision.

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We can see here a reflexivity between Vico's own theory of knowledge and that which he gives to his 'first people.' Just as Vico himself believes that the only certainty humans can attain is that of human affairs—those institutions humans create—he also believes that the earliest mode of knowledge, that of these first people, was derived from humanity's understanding of itself. For Vico, the first principle of knowledge is the understanding a human has of itself—a knowledge built within the lens of human experience.

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[18] Ibid., 70. Emphasis mine.

Everything else is derived from this, just as Descartes derives all knowledge from his own first principle that he thinks (*cogito ergo sum*). But the reflexivity of Vico's first principle gives it a powerful advantage over Descartes's in that Vico's is already the most natural metaphysical instinct of humans. Vico's philosophy makes for knowledge that is easier to grasp, and more effective to use in the real world, than Cartesian knowledge. Knowledge for Vico is the ability to anticipate how things outside one's own being will behave and how one might adjust one's own actions in order to interact with those outside things in an effective way. So if these 'metaphors' that assimilate non-human entities with human behaviour *function* to drive one's behaviour in such a way that is effective in the world, what advantage could purportedly objective knowledge of things 'as they actually are' hold? In what way is objective knowledge, that which is derived from the geometric method, superior to poetic wisdom? How is it better than the practical metaphysical knowledge developed by and communicated through poetic locution?

For Vico, it isn't. Far from being a self-sufficient metaphysical framework capable of delivering knowledge about the world on its own, the geometric method for Vico is a tool to be used for the parsing of meta-level methods for thinking through what is a fundamentally *humanistic* activity—phenomenological experience and reflection thereupon. As we saw above, he argued in his earlier lectures, predating *The New Science*, that an overemphasis of geometricism leads to the tripartite inability to identify significant lines of inquiry, pursue practical lines of inquiry, and communicate the results of inquiry. In contrast, the system of knowledge that Vico presents as "poetic wisdom" is one in which understanding of things *outside* oneself is vitally fused to understanding of what is *inside* oneself—one's *being*—and is therefore integrated with questions of social importance that are easily applicable to the context of practical concerns or embodied problems, and that are intuitively communicable. Objectivity is not only impossible, but undesirable.

Poetic wisdom is the seeing of the other *through* the self or *as* the self, but it is a far more expansive concept than simply an occasional use of metaphor to describe particular oddities or wonders of the world around us. It is more pervasive. It permeates both ancient and modern languages for Vico and it sheds light on and can serve as a meaningful apologism for ancient, non-Christian spirituality. The majority of *The New Science* is devoted to elucidating the precise meaning of the innumerable ways of

thinking and talking about divinities in antiquity. These ways of thinking and talking serve to naturalize polytheistic religions, particularly those of ancient Greece and Rome; to equate knowledge of the gods with knowledge of nature, in turn making what would otherwise be considered paganism into simply a pre-Christian science—one that was not at odds with Christianity and by which Christians had no need to feel threatened. Vico translates what at first glance appear to be descriptions of supernatural activity among gods who are sentient actors in the world, into sober descriptions of natural phenomena and human institutions. Gods are not supernatural agents acting wilfully upon humans but personified descriptions of abstract systems or structures such as law, government, metaphysics, agriculture, navigation, marriage, parenthood, and so on. Poetic wisdom is as expansive a knowledge system as geometricism or objectivity. It can be applied to any and every subject.

But poetic logic doesn't only replace geometricism or objectivity in regard to how knowledge is formed, it pre-figures a different concept of knowledge altogether; not simply an additional type of knowledge acting as a complement to geometric or objective knowledge, but a completely alternate idea of what knowledge is, what it's for, and how it's used. In the case of Christianity and Greek mythology, whereas objectivism renders the two wholly incompatible, poetic wisdom identifies them as merely alternate vocabularies and syntaxes for discussing essentially the same concepts and phenomena. A question such as, 'is there one God or are there many,' becomes moot. Both options are true. They're simply different ways of saying the same thing.

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To illustrate how this works in more detail and to begin to transition Vico's concept of poetic wisdom away from a general theory of knowledge and toward its functioning within more temporally contingent particulars as encountered in historical research, thereby setting up its potential for incorporation into contemporary historiography, I'd like to give an example of a poetic character whom Vico considers: Orpheus. Vico does not dedicate any discrete section of *The New Science* to Orpheus but rather weaves his mythology and meaning in and out of the argument while passing through the divisions of poetic wisdom. In Vico's description of the chronological table—his self-styled "confused and obscure" outline

of all the mythologies and histories of early humanity, which comes near the beginning of the book, before his argument about poetic wisdom—Orpheus is named as "a theological poet, who through the fables, in their first meaning, first founded and then confirmed the humanity of Greece."[19] This would suggest a human or superhuman individual: a great leader or king with the ability to unite a large group of people together into a single nation under his rule.

But when Vico first introduces Orpheus as "a vast den of a thousand monsters," he does so in reference to the absurd incongruence between this idea—that Orpheus is anything like a human at all, who lived and breathed on Earth and interacted with other real, living, breathing humans—and the claim that within his life "so many civil institutions are formed, for which the extent of a thousand years would hardly suffice."[20] Vico corrects for this incongruence in the way he does for so much else in *The New Science*. Rather than assuming that the first peoples were merely a bit foolish for believing that a single, real being called Orpheus could have lived for a thousand years and rallied together the entire Greek nation one family at a time, Vico steadfastly follows his axiom that it is rather his own and his contemporaries' literalistic understanding of the fables of Orpheus that are incorrect. So he tries to find the rational coherence within this mythology by adjusting his understanding of their language—by following a philological rather than philosophical methodology.

For this task, Orpheus's lyre is crucial. It precedes Orpheus himself in significance. The gestation of the Orphic character takes the trajectory of an organological history. Consider a simple explanation for the origin of the lyre: someone stretches a reasonably elastic piece of material and it makes a sound, and they like that sound; someone then discovers that something thin (like a piece of intestine as compared to a piece of wood) makes a particularly resonant sound when stretched, which they like even better; and finally someone then realizes that it's nice when several of these cords resonate at the same time, so the lyre as we know it is derived in order to facilitate that experience more easily. What's crucial here is not that this explanation of the history of the lyre is necessarily true but that it is plausible, because the concept of the lyre itself is used by Vico's first peoples as metaphor rather than evidence. When the early Greeks spoke of Orpheus's lyre, for Vico, they were not speaking about an actual lyre or its actual history

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[19] Ibid., 44.

[20] Ibid., 42.

but about the idea of several taut strings organized to sound in harmony; when they were speaking of Orpheus himself they were not talking about an actual being who played an actual lyre but of someone capable of finessing harmony out of a strong material stretched and placed beside others of its kind.

To unpack the metaphors implicit in this character, Vico explains later on in *The New Science* that, "when the poets were still mute and spoke by physical things, they took the sinews for forces."[21] One use for this idea of sinews—the idea of force—was to describe a father's relationship to his family:

> Here we may reflect how much it took for the men of the gentile [modern, civilized] world to be tamed from their feral native liberty through a long period of cyclopean [propagated by nobility] family discipline to the point of obeying naturally the laws in the civil states which were to come later. [...] [D]ivine [deeply insightful, as in 'divination'] force was needed to reduce these giants, as wild as they were gross, to human duties. Since they were unable to express this force abstractly, they represented it in concrete physical form as a cord, called chorda in Greek and in Latin at first fides [whence comes 'fidelity'].[22]

In Vico's formulation, before there were nations with laws, but after the earliest people emerged from total barbarity by organizing themselves into families, the father of a family had ultimate authority. What a father in this early archetypal family unit did to keep his family together and to ensure harmony within its members was considered an expression of force. He structured the family in an act of power. So the harmonious family is the single sinew stretched into a taut cord that resonates with purity. It is a monochord. And, Vico says, "from this cord (for the lyre must have begun with the monochord) they fashioned the lyre of Orpheus, to the accompaniment of which, singing to them the force of the gods in the auspices, he tamed the beasts of Greece to humanity."[23] The lyre, then, the bringing together of several monochords into a single apparatus, appears when many families are brought together and enabled to co-exist harmoniously. The lyre is law.

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[21] Ibid., 262.

[22] Ibid., 180. The bracketed comments are mine, and are intended to elucidate the very specific meanings for the words "gentile," "cyclops," "divine," and "fides," as Vico established earlier in the 1744 edition of *The New Science*.

[23] Ibid., 180.

[T]he lyre was the union of the cords or forces of the fathers, of which the public force was composed which is called civil power, which finally put an end to all private force and violence. Hence the law was defined with full propriety by the poets as *lyra regnorum*, 'the lyre of kingdoms,' in which were brought into accord the family kingdoms of the fathers which had hitherto been in disaccord because they were all isolated and divided from one another in the state of the families.[24]

So Orpheus, or *an* Orpheus, or *someone who is Orphic*, is someone who pronounces the law, who is capable of finessing music out of a collection of several taut strings, who is the founder and keeper of civil humanity because he enables so many families to live in harmony with each other.

Orpheus, then, becomes a character who can be conjured in a type of storytelling that serves the purpose of describing dynamics involving what we at present call the institution of *law*. If, for example, there is a popular uprising that results in the overturning of a government, one could say (to use the example Vico employs), "Orpheus [...] met his death at the hands of the Bacchantes [...], who broke his lyre to pieces," instead of "the old ruling class was usurped by the infuriated plebs, as the latter denied the precedence of the ancient rule of law over the will of the people." [25] Here, "Bacchantes" represents "the infuriated plebs," the "lyre" represents the ancient rule of law, and "Orpheus" represents the old ruling class.

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While Vico employs the mythology of Orpheus to introduce his idea of poetic wisdom, Homer receives a standalone—and much more thorough—treatment. Vico works to find historical truth within ancient mythology in order to complete a universal archetype for the dynamics of societies and governments at large, thereby generating a playbook for contemporary governmental administrators to use in their decision-making within actual civil institutions. He does this by using Homer as a sort of bridging concept between poetic and vulgar language, thus providing a key to unravelling misconceptions about the ancient world, and therefore about the inevitable course of all nations.

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[24] Ibid., 227-228.

[25] Ibid., 248.

But these true histories of ancient civilizations that Vico sees encapsulated within pagan mythology can only be recovered if he can understand precisely in what way they have been corrupted before arriving in their modern forms. The moment at which this corruption occurs, for Vico, *is* the emergence of Homer. Homer, who for Vico is the earliest author in all of history, therefore communicates a corrupt form of the true history of the first peoples of the world, but nevertheless the *least* corrupt form of that history available, and one that allows the best available access to truth.[26] Understanding Homer, then, is crucial to understanding history that predates written texts accessible in the present.

More importantly, however, Homer, due to his coming at the precise moment where a shift occurs away from poetic logic toward the vulgar, literal, abstract type of language we know and use today, is himself a poetic character. Just as Orpheus is not a god in the sense of an immortal individual, Homer is not a human in the sense of a mortal individual. Just as Orpheus was the stand-in character archetype used to anthropomorphize what we now call law, Homer was a name given to any Greek person of the roughly 460-year Homeric era who took it upon themself to tell the national history.[27]

What Vico sees in Homer is a people discussing a true narrative of real events that could have otherwise been told in abstract, metaphysical terms as the interaction of individuals, families, genders, ages, communities, ethnicities, and other groupings of people in regard to matters of politics, law, commerce, agriculture, war, and more. However, these people don't discuss these narratives in such abstract metaphysical terms but rather, because abstract language was not yet available, in personified terms. They reflect these narratives through their immediate experiences. They relate as human stories of feeling, perception, love, hate, and conflict, and thereby contribute to a shared understanding of real but larger-than-human, metaphysical events in an immediately comprehensible way—as something *sens*ible. And yet this is not merely a story Vico tells about Homer. It is a story that he, just as Homer did, tells about himself in telling about Homer, and can only or would only tell about Homer in-and-through his own *self*-understanding. It is true about the past and the present at once. It describes Vico's own historical method as much as it describes Homer as an allegory for cultural history. It has relevance to the past and present at once. It is not history or rhetoric, past events or present politics, but both at once.

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[26] Vico believes that Greek civilization predates Egyptian and Chinese, and so places Homer as the very first author in the world. See *The New Science*, 29-34.

[27] Ibid., 308.

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Due to the fundamental ephemerality of sound as a physical phenomenon, this simultaneity of past and present, history and rhetoric, self and other, as outlined by Vico, is not a quality we can *choose* to embed within our musical practices. It *is always and will always* be there, whether we aim to create something new or recreate something old. There is no utterance in music that is free from either subject or object. A musician cannot merely state a fact in their music without placing that fact in a judgmental form, nor can they merely pass judgment without embedding that judgment's referentiality to fact within it. A musician cannot merely display the notes on a page or the sound of an instrument in the way a critical theorist can merely quote the words of a document or hold up an artifact for anyone to see—at least not in music itself. Of course, even those acts a critical theorist can do in their empirical mode are not free from judgments either, as White, Stoler, and many others have pointed out. But we musicians cannot even get *that* close to neutrality, which is yet still so far away. Music is neither language nor object but *phenomenon* and *phantom*. In order to 'give the facts,' a musician must embody them, perform them, pass them through themself; must, to again repeat this quote from *The New Science*, "become them by transforming himself into them."[28] In which case, of course, are they still *facts*? Music is and always will be perception, memory, and imagination at once. Instead of trying to escape, avoid, excuse, or conceal this, I want to *practice* it.

The transcendence of subject-object dualism represented by Vico's poetic wisdom is not a mere balancing act between 'what I want' and 'what is true about the past.' Rather, such a distinction is simply not coherent. All that exists is the *I*, which sees, hears, feels, thinks, and communicates. Which is also not to say that it's only about 'what I want' either, because one's sense of self is only possible via experience of the outside world and interaction with others. The two are inextricable. The distinction is simply moot. "[O]ne makes [...] things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them."[29] In confronting something unfamiliar, one develops an understanding of it insofar as one recognizes oneself

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28 Ibid., 129-130.

29 Ibid., 129-130.

in it, and in order to communicate about it, to represent it to others, one transfigures oneself into that specific subset of their own self-understanding such that the end result is not a cross section of the person themself, but a cross-section that can lend their peers a way of engaging with the unfamiliar thing in question.

The result of this, of course, is neither immutable nor universal. It is an incomplete representation of the unfamiliar thing that is only communicable to a subset of people who already have some understanding of the person communicating about it. This is ok. Its incompleteness is compensated for by the addition of other perspectives from other members of the community represented in this narrative. How could any one individual be expected to present a representation of something in its totality? And why should anyone be expected to communicate beyond the group of people they know? They can certainly be expected to expand their personal community and to deepen their understanding of that community, but what can be the rationale for advocating for a truly universal mode of communication other than a desire for the total domination of all humanity by a single subset thereof? A limit on the size of one's audience only nurtures further diversity among humanity as a whole. And any misunderstanding prompted by inability to communicate beyond one's actual peers should merely encourage one to re-evaluate the nuances of their own perspective in further detail.

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Where is the human of the historian-musician? They read, write, look, teach, practice, listen, rehearse, perform, discuss. They are in the archive. Archives that are of substantial interest to historians of 18th-century music are, broadly speaking, buildings that hold documents containing any combination of language, notation, and image. They can also be sites where instruments are collected. Architecture can be considered archival as well—spaces where music was once made can be observed similarly to documents describing the music once made in them. The human of the historian sits in the archive, holds an instrument, stands in a music room. As they practice, they encounter technical obstacles and hardships; they face decisions about ornamentation, harmony, timbre, and expression; they mimic and find themselves mimicking; they relish well-worn paths just as they push themselves to escape their

habits. And they exist in the world as humans beyond music. They think when they're not being paid to think; they listen when they're not being paid to listen. They carry their musicianship into their lives beyond music.

What are this subject's objects? With what physical matter do they engage? What sensory perception do they experience? What things external to them must be translated into a cross-section of their being to be understood? They are those archival documents, historical instruments, and buildings. Historical music—intentional artistic sound production of the past—is conspicuously absent. This subject can engage with everything except what they most explicitly desire to address. Historical music is more the topic of this research than its object. It is an abstraction. And though my mind may be capable of such abstraction in the way Vico's first peoples were not, it would be productive to nevertheless proceed here as if I were so incapable. Poetic wisdom comes from a place of radical groundedness that I must lower myself into if I'm to draw out the concept's potential value for the historian-musician. I must relinquish the idea of historical music as object and instead focus on those physical objects that can actually be accessed. I must imagine what might happen if a present-day historian were to suddenly lose their capacity for abstraction and intuit themselves into the quite different knowledge system of poetic wisdom.

So as I begin, within the archive, I look at a document and I see that my choice of what document to bring out and look at is informed by my own particular interests, aesthetic and artistic, and my own ideologies about music, politics, and culture. I pull out fragments and anonymi because I am drawn to the incomprehensible, to that which resists understanding, and to that which is contradictory or opaque, even absurd. Others' choices will be different, but no less personal unless they deceive themselves that that is the case. I cannot divorce myself from myself. My being is my guide. My experiences built my ear, my body, my desires, and the environments in which I now find myself. And so I find anonymi and fragments because the whole of my being has set out to look for them almost without my conscious choice to do so.

What then do I actually do once I've requested them to be brought up from the archival stacks; once I've decided what to find; once I've found it? How do I *be* with them? I want to understand what they are, certainly, and yet I can only understand them insofar as they appear already to be analogous to

myself, to my history in music, and to my tastes and propensities and my ability to make music in particular ways, with particular peers, in particular contexts, at particular times. I am only able to see in them what I am able to see in notation of any kind. I take those qualities of myself I see within them *and I become only them* for a moment. I become that version of myself which is readily there to be seen in the notation in front of me. And so something new emerges. If I've never looked at this particular document before; this subset of my individuality that I become in looking at it is one I've never performed before.

And then I speak, musically, as this new being. I make this notation into new notation to be used for the making of music by performers other than myself—my collaborators; performers—who consider feedback I generate by listening to rehearsals and communicate by speaking, gesturing, and imitating.

There's a crucial distinction here to be identified between this process and more Modern, authorship-oriented compositional practices. I have not simply taken these fragments and anonymi for *use* in my own compositions. That would require retaining my selfhood as a separate entity from the historical notation I use. I do not merely employ these fragments in a context separate from them. I do not drop them into a pre-formed musical style that is my own. I am not interested in a compare-and-contrast approach to understanding the new through the old and the old through the new. There is no passing back and forth between objectivity and subjectivity, empiricism and rhetoric, fact and opinion—no mode switching as in critical theory.

I *lose myself* in them. My selfhood as an independent identity dissolves into whatever identity the notation I embody might be seen to have, were each individual's interaction with it strung together into some sort of composite picture of it from a thousand different angles. *We*, together, the notation and I, become something in union. I speak from my own body, with my own turns of phrase, my own inflection and cadence, and yet none of the words I use are of my own language. As any individual person in Vico's Greece might *become* Homer, might *transform* themselves into Homer as they begin to speak their cultural history, my compositional pen begins to write as the notation it has seen. I as a composer transform myself into the document in front of me, its turns of phrase, its mannerisms, its vocabulary and witticisms, but not in an authentic way, not in a full way, not in an objective way, not in a way in which I become *detached* from myself in order to become an other. I melt into the other. My selfhood fuses with it. A listener to the music I make in this manner becomes unable to hear me except by listening

to the fragments I have used. Yet they cannot hear these fragments themselves except through, or perhaps *as*, me.

6_Singing in the Aviary

Conclusion

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At the beginning of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre,* Jane takes a book from her cousin's library and hides in a window well to read.[1] The book is Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds* [first published 1797], a seminal work in the history of ornithology, and one influenced not insignificantly by a mutually declared friend of Bewick's who wrote his own book about birds, John Freeman Milward Dovaston.[2] But the latter's book, introduced as "My Aviary" [ca. 1808], is quite different. It isn't an illustrated book of natural history but rather what one might call a poetic book of music. In it, Dovaston compiles hundreds of what he calls "national melodies" and invites his reader to analogise the breadth of their character and beauty to the diversity of birdsong.[3]

I came across Dovaston's aviary while conducting a broad search through the special collections of the British Library for any music notation committed to paper during the long 18th century in Britain that appeared to be anonymous and/or fragmentary. The book indeed contains quite a lot of notation that fits one or both of these categories, and for this reason any of these excerpts on their own would have deserved attention from me. But as a whole it can also be understood as emblematic of a much broader question for historical musicology and historical performance today. As I look at the melodies contained within, I want to play them, I want to hear them. But what *exactly* do I want?

It's apparent that a large amount, if not all, of this notation was not composed by Dovaston but rather transcribed. For these excerpts, do I want what their composer wanted or do I want Dovaston's fleeting moment of wandering through his aviary? Or are these the same thing? And can I even trust Dovaston's pen as confirmation of whether 'an Irish air' was composed in Ireland or only composed to sound like his or someone else's idea of Ireland? Other examples include a string quartet by Joseph Haydn, but arranged to a grand staff. What do I imagine when I look at that page? Four string players at

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[1] Charlotte Brontë, ed. Richard Nemesvari, *Jane Eyre* [first published 1847], chapter 1 (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), 64.
[2] See, for example, Gordon Williams (ed.), *Bewick to Dovaston: Letters, 1824–1828* (London: Nattali & Maurice, 1968).
[3] Add. MS 63512, British Library, London.

Eszterháza or Dovaston rendering something he considered analogous to this at the keyboard? And is there any moral dimension to this choice? Dovaston's project of collecting melodies from around the world can easily be likened to the practice of contemporaries such as the architect John Soane pillaging sculptures and monuments from Egypt and elsewhere,[4] but does the same logic of theft apply when what's taken is not physical matter? A musical phrase transcribed and transported can leave its original culture intact, whereas an architectural feature removed from a building can only be in one place at a time. Though maybe the more relevant questions are whose many practices sit behind Dovaston's scribal hand, and what are the natures of their voices in this document? How much of each of them speaks through their voyeur or how much does his will erase of their reality? Or does this even matter?

Affirmation that the practice of compilation can be quite easily understood as an act of *creation* comes from both our own recent past and from Dovaston's. By my own understanding of the term, Dovaston's aviary is itself a *composition*, made as all compositions are out of others' work. And what of my own act of compilation—or again, composition, or perhaps history—in pursuing something like this document and stopping and thinking upon finding it. To write the words on this page, drawing out into present action what has until now been only a latent hypothetical, is to perform a new expression of art to others. What about *me* has determined that *this* should be what I choose to dwell on instead of something else?

In this sense, this aviary is a book I can only understand in any meaningful way through what one might call an intertemporal or interscalar lens; an understanding of each moment, each action, each individual, each artifact as embedded with a great many overlapping temporalities, cultures, and geographies, whether spanning a fleeting few minutes or reaching centuries to either chronological side of both our present and their maker's, and whether contained to the few occupants of a single room or the whole human population of the Earth. If I want—as I do—to approach this aviary from such an intertemporal and interscalar lens—not only as a writer but also as a musician—what might I do?

It's important to repeat here that my core aim in this dissertation is *not* to merely replicate or attempt to replicate a specific historical practice wholesale but rather more generally to practice history— understood in as capacious a sense as possible—in and through the practice of music. As I have detailed

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[4] For a basic introduction to this practice, see Tim Knox and Derry Moore, *Sir John Soane's Museum, London* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2016).

throughout this text, I don't understand the practice of history to be exclusively constituted by the objective description or replication of historical events, but rather to encompass a much more temporally and perspectively rich undertaking as already consciously practiced by critical theorists, art theorists, sociologists, philosophers, and even many historians who work outside the field of classical music.

So to return to my statement above, but now with a key emphasis added, 'the aviary is a book *I* can only understand in any meaningful way through what one might call an intertemporal or interscalar lens.' My own subjectivity contributes just as much to how I want to hear this book as either Dovaston's curatorial intent or each individual melody's author. Whatever music I make with its contents will be an *illusion*—in Bernard Harcourt's terminology—of its pastness. And as was made clear by Richard Taruskin, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and many others during the debates around historical authenticity beginning in the 1980s, this statement would be true for *every* musicologist or performer who ever has used or ever will use this book in any way. By acknowledging this, one can become free of the flimsy naivety of pretending to know for certain what can never be known for certain. But it is only by also acknowledging that history is argumentation as much as description, construction as much as replication, a drawing *across* distant temporalities and places as much as a drawing *of* them, that I believe a truly meaningful musical use of them can be made in our present moment. No single instance of musical practice can convey the full potentiality or essence of a given example of notation or of any broader idea of a musical culture, historical or otherwise, but by drawing and reflecting upon more and more Harcourtian illusions of these objects cutting across each other as diversely as possible; touching upon and folding in even the remotest of possibilities or analogies imaginable around them, one can learn more, and learn more, and learn more.

Dovaston's aviary begins with an embossed outside cover that reads "National Melodies &c.," an inside cover with a pasted-in label containing an image and a quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and a first page with an introduction including author acknowledgments and quotations from canonic works of literature.
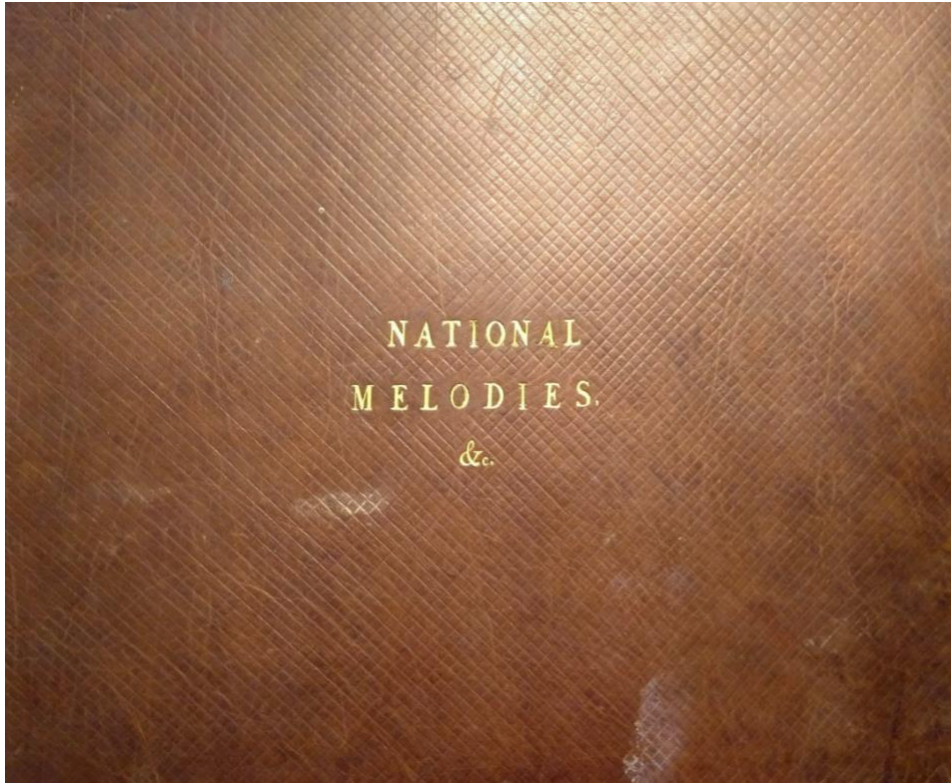
Figure 6.1: The outside front cover of John Dovaston's aviary.
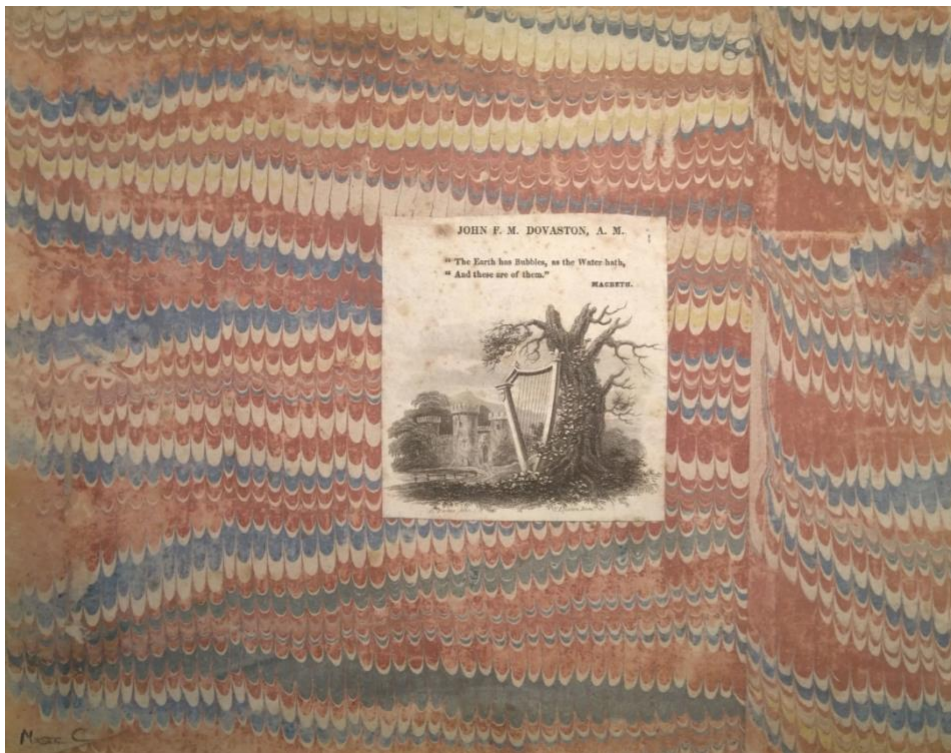
Figure 6.2: The inside front cover of John Dovaston's aviary.
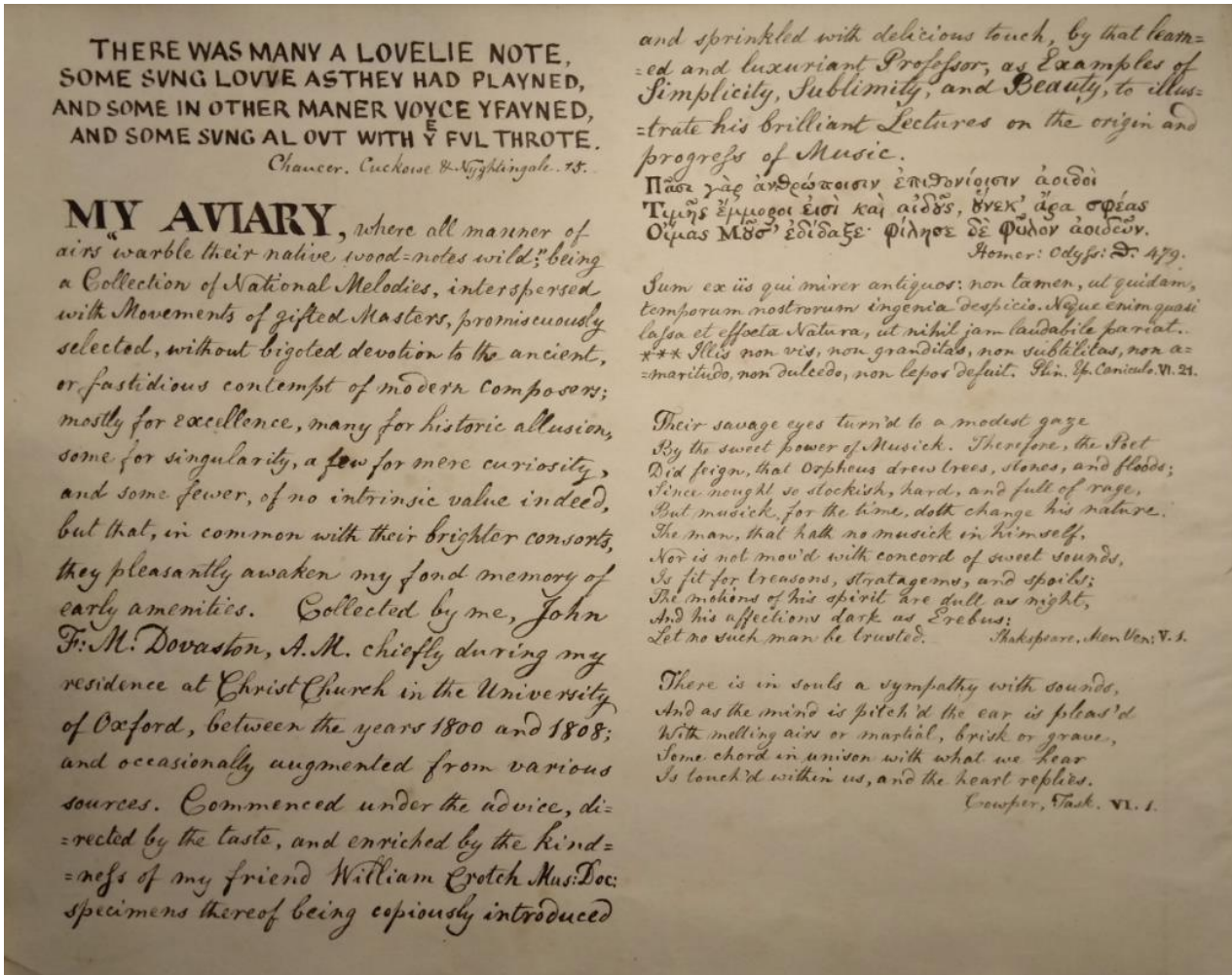
Figure 6.3: The first inside page of Dovaston's aviary.

Bookending an introduction by Dovaston himself are quotations from Chaucer, Homer, Pliny the Younger, Shakespeare, and Cowper. I won't transcribe the passages in English here, but the Greek and Latin texts can be translated, respectively, as:

For among all men that are upon the earth minstrels win honour and reverence, for the Muse has taught them the paths of song, and loves the tribe of minstrels [Pliny the Younger, *Letters*].[5]

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[5] Homer, trans. A. T. Murray, rev. George E. Dimock, *Odyssey, Volume 1, Books 1-12* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 306-307.

I am an admirer of the ancients, but, not like some people, so as to despise the talent of our own times. It is not true that the world is too tired and exhausted to be able to produce anything worth praising. [...] He lacked neither vigour, grandeur, nor subtlety of style, pungency, charm, nor humour [Homer, *Odyssey*].[6]

After this introductory page follows a table of contents, spread across 14 pages, which gives a title and/or origin for 1,266 included pieces.

Figure 6.4: A page from the table of contents of Dovaston's aviary.

The majority of these origins are nationalities of the British Isles—"English," "Welsh," "Scotch," and "Irish"—but there are also other European nationalities represented such as "French" and "German."

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[6] Pliny the Younger, trans. Betty Radice, *Letters, Volume I, Books 1-7* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 446-449.

Other indications are broader geographic ones such as "Scandinavian" or "Asiatic" while yet others are names of composers including "Handel," "Pleyel," "Corelli," and "Dr. Arne." Each of the origins is more or less evenly dispersed across the volume except that there are distinctly more designations of British or Irish national origin than any other type of designation.

Notable about the presentation of the notational pages is that individual pieces are not spaced out on the given page. Instead, each one immediately follows its predecessor such that an inattentive musician might very reasonably play through from one to the next without pause. Of course, such an approach would be interrupted by the occasional transition from single staff to grand staff.
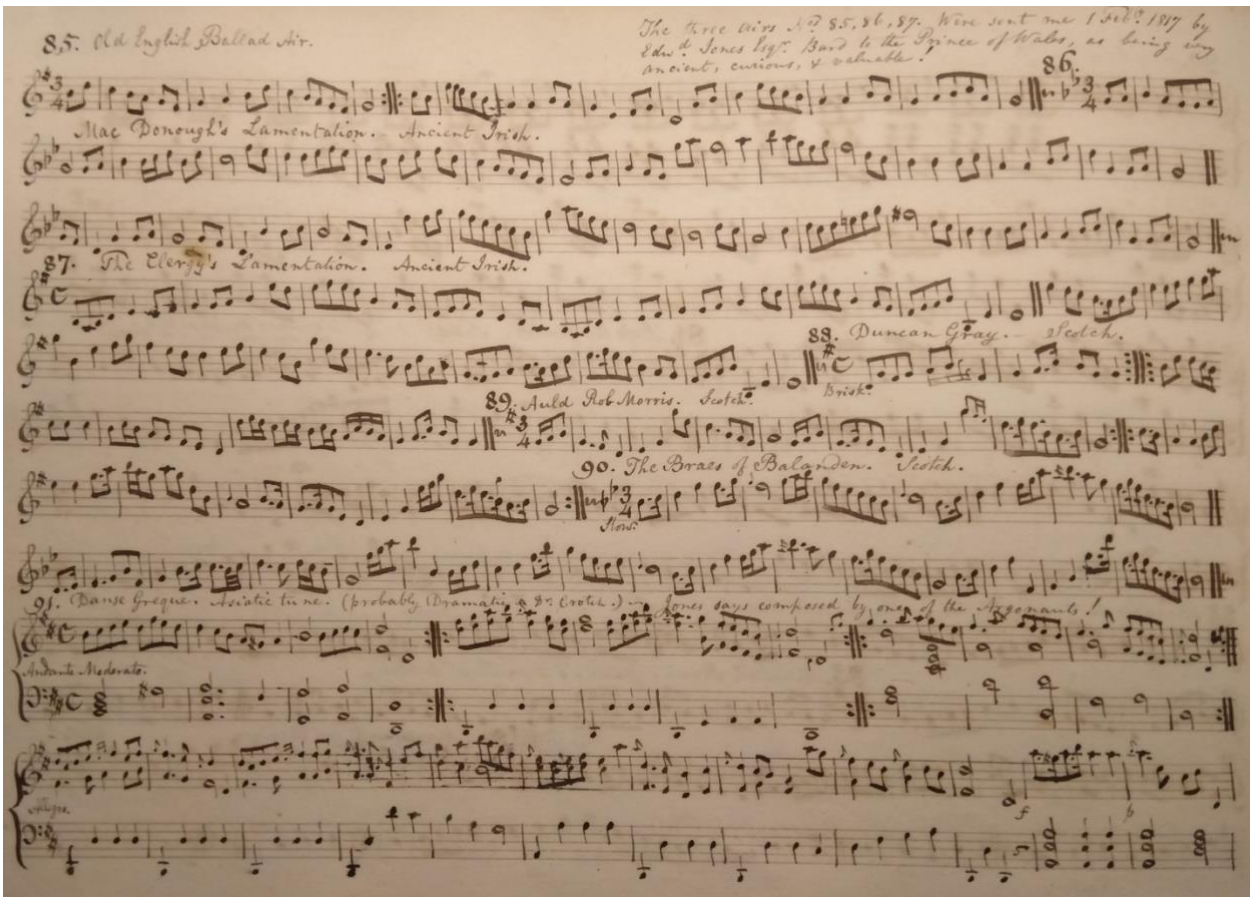

Figure 6.5: An interior page of Dovaston's aviary, showing pieces numbered 85–90.

There are also frequent marginalia providing contextual information about some of the pieces, and it's worth pointing out that these comments are never allowed to interrupt the continuity of notation from one piece to the next, even in cases where they are extremely long.
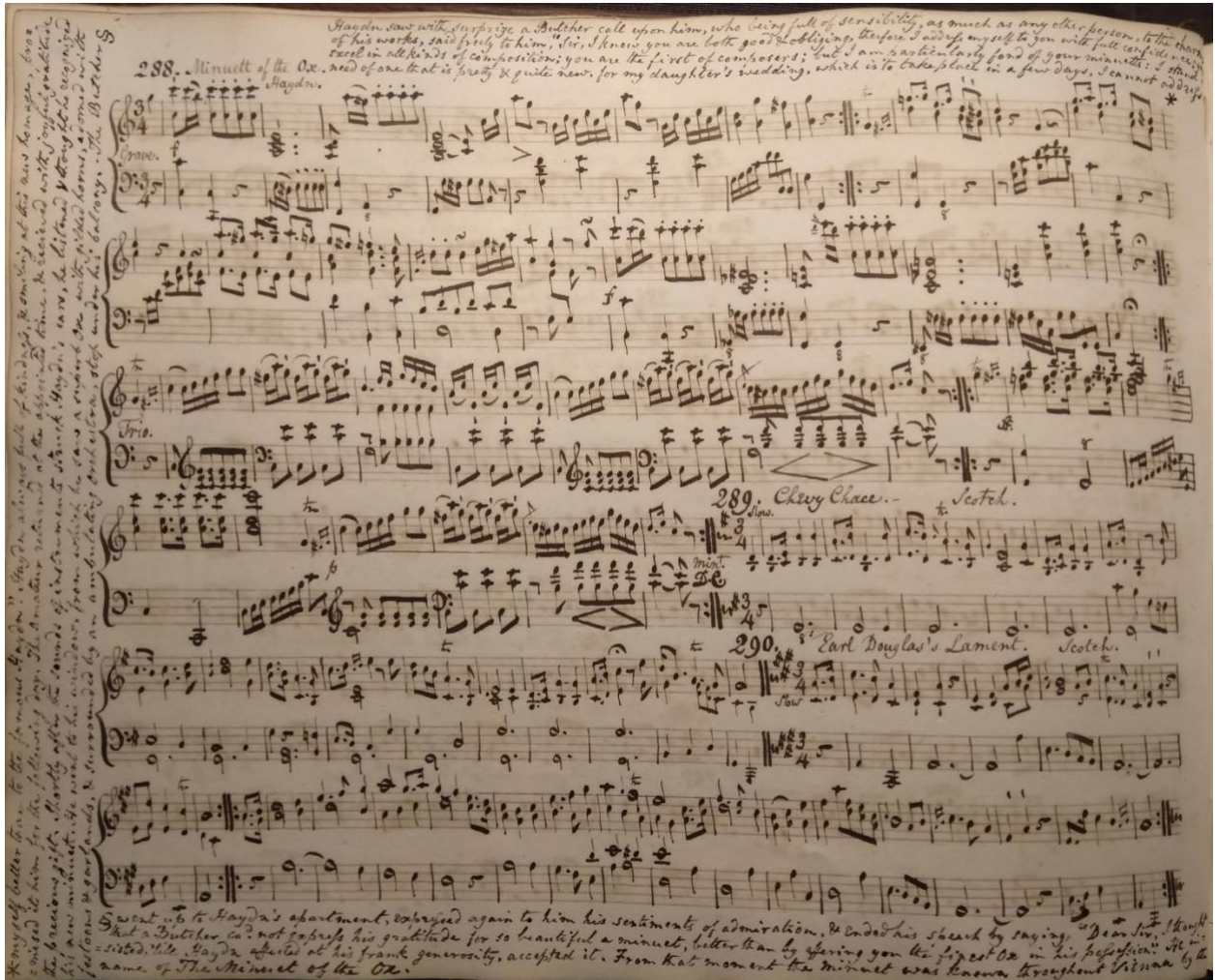

Figure 6.6: A copy of the "Minuett of the Ox," attributed by Dovaston to Joseph Haydn, with extensive marginalia; this is piece number 288 from Dovaston's aviary.

My overall first impression of this volume was of its sheer enormity. Following the introductory pages and table of contents there are 210 pages *completely* filled with notation. And this is no operatic or symphonic score where one page contains only a handful of measures for a large ensemble—the largest instrumentation is a grand staff. On very rough calculation, to play through the entire volume in one sitting would take well over 24 hours.[7] Furthermore, the continuation from each piece to the next without any addition of line breaks contributes a somewhat chaotic quality to the experience of flipping through the book. Aside from the numbers and titles sprinkled across each page, there's no other form of visual hierarchy, and no indication is given as to whether these 1,266 entries are even presented in a particular order. No subheadings of smaller groups of entries are provided and no bracketing techniques are used in the marginalia to explicitly indicate similarity or classification. Furthermore, the book doesn't really *end* in a particular way. There are several blank pages of staff paper after the final piece, and there is no indication afterwards that it is intentionally the *final* one. The overall visual impression all this produces for me is that of a completely undifferentiated colossus of melody.

Per Dovaston's introduction, this is, "My Aviary, where all manner of airs 'warble their native woodnotes wild.'"[8] This perhaps gives a first clue of a logic behind this undifferentiated mass of notation. Perhaps the chaos I perceived *is* the intent. Just as a walk through an actual aviary—an enclosure for birds—might yield an endless overlapping chorus of seemingly innumerable birdsongs, so too might a read-through of the pages of this collection yield a formless opera of melodic diversity. There is no apparent attempt on the part of their compiler to imprint an aggregate form upon these melodies, yet each is as delightful as the next, just as each *transition* from one to the next is equally intriguing. Upon exploration of this shapeless anthology, the sounds of distant nations begin to reveal their consonance and imitation as members of the same world and its one, long history. Dovaston makes explicit overture in his introduction to the equality in value of ancient and modern musics. He quotes Pliny the Younger: "I am an admirer of the ancients, but, not like some people, so as to despise the talent of our own times." And

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[7] In the first few pages the average staff contains approximately 30 beats. Assuming an average tempo of 60 beats per minute, each staff would take 30 seconds to play. Each page contains 12 staves, which, multiplied by 210 pages, equals 21 hours. About a third of the notation is presented in grand staff while the other two thirds are single staff, which reduces this time considerably, but a majority of pieces call for repeats, which double the duration of those sections. This is a very rough calculation, but it more than suggests that a read-through of the full volume would take at least 24 hours.

[8] "Warble their woodnotes wild" is in quotation marks in the original but no attribution is provided.

he writes that he selected the melodies "without bigoted devotion to the ancient, or fastidious contempt of modern composers." Via Shakespeare, Dovaston also alludes to the capacity of music to produce compassion in the unrestful human soul more generally:

> Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
>
> By the sweet power of Musick. Therefore, the Poet
>
> Did feign, that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
>
> Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
>
> But musick, for the time, doth change his nature.[9]

Dovaston's introduction as a whole speaks to both to the power of nature to calm human cruelty and to a desire for a more just future. Such rhetoric makes the inclusion of number 454, "The Marseilles [sic.] March," unsurprising. There is an implication that the study of natural philosophy can yield a better understanding of human society—this is not an uncommon theme in the writings of Diderot, Rousseau, or Voltaire—yet there is also a more moderating message that the traditional facets of human culture ought not be abandoned entirely. This makes it equally unsurprising that Orpheus—musician and lawmaker, founder of human societal harmony, as we saw earlier through Vico—is mentioned on two separate occasions on this one page. As both a bridge between nature and society and an emblem of the ancient world, Orpheus can perhaps provide a counterpoint to the argument that progress toward a more just and egalitarian world order requires the abandonment of history.

This idea of ornithology—and scientific inquiry more broadly—as a *moral* pursuit also appears in Dovaston's extensive correspondence with Bewick. In February 1825, Bewick writes to Dovaston:

> I wonder whether my attempts will have any effect so as to make the youths of the present generation, pursue the lessons in the great book of nature so amply spread out before them, and to set them thinking & reflecting upon it—it stands in no need of dogmas & creeds to make them *clearly understand* & believe it—it is the only visible, & living, word of god & which may be perused with never ending wonder, generation after generation for unnumberable [sic.] centuries to come—I conceive that the present generation, of at least, the majority of

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[9] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, act 5, scene 1.

mankind, are so blinded, & loaded, & cramped with prejudices, instilled in youth, & grown up with their years, that they cannot (I doubt) be removed—for they are become as inveterate almost as antipathies—and it would require a great effort of the reasoning power to get quit of the trammells imposed upon them—most of men do not reason—they only ruminate.[10]

A few letters later, in the summer of the same year, Dovaston sends his "hints for Mr. Bewick's improvement upon" the introduction to *History of British Birds*. A passage from this revised version of Bewick's book reads as follows:

When I first undertook the *History of British Birds* my sole motive was to lead the minds of youth to the study of Natural History, the only and surest foundation on which true Religion can efficiently be implanted in the heart, as being the unquestioned & unalterable, as well as unerrour'd Book of the Diety [sic.].—My Writings were intended chiefly for children, & the more readily to allure their pliable, tho' discoursive [sic.], attention to the Great Truths of Creation, I illustrated them with figures delineated with all the Fidelity and animation I was able to impart to mere wood-cuts without colour: And as Instruction is of little avail without constant cheerfulness & occasional amusement, I interspersed the more serious studies with pieces of gaiety and humour, yet even in these seldom without an endeavour to illustrate some truth, or point some moral; so uniting with my ardent wish to improve the rising generation, the exercise of my art & profession by which I lived.[11]

Through directing the attention of an open mind to the behaviours and general diversity of birds, one studies God, except in *living* rather than biblical form. This is both a practical instruction as to the inner mechanisms of the world, and an ethical instruction as to a *good* way to behave among both fellow humans and among the non-human members of one's environment.

A shade of this sentiment can be read in Bewick's appearance in *Jane Eyre*, though with the further nuance that such inquiry of nature can provide respite from the human world as an environment of corruption and cruelty—a *divorce* from nature:

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[10] Williams, 40-41.
[11] Ibid., 54-55.

> Having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement. Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near, a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.[12]

On a grey day, Jane escapes the disrespect of her cousins and then-guardians by hiding between a thick curtain and a window. On both sides, she is separated from her surroundings, holed up in safety. But her barrier to the human side is opaque while to the natural it is transparent. She retains the physical comfort of the constructed human space, but otherwise loses awareness of its existence, fascinated instead by the outside. One can see a metaphor here to her choice of Bewick's book. To read can be to distance oneself from the petty concerns of fleeting moments, and to instead lose oneself in the far away, the grand, or the otherwise more permanent and meaningful, yet this escapism is not to truly be elsewhere or to see elsewhere but rather to imagine it. It is a retreat into the self *as* a retreat outside to the distant other. In this case, that far away, that grand, and that more permanent and meaningful, is *this* natural history of Bewick's and, perhaps, by extension, Dovaston's as well:

> I returned to my book—Bewick's *History of British Birds*: the letter-press thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of 'the solitary rocks and promontories' by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindesness, or Naze, to the North Cape—
>
> > 'Where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls
> > Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
> > Of farthest Thule; and the Atlantic surge
> > Pours in among the stormy Hebrides.'

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[12] Brontë, 64.

> Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with 'the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space,—that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.' Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own; shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive. [13]

Brontë writes several times how little importance the youthful Jane assigned to Bewick's text—purportedly much favouring his imagery—yet reveals just as much in the quoted passage above about the former as the latter. Though unconcerned with the text, Jane can't help but be drawn into the descriptions of other cold and barren places as parallels to what she sees just outside the window of her house. Again, as with Dovaston, a remarkably global and diverse picture is drawn, wherein individuals appear only as unique shades of a whole.

For Jane, even such inhospitable landscapes as these seemed preferable to her presently intolerable human environment.

> With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast-room door opened.[14]

And we're sucked back into the fear and anxiety of Jane's manufactured non-belonging, back into the oppression created by a deficiency of care, a lack of self-knowledge, and a refusal to look beyond oneself for any amount of truth or value.

This tension between cruelty and kindness, between devised cultures and organic environments, permeates Brontë's novel. And this theme of escapism, or at least these cycles of incorporation within or separation from society and nature, is not dissimilar to those sentiments expressed by Bewick in Dovaston, either in their correspondence to each other, or in their respective works. Such sentiments permeate discourse in Early Music and New Music as well. In Early Music, one can see a turning away from a noisy, exhausting, manufactured reality of modernism, toward a richer, more organic and

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[13] Ibid., 64.
[14] Ibid., 65.

differentiated soundworld of the past. In New Music, too, one can find many attempts to detach from received culture and to produce a more perfect future through imitation of nature or of abstract physical or mathematical principles.

And yet the music in Dovaston's aviary doesn't only belong to him; it also belongs to those countless other musicians who made its compilation *possible*. And it is entangled with many more philosophical, historical, and artistic traditions besides even these more composerly contributors. All of these voices sit within the book, yet Dovaston's own looms quite a bit larger. His project shares many of those same underlying attachments, conscious desires, and dualisms I named in my own research question earlier in this dissertation, and as such perhaps warrants a similar approach of dismantling and rebuilding that I have followed over the past many pages. His impositions upon his sources are as deserving of a critical historical gaze as those sources as objects in their own right. All of this about Dovaston, Bewick, and Brontë, and about the former's aviary, as a book, is only to see this music through that one lens.

But how many of these melodies might be written down *only* here and in no other document? Given the extreme difficulty of identifying fragmented, anonymous, and/or otherwise sparsely labelled notation, it's pretty much impossible to know whether this is the case, but given the large number of anonymous pieces it also seems very likely. Do these melodies deserve a broader historical representation than merely what might be achieved via Dovaston's curation? Or should we really believe that Dovaston was a neutral medium of their own unique vitality? Surely he was subject to the same vagaries of historical subjectivity as we are now? Do we reproduce Dovaston's narrative or the many other narratives it compiles from a layer deeper than his present?

One can see a constellation of diverse subjectivities bound together in these 210 pages that will never be meaningfully represented in sounding music by a single way of playing or a single playing through. As in the music of Brian Ferneyhough, there is simply too much meaning in this notation for a performer to be a neutral conveyor of score to audience. And as in *One,* the nature of the source material precludes the possibility of a traditional methodology for making music in a historical way, as if it belongs only to one historical time and place. Yet what we *can* do is trace paths through this rich network of potentiality. And besides, it was only by designing my archival research along the lines of Ann Stoler's reflection upon the methodology and epistemology of postcolonial historiography that I was able to find and come to value

Dovaston's aviary as a significant object of music history. How could I then, in moving to use this document in sounding music, suddenly abandon the unique and powerful form of political judgment that so explicitly drives Stoler's work, which was exactly what drove me to her writing in the first place?

My album *The Aviary*, then, recorded with Stile Nu, is not only a recitation of Dovaston's aviary, or a specific critical historical treatment of it as a primary object of inquiry, but it also encompasses a much broader sedimentary construction of music notation, historiography, and composition. And as it is tied up in Dovaston's musical, scientific, and social ideology and critiques thereof, it is also tied up in historically-informed performance and contemporary composition as conceptual and methodological frameworks. Upon looking through Dovaston's aviary, these phenomena became indistinguishable for me, impossible to disentangle from each other. As such, all these rhetorical manoeuvres are woven into a simultaneous fabric of musical practice that is furthermore an idiosyncratic expression of my own personal history, knowledge, and judgment as a musician and a scholar as well. The fabric of my own aviary, then, is woven from a multitude of sources, some with ties to Dovaston's aviary, some with other ties to Dovaston, and some with no explicitly related provenance at all.

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A recording of my album, *The Aviary*, can be found at https://carlodiaz.com/music/the-aviary, and a full listen-through may be informative at this point.

Its track listing runs in numerical sequence from "Two" to "Ten," with the exception of "Two Again," which appears between "Eight" and "Nine." Some of these pieces appear for their first time in this context while others are adapted from earlier projects.

"Two" was originally a movement from a 2017 composition of mine called *Reuse Music*, which took examples of architectural salvage as inspiration for the contemporary musical use of fragmentary historical notation. In contrast to my later uses of fragments, as can be heard elsewhere in *The Aviary*, "Two" doesn't take a phenomenological approach but rather analogises music notation to physical building materials. The piece is based on a manuscript by the Neapolitan composer Pietro Marchitelli

from around the year 1700,[15] and imagines a musical equivalent to dismantling an old building brick for brick and the reuse of those bricks to construct an entirely different building. In its simplest forms, this architectural practice is nothing more than an economical conservation or recycling of existing materials, but what becomes aesthetically notable from such practices is the frequent disjuncture between earlier and later architectural styles. The physical inconsistencies—imperfections, perhaps—of these older, weathered building materials can produce a type of conflict or contrast with modern design aesthetics, which often value a carefully manufactured sameness or consistency. When arranged in regular geometry and left unornamented—in a perfectly rectangular wall, for instance—the result ends up looking not like a single, uniform structure but rather a focused contemplation of innumerable textural variations within that overriding shape. This type of mild disjuncture—conflictual in some ways, complementary in others—is precisely what interests me in "Two."

So like a builder dismantling a wall, I pull apart this manuscript by Marchitelli measure for measure. Once I have each measure isolated, I perform a very simple operation. I rearrange them according to the starting pitch of the basso continuo part, from lowest to highest. In the many cases where there are multiple measures with the same starting pitch, I determine an average pitch for the whole measure to use as a secondary data point. What this produces is a very basic overall form characterized by constant upward motion—an interesting effect in itself. There's a frenetic kind of motion and energy to the piece, which I attempt to further accentuate by adding a gradual *accelerando ad infinitum*. It becomes one long, sweeping, upward motion—constructed of obviously historical materials yet in an obviously ahistorical style—to begin *The Aviary*.

In the lingering resonance of the fast, chaotic ending of "Two," "Three" begins suddenly. Having described it in some detail in the introduction to this dissertation, I won't dwell long upon it here. What I will do is share its full list of source materials, as it is the most diverse track on the album in this respect. In the score for "Three," *every single note* can be traced back to one or more of the following sources:

— "Sei Barcarole Veneziane" [ca. 1785], anonymous;
    #66623, Travis & Emery Music Bookshop, London.

[15] MS 489 A–B, The Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, Berkeley, CA.

— "...a very choice and excellent bundle of many beautiful & genuine compositions"

[ca. 1805], compiled by John F. M. Dovaston;

Add. MS 63818, British Library, London.

— "collection of tunes for German Flute" [ca. 1752], compiled by Robert Tubbs;

Add. MS 56487, British Library, London.

— Misc. volume labelled "Violino Principalo" [18th century], anonymous;

R.M.21.d.9 b1, British Library, London

Each excerpt from these manuscripts that appears in "Three" is anonymous and/or fragmentary in some way: a melody here, six bars of counterpoint there, an unlabelled four-bar bass line, and so forth. As described in the introduction, my interest in this piece lay in the phenomenology of notational fragments—in what potentialities, imaginings, or questions they instinctively stir in those who read them, and how they do or do not conform to typical ideas of music ontology, and do or do not allow for typical methodologies of historical performance. As in "Two," these sources provide raw materials for the music that can be heard on *The Aviary*, but in this case the approach is much more situated in the moment-to-moment potentiality of each fragment rather than the result of an abstract linear process.

"Four" offers yet another approach, in this case by using just one archival document instead of many. It strives to present that source notation blankly—as closely as possible to what might be called 'without interpretation.' The original manuscript contains what appears to be an unfinished sketch of a composition for one or two instruments alongside basso continuo.[16] It may perhaps be the start of an exercise rather than a whole composition, as the writing is extremely simple, generally only containing basic melodic sequences over whole-note bass movement in 4/4 time. There's really no indication in the document that provides further information as to its intended completed form, so all I can say with clarity is that what I see on these pages is only a small subset of a more filled-in *something*.

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[16] Add. MS 14225, British Library, London, 99.

Yet it's long enough in duration that a performance of it can fill the same amount of time as a short movement. So, in "Four," this fragment is performed as plainly as possible. The idea here is to present music as if merely an audible form of notation; to convey as clearly as possible no more and no less than exactly what is on the page. In a way, this makes it a kind of behind-the-scenes moment for *The Aviary*. It exhibits for the listener the basic nature of the entire album's source materials. Yet in music there's a strange phenomenon in which incompleteness is actually extremely difficult to convey. A silence between two notes doesn't necessarily sound like a moment in which something else should happen. It simply becomes a longer breath or pause or separation between two things that might otherwise have been shorter. Whatever is played, however sparse, becomes the totality of the music. So perhaps "Four" sounds like a barren, incomplete fragment or perhaps it just sounds like simple, pretty music. Or maybe one can hear this tension at play.

Moving onward, "Five" represents a significant departure from the rest of *The Aviary* thus far in that it's not based on a fragment or an anonymous composition. Simply put, it's an arrangement of the "Kyrie" from Antoine Brumel's *Missa 'et ecce terrae motus,'* composed around 1570.[17] Aside from adapting it to a six-part baroque orchestra from its original version for 12-part choir, "Five" significantly increases its usual tempo, though not to the same point of chaos as "Nine" does for Vivaldi. In this case, the new speed more gently transforms—perhaps—its solemn reverence into a vigorous dance.

To situate this further, it's worth stepping back at this moment to suggest that one of my overall formal concepts for *The Aviary* was to provide a succession of movements that can each be seen as presenting a component concept of a larger rhetorical gesture that only reveals itself across their composite. Each movement can be understood to say, perhaps, a single sentence within a paragraph, or a single paragraph within an essay. Here, in "Five," is a reminder that the decisions one makes about *how* to play a piece can have much more of an effect upon what it sounds like than anything on the page. By merely speeding up, the entire piece changes form and style. This principle holds true for all of the music in *The Aviary*, just as it does for all notated music, but my hope is that isolating and centring it in "Five" makes this come across more clearly.

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[17] Antoine Brumel, *Missa 'et ecce terrae motus'* [ca. 1570].

In "Six," we return to fragments and anonymi in what is another relatively simple and more procedural piece. Procedural composition is a practice in which a basic process or formula is applied to a given set of notational source materials in order to produce the final musical result. In this case, I simply place two separate excerpts in simultaneity, one on a violin, the other on a cello.[18] There's no other operation than that, yet the two line up remarkably well in terms of phrase length and harmonic patterning simply because of general consistencies of formal and stylistic conventions at their respective times of composition. There is the occasional dissonance or other oddity, but for the most part "Six" just sounds, as does "Four," like nice music.

"Seven" is a simple keyboard piece, marked 'Largo' in its source but not labelled with any other title or with any composer's name, played in a beautiful yet otherwise unremarkable historically-informed style. It is also, in fact, the only moment in *The Aviary* in which a section of John Dovaston's aviary, number 443, is played.

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[18] The first excerpt is from Add. MS 34074-34076, British Library, London; on the 6th to last page of the basso book, there is a mirror-image impression of notation from a previous page that is no longer in the document. The second excerpt is from Add. MS 56487, British Library, London, 20; it is much more easily legible than the first excerpt, and is labeled "#37, 'Sonata.'"
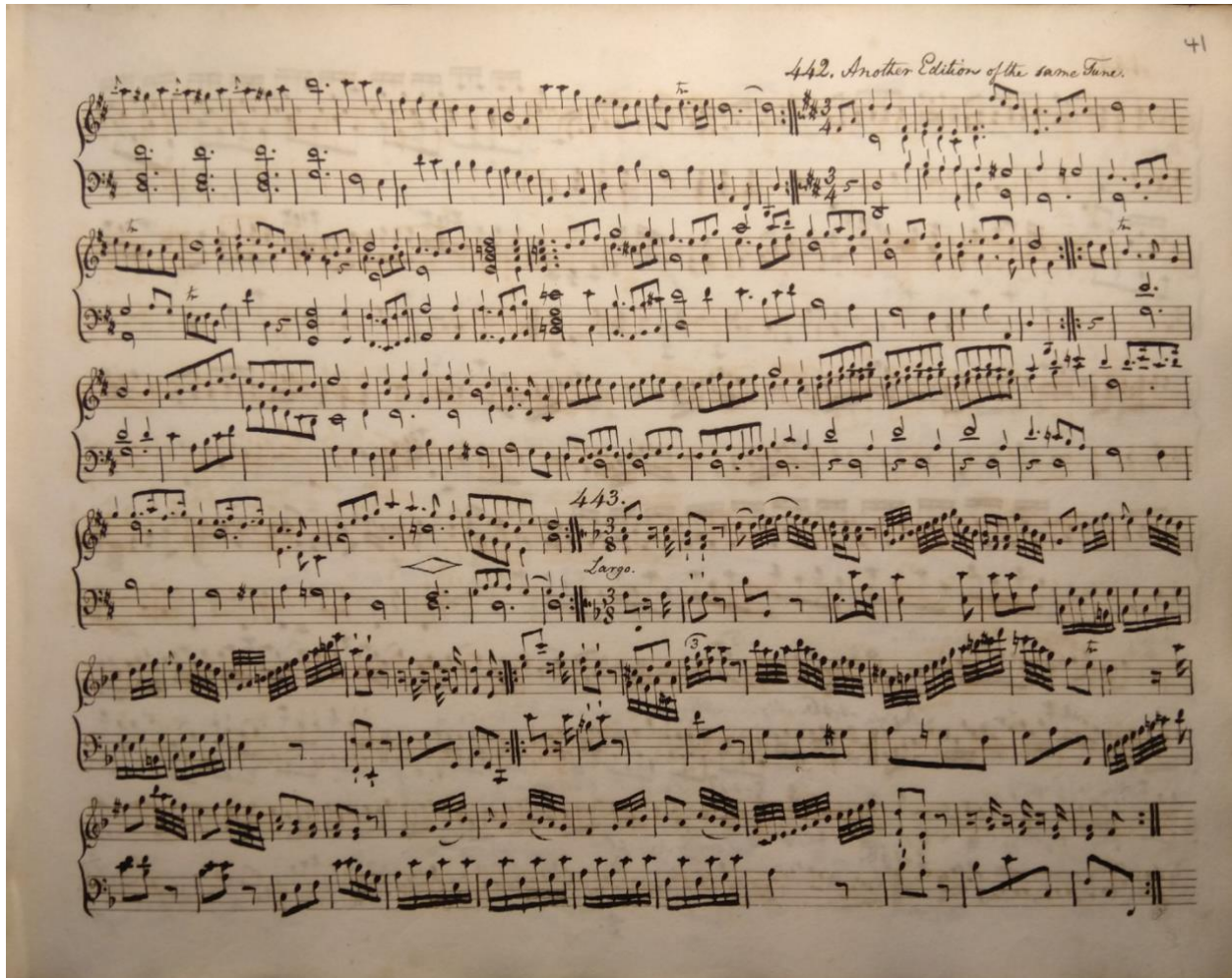
Figure 6.7: A performance of piece number 443 of Dovaston's aviary,

shown here, is the track called "Seven" in my album, *The Aviary*.

It would be difficult to overstate just how much vastly more potential remains untapped within this document than I've realized in my own aviary, regardless of the historical or artistic framework applied. Of this enormous 240-page mass of notation, I've used only half of a page in 20 minutes of music. And these 20 minutes hardly even represent a significant fraction of all that might be done with this half page. Aside from the innumerable *interpretive* variations that might be discovered from one performance to the next, I could have carried out any number of other curatorial treatments. I might have recorded the entire book on one instrument in one take, or on several instruments in several takes. I might have excerpted a brief passage from somewhere in the middle, compiled a group of numbers all from the same indicated national origin, or compiled a grouping meant to capture a diversity or cross-section of these origins, or

excerpted all of the arrangements of well-known operatic or larger ensemble music. Or, in a more compositional approach, I might have tried somehow to compress this huge volume into a shorter timespan through some creative form of collage, or I might have sought to showcase various forms of melodic, harmonic, or formal affinity across the book's full contents.

But again, each of these approaches would leave Dovaston's compilation intact as a discrete object, separated from its context, from my context, and from the many overlapping temporalities and geographies that come together within it. Other approaches might bring in other musical materials that in various other ways draw out these sedimentary qualities of Dovaston's book. They might cause his own historical character to confront other moments in time, other individuals, other cultures and places, which can be done, again, for innumerable reasons and to innumerable ends, whether scholarly, artistic, both, or somewhere in between. By choosing only one small excerpt of notation, yet naming my own project after Dovaston's compilation in its entirety, I mean to press very directly on this impossibility of comprehensive presentation and to defy the norm of treating it alone, cut off from its own environment, history, and legacy. So while "Seven" is perhaps somewhat blank in interpretation, perhaps this blankness enables this project as a whole to soak up even more rhetorical complexity. By denying number 443 its own capacity to hold and convey meaning for Dovaston's aviary, attention is all the more directed to its adjacents, outsides, unknowns, and unknowables.

After "Seven" we retrace old paths to the end of the album. "Eight" is more or less a repeat of "Three," only with a few of the elongated arpeggios slightly shortened this time and a handful of other cosmetic adjustments, including a key change near the end as well as a brief coda to finish the piece. After this comes "Two again," which is exactly that. The exact same audio file of "Two" is replayed. These repeats serve some of the usual purposes of musical repeats: to offer another opportunity to listen to the same thing again and experience how the intervening music has changed one's impression of it. Furthermore, this particular order to the repeats, with the reappearance of "Three" preceding that of "Two," creates a symmetrical form within *The Aviary* as a whole. This symmetry has the effect of producing a self-contained form in "Two" through "Two again," as if these eight tracks are their own independent multi-movement composition sitting in front of "Nine" and "Ten," the final two pieces of

The Aviary, which in turn come across as a coda, or perhaps like a bit of something extra tacked onto the outside of the contemplation of Dovaston—an afterlife to *The Aviary*, perhaps.

"Nine" and "Ten" are my treatments of Vivaldi's *Quattro Stagioni*, as addressed earlier in this dissertation. In the abstract, as mentioned above, each is an experiment in the interpretive agility of classical performance, the ontological malleability of musical works, and the epistemological uncertainty of historical sound. Here, at the end of, or perhaps after, *The Aviary*, they take on additional functions, both aesthetic and rhetorical.

Aesthetically, they offer a kind of cathartic moment. Though a symmetrical, recursive form separates "Nine" from its predecessors, it comes in the moment-to-moment progression of the album as very much an extension of the frenetic end of "Two again." The chaotic energy of this reuse of my earlier *Reuse Music* is transferred directly into, and perhaps begins slowly to be released across, the noise of Vivaldi's summer thunderstorm, which then gradually dissipates into the still extremely fast but now quiet and gentle "Ten." "Ten" itself may then feel something like an undying resonance of these final moments of voracity from "Two again" and "Nine"—the storm rolling away into the distant horizon, perhaps. And this vast echo hangs in the air for full *minutes* longer than these two pieces even lasted themselves. There's not much of an end to "Ten," either, even after more than five whole minutes, a full quarter of the entire length of *The Aviary*. The harmony does fully resolve, allowing "Ten" to claim adherence to Vivaldi's original score—as I maintain it does—but the crazed arpeggiation of the harpsichord doesn't stop until the entire sound of the ensemble just evaporates in an instant.

This aesthetic trajectory from the symmetrical end of the unit formed by "Three" through "Two again," to the final vanishing moment of "Ten," shapes the concluding rhetoric of *The Aviary*. Nothing is really concluded at all. What might become clear is that the overall style—performative and compositional—up until the end of "Two again" has hardly even scratched the surface of the artistic potential in its raw materials. If Vivaldi can sound so unfamiliar, how much further similar capacity for aural diversity might Dovaston's and other notational contributors to *The Aviary* contain? Drawn into phenomenological questions about anonymous notational fragments, I ceded previously held ground on the interpretive questions from before. There is simply *too much* that can be done here.

This music has not perfectly conveyed its nominal object of inquiry, that huge compilation of Dovaston's, but it has conjured a peculiar *illusion*—if not several—around, about, from, and of it. It has done so by carefully weaving around received hermeneutical, ontological, and epistemological concepts and procedures in order to avoid *capture* by the traditional disciplinarities of historical performance or contemporary composition, of Early Music or New Music. In confronting the *aphasia* produced by historical artifacts that are impossible to wedge into pre-existing taxonomies, it has had to conjure a new methodology for their use as objects simultaneously of a fossilised pastness and of a still-potent anticipation.

These qualities of historicity and imagination that I detail throughout this description of *The Aviary* are, to return to the language from my research question, among what I believe to be the key "attachments" and "desires" that fuel interest in "Early Music" and "New Music," respectively.[19] But the methodology through which I've carried these "impulses" into *The Aviary* is one that has also sought to divorce them from what I previously implied to be their *essential* dualisms: "mind and body, subject and object, thinking and doing, fact and opinion, theory and practice." Through my work on this project, I have found that these dualisms are, happily, not essential to musical sound, nor to the idea that musical sound can either represent the real past or conjure a different future. Early Music and New Music are instead *disciplines*, which—to allude to Michel Foucault's sense of the word—*enclose* and *enforce* particular modes of musical sound production according to some type of *moral judgment*. Or to use Bernard Harcourt's framework, they are instead *illusions* of musical practice, just as my use of Dovaston's compilations and my broader epistemological and ontological frameworks for understanding them are *illusions* themselves. What the illusions of Early Music and New Music do is separate the past from the present, or the practice of reproducing past sound from the practice of inventing new sound. At least for the present moment, this separation doesn't seem *right*—to use the moral sense of that word, with both

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[19] In full, my full research question is: "How can the underlying attachments and conscious desires of musicians in the impulse of collective memory, taste for the past, will to make it new, and eagerness for novelty, be extended still forwards beyond the dualism of mind and body, subject and object, thinking and doing, fact and opinion, theory and practice, that at once constitute and render into paradox the disciplines of Early Music and New Music?" See Chapter Two.

Foucault and Harcourt in mind. As we have seen via the writing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, John Locke, Ann Laura Stoler, Stephen Wright, and Giambattista Vico, the historical and the invented, the real and the imagined, are often phenomenologically inseparable. And these authors have each offered valuable reasons and strategies for both their own disciplines and ours as musicians to take this inseparability on board as an advantage, instead of attempting to avoid it, hinder it, or hide it as a disadvantage. It may well be that the far future will warrant a different approach, but for now the illusion I present in this dissertation seems appropriate.

This methodology has been one of finding a way to drop the segregation of self and other—of me from what I study, of what I invent from how the cultures around me invent me, of my present from the past of the artifacts I study—without losing my ability to make music as a practice of producing and communicating knowledge. I've sought to allow instinct back into historical methodology, yet without falling back onto a naïve idea of personal tastes and habits as either self-created or self-contained. I don't know if I can proclaim that I've fully achieved something akin to Vico's *poetic wisdom* in musical practice—whether historical, contemporary, or somewhere across or between these hopefully now bygone poles. But I do know that I've opened up a new field for myself, and I hope that others might join me here sometime soon and help explore further around its unfamiliar edges.

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Archival Scores

Appendix 1

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1. #36696, Travis & Emery Music Bookshop, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.01__36696_Tavis_&_Emery.pdf

2. #77796, Travis & Emery Music Bookshop, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.02__77796_Travis_&_Emery.pdf

3. Add. MS 14225, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.03__Add._MS_14225_British_Library.pdf

4. Add. MS 14245, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.04__Add._MS_14245_British_Library.pdf

5. Add. MS 34074–34076, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.05__Add._MS_34074-34076_British_Library.pdf

6. Add. MS 56487, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.06__Add._MS_56487_British_Library.pdf

7. Add. MS 63512, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.07__Add._MS_63512_British_Library.pdf

8. Add. MS 63818, British Library, London

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.08__Add._MS_63818_British_Library.pdf

Archival Scores

9.   MS489A, Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, University of California, Berkeley

     https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.09__MS489A_Berkeley.pdf

10.   MS489B, Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, University of California, Berkeley

     https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_1.10__MS489B_Berkeley.pdf

Performance Scores

Appendix 2

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1. *visions of small-minded Men*

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_2.01__visions_of_small-minded_Men.pdf

2. *One*

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_2.02__One.pdf

3. *The Aviary*

    https://carlodiaz.com/permalinks/Appendix_2.03__The Aviary.pdf

Performance Scores

Curriculum Vitae

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Carlo Diaz is a musician, designer, and artistic researcher. He received his Bachelor of Music in composition, interdisciplinary arts, and music technology from Northwestern University in 2016 and his Master of Music in composition from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in 2018 before beginning the docARTES Ph.D. trajectory at Leiden University and the Orpheus Institute later the same year. He has studied composition with Hans Thomalla, Jay Alan Yim, Patricia Alessandrini, Wim Henderickx, Willem Jeths, and Richard Ayres, and his Ph.D. research was supervised by Anna Scott and Richard Barrett. His music has been performed by artists including the Nieuw Ensemble, wild Up, Ensemble Linea, Ugly Pug, and the experimental baroque orchestra Stile Nu, which he founded in 2017. From 2013 to 2019, Carlo worked as a concert and festival producer for Rush Hour Concerts, Make Music Chicago, and the Chicago Philharmonic. Since 2019, Carlo has been a member of staff at The University of Chicago, first at the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory and then at the Committee on Environment, Geography and Urbanization (CEGU) and the Urban Theory Lab. Since 2023, he has also taught music composition and audio technology at Harper College, and in 2024 he will begin teaching design practice to CEGU students at The University of Chicago.

Summary

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The fields of historical performance and contemporary composition may not seem on first impression to share much. Insofar as the former is dedicated to reproducing the oldest music and the latter to inventing the newest, they can easily be understood as fundamental opposites. In context of this precise disciplinary opposition, however, this dissertation locates an opportunity for the advancement of both fields through an interdisciplinary practice and theorisation across them. Much cross-polination has certainly occurred between the two fields already, but it has largely been confined to performance spheres. Theorisations across the two remain rare. Key to the productivity of this dissertation is the identification of a complementary pair of analyses coming out of the two fields in the 1980s: critiques of the authenticity of historical performance on the one hand, with Richard Taruskin providing the classic example, and critiques of the possibility of artistic originality on the other, especially by Rosalind Krauss.

Viewed independently, each of these critiques can seem to present a vexing impasse. If historical performers cannot reproduce the past, what are they doing and why does it matter? Likewise, if contemporary composers cannot make anything new, the same questions apply. What can one do but acknowledge one's shortcomings and carry on? As these debates of the 1980s wound down, this is exactly what happened. Each discipline resigned itself to its shortcomings and carried on as if the critiques had never been made. But a reevaluation is worthwhile, as something much more interesting happens when they are viewed across each other. The ontological problems they describe begin to look eerily similar, and a wide array of practices within both disciplines come to look like fundamental syntheses of mimesis and invention, memory and imagination. What previously obscured or devalued types of music might be freshly empowered by renewed attention to this synthesis?

Through comparative study of historical theory, critical theory, art theory, Englightenment and anti-Enlightenment philosophy, and the recent histories of historical performance and contemporary composition, alongside artistic experiments in a potent gray space between the two, this dissertation seeks to understand artistry and historicity in relation to broad ontological and epistemological problems of making and remaking in music. Special potency is found in archival manuscripts of long 18th–century Britain containing anonymous, fragmentary, or damaged notation. Through both compositional and

interpretive experiments with these historical extracts of music notation, as well as theoretical reflection upon them, novel ways are found for aurally presenting the rich and complex intertemporality of musical practice and its surrounding cultures and histories.

Samenvatting

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De gebieden van historische uitvoeringspraktijk van muziek en hedendaagse compositie lijken op het eerste gezicht weinig gemeen te hebben. Voor zover de eerste gericht is op het reproduceren van de oudste muziek en de laatste op het bedenken van de nieuwste, kunnen ze makkelijk gezien worden als fundamenteel tegenovergesteld aan elkaar. Maar juist binnen de context van deze disciplinaire tegenstelling biedt dit proefschrift een kans voor de ontwikkeling van beide gebieden door een interdisciplinaire praktijk en theoretisering tegen elkaar af te zetten. Er heeft zeker al veel kruisbestuiving plaatsgevonden tussen de beide gebieden, maar deze is grotendeels beperkt gebleven tot de sfeer van de uitvoering. Theoretiserende vergelijking tussen beide is tot dusver schaars. Essentieel voor de vruchtbaarheid van dit proefschrift is de identificatie van een complementair paar analyses voortkomend uit deze twee gebieden in de jaren 1980: kritieken aangaande de authenticiteit van de historische uitvoering aan de ene kant, met Richard Taruskin die hier het klassieke voorbeeld geeft, en kritieken aangaande de mogelijkheid van artistieke originaliteit aan de andere kant, vooral door Rosalind Krauss.

Objectief beschouwd lijkt elk van deze kritieken een lastige impasse te presenteren. Als historische uitvoerders het verleden niet kunnen reproduceren, wat doen ze dan eigenlijk en waarom is dat belangrijk? Maar ook: als hedendaagse componisten niet echt iets nieuws kunnen maken, dan zou je precies dezelfde vragen kunnen stellen. Wat kun je anders dan je tekortkomingen erkennen en maar doorgaan? Dit is dan ook precies wat er gebeurd is toen de discussies van de jaren 1980 begonnen af te nemen. Iedere discipline legde zich neer bij de eigen tekortkomingen en men ging verder alsof de uitingen van kritiek nooit had plaatsgevonden. Maar toch is het de moeite waard om dit opnieuw te evalueren, omdat er iets veel interessanters gebeurt als je ze in een vergelijking tegenover elkaar zet. De ontologische problemen die ze beschrijven beginnen opmerkelijk veel op elkaar te lijken, en een breed spectrum van praktijken binnen beide disciplines beginnen eruit te zien als fundamentele synthesen van mimesis en inventie, geheugen en verbeelding. Welke tot voor kort vergeten of gedevalueerde soorten muziek zouden nieuwe glans kunnen krijgen door hernieuwde aandacht voor deze synthese?

Door vergelijkende studie van historische theorie, kritische theorie, kunsttheorie, Verlichtings- en anti-Verlichtingsfilosofie, en de recente geschiedenissen van historische opvoeringen en hedendaagse

compositie, aangevuld met artistieke experimenten in een sterke grijze ruimte tussen de twee, probeert dit proefschrift greep te krijgen op kunstenaarschap en historiciteit in relatie tot brede ontologische en epistemologische problemen van het maken en reconstrueren van muziek. Manuscripten uit archieven van het Brittannië van de lange 18e eeuw met daarin anonieme, fragmentarische of beschadigde muzieknotatie zijn hiervoor bijzonder vruchtbaar gebleken. Door zowel compositorische als interpretatieve experimenten met deze historische muzieknotatie-fragmenten, als door theoretische reflectie hierop, zijn nieuwe wegen gevonden voor de auditieve representatie van de rijke en complexe intertemporaliteit van de muziekpraktijk en de culturen en geschiedenissen eromheen.