



A New Ecosystem of Early Music Studies

COST action 21161

Report of WG4 Performances (Lisbon, 2023)

EDITED BY

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Introduction

“Increasing professionalization and specialization in the fields of performance and within the music industry has diminished the dialogue between scholarship, performance, and dissemination, which had been a hallmark of the early years of the early music movement.”¹ While there are no certain indications that the early music movement is shrinking in quantitative or qualitative terms, **early music performers, both young and established, face problems in building distinctive artistic profiles that are bolstered by rigorous research and sustained through steady concert and recording agendas.**

Four related issues have been addressed in this study session.

HOW TO MINIMIZE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN PERFORMERS, SCHOLARS, AND LISTENERS; HOW TO ENFORCE—OR EVEN REBUILD—THE VITAL TIES BETWEEN THE ‘H’, ‘I’ AND ‘P’ IN HISTORICALLY INFORMED PERFORMANCE PRACTICE? WHAT CAN BE RELEARNED AND REINCORPORATED FROM THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT?

Over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, early music developed from a disruptive subculture to a popular sector in classical music performance and recording. Tellingly, musicians who originally left or attacked the classical music establishment and its core institution, the symphony orchestra, became sought-after orchestral conductors themselves, as exemplified by the careers of Nikolaus Harnoncourt (1929-2016) and Frans Brüggen (1934-2014). Historically informed performance [hereafter HIP] has been subsumed by the mainstream because its original hallmark—‘authenticity,’ defined as faithfulness to the style and techniques of the era in which a performed work was conceived – risks being seen as unexciting and uninteresting. Musicological research into repertoires and performance practices seems to have become redundant; younger musicians no longer seem to consider it necessary to study historical sources in depth and are instead content to base their artistic-scholarly judgements on the performing traditions and recordings of their teachers or models. As the flutist and recorder player Barthold Kuijken (1949-) has remarked:

The great artistry, charisma, pedagogical authority, and commercial success of some Early Music performers can be dangerous . . . Audiences, colleagues, and students all too readily accept that these “stars” know all about Early Music, and so their performance is taken as a model to unthinkingly imitate. Needless to say, we thus create a new performance tradition that is based on the personal choice of some historical facts plus a strong dose of individual genius. In doing

¹ *Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action “A new ecosystem of early music studies” (EarlyMuse) CA21161 (Brussels, 2022), 3.*

so, we remove ourselves one step away from the historical documentation itself. Students of these “stars” will tend to imitate them, rather than study the facts that shaped the teachers’ decision—and so it goes to the third generation and the students beyond. This evolution is clearly visible and audible. It is the price we pay for the success of Early Music in concerts, publications, and recordings, the price we pay for having Early Music courses in most major conservatories.²

Contribution by Marten Noorduin (Musikhochschule Lübeck)

In recent decades, the early music movement has suffered from a loss of distinct identity: its commercial success has encouraged crossover with the orchestral mainstream, both in terms of repertoire and in terms of personnel. This has resulted in what Colin Lawson described as “attractively packaged but unripe fruit”: an uneasy mixture of historical hardware and a modern performance style supplemented by a select number of supposedly historical gimmicks.¹ Richard Taruskin’s scathing critiques of the movement further reinforced awareness of the gaps between historical evidence and marketing.²

Recent years have seen the widespread use of historical recordings as sources for historical performance, a practice that has gone some way in responding to Taruskin’s challenge. It is undeniable that these recordings represent some of the practices of the time in which they were made. There has even been a tendency among performer-scholars (e.g., Neal Peres Da Costa) to apply these performance practices to more traditional HIP repertoires, often to great effect. However, underpinning these recording-based projects are a series of patrilineal connections that run counter to the original *raison d’être* of the early music movement in the mid twentieth century. While some have celebrated this development for the added freedom it gives the performers, it also represents HIP abandoning its radical intellectual edge by embracing broad notions of ‘tradition’ that it had previously criticized to set itself apart from the mainstream.

¹ Colin Lawson, “‘Attractively Packaged but Unripe Fruit’: the UK’s Commercialization of Musical History in the 1980s,” *Performance Practice Review* 13/1 (2008), article 4.

DOI: 10.5642/perfpr.200813.01.04

² Richard Taruskin, *Text & Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York, NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

On the other hand, members of WG4 argued that the virtuosic performance practice of the present generation would be unthinkable without the experience accrued over the course of several decades. It is vital to investigate the rhetoric with which

² Barthold Kuijken, *The Notation is Not the Music: Reflections on Early Music Practice and Performance* (Bloomington, IN; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 2-3.

'pioneers,' 'stars,' and 'authorities' have been established. More importantly, it is vital to **define early music not merely in terms of a repertoire (with shifting temporal limits), but also stress the scholarly-critical attitude adopted in performing this music, regardless of its time or place of origin.**³

Additionally, and in keeping with the field of cultural heritage, early music constitutes more than a set of historical sources; **a broad corpus of collective practices** ('good' and 'bad' alike) are being developed and cultivated by numerous creative agents in collaboration with one another and with their audiences.⁴ Early music culture comprises different subgroups and subcultures whose artistic choices are determined by the audiences to whom concerts and recordings cater.⁵

Contribution by Irene Brigitte Puzzo (Universidade de Coimbra / ESMAE, Porto)

In Western culture, writing has always been considered the proper tool to eternalize actions and to construct a history. But the transmission of culture is not only logocentric; it also includes gestural, acoustic, and visual information. These kinds of ephemeral elements are part of what Diana Taylor calls *repertoire*, which is transmitted through the performance of acts, in a constant state of *againness* that cannot be captured.¹

It is, however, through an archival type of study (e.g., analysis and edition of scores, reading and interpretation of treatises) that the HIP movement has made it possible for performances to be historical. Only a small part of this group is researching *through* performance and constant musical-laboratory work, which, in my opinion, is a path to minimize the distance mentioned in the EarlyMuse's proposal. I would like to open the conversation about whether and how this approach is valued through the sharing of a variety of different experiences within the movement. How much do non-logocentric methodologies influence scholarly research? As performers, how do we balance our relationship to the archive (scores) with the act of transferring repertoire in our chamber music concerts (embodied memory)? Will listeners be more involved and will musical languages become more approachable if we create participative opportunities, such as open rehearsals, workshops in historical places, or informal concert situations?

³ See the *Memorandum of Understanding*, 13, where early music is described in terms of a "resolutely scientific approach based on the enhancement of an exceptional and living heritage through the emotional force of the performance".

⁴ John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵ Kay Kaufman Shelemay, 'Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds', *Ethnomusicology* 45/1 (2001), 1-29.

¹ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

Contribution by Nevin Şahin (Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory)

Performances of early Orthodox music of Turkey, a country in which Orthodox Christianity was historically but not culturally significant, are rather rare. The vocal ensemble Cappella Romana, which was founded in 1991 by Byzantine music researcher Alexander Lingas, takes up this innovative role in the Pacific Northwest of the United States of America. The versatile ensemble, which focuses on a transcendent experience between East and West, combines a variety of genres and periods in its repertoire. Both intensive research on discovering medieval melodies in manuscripts and educational programs within the ensemble contribute to the sonic experience offered to audiences. By commissioning contemporary compositions and performing Orthodox concert music, which corresponds thematically to the religious tradition without aiming to convey the religious function of Orthodox music, the ensemble builds bridges between the performance of early music and contemporary music.

In addition to their efforts to broaden the repertoire, the ensemble also participates in the religious services of local Orthodox churches as chanters following their tour performances. What can be learned from the music-making processes of Cappella Romana regarding the performance of early music? Which strategies from the experience the Cappella Romana offers can be beneficial in connecting researchers, performers, and listeners of early music?

HOW TO EMPOWER SCHOLARS, PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCES ALIKE IN THEIR RESEARCH, PRODUCTION AND EXPERIENCE OF EARLY MUSIC? WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES OF THE FUTURE AND MOST PROMISING AVENUES IN THIS REGARD?

Today's artistic modes and audiences evidently differ from those of yesterday. We cannot merely replicate existing formats and practices for early music; instead, new formats and practices need to be proposed and tested. It is vital to recognize the **growing diversity of early music audiences**. Concertgoers and buyers/collectors of recordings who used to endorse the field have been joined by new types of listeners, such as cultural tourists, online users, film audiences, and younger listeners, all of whom foster different musical habits and expectations.

Furthermore, a **culture of digital content providership and patronage** has emerged via YouTube and Patreon, turning passive listeners into more active, critical, and demanding 'content partners,' and altering the relationships between supply and demand. Increasing numbers of early music groups are using online

platforms to inform audiences about their work, as well as to track their followers on an international level.

With more resources for outreach, empowerment and citizen science at their disposal, early musicians are encouraged to attract new listeners, including those who would otherwise have no contact with music. Workshops, laboratories, open rehearsals, participative performances, commentated concerts, and similar formats are mutually beneficial, with musicians not merely enlightening listeners (who might be musicians themselves and do not need to be told how to listen to music), but also vice versa. The entire *process* of early musicking, from source studies to performance, can become more transparent and its full breadth better appreciated. Cultural governing bodies, however, tend to favor standardization in artistic production and therefore principally fund 'finished products', such as concerts and recordings. **WG4 recommends the valorisation of a range of early music practices by incentivizing 'slow cooking,' promoting more intense social interaction between scholars, performers, and audiences, and encouraging changes in performers' professional habitats.**

To gain a deeper understanding of the promising work in this field, WG4 will maintain solid bonds with the REMA, the Réseau européen de musique ancienne / A European network for early music, which has undertaken important surveys and set up projects such as the *Future of Early Music* podcast.

Contribution by Ivana Jelača (Sve ostalo je glazba=The Rest is Music, Dubrovnik / LUCA School of Arts, Leuven)

Although early music has radically changed thinking about music,¹ its artistic results have been disseminated mostly through recordings and standardized concert events at which listeners are passive consumers.² In order to rebuild the vital ties between the 'H', 'I' and 'P' in historically informed performance practice, I propose an experimental framework in which the historical context is a starting point, but where more stress is put on current performative conditions, deconstruction, intermedia, multimedia performance, and co-creation.³ Armed with historical sources, a performance should activate music in all its functions; aesthetic, emotional, ethical and social. In doing so, HIP becomes positioned at the crossroads of modernism and postmodernism.

Although many rituals are long-lasting and protective of the status quo, others encourage innovation by opening up space and time for anti-structures or for temporary adherence to alternative sets of rules.⁴ By adopting the postmodern ideology of rejecting the established tradition in shaping HIP performance, I propose an alternative performance format as a viable tool for the inclusion of all the partakers (students, musicians, scholars, music educators, producers, and concert-goers) in the process of co-creation. Using this tool, a platform for the redistribution of materials (archival sources, research outcomes) as well as the re-

contextualisation of performance (experimentation) can be created. Eventually, the distance between performers, scholars, and listeners can be minimized through their exchange of ideas, experiences, and knowledge. As Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has remarked, “it has to be possible for a musical performance to comment on the sorts of concerns with which musical performance interacts.”⁵

¹ Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer’s History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

² Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

³ See the videos of my MUZA Workshops (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLI76wQs7AU>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eq9s6pxW3o4>) and my *Renaissance Garden* project (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uobFDOCAIus>).

⁴ Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them*. Version 2.04 (2020). <https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/>. Last accessed 20 April 2023.

WHAT TOOLS ARE PRESENT IN OR CURRENTLY MISSING FROM EDUCATIONAL AND ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS FOR EARLY MUSICIANS TO BUILD AND DEVELOP CAREERS IN IMPACTFUL WAYS?

Members of WG4 perceive **disturbing evolutions in higher music education**. At the moment of WG1’s Lisbon meeting, surveys on early music in the educational landscape had just been initiated and found that it can be safely assumed that most major conservatories in Europe have an early music department or specialists among their faculty. The Bologna Process has led to academisation and increased focus on research, resulting in graduating music students submitting theses or pursuing postgraduate and doctoral work in artistic research.

On the other hand, an intensely competitive labor market requires schools to prepare young musicians for performance at the highest level. As a result, students are specializing very – perhaps too – early on in their education and careers, becoming, for example, ‘modern’ or ‘Baroque’ violinists already while undertaking undergraduate studies; or emulating the example of their mentors, as Barthold Kuijken complained. Secondly, young early musicians lack **the time and space for intellectual work and experimentation**. Students tend to continuously re-read and ‘fetishize’ the same corpus of primary sources uncritically and without consulting the growing secondary literature on these documents. Research training practice is either wanting, too mono-disciplinary, or taught by unqualified professors without a doctorate or a solid track record in academic research at present-day conservatoires. **WG4 recommends sufficient exposure of music students to alternative models of early music to encourage future generations to recognize the interpretive openness of historical sources, repertoires and performance practices.**

***Hands-On Research Teaching for (Early) Music Students*, by Niels Berentsen**
(Haute école de musique Genève-Neuchâtel)

The growing divide between the study and performance practice of early music—that is to say, between the conservatoire and the academy—is often deplored. A unique opportunity to bridge this gap is training (early) music students to conduct research. However, this poses a number of challenges. The educational method most familiar to music students is the master-apprentice model in which the teacher aids the student in perfecting a performance-aesthetic with its prerequisite skills. Critical inquiry into this aesthetic is typically not encouraged, as it distracts students from preparing (ever more quickly) for professional life. On a more fundamental level, this crafts-based learning model does not prepare students for dealing with the complexities of musical historiography and ontology; it needs to be supplemented and challenged by other learning experiences.

After a decade or so of teaching research to music students, I have come to the conclusion that a hands-on approach is most effective. In my courses in music history and analysis, I consciously present ‘knowledge’ as the result of critical inquiry through Kierkegaard’s *De omnibus dubitandum* as guiding principle. The most direct approach, however, is recruiting students as ‘research assistants’ on ongoing research projects, where they learn to carry out specific, well-defined tasks within an established methodological framework. This way of working alleviates the stress of having to come up with an ‘original’ topic themselves and allows students to develop research skills and improve their ability to discuss and reflect. It is my experience that alumni continue to cultivate research as part of their daily practice, consume scholarship, and use it to develop innovative practices as performers.

Alongside education, **media** play a role of capital importance in creating the necessary environment for early musicians to develop their career and connect with audiences. Legendary radio and television shows, such as David Munrow’s *Pied Piper* (BBC Radio 3, 1971-76) and *Early Musical Instruments* (Granada TV, 1976), have exposed a generation to the achievements of early music. A complete mapping of the present media landscape with respect to early music programming by national broadcasting companies has yet to be undertaken; it **is therefore unclear as to which countries are offering which media platforms to early musicians. WG4 will call on its members to provide this information.**

At the same time, early musicians perceive limited critical space for debate or explanation. Supplanted by marketing and public relations, music criticism has been severely reduced in classical music. Musicians may not have received the media

training necessary to address diverse audiences or answer basic questions that may be viewed as 'stupid'. **WG4 recommends that the MC of EarlyMuse plan a training session on this topic.**

WHICH EXPERIMENTAL MODES OF PERFORMANCE SHOULD BE—OR ARE ALREADY BEING—DEVELOPED TO COMMUNICATE THE CORE VALUES OF EARLY MUSICKING TO BROADER AUDIENCES IN A DIGITAL, POST-PANDEMIC AGE, AFFECTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SHOCKS?

Digital technologies can fundamentally enhance the research, performance, and reception of early music. Knowledge gathered from musical analysis, hermeneutics, or performance practice studies cannot always be transmitted immediately via performance or accompanying discourses. 3D animation, digital interfaces and gamification, by contrast, can integrate and visualize such knowledge more easily in(to) performance, rendering complex issues such as polyphonic textures more comprehensible to wider audiences and minimizing the distance between score, performer, and listener.

Virtual Reality Performance and the Future of Early Music, by David G. Hebert (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen / Education University of Hong Kong / Nordic Network for Music Education)

I propose a single approach to addressing all four concerns raised by this workgroup: VR performance as artistic research. Novel approaches to VR performance of early music can be used to attract new audiences by broadening inclusion and accessibility regardless of any restrictions to mobility, to reduce the gaps between stakeholders, and to feature both new components of educational curricula and experimental modes of professional concertizing. As of 2023, virtual reality headsets such as the Pico 4 and Oculus Quest 2 are becoming increasingly popular, cheaper and more user-friendly; they are likely to become household items in the near future, owned by a majority of young Europeans. While VR headsets continue to be mostly used for gaming purposes, they have enormous untapped potential for both education and artistry by enabling users to attain ineffable experiences through engagement with richly interactive virtual environments, some of which may embody historically-informed artistic creations. VR can also be an effective way of communicating research results to new audiences, particularly when it comes to complex topics. Many researchers across Europe today are devoting their attention to ways of better representing cultural heritage in VR environments. To do so with early music would enable the art form to rejuvenate its audience.

Contribution by Olivier Lartillot (University of Oslo) and **Joshua Neumann** (Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz)

We imagine a program of research—for which we plan to dedicate significant effort through research projects under development—to develop new technologies that intermingle and empower scholarship, performance, and the public appreciation of early music along the following lines:

1. Technological progress in automated score alignment and music transcription can enable a closer articulation of score and performance in the form of a graphical and interactive representation which can be called a *live score*. Such representations map information from the score to detailed visual descriptions of the audio performance. It allows an experienced user to get a rather rich and accurate prediction (and auditory image) of how the performance sounds like by looking at the visual representation. One application is that it provides a quick way to browse a large collection of performance recordings.
2. Such technology also makes it possible to align all performances of a piece and to offer interfaces that allow browsing and visualising different versions, as well as quickly pinpointing the singularities of particular performances. Collecting recorded performances of identical or similar pieces can lead to the emergence of performance statistics, revealing alternative trends. Any given performance (and, in particular, new recordings provided by users) can be compared with all other performances, highlighting common characteristics with given performance styles and particular similarities with particular recordings from the corpus, while also pinpointing the singularity of a new performance.
3. Computational music analysis can provide detailed analyses of individual pieces and entire corpora, revealing similarities and imitations. High-level musicological analyses can be automatically added to the live score representation in view of making research more accessible to musicians and audiences.
4. Design of AI systems that automatically establish performance theories based on the score, musicological analysis, and performance characteristics can lead to a study of the strategies to convey and highlight music structures through performance.
5. Visualisation tools that allow the general public to understand structural principles of each piece of music, while listening to specific performances. Such visualisation tools could also show the particularities of a given performance, while offering the possibility to listen to alternative performances aligned to the same piece and revealing and explaining the differences. Listeners would be able to provide feedback that could be used both for automated recommendations of music recordings based on their

tastes (while also prompting the public to try to discover new tastes), as feedback to the performers, and for scholarly research.

6. Showing music in the form of graphical animation, in a way that is as accessible as possible to the non-expert, while showing as much richness of the music content/structure/etc. as possible. The live score can be transformed into an animated visualisation.
7. This augmented music listening experience could have a significant impact on the way (early) music is approached by the general public, thereby overcoming current impediments to the public's appreciation of the richness of the repertoire. Little-known performances would be made more easily accessible to the public based, not on top-down marketing strategies, but on the bottom-up interest of the public, spurred by these new technologies for 'music accessibility.'

Digital technologies also **facilitate *in situ* presentations of early music**, for example in historical settings that no longer exist or are difficult to access. Experiments during the pandemic have recontextualized repertoire in locations that listeners would normally not visit, such as small churches, remote monasteries, or private castle rooms. When produced according to high production standards and going beyond mere mimicry of standard concert formats, such projects can address larger audiences, including listeners with disabilities, high sensitivity, and social phobias.

Contribution by Vasco Zara (Université de Bourgogne, Dijon / Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance, Université Tours)

Acoustic condition is not taken into account as a standard parameter in the recording of early music. Like any other musical repertoire, early music recordings mirror the 'ideal and idealized' sound clarity and the irreproachable qualitative standards of a recording studio. It favors a modern habit of music listening that did not exist historically and has no historical basis if unrelated to the twentieth century.

In 2010, Tom Beghin opened up a horizon with his recording of Haydn keyboard sonatas in virtual recreations of the acoustics of the rooms for which Haydn composed.¹ Case studies such as two French-funded *Musi2R* projects on the performance of music in four French castles during the reign of Louis XIV and the 3D reconstruction of the Dijon Sainte-Chapelle, including its acoustic in a 4D model of sound spatialization, demonstrate how the historical study of acoustic conditions of musical performance (including architectural devices, placement of the performers, sound production, tempo, the use of ornamentation, and other

musical techniques) can offer tools for strong collaborations between musicians and musicologists, as well as new experiences for early music.

¹ *The Virtual Haydn*, McGill University. <http://www.music.mcgill.ca/thevirtualhaydn/index.html>. Last accessed 20 April 2023.

WG4 recommends further development of digital technologies, with the following conditions:

- Media should be balanced so that the visual reinforces rather than distracts from the auditory. Music should also be allowed to tell its own, sonic narrative. Visitors to museums and historical buildings, for example, have the option to not use or switch off an audio guide or augmented reality technologies such as HistoPads in order to focus on the exhibits or spaces themselves.
- Sufficient possibilities for **plural forms of listening** should be afforded, rather than promoting an implied, ideal listener (as do most studio recordings). Listeners must be able to choose what to focus on in early music, for instance one particular instrument, voice, or 'channel.'
- Digital technologies should **also seek to enhance performances** of early music.
- European cultural and creative industries should afford **sufficient room for early music scholarship in media programs, films and games.**