

# Do as Some Said, or as Most Did?—A Foucauldian Experiment with Nineteenth–Century HIP

George Kennaway

Performers and researchers who explore performance practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries frequently come up against a problem recently highlighted by musicologist Daniel Leech–Wilkinson, among others. Comparing recordings of Schubert’s “An die Musik” from 1911 and 1997, he observes that the contrast between the two is deeply unsettling, and that the “audience to whom one seems just right may find the other a travesty” (Leech–Wilkinson 2011:2). Recordings by performers like Adelina Patti will reliably induce astonished laughter in an unprepared modern audience, and the slow, heavy portamento of early twentieth–century cellists such as Hans Kronold has a similar effect on conservatory cello students.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between then and now is not simply a matter of different but equally valid performing styles, or a question of, e.g., the degree of portamento employed, which a little audience re–education would eventually make familiar.<sup>2</sup> It appears to challenge a modern audience’s very notion of what musical expression is or means. The modern laughter is not derisive. It is provoked by a sudden collision of incongruous performance codes.

This paper explores the application of Foucault’s concepts of *énoncé* and *discours* to musical performance, to the peculiar aspects of older performing styles, and to the reactions they produced in the context of nineteenth–century annotated editions of chamber music.<sup>3</sup> Historically Informed Performance (hereafter referred to as HIP) is supported and sustained by performers and academic researchers. The research is largely positivist and does not generally engage with issues and methodologies typical of the more theoretical musicology that has emerged in recent decades. Likewise, the “cultural turn” has largely escaped performers. The simple practicalities of performance do not fit well with such notions as the death of the author, the *décalage* between sign and signified, or representations of the Other. Rehearsals are generally not given over to discussions of hermeneutics versus phenomenology. This paper is a preliminary step in showing how such theoretical approaches could be fruitful for both performance practice and scholarship.

No written sources from the nineteenth or even the earlier twentieth centuries would wholly endorse the performance style of Patti or Kronold. In the matter of portamento alone, for all that singers and string players approve

## Current Musicology

---

of it as an expressive device, they also advocate a restraint which is signally absent from the performances mentioned above (Brown 1999:558–65). There is an apparently increasingly ill-tempered conflict between musical authority-figures and practitioners towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the early period of recording. While *fin-de-siècle* critics and teachers become more emphatic in condemning the alleged abuse of expressive devices like portamento or vibrato, performers, as heard on early recordings, use these devices with abandon. These records sold well in the face of consistent critical disdain. The extremely slow and intense portamento of the actor-cellist Auguste van Biene (1849–1913) was clearly part of his widespread appeal. From 1892 until his death he delivered nearly six thousand performances of the lachrymose drama *The Broken Melody*, a play written expressly as a vehicle for his histrionic style as actor and cellist. His performances, however, only ever received highly qualified critical praise (Kennaway 2007). The increased caution about the use of expressive devices in the late nineteenth century is well summarized by Joseph Joachim. His discussion of vibrato consisted largely of a lengthy quotation from Spohr, who treats it positively as “an impassioned style of playing.” But Joachim also went on to warn against “spasmodic trembling,” stressing the importance of a physically natural technique:

... the pupil cannot be sufficiently warned against the habitual use of the tremolo [vibrato] especially in the wrong place. A violinist whose taste is refined and healthy will always recognize the steady tone as the ruling tone ... (Joachim and Moser 1905:96a)

Joachim also objected to excessive portamento:

... even when such places are marked *glissando* or something similar, the use of the *portamento* must never overstep the limits of the beautiful and degenerate into a whine, as if the intention were to caricature the peculiarities of certain wandering street musicians. (92a–93a)

Frequently, criticisms of faultily applied vibrato and portamento implicitly equate them either with lower-class status or with unhealthiness—sometimes both. The cellist Hugo Becker was particularly explicit:

The intensity and speed of vibrato should be determined and used only in agreement with the respective *Affekt*. Every person of finer feeling will probably have to admit on closer consideration that, for the portrayal of profound, noble feelings, the rapid, lascivious, so-called “coffee-house vibrato” is inappropriate, although, in a more refined [art] form, it is indispensable in the expression of eroticism! Just as in dynamics, forte and piano alone are insufficient, so just as little can we be content with

only one style of vibrato . . . The inclination to play each cantilena with overflowing feeling is widespread. Because of this, Hanslick called the cello the instrument of melancholy and sentimentality. However, unmotivated, exaggerated sentiment has a ridiculous effect, because it creates an excess of expression. Just as the drinker cannot see a full glass without emptying it, so no cantilena can appear before the cellist without him becoming sentimental . . . Also in the performance of Bach's music vibrato should only be used discreetly. But how is it ordered nowadays? The whining, effeminate Bach playing of many over-sensitive cellists often has an intolerable effect. Serious classical music cannot bear any erotic vibrato; it needs a feeling for style, nobility and dignity, without any loss of warmth. It is a sign of the weakness of a performing artist if his means of expression in vibrato are exhausted.<sup>4</sup> (Becker and Dynar 1929:199)

However, the recordings which Joachim and Becker would probably have approved of, such as those by the Klingler Quartet (led by Joachim's pupil Carl Klingler), or by Joachim's pupil Marie Soldat-Roeger, are wholly unrepresentative of their time.<sup>5</sup> Modern performers interested in recapturing nineteenth-century performance practices can therefore choose between playing as the clear majority of musicians at the time actually played, or as critics would have liked them to play.

So, are historically-motivated performers to be poachers or gamekeepers? Perhaps we can decide on a case-by-case basis, and make our choice based on specific historical evidence that relates to our own performing project. One can play a cello work by the virtuoso Adrien-François Servais (1807-1866) with a constant vibrato, as he apparently did in St. Petersburg in 1866, or use vibrato less often, as the critic Pavel Makarov wished Servais had done:

Servais's . . . lilt is so full of the unending sugary vibrato that one would, no doubt, like to cleanse one's ears with full and clear sounds, as one would like to have some plain water after eating candies. (Ginsburg 1983:52)

The obvious difficulties here are:

- 1) the performance Makarov would have preferred did not happen, whereas Servais's performance clearly *did*
- 2) we cannot assume that the vibrato Servais used was absolutely continuous (it seemed so to Makarov)
- 3) we know nothing of its speed or width—some nineteenth-century violinists discuss these aspects, Spohr and David in particular, but cellists before Casals's student Dinan Alexanian (Alexanian 1922) do not
- 4) what Makarov disliked might have been unremarkable to another critic (later Russian reviews of Servais mainly criticize him for his old-fashioned repertoire)

## Current Musicology

---

All we know is that Servais used some kind of vibrato in one concert relatively late in life (I have not yet found any other mention of it), and that one critic disapproved. This has not prevented general histories of the cello from asserting that Servais used continuous vibrato. Inevitably, the critic now speaks louder and clearer to us than the performer—we can read Makarov, but we cannot hear Servais. Two of his pupils, Joseph Hollmann and Auguste van Biene, made recordings, but half a century after Servais's death they cannot be reliably used as indicators of Servais's own style. Much of the information about performances from the pre-recording era takes the form of the Servais/Makarov example, which means that generalizations about individual performing styles are already some way removed from the evidence, and generalizations about performing styles spanning large historical periods, including concepts of “national schools,” are even further removed.

Turning from the most widely discussed aspects of older performing styles to the minutiae of instrumental technique, things are no clearer. There was, for example, no consensus in the earlier nineteenth century on such an apparently simple matter as how to finger a chromatic scale on the cello. This means that *any* chosen fingering—there were several possibilities at that time—will be by default a minority choice (Example 1).

These technical questions are as important as those concerning vibrato or portamento. Choices of scale fingering have a cumulative effect, especially in earlier nineteenth-century repertoire. Several chromatic scale fingerings in use until around 1830 involved approximately 50% more shifts than the now standard one first proposed by Duport, with a consequent loss of clarity.

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each representing a different fingering for a chromatic scale on the cello. The notes are written in bass clef and include accidentals for sharps and flats. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 0-4 above the notes. The scales are: 1) C major (C-D-E-F-G-A-B-A-G-F-E-D-C), 2) C minor (C-B-A-G-F-E-D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D-C), 3) D major (D-E-F-G-A-B-A-G-F-E-D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D), and 4) D minor (D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D). Each staff shows a unique sequence of fingerings, illustrating the variety of techniques used in the early 19th century.

Example 1: Chromatic scale cello fingerings in use until c.1830.

Whether dealing with Servais's vibrato or the fingering of a scale, any attempt to play historically raises intractable questions. Do we play like a dead performer or in a way that would have satisfied a dead critic? Do we play like an up-to-date cellist or like an old-fashioned one? In the sense pursued here, these are false choices which originate in the methodology supporting historical performance research. This methodology might be characterized as a markedly positivist and empirical approach to the examination of historical sources, one with the hermeneutic aim of uncovering the truth of the original composition. This is a rather stark formulation, but what else could "authenticity" have meant?<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, most performers shy away from explicitly making such claims. In the wake of Richard Taruskin's exposure of the modernist ethos underlying the "early music" movement (1995), the term "authenticity" has been systematically deleted from almost every record company's vocabulary, and replaced with more circumspect, if not indeed disingenuous, statements about original instruments, original texts, or vague claims to being historically informed (Brown 2010:476). Just as performers have fled from the "A-word," scholars have quietly dropped the "I-word" (intention), making subtly refined claims, such as trying to reconstruct "the sound-world that might have shaped the composition," or the "sounds in the composer's head," with the unexamined assumption that the composer's aural imagination and performance expectations are limited by what he/she has already experienced. Clive Brown's work is a particularly good example. In the opening paragraph of his *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900* he stresses his aim:

. . . above all, to identify some of the constantly changing conventions of performance that informed the experience and practice of composers and executants alike. (1999:i)

He interprets notated music as providing evidence of composers' "intentions, expectations, and assumptions." In a recent review of nineteenth-century chamber music recordings, he examines "[the musicians'] success in capturing the style and sound of the nineteenth century," in what is tantamount to an *exposé* of equivocal marketing claims:

. . . [the] *implication* that those performers who specialize in playing on period instruments are presenting . . . performances that are closer to a style that the composers would have recognized (Brown 2010:477)

The boldest claim he makes for HIP is that it may engage "a more adventurous approach to the interpretation of . . . notation" (Brown 1999:6). None of these highly nuanced expressions is the least bit contentious in itself, but it

## Current Musicology

---

does seem to be tacitly assumed that as much as we might want to admire the performance of an innocent, instinctive musician (a sort of noble savage violinist?), a more valuable performance is one given by an intelligent, thoughtful, highly historically informed musician who uncovers the music's "true" meaning, and that such a performance represents an ideal. As John Rink pointed out, "Some research into 'historical performance' . . . [aims] to discover 'what was done' in bygone eras rather than to guide the modern performer" (Rink 2001:201). But this positivist project is sustained by an unstated conviction that "what was done" is "what we should do now." Not only has historical performance research retreated from the bold claims and bolder ambitions of the 1970s and '80s, it has also resisted influences from other types of musicology. There has not been a substantial shift since Laurence Dreyfus observed that "within the cultural phenomenon called 'Early Music,' there has been little, if any, philosophical reflection on its own activities" (Dreyfus 1983:297). The most wide-ranging attempt is John Butt's *Playing With History*, a survey of different philosophical aspects of HIP, but his overall aim here is to show how HIP practices can invigorate our musical performing culture generally (Butt 2002:50, 71). Dario Martinelli's *Authenticity, Performance and Other Double-Edged Words*, a semiotic treatment of the concepts of authenticity and engagement, is potentially very useful, offering a simple, non-judgmental model for positioning many different types of performance. His concept of the natural history of signs also offers a stimulating new perspective on aspects of musical notation (Martinelli 2010). But this work is exceptional, and almost entirely based on Martinelli's specialism in popular music; its application to art music is yet to be explored.

### Performance as *énoncé*

If Foucault's concepts are to be explored for their possible application to HIP, it is important to clarify some terms. *Discours*, for Foucault, referred to the total possible statements (*énoncés*) available, the frames that contained these statements, and the rules which governed their formation (Foucault 1971). An *énoncé* need not be a conventional sentence. In a musical context this suggests a different way of looking at the act of performance itself. Concert reviews and program notes are *énoncés*; a publicity photograph is arguably an *énoncé*; a composition can be an *énoncé*—but could a performance itself also constitute an *énoncé*? If recorded and distributed it could, and from there it would seem a short step to ascribe the same status to any public performance, and then any performance at all.

Some discussions of music and discourse have not treated music itself (performed *sound*) as a body of *énoncés*. In *Music and Discourse*, Jean-Jacques Nattiez saw “the musician’s discourse” as embracing statements made about music, a “multiplicity of discourses, meta- and perimusical discourses” which “constitute” the musical work, with a distinctive status being allocated to statements made by the composer (“metamusical discourse”). But musical performances themselves are not included; Nattiez sees the production of music as a process that stops with the completed composition (Nattiez 1990:ix). Similarly, Giles Hooper’s *The Discourse of Music* analyzes the study of music as a discourse but does not include musical performances as statements within a discourse—notwithstanding his discussion of different analytical approaches to Mahler’s ninth symphony (Hooper 2006).

Discourse, as a regulatory system, is bound up with power, but those who live within the discourse internalize their disempowerment so that it requires no external reinforcement. We become the subjects *of* discourse (subjected *to* discourse) when we situate ourselves within it, whether willingly or unconsciously. In Manfred Frank’s words:

We can call discourse a symbolic order . . . which makes it possible for all subjects who have been socialized under its authority to speak and act together. (Frank 1992:105)

All statements that belong in a given discourse constitute, as a whole, material which offers clues about the structures of thought which constrain that discourse.<sup>7</sup> If in the nineteenth century there are well-established, institutionally-reinforced compositional discourses—defining which harmonies, orchestrations, or structures are permissible—there are also discourses within which performance is regulated. There are unacceptable sounds, such as whining. Elegant postures are strongly preferred. Some people are not allowed to perform some instruments in public—in England women violinists were not even admitted to British conservatories until 1872. Some performance techniques are suitable only in certain venues, as are some repertoires. The cellist Arthur Broadley noted that Auguste van Bienen’s exaggerated histrionic style, “while permissible in the theatre, would be quite inappropriate in the concert hall” (Broadley 1899:7). A performance of, say, a string quartet, would seem to satisfy the criteria that shape discourse generally: a common object (what can be spoken about—or played?), an identifiable mode of statement or ritual, and a delimitation of who can speak, or “rarefaction” (professionals in public, amateurs in private).

Most standard surveys of performance practice are directed at what might be termed *Zeitgeist*, not *discours*. The *Zeitgeist* approach seeks to describe the prevailing climate of thought, in the form of aesthetic norms

## Current Musicology

---

which are extrapolated from the relevant sources. When, for example, Robert Donington presented in *The Interpretation of Early Music* a series of individual quotations from performance treatises, he demonstrated that, indeed, ornamentation was key to the performance of baroque music (Donington 1963). Clive Brown has shown that, to take just two examples, portamento and the arpeggiation of chords on the piano were essential elements of nineteenth-century performance (Brown 1999). In *Stolen Time*, Richard Hudson has shown the same with contrametric rubato (where the melodic line is rhythmically inflected over an uninflected accompaniment) (Hudson 1994). One could extend notions of baroque ornamentation into art and architecture, adopting the “irregular beauty” cliché, or relate Victorian portamento to a taste for sentimental emotional expression, but one would still be describing *Zeitgeist*. The *Zeitgeist* is a concept extrapolated from historical data, which itself can modify perceptions of that data and thereby create a continuous loop. For the purposes of this essay, this entire process remains wholly within the bounds of *discours*. If we ask, “Why *these* topics?” or “Why is *that* debate so heated?” we begin to address *discours*.

With these criteria and questions in mind, I consider aspects of nineteenth-century music—its edited texts, performances, reviews, instrumental pedagogy—to bring some of the apparent contradictions outlined earlier come into a different focus.

\*\*\*

When we hear music, we always hear a complex combination of chord and discourse.

—Peter J. Rabinowitz<sup>8</sup>

By “discourse” Peter Rabinowitz, like Nattiez, means the verbal texts that surround musical performances, such as program notes or written analyses—especially those directed at non-specialists. He makes the point that although these texts appear to convey facts, “their illocutionary force is advisory: that is, they serve not as facts but as instructions for listening” (Rabinowitz 1992:41). Musical texts themselves are, to a degree, illocutionary texts, the “reading” of which, either in the concert hall or in the library, constitutes a performance; the score is not an artifact but a set of instructions for the creation of an artifact. But Rabinowitz’s chord is also *part* of the discourse—the discourse that embraces compositional *énoncés*, protocols of public performance, permissible critical *énoncés*, and so forth. A familiar example of the way in which discourse can constrain permissible *énoncés* appears in Mozart’s well-known letter to his father in 1781, where he describes his musical representation of Osmin’s rage in the aria “Solche hergelauf’ne Laffen” from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He describes how



he does not overstep the limits of musical discourse—a discourse which appears almost self-evident to Mozart:

For just as a man in such a towering rage oversteps all the bounds of order, moderation and propriety and completely forgets himself, so must the music too forget itself. But since passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed to the point of exciting disgust, and as music, even in the most terrible situation, must never offend the ear, but must please the listener, or in other words must never cease to be music, so I have not chosen a key foreign to F (in which the aria is written) but one related to it—not the nearest, D minor, but the more remote A minor. (Anderson 1938:1144)

It is hard to find any representation of madness in nineteenth-century opera in which the music *actually* “forgets itself,” as opposed to *signifying* such a thing. The “mad scene” from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Act III scene 2) is primarily a musical exercise in coloratura virtuosity. The *obbligato* instruments (originally glass harmonica, later changed to flute) had well-known associations with madness (Gossett 2006:434), but there is nothing in the least disturbing about the music. When critics of new music suggest that the composer is indeed insane (Slonimsky 1953:*passim*), what is meant is that his *énoncés* are defined as lying beyond the limits of discourse.

In principle, all of these *énoncés* are the subject of musicological inquiry in their own right. But what constrains them as a discourse? Discourses are bounded externally by systems of taboo such as truth/falsity or sanity/madness. The “will to truth” (*la volonté de vérité*) is the major system of exclusion that defines discourse and which “tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint on other discourses.” Foucault then asks, “What is at stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this ‘true’ discourse, if not desire and power?” (Foucault 1971:22). To transpose this into the field of musical performance seems at first sight banal. Insofar as the discourse of performance can be determined in terms of truth or falsity—performances are deemed “musical” if they satisfy such criteria as technical accuracy, or truth to the perceived nature of the work—we barely need to invoke the concept. It is so obvious that it is hard to describe, which is itself a hallmark of being within a discourse. But what *drives* the “will to musicality”?

The power relationships between composer, editor, performer and audience are not straightforward. Power circulates between them; the performance is a site for the exchange and transfer of power. The audience is not simply the passive, grateful recipient of the performance; the performer is not only (if at all) the humble servant of the composer. Once the composer has written the work, he/she has to all intents and purposes relinquished power

over the eventual performance, whether the composer resents this or not. If physically present, he/she is often another audience member, acknowledged at the end. Similarly, the composer is physically represented by the music in front of the performers (and not even by that if they play from memory). That text is always incomplete if considered as a full specification of the work, in that the performer will always contribute something that is not only not present in the notation, but which could not be anticipated by the composer.<sup>9</sup> The players are, of course, fully aware of the composer's presence, seen or unseen. But the extent to which the composer's presence exercises power is similar to Bentham's Panopticon in its Foucauldian guise as a metaphor for how external power becomes internalized. Bentham's prisoners never knew whether or not they were being observed, and therefore always behaved as if they were, which made supervision redundant. Performers who adhere very closely to the printed music (possibly an *Urtext*) are behaving in this way, although they do not see themselves as prisoners—they are volunteering to submit, they think, to the composer's gaze.

But they may not be. An original late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century print will include markings which had quite different meanings for players of those days, such as staccato dots/wedges (often signifying *non legato* or *detaché*), or dots under slurs (often signifying *portato* rather than *jeté*). Such texts, for their original readers, carried illocutionary force through notational convention. But modern performers following an *Urtext* frequently do not have the necessary contextual information (when this is provided it is often inadequate), so they read staccato dots in whatever way their own musical instincts lead them. Some modern string players will normalize all these markings as highly articulated short notes, often played with the bow coming off the string. In doing so, they are unwittingly evading the composer's gaze. The *Urtext* editor is, at least in theory, the most absent of all.<sup>10</sup> In the modern *Urtext* the original illocutionary force is dispelled; the text's "instructional" dimension is diminished; the performer is more, not less, free to express his/her subjectivity. Typically, what has been removed, or indeed ignored, to create the *Urtext* is the older editorial material added to help the performer. Between 1868 and 1917, Beethoven's violin sonatas were published in nine different performing editions prepared by the leading violinists of their day, such as David, Joachim, Brodsky, Kreisler and many others. Several of these editions have remained current well into the twentieth century. The *Urtext* appears to give the performer direct access to the composer's work, bypassing the mediation of earlier editors, but it also places power firmly in the hands of the player, who will decide for him/herself how to interpret ambiguous markings. It is safe to say that this outcome was entirely unforeseen.

Some nineteenth-century players were much more overt about this. Friedrich Grützmacher's extraordinary performing edition of the Bach solo cello suites, made around 1867, explicitly claims that the suites have been adapted for public performance. His alterations go far beyond dynamics and expressive markings, although these are highly detailed. He adds dense contrapuntal lines and chords, recomposes bars, longer sections, and sometimes whole movements—all with a view to making this evidently unpromising musical material publicly performable (Grützmacher 1868). Similarly, a copy of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no. 4 heavily annotated in MS by Ferdinand David (on loan to the University of Leeds from Uppingham School, England) shows that David saw Dehn's scholarly edition (Dehn 1850–53) "published for the first time from the original manuscripts" only as a first stage in the preparation of a performance—he imposes complex phrasing patterns and sophisticated dynamic schemes throughout, and makes sure that these markings are consistently applied to all the parts, both soli and ripieni (Figures 1–2).<sup>11</sup>

In such cases the player-editor's power is visibly more evident than the unseen power of the Panopticon. In printed texts, the editor's name is sometimes afforded even greater prominence than that of the composer on nineteenth-century title pages. Those particularly heavily annotated editions, such as Friedrich Grützmacher's, some Ferdinand David editions, Jean-Delphin Alard's series *Les maîtres classiques du violon*, or Edmund Singer's editions for general conservatory use (to take only a few examples) express the power of the editor's name as much as they satisfy any more immediately practical requirements for amateurs or students (Figures 3–4). With Joachim's arrangement of Brahms's *Ungarische Tänze* (Figure 5), his name is more prominent than Brahms's.

If the player is subject to the editor's power, this is not necessarily oppressive. Power is exercised not in a set of absolute commandments, but in the delimitation of a subject position which leaves scope for some individual variation in the player's interpretative response, while limiting the otherwise "potentially infinite plurality" of individual responses.<sup>12</sup> A violinist, for example, using one of David's editions, is constrained within David's subject position—the subject position taken by the editor at a particular time, for a particular purpose. If the player decides to make large-scale changes, it suggests that a new subject position—the player's—has replaced the editor's. In this context, Hugo Becker's 1929 analysis of Haydn's D major cello concerto Hob. VIIb:2 is striking. Discussing editions of this work (of which there were several in the later nineteenth century, all deviating considerably from the original), Becker says:



Figure 1: Bach, Brandenburg Concerto no. 4, solo violin, 1st movement.



Figure 2: Bach, Brandenburg Concerto no. 4, 1st movement, ripieno 1st violin.

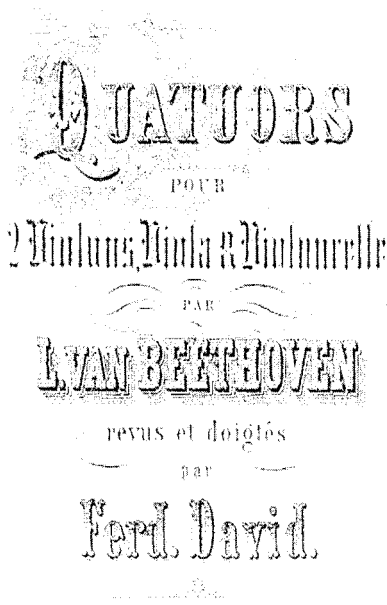


Figure 3: Title page detail from Ferdinand David's edition of Beethoven's string quartets.

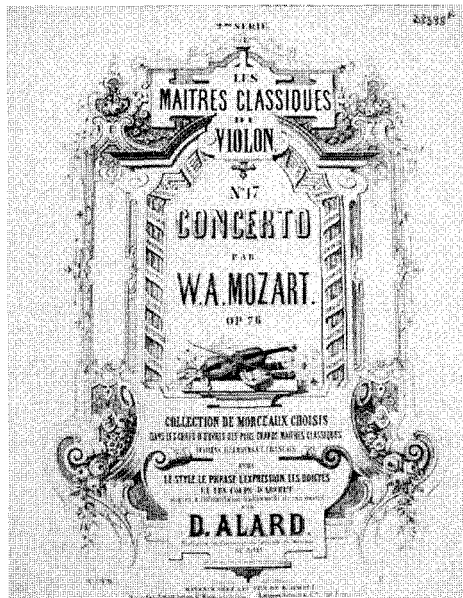


Figure 4: Title page of Delphin Alard's edition of Mozart's Concerto K.268.



Figure 5: Title page, Brahms *Ungarische Tänze* arr. Joachim.

The available version by Gevaert can be called successful. Since it is the basis for our analysis, the modifications suggested here cannot be seen as deviations from the composer's original version, in the sense of an injury to the principle of faithfulness to the notes [*Notentreue*].<sup>13</sup> (Becker and Dynar 1929:233)

So it is permissible to modify Gevaert's significantly cut and rewritten solo part, since it is not Haydn's original version and principles of *Notentreue* do not therefore apply. But he never suggests that Haydn's original version should be played. This would presumably mean submitting to the composer's controlling gaze—less easy to evade than the editor's. At the level of *énoncé*, the player may claim that the editor's annotations are discarded in order to achieve an unmediated contact with the work itself, with the composer's own intentions. But at the level of *discours*, the player has an interest in aligning him/herself with the subject position that seems most "musical," not only in order to submit to the regulation of that discourse, but also to become the vehicle of its power/knowledge. The audience too, although apparently passively receiving the performance, is also aligning itself with the discourse

of musicality by adopting the performer's subject position, discussing its finer points, criticizing it in accepted terms, and adjusting its applause accordingly. It is quite striking that the language of concert reviews becomes more predictable and limited in the later nineteenth century, with the holy trinity of *Reinheit*, *Fertigkeit*, and *Sicherheit* cropping up so regularly that they almost come as a package. This is quite unlike the sometimes extravagant, if not actually incomprehensible reviews that are found earlier, such as this 1822 review of the cellist Max Bohrer:

Everywhere loveliness and tender coloring, and the same in the *Symphonie militaire concertante* . . . with a rondo on Dutch national themes, which smells of a potpourri of violets, mayflowers and primroses, beneath which only a timpani-stroke stands out (like dog-roses).<sup>14</sup> (Anon 1822:5–6)

It may be that the increasingly insistent pedagogical warnings about the abuse of expressive devices is paralleled in the growth of regulatory musical institutions such as music conservatories—in which case both could be seen as unconscious reinforcements expressed through a discourse of expressivity. The distinctive feature of this discourse is that it includes actual performances as well as advice on how to perform. Here, Foucault's "incitement" comes into play, as described in his *History of Sexuality*. There is a remarkable congruence between the discourses of sexuality and musical expression. The careful categorization and detailed explanation of ornaments (even in the early nineteenth century when much of this information was largely irrelevant to the performance of contemporary music) parallels the much greater effort to categorize and study human sexuality. Foucault describes how by the end of the seventeenth century

there emerged a political, economic and technical incitement to talk about sex. And not so much in the form of a general theory of sexuality as in the form of analysis, stocktaking, classification and specification, of quantitative or causal studies. (Foucault 1979:23–4)

And just as the multiple means of talking about sex function as an "incitement," the way in which expressive techniques are discussed in the nineteenth century can be seen as provoking the very thing which is being controlled. It is almost impossible to find a concert review of a singer or string player which actually praises their use of portamento, let alone their vibrato. These expressive techniques (or ornaments) are normally discussed only when the reviewer thinks they are badly executed, used inappropriately, or used to excess. But the accusation of "lack of taste" in such matters is frequently a cover for something altogether more disturbing. As noted earlier, metaphors of disease and immorality frequently lurk not far below the surface. This

## Current Musicology

---

is particularly true of British music criticism in the nineteenth century, which provides an extraordinary range of examples. The following are more substantial than most, and couched in more extreme terms, but the issues they raise and the metaphorical language crop up in scores of other examples from the later nineteenth century onwards.

The *vibrato*, more than perhaps any other feature of violin playing, excites the ambition of youthful players and seems to represent to them the very pinnacle of musical joy and aspiration. This oscillation of the finger is to them a constant delight; and until they can produce a tone-effect resembling in some degree the results of a good *vibrato*, their happiness is incomplete, and violin-playing is devoid of all charm and elegance. That the *vibrato* is a peculiar and, often, dangerous accomplishment, no one knows better than the teacher who, so frequently, finds it a serious impediment in the development of a healthy and beautiful tone. Often it is advisable—if not absolutely necessary—entirely to eliminate the *vibrato* from the pupil's work; for not only may it mar, but actually destroy, a performance otherwise admirable . . . The average pupil is so delighted with that wavering and intensified tone that he requires no urging to make the first awkward experiments that precede the acquirement of the *vibrato*. These early and eager attempts soon form into a very strong habit, which, more often, the teacher finds imperative to repress rather than encourage. (Anon. 1900:265)

The string player has two enemies—faulty intonation and “vibrato.” The first is a disease; the second is a curse. Vibrato . . . comes to us in the guise of a friend; it has letters of introduction from esteemed masters; it even helps us over certain difficulties. Yet its real name is death, the leveller—for it kills all musical tone; it brings the performance to one dead level of gush and insincerity. At first it may be a servant; in the end it becomes a master. Lots of people in the Dark Ages . . . sold their souls to the devil, meaning to go half-way, get out of their urgent stress, then repent and cheat the enemy. Lots of fiddlers to-day cultivate vibrato just to get into their tone something like the warmth of an Ysaÿe or the sweet urgency of a Kreisler. Lots of people in the Dark Ages repented too late; lots of fiddlers today get something very different from the warmth of Ysaÿe . . . by trusting to vibrato . . . vibrato *in excelsis* is only useful and indeed necessary in the jazz band . . . Is it not pretty obvious that what suits the slobbery tunes of the jazz-band will not do for music? (Bonavia 1927:1077)

The vibrato or tremolo is universally condemned, yet, strange to relate, nine vocalists out of every ten persist in its use and abuse . . . at our concerts recently (young lady vocalists especially) . . . shake and tremble in a pitiable manner, as though they were shivering with cold . . . Our musical





**Example 2:** Cello A major scale: 18th-century fingering above, “modern” fingering below.

committees, before making engagements with vocalists, in the future, should stipulate that they abstain from the use and abuse of this senseless appendage. (“Critic” 1896:122)

The link between vibrato and unhealthy sexuality is obvious, and in the last passage there is a transparently Freudian fear of the self-sufficient female and the abuse of a (her?) “senseless appendage.” There is a distinction between attitudes to portamento and vibrato. Nineteenth-century teachers are quite open about the use of portamento, with detailed examples of its technique, application, and notation in annotated editions. Vibrato, on the other hand, is rarely discussed in the later nineteenth century without stern warnings about the danger of its misuse. Additionally, virtually no basic information is given about how to specifically execute vibrato within this literature. Here again, there is a parallel with aspects of sexuality. While there is a vast literature on marriage—in the form of practical advice, fictional representations, or considerations of the social institutions built around it—any kind of sex outside marriage is discussed very much in terms of oppression, with no such social exemplification or validation. Portamento is like procreative marriage—emotionally restrained, smooth, highly visible, universally endorsed, legitimized. Vibrato resembles extra-marital sex—emotionally intense, disturbing, less visible, universally limited. And everyone does it. It is not a sufficient refutation to point to instances where vibrato is presented as an “acceptable” ornament, albeit one to be used with care, or, for that matter, to point to examples of portamento being treated perfunctorily.<sup>15</sup> The *énoncés* that make up the discourse of expressivity may include more or less positive individual statements, but in general they embody what John Potter loosely but conveniently calls “the historical ideology

## Current Musicology

---

of disciplined restraint” (2006:528). It looks, then, as if there are grounds for a more thorough exploration of the “archaeology” of the discourse of musical expression. Certainly, the limits of this discourse cannot be solely described in terms of the wider nineteenth-century discourses of sexuality or disease—gender roles are also relevant, both with regard to the perceived gender of music itself and to the masculine stereotype of the performer who both stimulates and, crucially, controls the listener’s emotional response.<sup>16</sup>

For the moment, however, we turn back to the astonished laughter that early recordings can provoke in modern listeners. Foucault describes how, in the early nineteenth century, some scientific ideas appeared which were well ahead of their time, while other ideas appeared which were already completely outmoded. In *both* cases, those who disagreed did so entirely within the prevailing scientific discourse. Both types of ideas, the avant-garde and the obsolete, were “below the theoretical horizon.” In the much smaller world of cello scale fingerings, the first serious attempt to apply logical principles to their clarification (Gunn 1789) was ignored by other cellists, including those who subscribed to the first edition of Gunn’s *Theory and Practice*. Even when the much more famous Jean-Pierre Duport (Duport 1806) proposed the same fingering, it still did not become standard for another two decades. The scientific breakthrough made by Gunn and Duport was to separate fingering patterns from “musical” notions about the tetrachordal construction of the scale, and to base them on the ergonomics of the left hand; the fingering is functional, not musical. In the case of diatonic scales, older eighteenth-century fingering patterns retained the sense of the scale’s construction out of two tetrachords, which is obscured by modern fingering.<sup>17</sup> This older fingering was still being recommended by some teachers until the 1820s (Figure 7 above).

John Gunn was criticized, rather weakly, on the grounds of *lack* of originality (Anon. 1793:326), even though the much simpler cello methods that he was supposed to have imitated had almost nothing in common with his ambitious (and unique) attempt to apply Enlightenment thinking to the teaching of his instrument:

We are only doubtful whether the mixture of mathematical theorems with practical precepts will smooth or shorten an incipient musician’s road to excellence in the first stages of his progress. We have compared these directions with [Lanzetti and Tillière] and we find no other difference than that Mr. G.’s work is more copious . . .

Richard Taruskin’s assertion that “authenticity” was modernism by another name may also be a demonstration of a theoretical horizon (Taruskin 1995:164–172). Many performers who read Taruskin (and his epigones) might simply shrug, as if to say, “we can’t help being of our time, and we’re

going to keep on doing what we do—we may not use the *a*-word, though.” These performers would be speaking quite comfortably from within the discourse. This may also explain why playing with minimal vibrato is entirely normal and barely worth commenting on nowadays, while revivals of nineteenth-century portamento, especially in orchestral works, are vanishingly rare. This was, of course, Taruskin’s canary in the mine (Taruskin 1995:151)—if Tchaikovsky’s symphonies were ever to be played with swoops and slides, Taruskin was prepared to man the barricades.<sup>18</sup> It is unlikely, because that use of portamento, in the end, is almost meaningless to modern audiences.<sup>19</sup> The laughter provoked by Adelina Patti or Hans Kronold is prompted by a sudden recognition that the performed *énoncé* forms part of a discourse with a very different theoretical horizon, which we have glimpsed only through the means of recording. It is as if we, on our Pacific island, eating fish and coconuts, are given a telescope through which we can see another island in the same sea where the diet consists of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. We can see that it’s different, but it evidently works for them. Some of us will try it out of curiosity; others will laugh, as they do when they hear Patti.

For modern performers interested in HIP, the poacher/gamekeeper dilemma can be sidestepped. The choice is made within one discursive field. The performer is adopting one of a number of possible (i.e., historically available) subject positions. Some will use as much historical information as possible; some will ignore it; and some will adopt a position between these extremes. From this point of view, the vagueness or ingenuousness of the limited HIP claims made by performers or their record companies need not be seen as merely duplicitous or half-hearted. Clive Brown’s “yawning chasm between contemporary practice and historical evidence” (2010) is itself, from a Foucauldian perspective, only another *énoncé* in the current discourse of performance. The position adopted by the performer, whatever their degree of HIP, will be whichever lets the performer exercise power most effectively within the current *discours*. The “chasm” is not necessarily due to willful ignorance or perversity. It is a good example of how a discourse stimulates opposing views. The persistent “abuse” of expressive devices is not a separate thing from Joachim and others’ criticism, because

there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised. (Gordon 1980:142)

Today, instead of arguments over vibrato, we have arguments over HIP’s lack of systematic historical knowledge, arguments which have recurred since at least the 1970s. For Taruskin, the early music movement was essentially

## Current Musicology

---

an expression of Stravinskyan modernism. However, from an experimental Foucauldian perspective, the tensions, apparent dichotomies, conflicts and paradoxes which characterize it are part of a discourse which has its roots in the nineteenth century.

### Notes

1. I was able to try this experiment in November 2010 at the Lithuanian Academy of Music (Vilnius) with a class of cellists. For recordings by Patti, see Adelina Patti 1843–1919 (Pearl, GEMMCD9312). Recordings by Kronold are available at The Virtual Gramophone, URL <http://amicus.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html> and the Cylinder Preservation and Digitization Project, University of Santa Barbara, URL: <http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/index.php>. This paper contains a number of references to cello performance issues. This is partly because this is my area of expertise, but also because the history of nineteenth-century performance practice has been predominantly written by violinists and keyboard players.

2. Robert Hill suggests the adjustment of expectation could apply in the case of the recordings by the castrato Moreschi, “over which it is hard to suppress a giggle” at first (Hill 1994:40).

3. At the time of this article, the author is on a research project at the University of Leeds in nineteenth-century performing editions of string music (<http://chase.leeds.ac.uk>). He has benefited considerably from the opportunity to discuss the ideas in this paper with his colleagues Prof. Derek Scott, Prof. Clive Brown, and Dr. Lauren Redhead. He also wishes to thank the organizers of the “Radical Music History” conference (Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, December 2011) for the opportunity to present a version of this paper and to discuss it further with Anna Bull (University of Cambridge). The assistant editor of this journal, and two anonymous readers, have all made extremely useful suggestions.

4. This quotation, like several others later in this paper, raises a question of gender and expressive performance which is too large to explore here. It constitutes a major part of the writer’s forthcoming book on nineteenth-century cello performance (2012).

5. The Klingler Quartet’s recordings have been reissued as *The Klingler Quartet 1905–1936 The Joachim Tradition* (Testament Records, SBT 2136, 1998). Soldat–Roeger’s 1926 recording of the adagio movement of Spohr’s 9th concerto is available on *The Recorded Violin vol.1* (Pavilion Records, BVA1). For a discussion of her playing, see Milsom 2007.

6. This point was made in a different context by Laurence Dreyfus (1983:321).

7. “All statements” does not include “all grammatically correct but meaningless statements,” such as “Beethoven is a blue pineapple” (along the lines of Chomsky’s famous “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously”).

8. Rabinowitz (1992:42).

9. This point is discussed at length in the author's forthcoming paper (2011).

10. There are notable exceptions, including those hybrid *Urtexts* which add a modern performer's bowings and fingerings such as André Navarra contributed to the *Urtext* of Beethoven's cello sonatas [van de Linde et al. 1971].

11. I wish to acknowledge Uppingham School's considerable generosity in making this loan to the University of Leeds. Both the Grützmacher and David sources can be viewed online at <http://chase.leeds.ac.uk>.

12. I use the term here as used by Eric Clarke: "The term 'subject-position' has been used in relation to the cinema, where it describes the way in which a perceiver is encouraged, or obliged, by the film to adopt a particular attitude to what he or she is witnessing" (Clarke 1999:351).

13. "Das Werk hat mancherlei Wandlungen durchgemacht und ist in verschiedenen Fassungen veröffentlicht worden. Die vorliegende Form von Gevaert ist eine glückliche zu nennen. Da sie unserer Analyse zugrunde liegt, können die hier vorgeschlagenen Modifikationen nicht als Abweichungen von der Originalfassung des Komponisten im Sinne einer Verletzung des Grundsatzes der Notentreue betrachtet werden."

14. "Überall Lieblichkeit und zartes Colorit, und selbst in der . . . Symphonie militaire concertante, mit Rondo über holländische National-lieder, duftet ein pot-pourri von Veilchen, Maiblumen und Aurikeln, unter denen nur einige Paukenschläge (als Klatschrosen) hervorstechen."

15. Gutting (2005:40) points out that a psychologist may diagnose a hatred of women in a patient, which would be not be invalidated just because the client phones his mother every week and never forgets wedding anniversaries.

16. A good example of the intersection of these discourses is suggested by Naomi André (2006:139 and 206n20), who links coloratura with madness and hysteria in a nineteenth-century context: *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early 19th-century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

17. In the more commonly used keys the tetrachordal fingering would have been visible to the audience.

18. He was making a different point from Dreyfus who describes the reaction of the "Early-Music fan" as "curb[ing] his pleasurable response . . . proud not be emoting over Tchaikovsky's Pathétique" (Dreyfus 1983:302).

19. For one possible explanation of this in terms of its hypothesized psychological associations, see Leech-Wilkinson, 2006.

## Current Musicology

---

### References

- Alexanian, Dinan. 1922. *Traité théorique et pratique du violoncelle*. Paris: A. Z. Mathot.
- Anderson, Emily, ed. and trans. 1938. *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.
- André, Naomi. 2006. *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early 19th-Century Italian Opera*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Anonymous. 1793. *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal, Enlarged* 12: 326.
- Anonymous. 1822. *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* 6: 5–6.
- Anonymous. A Provincial Critic. The Vibrato or Tremulo. 1896. *Musical Standard* 5:122.
- Anonymous. 1900. The Vibrato in Violin Playing. *Musical Standard* 13: 265–66.
- Becker, Hugo and Dago Dynar. 1929. *Mechanik und Aesthetik des Violoncellspiels*. Vienna and Leipzig: Universal-Edition.
- Bonavia, F. 1927. On Vibrato. *Musical Times* 68: 1077–78.
- Broadley, Arthur. 1899. Chats to Cello Students. London: 'The Strad' Office, E. Donajowski and D. R. Duncan.
- Brown, Clive. 1999. *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. Performing Nineteenth-century Chamber Music: The Yawning Chasm between Contemporary Practice and Historical Evidence. *Early Music* 38: 476–480.
- Butt, John. 2002. *Playing with History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clarke, Eric. 1999. Subject Position and the Specification of Invariants in Music by Frank Zappa and P. J. Harvey. *Music Analysis* 18: 347–374.
- Dehn, S. W., ed.. 1850–53. *J. S. Bach Six concertos publiés pour la première fois d'après les manuscrits originaux*. Leipzig: C. F. Peters.
- Donington, Robert. 1963. *The Interpretation of Early Music*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Dreyfus, Laurence. 1983. Early Music Defended Against its Devotees: a Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century. *Musical Quarterly* 69: 297–322.
- Duport, Jean Louis. c.1806. *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle*. Paris: Imbault.
- Foucault, Michel. 1979. *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by R. Hurley. Vol. 1. London: Allen Lane.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1971. *Lordre de discours*. Paris: Gallimard.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1980. *Power/Knowledge; Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–77*. Edited by C. Gordon. Brighton: Harvester.
- Frank, Manfred. 1992. On Foucault's Concept of Discourse. In *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, translated by Timothy L. Armstrong, 99–115. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester.
- Ginsburg, Lev. 1883. *History of the Violoncello*. Translated by Tanya Tchistyakova, edited by Herbert R. Axelrod. Neptune City, NJ: Paganiniana Publications. (Citing P. Makarov, "St. Petersburg Concerts", *Muzikalny tsvet* 1866, no. 6).
- Gossett, Philip. 2006. *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Grützmacher, Friedrich, ed., 1868. *Johann Sebastian Bach Six Sonates ou Suites, Edition nouvelle, revue et arrangée pour être exécutée aux concerts*. Leipzig and Berlin: C. F. Peters.
- Gunn, John. c.1787. *The Theory and Practice of Fingering the Violoncello*. London: the author.
- Gutting, Gary. 2005. *Foucault A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hill, Robert. 1994. 'Overcoming Romanticism': On the Modernization of Twentieth-century Performance Practice. In *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, edited by Bryan Gilliam, 37–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hooper, Giles. 2006. *The Discourse of Music*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hudson, Richard. 1994. *Stolen Time: the History of Tempo Rubato*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Joachim, Joseph and Andreas Moser. 1905. *Violinschule*. Translated by Alfred Moffatt. Vol. 2. Berlin: Simrock.
- Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel. 2011. Performance Style in Elena Gerhardt's Schubert Song Recordings. *Musicae Scientiae* (forthcoming). Pre-publication text: [http://kcl.academia.edu/DanielLeechWilkinson/Papers/279313/Performance\\_Style\\_in\\_Elena\\_Gerhardts\\_Schubert\\_Song\\_Recordings](http://kcl.academia.edu/DanielLeechWilkinson/Papers/279313/Performance_Style_in_Elena_Gerhardts_Schubert_Song_Recordings).
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. Portamento and musical meaning. *Journal of Musicological Research* 25: 233–61.
- Van der Linde, Bernard, Andre Navarra, and Hans-Martin Theopold, eds. 1971. *Ludwig van Beethoven Sonaten Klavier und Violoncello/Urtext*. Munich: G. Henle Verlag.
- Kennaway, George. 2007. The Phenomenon of the Cellist Auguste van Biene: from the Charing Cross Road to Brighton via Broadway. In *Victorian Soundscapes: Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies* 9, edited by M. Hewitt and R. Cowgill, 67–82. Leeds: Leeds Centre for Victorian studies and Leeds University Centre for English Music.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. Bookcases, Fish Pie and My Piñata: Musical Scores Considered as Sets of Instructions. *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42 (2): 355–376.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012 (forthcoming). *Playing the Cello 1780–1930*. (Farnham: Ashgate).
- Martinelli, Dario. 2010. *Authenticity, Performance and Other Double-Edged Words*, *Acta Semiotica Fennica XXXVIII*. Helsinki: Umweb Publications.
- Milsom, David. 2007. Marie Soldat-Roeger (1863–1955): Her Significance to the Study of Nineteenth-Century Performing Practices. Leeds: University of Leeds. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/dm-ahrc/Miscellaneous-violin-and-piano.shtml>.
- Nattiez, Jacques. 1990. The Musician's Discourse. In *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, translated by Carolyn Abbate, 183–197. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Potter, John. 2006. Beggar at the Door: The Rise and Fall of Portamento in Singing. *Music & Letters* 87: 523–50.
- Rabinowitz, P. J. 1992. Chord and Discourse: Listening Through the Written Word. In *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, edited by S. Scher, 38–56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rink, John. 2001. Translating Musical Meaning: the Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator. In *Rethinking Music*, edited by Cook, Nicholas and Mark Everist, 217–238. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slonimsky, Nicolas. 1953. *Lexicon of Musical Invective*. New York: Coleman-Ross.
- Taruskin, Richard. 1995. The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past. In *Text and Act*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.