

Running head: SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

A Classification of the Schools of Musical Interpretation  
and a Proposed Philosophy

A Senior Project

by

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Abstract

There are as many different approaches to interpretation as there are mature performers. Every performer must grapple on his own with the question of how to best present another's work. While most musicians keep to themselves the specific principles which they consciously or unconsciously follow a few have dared to announce their philosophies to the world. Their internationally-recognized musicianship is their authority. To this I would also like to add my own philosophy. Though I am unknown today, I am inquisitive and opinionated—and have all the time in the world to obtain my authority.

There have always been different schools of interpretation—as many schools as there are mature performers, in fact, for every musician must grapple with the issue of interpretation on their own. A few of these musicians saw fit to share their thoughts with the world, to advocate an approach or defend their own. Wanda Landowska is such a musician—a musician-philosopher. In *Music of the Past*, Landowska seeks to “expose and refute misconceptions and to enlighten people on the true characteristics of the forgotten music she played for them.”<sup>1</sup> Igor Stravinsky, as a composer-performer, had a rather large stake in the interpretation and performance of music—or, as he titled his lectures at Harvard, *Poetics of Music*. A third breed of musician is Christopher Hogwood, who voices his opinion from the podium. As music director of the Academy of Ancient Music, Hogwood demonstrated his knowledge of the past through the live performances, recordings, and CD liner notes.

Across the spectrum of interpretive approaches, these three figures stand out. Backed by the authority of their musicianship and guided by the principles of their interpretive approaches, Landowska, Stravinsky, and Hogwood create entirely different performances from the same material. For the sake of this paper, I will install them at the heads of three schools of interpretation, to be described below.

### *The Schools*

For these three schools, I propose the following titles: instinctual interpreter, transmitter, and historian. The three schools are situated equidistant from one another in the two-dimensional spectrum of interpretive approaches. At the heads of the schools are,

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<sup>1</sup> Landowska, Wanda. *Landowska on Music*. ed. D. Restout. Stein and Day Publishers, 1965: Restout in *Foreward to Part One*, p. 31.

respectively, Landowska, Stravinsky, and Hogwood. I will outline the tenets of the schools as I see them, more for the sake of demonstrating the variety of opinions than to box in the three artists. Without a doubt, my own prejudices will show through—I see no reason to hide them.

*The Instinctual Interpreter*

Interpretation is about reading between the lines, and instinctual interpreters are the best at reading between the lines. This is the most subjective approach to interpretation, and the success of this approach lies most on the conviction of the performer. This kind of interpretation is not possible without the sufficient accumulation of musical prejudices, also known as *taste*. Once taste has been acquired—a lengthy, if not never-ending, process—this approach requires the least work in terms of tailoring an interpretation to a composition. One's guidance is solely one's instinct. As with all forms of instinct, rational thought tends to interfere with, rather than promote, the execution of an instinctual performance.

Such an artist's interpretation depends largely on the aural body of works—that is, particular recordings or live performances, rather than the texts of the pieces themselves—with which he is familiar. Because the experience of every individual varies, the school of instinctual interpretation should have the capacity to produce a large variety of performances. Absolute agreement can only come through exposure to the exact same sources, which, given the richness of our musical culture, seems unlikely. However, this does not take into account the advent of recording technology. Catalyzed by the few names cornering the market—Mischa Elman, in the early part of the century, and Jascha

Heifetz soon after—and the convenience of a performance in one's pocket—“*Aida* on the patio and the St. Matthew Passion in the shower”<sup>2</sup>—the homogenization of taste among the less-experienced musicians has become an unfortunate reality. Though many relatively unknown recording artists have much to offer the learning performer, few such students take advantage of these sources. Limited by the size of one's wallet and the time one has to listen to recordings, the immature performers flock toward the brand-name artists and consequently produce their own low-quality photocopies of the great performances. Among the mature artists, the hierarchy of the varied performances is determined by the conviction of the artists.

The instinctive interpreter is epitomized by Landowska, who fully admits that she is “neither humble nor faithful”<sup>3</sup> to the old masters: Bach, Couperin, and Scarlatti. Ignoring ties, adding ornaments, and altering rhythms—these are among the liberties she takes, for which she is often criticized. Her response to her critics is both a criticism of them and an articulation of her philosophy:

I take many other liberties that remain unnoticed by my critics, although they are numerous and flagrant...where are the ears that can detect the hidden sustained pedal note which resounds in the Prelude in F major, for instance, or in that in G minor, bars 3 and 6?<sup>4</sup>

Rather than justifying her departure from the text, Landowska challenges her critics for not catching everything that she does “wrong”. She may criticize them rightly, but in doing so, she declines to answer their calls. One wonders what her response would be to

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2 Taruskin, Richard. Text and Act: essays on music and performance. Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 93

3 Landowska on Music, p. 400.

4 *Ibid.*

the hypothetical critic who points out *every* departure from the score. Doubtless there are such people who could do so within a very limited repertoire. But even if such people happened to be in the audience, they would not necessarily feel obligated to call out Landowska on her deviations.

The taking of liberties is not inherently wrong. Executed unconvincingly, an added ornament is wrong. But, executed unconvincingly, a notated ornament also sounds wrong, or at least *bad*, which is, in the end, the same thing. A mature listener would only take fault with those ornaments that are unconvincingly added. Of course, “unconvincing” is a subjective term, with many possible perspectives. An ornament that results in parallel fifths or octaves, for instance, would be unlikely to convince me, regardless of the performer's own conviction in its appropriateness. And any other stylistically inaccurate ornament would likely fail to convince a listener conversant in the language of the historical time period of a given piece. While I am not necessarily calling out Landowska on non-Baroque ornaments in her Bach—I have not listened to this piece with its offending ornaments—her writings suggest that she is less concerned about historical accuracy than is ideal.

Nothing in this world could prevent my interpreting the text as I see it, understand it, and feel it. No doubt I would be astounded were I to hear this piece played by an artist of the time of Shakespeare on an instrument of the period. But, believe me, I am not taking advantage of the fact that it can never happen.<sup>5</sup>

No, I have no doubt that Landowska would play on her own instrument, in her own style, regardless of whether or not the composer was present with his favorite instrument. How,

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 401.

though, would the composer feel about being ignored?

To the instinctual interpreter, performance is a matter of taste. Taste, which is subjective by definition, is a dangerous master. Landowska's heavy reliance on her taste is the main reason for which she is criticized. She does have conviction, though—her responses are staggering in their audacity:

“[T]he critic is unable to notice what characterizes my playing.”<sup>6</sup> Landowska turns the tables on the critics, accusing them of ignorance.

“By living intimately with the works of a composer I endeavor to penetrate his spirit, to move with an increasing ease in the world of his thoughts, and to know them 'by heart'...”<sup>7</sup> Landowska claims a unique empathy with the old masters, making her the final judge and jury of interpretive success.

“You gave birth to it; it is beautiful. But now leave me alone with it. You have nothing more to say; go away!”<sup>8</sup> Landowska finally usurps the composer, citing her more discriminating taste as a specialist in performance. She creates an interpretation based almost purely on taste, regardless of her claims to the contrary<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps she is justified in doing so. Few have experienced as much music as Landowska; this is her authority. But, in the end, she does not “execute [Bach's] will”<sup>10</sup>. Landowska executes Landowska's will, and that is her interpretive approach.

### *The Transmitter*

For some performers, the composer remains above the performer. For such

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6 *Ibid*, p. 400.

7 *Ibid*, p. 406.

8 *Ibid*, p. 407.

9 Landowska claims to base her interpretation on historical facts and analytical study, among other things. *Ibid*, p. 406.

10 *Ibid*, 408.

people, the proper function of the performer is “to transmit music to the listener.”<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, the originator of these words is a composer-performer: Stravinsky.

At the root of this philosophy is the idea that “music exists already prior to its actual performance”<sup>12</sup>. Where it exists is in the mind of the composer, and the performer's job is to take the music as it appears in the composer's mind and present that to the audience. Thus it is with Stravinsky's transmitter that we encounter the term *composer's intentions*.

The idea of the composer's intentions is best observed in the interactions between performers and still-living composers. Not all composers are the same in this respect; some defer to the performer, passively or actively. Yehudi Menuhin recounted his experience with Elgar:

So we began playing and we had scarcely reached the second subject [of the Violin Concerto] when Elgar said: 'You play marvelously. That will be perfect, but it's such a lovely day...I'm going to the races!' He left, and I had no idea if my interpretation would please him or not. The recording began the following Monday, and to my relief it went like a dream, and both of us were very happy.<sup>13</sup>

Here was a composer who did not want to get in the way of the performer doing what he does. Other composers, however, were very particular about how their works were performed. Beethoven, even when deaf, knew how he wanted his music played, and demanded that performers bend to his will. “A staccato passage not being expressed to the satisfaction of his eye, for alas, he could not hear, he seized Holz's violin and played

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11 Stravinsky, Igor. Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons. Vintage Books, 1947. p. 127.

12 *Ibid*, p. 125.

13 Menuhin, Yehudi. The Violin. Flammarion, 1996. p. 212-4.

the passage a quarter of a tone too flat.”<sup>14</sup> Stravinsky, like Beethoven, had an idea of how his music should sound, and he was not hearing this in performances of his works. Fed up with the infidelities of performers, Stravinsky became a concert pianist and conductor of his own works—a specialist in himself, so to speak..

Stravinsky's intentions and the performer's intentions are now one and the same, and thus he gave us examples of the composer's intentions perfectly realized—in theory. In practice, this cannot be the case. To illustrate this, let us think about a hypothetical performance of a work by Stravinsky (not performed by the composer). The performance is a single performance, the only opportunity to present a work to a given audience. This is—or should be—the psychology of the performer. Only one performance, only one chance—but that single performance is to be based on the many performances by Stravinsky. Each time he performed a work, he performed it differently. From which performance can we glean his intent? The last? The first? Should we take the average of the performances? The median? Or the mode? The modern performer must hit with his arrow the target that is the composer's intentions, but there are many targets and only one arrow. Stravinsky does not address this issue in his writings, either unaware or uncaring of his ever-changing intentions. Unless we can specify one performance by Stravinsky as the representation of his intentions, a decision to follow the practices of one performance over another remains arbitrary. The least arbitrary solution to this problem would be to rely on the composer's intentions during the conception of the piece. Though his ideas may change throughout the course of his life, his opinions at that particular moment are

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14 Brown, Clive. “Ferdinand David's Editions of Beethoven.” *Performing Beethoven*, ed. R. Stowell. Cambridge University Press, 1994. p. 118: Quotation from *Leaves from the Journals of Sir George Smart*, ed. H. Bertram Cox and C.L.E. Cox, London 1907, p. 109.

forever crystallized in time.

The most direct evidence we have as to the intentions of the composer during the conception of the piece is the manuscript. Of course, this does not work in all cases. There may be revisions in another source, made after the composer heard his work performed live. In the case of Debussy's String Quartet, the parts—rather than the score—contain the definitive version, for it was in the parts—and not the score—that Debussy made corrections and revisions after hearing Ysaÿe and his quartet play through the piece. There are also examples in history of composers revising works just prior to publication. Schubert introduced large cuts into his E-flat major Piano Trio, and Beethoven replaced the *Grosse Fuge* of his Op. 130 String Quartet with a much more modest finale movement. A few composers even revisited works written by their younger selves. In the case of both his C minor Piano Quartet and B major Piano Trio, Brahms took works written years earlier and transformed them into completely different—and arguably much improved—pieces. Then there is the matter of lost manuscripts. A notable example of this is that of Beethoven's Violin Concerto. We have the initial full-scale presentation of the Concerto, and we have the *Stichvorlage* in a copyist's hand. The intermediate source—presumably a definitive, autograph score in Beethoven's hand—is lost to us. A performer must make do with the sources available to him, which may be less than ideal.

Excepting these works for which a definitive manuscript is unavailable, the autograph score remains our clearest window to the composer's intentions. From here, we come to the performer who can perfectly translate the autograph score into music: the

*executant*. According to Stravinsky, being a “flawless executant”<sup>15</sup> is the first—and an absolutely necessary—step for aspiring interpreters. Ideally, the executant is aware not just of every note, but of every dynamic, tempo, phrase, and expressive marking. These must be followed religiously, for “[t]he sin against the spirit of the work always begins with a sin against its letter and leads to the endless follies which an ever-flourishing literature in the worst taste does its best to sanction.”<sup>16</sup> The performer must especially be wary of accuracy in magnitude. All musicians are aware that *piano* is a poor substitute for *pianissimo*—though awareness is unfortunately not synonymous with execution—but fewer are aware that the reverse is also true.

Lastly, knowledge of the style—of the period, and of the composer—is essential. Mozart and Rachmaninoff are different creatures entirely, and to produce the same effect from the same notation is to do an injustice to one or the other, if not both. Even contemporaries such as Brahms and Joachim could differ in their approaches to notation. A letter from Brahms to Joachim, in a response to some of the latter's markings illustrates this:

[S]ince when and on what authority do you violinists write the sign for portamento [i.e. portato] ( . . . . ) where it does not mean that? You mark the octave passage in the Rondo ( . . . ) and I would put sharp strokes . . . Does it have to be so? Until now I have not given in to the violinists, and have also not adopted their damned lines \_ \_ . Why then should . . . mean anything else to us than it did to Beethoven?<sup>17</sup>

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15 *Poetics*, p. 132.

16 *Ibid*, p. 129.

17 Brown, Clive. “Joachim's violin playing and the performance of Brahms's string music.” *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. M. Musgrave and B. Sherman. Cambridge University Press, 2003. p. 52: Quotation from *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel VI*, p.161-2: Letter of mid May 1879.

Two composers (Joachim was a composer, as well as a violinist) who are heavily associated with one another could not agree on the meaning of ( . . . . ). Extrapolate this to composers of different eras, and one sees why the knowledge of stylistic traditions plays a large part in interpretation.

Only when complete accuracy in every respect is obtained can the executant make the leap to interpreter. This difference, however, is relatively slight. Stravinsky merely notes a “loving care” in the interpreter, in contrast to the executant who translates the notes into music “willingly or grudgingly”.<sup>18</sup>

At the core of the transmitter is the principle of submission: to the notes on the page, to the manuscript, to the composer. This submission is the difference between Landowska and Stravinsky. Landowska feels not humility but camaraderie. She is “one of the boys”, an “old master” herself—minus the “old”, perhaps. The transmitter is nothing but a middleman—and he knows this.

### *The Historian*

The historian creates his interpretation under the premise that the only legitimate model of a performance is that which was specifically sanctioned by the composer. Often these are the performances at which the composer was present, or possibly for which the composer provided direction. Because of this, the premiere performance—which usually satisfies both of these requirements—often occupies a special place in the hearts of historians—that is, if they have hearts. Their thoughts are occupied by not just how the piece was played, but also the more tangible details such as the physical characteristics of the first performance.

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<sup>18</sup> *Poetics*, p. 128.

One of the hallmarks of the historian is adherence to period circumstances, among them equipment and size of forces. Of course, there are many compelling reasons to perform on period instruments. “Because that's how they did it in the past,” is not a compelling reason, and yet this is the main reason for a historian. This holds true for ensemble size as well. It is well known that ensemble size was generally much smaller during and prior to the Classical and early Romantic periods. Thus many historians object to the huge forces now used today in works such as Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*, which was “perfectly realized,” according to the historian within Stravinsky, “by a total force of thirty-four musicians, including soloist and chorus.”<sup>19</sup> Stravinsky is somehow able to state this subjective opinion with certainty, even though he could not have possibly communicated with Bach. In such cases, we begin to hear the historian overriding the musician.

The historians' non-musical quirks extend to performance interpretation. They are often guided not by ear, but by principle. This may result in a mannered performance, where the performer seeks not to move the listener, but to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge. As Charles Rosen observed, “the effect of musicology on performance is often to inspire the more ambitious musicians to make a nuisance of themselves.” There was a time in the not-too-distant past when period performances of Beethoven followed his metronomic markings metronomically, coinciding exactly with the click of the metronome for minutes on end.

The results of the historians' research may be more disconcerting than pleasing to the ear. In his recording of Beethoven's “Eroica” Symphony, Christopher Hogwood

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

sought to recreate even the undesirable factors of the first performance. Who in their right mind would try to replicate the efforts of a group “consisting almost entirely of amateurs”<sup>20</sup>? Hogwood's interpretation is that of a man with no taste, who actively spurns “the wider variety of nuance and tempo modification which were later to be considered the hallmarks of a conductor's interpretation”<sup>21</sup>. Instead, Hogwood sought a solely rhythmic performance, “typical of amateur performances to this day”<sup>22</sup>. He follows the ideal of the first performance to a San Andreas fault.

By elevating the premiere performance onto a pedestal, historians avoid the problem of dealing with inconsistencies in performance traditions throughout Europe. Orchestra size varied widely between composer-sanctioned performances. Pitch was inconsistency throughout the continent, and sometimes even within towns. In choosing a single performance on which to rely for performance practice, the historians could sidestep these questions of size and pitch (problems that were not originally problems, but simply turned into problems in order that the historians could propose a solution and further demonstrate their knowledge.) But to blindly adhere to the first performance is to choose historical circumstances over the music itself. History is full of not-entirely-successful premieres. Beethoven, between the first and second performances of his Op. 97 Violin Sonata, sent the violin part to Pierre Rode for extra practice by the violinist. He certainly did not want the first performance to be reproduced! Brahms, too, did not necessarily want all of the factors of his Fourth Symphony's premiere to be reproduced. This symphony was premiered by the Meiningen Court Orchestra, a much smaller

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20 *Text and act*, p. 93.

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

orchestra than the Vienna Philharmonic, which had premiered his Second and Third Symphonies. Historians would doubtless argue that this is proof that his Fourth Symphony was written for a chamber orchestra, and that the Symphony is “perfectly realized” by an orchestra of less than fifty players. More likely, Brahms felt that additional string players *who were not part of the usual Meiningen Court Orchestra roster* would destroy the cohesion of the group. A larger orchestra that could achieve the same level of cohesion would certainly not be a negative, and could possibly be a positive. The only reason to actively advocate a smaller orchestra is to lecture from the podium about the unusually small forces involved in the premiere of Brahms's Fourth Symphony.

Such arguments fall deaf on the ears of historians. In an effort to be objective, they follow the rules—never to be broken—of the past, and create arbitrary rules where no rule existed—or belongs. “Ah, a new set of instructions for embellishments...ah, wonderful!”<sup>23</sup> With that illustration of his thoughts upon the discovery of new evidence, Hogwood demonstrates his submission to rules. He is the apathetic executant—but one who revels in his apathy. (Richard Taruskin actually argues that Hogwood is a terrible executant—but Hogwood's *philosophy* remains that of an executant.)

### *My Philosophy*

As the reader has by now noticed, I have my own opinions on this topic. As a performer, I reject the notion of the ideal interpreter as submissive. As a humble performer, I accept the composer's intentions as superior to my own. The balances of

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 101.

these two forces—my personality and that of the composer—results in an interpretation that is my own, yet faithful to the composer's intentions.

So we have returned to that fun little phrase of “composer's intentions”. True, the phrase is somewhat problematic, and Taruskin has a point when he states:

We cannot know intentions, for many reasons—or rather, we cannot know we know them. Composers do not always express them. If they do express them, they may do so disingenuously. Or they may be honestly mistaken, owing to the passage of time or a not necessarily consciously experienced change of taste. If anyone doubts this let him listen to the five recordings Stravinsky made of *The Rite of Spring*, and try to decide how the composer intended it to go.<sup>24</sup>

For a composer to pin down that single interpretation that “perfectly realizes” his intentions is next to impossible; for a performer to pin down the said composer's intentions is impossible squared. This does not mean that the composer can be disregarded. It is still the duty of the performer to determine the intentions of the composer, *even if the composer himself could not decisively determine them*. Music is a message, and performers are the messengers. Rarely is the undecipherable message in anyone's interest. Reading and deciphering for himself the message before passing it on to the listener, the performer must be an active participant in the conveying of the composer's intentions.

How does a performer go about realizing such an indecisive composer's intentions? We begin with that most decisive text, the manuscript. The final manuscript represents that brief moment in time when the piece has crystallized in the mind of the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 97.

composer. This manuscript is the foundation of our work as performers. It is upon this foundation that we may lay our analytical, historical, and even extra-musical findings. At all times, one's ear must serve as the final judge and jury. Otherwise, there would be little difference between an informed performer and an archaeologist. One must approach the work with an open mind as well. We will not be *slaves*, not to habits, not to traditions, not to the musical giants of the recording age.

Here is the manuscript—a blank slate. Our first layer will be the most pure form of musical study: analysis. Analysis directly addresses what is on the page and what we actually hear. While analysis cannot create something out of nothing, it can often point out details that would otherwise be passed over in listening to or playing a piece. Such details are especially slippery to our relatively desensitized ears. In the centuries since composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, the limits of acceptable sounds have been probed and pushed back, making us more immune to the subtle nuances of these great composers. Our ears, having been accustomed to the harmonies of Wagner and Schoenberg, hardly notice the deceptive cadences of Bacchian harmony. Close study of the score is the only sure way to rediscover those delightful musical moments that were once obvious. In Mozart's A major Violin Concerto, for instance, the surprising arrival on B-sharp at the start of the development is an earth-shattering moment—but how many hearts skip a beat today? (Mine does.)

Nor has the desensitizing been limited to harmonies. Thanks to cheap and easily-accessible recordings, once-treasured performances are now on-demand. Gone are the days when Bach walked for hundreds of miles to hear Buxtehude play. We hear the likes

of Heifetz, Oistrakh, and Menuhin in our living rooms, and those interpretations become ingrained in our minds. We slow down, speed up, pause without knowing why, without thinking of what the music really demands. To hold the audience in suspense is to be an artist; to keep the audience waiting is to be a hack. Every sound has a reason for being. Understanding is paramount. Composers may play games with the listener, but the performer must always be an accomplice in this deception. This is how the performer realizes the composer's intentions.

Analysis allows us to truly see the notes for what they are and what they do. However, the notes do not contain the full story. The New Criticism cannot apply to music; bound up in any composition is the story of the composer and of his time. An extensive knowledge of the performance practices of the day will bring to light that which the composer felt unnecessary to notate in his day. Unfortunately for us modern performers, who often perform works hundreds of years after their composition, the unsaid guidelines are no longer obvious. Due to changes in taste, evolution of equipment, and exposure to more recently composed works, we have been raised as creatures of entirely different habits. In order to reach the sound for which the composer strove, we must know his taste. Perhaps he actively disliked *spiccato*. (This would not be unusual at the turn on the nineteenth-century, when the Tourte bow and springing bow strokes were in their infancy.) Would it be appropriate to introduce such a bow stroke into his music, even if the music (as we see it) suggests such a bowing? Treatises written during, or even soon after, the time offer glimpses of what pedagogues of the day were saying about performance. While we should not be held to their taste any more than we should be held

to the tastes of today, we cannot be ignorant of them, either.

The study of the performance practice of a certain time period may reveal several different schools of performance. In any time, style, as much as any other factor of performance, has strong proponents on multiple facets. To know how Franz Clement performed Beethoven's Violin Concerto at its premiere is *not* to know how most great artists of that day would have performed the Concerto. On the contrary, Clement stood quite alone in his old-fashioned manner of playing, and he was even snubbed by Beethoven, two decades after having premiered his Concerto. The dominant school of violin playing was the Viotti School, and most of the violinists with whom Beethoven associated—George Polgreen Bridgetower, Rudolph Kreutzer, and Rode, to name a few giants—were of that school. Of course, the dominant school is not necessarily the “correct” school, either. Nevertheless a performer should be aware of all the different styles, as well as contemporary criticism of those styles. Reviews of concerts reveal much about the tastes of the time, and should be read as closely as the treatises.

But it is not enough to know just the times. Composers are individuals, and not necessarily adherents to the tastes of their contemporaries. They must therefore be individually studied. Also, an understanding of the composer as a person offers a more complete picture than the composer as an occupation. Brahms was aware of this, collecting biographies on Mendelssohn and his family in addition to his works.<sup>25</sup> The various relationships of the composer offers glimpses into his mind. This includes romantic relationships—Brahms and Clara Schumann—and working relationships—Brahms and Joachim. Correspondences reveal to us what composers thought and felt

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25 Brodbeck, David. “Brahms's Mendelssohn.” *Brahms studies II*, 1998.

about their music and their contemporaries' music. Other biographical information could be used to discover a source of inspiration for a particular composition. Knowing the sources of inspiration and influence allow the performer yet another toehold into the mind of the composer. The process of composition is analogous to the raising of a building, and a look into the early stages of the process allows one to see the foundation and supports of a piece. All of this information brings the performer one degree closer to the composer, and his performance one degree closer to the ideal of the composer's intent.

The knowledge gained from analytical and historical study must be harnessed properly. What one gains during this massive accumulation of knowledge is boundless possibilities for performance. In order to form our own interpretation, we must free ourselves from old habits and approach a work with an open mind. The ear is the judge; developing an interpretation is done by trial-and-error. What sounds bad must go; what sounds good may stay; what sounds familiar must be questioned. Do you have something new to say? If not, then what you have to say isn't worth saying. Have you remembered the composer's intentions? Respect them, for you are taking care of his creation. And never forget that the primary aim of music is to move people. These principles, combined with the accumulation of knowledge described earlier, are the tools needed for the interpretation of musical works.

As a violinist, I try to keep my interpretations fresh, yet historically informed. Sadly, these two seemingly-contradictory goals are achievable simultaneously in today's world. The world changes rapidly, however. Landowska wrote many essays in the first few

decades of the twentieth-century. Her contributions to music cannot be fully appreciated unless one recognizes that some of her ideas that we take for granted today were once at odds with the prevailing musical opinions of her time. While I don't pretend to be advocating an controversial and innovative approach to musical interpretation, I hope that, fifty years from now, my ideas—and perhaps my interpretations, crystallized in early twenty-first-century recordings—will be considered utterly boring. For that is a true sign of universal acceptance—and besides, I'm sure that by then my philosophy and my interpretations will have moved on, back into unfamiliar—fresh—territory.