

# 7 Exploring the text-performance continuum in music

## Reflections on immediate mediation

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### Setting the tone: music as text versus music as performance

In a recent strand of musicological discourse the common-sense distinction between text and performance has turned into a dichotomy precisely as a result of the determined effort to overcome the ‘split’ that is attributed to historical musicology as a discipline (Cook 2013: 16). Yet the argument that places ‘music as text’ and ‘music as performance’ in opposition seems to be quite a recent development. Even as late as the mid-1990s, the leading ‘new’ musicologist Jonathan Kramer did not have any impression of such a split: when he proposed the idea of a ‘post-modern music’ which ‘locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances, or composers’ (Kramer 1996: 22), he placed ‘scores’ and ‘composers’ on the same side as ‘performances’, with ‘listeners’ at the other end of the continuum. Nicholas Cook cautiously proposed that argument in his seminal article ‘Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance’ (Cook 2001) and subsequently refined it over time until his influential book *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Cook 2013). Cook himself made it clear that ‘early’ new musicologists ‘did less than might have been expected to place performance ... at the heart of the discipline’ (Cook 2009: 777). Among the reasons why they considered ‘social meaning ... encoded in the musical text’ rather than created ‘in the interpersonal and social transactions which those texts prompted ... through the act of musical performance’, he mentioned only one: ‘the influence of Adorno’ (Cook 2009: 777).

The conclusion of Cook’s earlier article describes the need ‘to understand music as both reflection and generator of social meaning’ as ‘most ambitiously expressed in Adorno’s claim that music “presents social problems through its own material and according to its own formal laws – problems which music contains within itself in the innermost cells of its technique”’ (Cook 2001: §31). Despite the ‘frustration’ that Adorno’s analyses caused him, due to the opacity of ‘his concept of the interface between music and society’, Cook concludes: ‘the problem disappears if instead of seeing musical works as texts within which social structures are encoded we see them as scripts in response to which social relationships are enacted’ (Cook 2001: §31). At this

point Cook still regards Adorno's contribution as attuned to the objectives of a 'culturally-oriented musicology' (Cook 2001: §31) but inadequate to their implementation. In Cook's later reflection, however, Adorno is burdened with increasing responsibility, to the point that he comes to epitomise at the same time 'musicology's traditional orientation' (Cook 2013: 16), seen as based on 'textualist models of reproduction' (Cook 2013: 273), and 'modernism', viewed as 'the yardstick against which other epistemes, mentalities, periods, or cultures were measured' (Cook 2013: 130). Adorno is thus perceived by Cook as dictating the disciplinary agenda of musicology long after his death (Cook 2013: 250–1).

In this context, Adorno hovers like a scapegoat: being influential, he is charged with faults for which others were responsible; in addition, his theory is considered tainted by his 'mentality' outlined by Cook on account of a limited set of quotations extracted from Adorno's scattered notes published posthumously as *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction* (Adorno 2006).

It is not my aim to come to the defence of Adorno, whose outlook is, of course, of his own time, laden with traits that are unacceptable today (Cook 2013: 8–9, 15, 17–9). But for this same reason one should recognise that Adorno's 'textualist' orientation is largely established by or measured against the 'music as performance' paradigm, for he lacked an alternative against which to argue and defend his alleged position. Moreover, a less incomplete account of Adorno's theory of reproduction, one capable of building a better understanding of his often changing positions in the context of his private notes, would be desirable, and it is for this reason that I shall dwell on Adorno a little longer.

Considered in its context, Adorno's idea of musical 'reproduction' is connected neither with a textualist orientation nor with the modernist mentality of his own culture but rather it is linked to an 'idiosyncratic use of the concept of "mimesis"' (Gritten 2014: 97). I have discussed elsewhere how complex, and also contradictory, Adorno's attempt to consider the text-performance relation in terms of imitation is, including the role his notation theory – based on Hugo Riemann's remarks on early notation – plays in this context (Cecchi 2017). To illustrate this complexity, in the following paragraphs I will introduce some arguments (along with selected quotations from his own writings) which will give a rather different picture of Adorno's theory.

First, Adorno himself explicitly defined the musical text 'as a memorial trace of the ephemeral sound, not as a fixing of its lasting meaning', to which he added that the musical text 'signifies the ideal of sound, not its meaning' (Adorno 2006: 4). With such a definition he is not that far from Cook's position on musical meaning.

Second, for Adorno the object of imitation is not simply 'the text' but something underlying the musical text, which remains 'hidden' (Adorno 2006: 4) and is at times compared to an image – hence the definition of musical performance as the 'x-ray image of the work' (Adorno 2006: 1). Though he later discarded this metaphor, from the beginning his idea of 'reproduction' is

less straightforward than has been claimed. With respect to Adorno's identification of three aspects of notation in performance, the object of imitation is neither the 'mensural' (i.e., the symbolic level of the score) nor the 'idiomatic' (i.e., the paralinguistic aspects of music in performance), but the 'neumatic' element (Adorno 2006: 67), remnant of the ancient neumes. In Riemann's hypothesis, these rely on 'cheironomic' musical practices (i.e., based on hand gestures), for which – according to Adorno – modern notation would have developed 'substitute functions', identified in 'phrase marks' for articulation and punctuation (Adorno 2006: 94), dynamics, tempo and performance indications, and everything related to the 'mimic', 'mimetic' and 'gestural' aspects of music (Adorno 2006: 67) inherent in musical practice. Viewed in this light, the 'neumatic' element converges with Cook's idea of 'social script' more than it diverges.

Third, since in Adorno's theory of musical performance 'imitation' takes over 'interpretation' – the hermeneutic act, traditionally related to the reading of a text – I would rather define his attempt as 'anti-textualist', which reveals how little he was interested in developing a coherently textualist perspective.

These observations demonstrate how current musicological discourse proposes simplified visions of the theoretical efforts of past scholars and considers them hostage to the limits of their mentalities, rather than exploring the theoretical implications of their work, which could prove useful within a different context. On my part, I prefer to consider Adorno and Cook, together with many others, as travelling companions in a common effort to clarify a complex matter – one which will hardly find a final word, for any perspective, not only Adorno's, is limited by the set of assumptions which define it.

Adorno's idiosyncratic attempt to define the text-performance relation in terms of mimesis was doomed to fail, for imitation requires a high degree of similarity. Musicians can and do imitate the performances of other musicians, and their recordings or record productions, but the transition from the score to the 'acoustic result' implies a 'change of medium' (Borio 2007: 71) which makes the application of the similarity criterion problematic. Yet most of Adorno's theoretical problems depend on such philosophical assumptions as the principles of the 'autonomy' of art, the 'non-intentionality' of musical texts, and the 'non-similarity' of music to language – assumptions he did not want to put aside (Cecchi 2017: 134).

Cook's 'music as performance' paradigm also has its inconsistencies, especially when compared to other disciplines. When Cook proposed seeing scores as 'scripts' he wrote: 'Whereas to think of a Mozart quartet as a "text" is to construe it as a half-sonic, half-ideal object reproduced in performance, to think of it as a "script" is to see it as choreographing a series of real-time, social interactions between players' (Cook 2001: §15). For him, 'the shift from seeing performance as the reproduction of texts to seeing it a cultural practice prompted by scripts' was sufficient to dissolve the 'stable distinction between work and performance' (Cook 2001: §16). And yet, this seminal article in the performative turn in musicology has met with pertinent criticism at the hand

of performance scholar Philip Auslander. In commenting on Cook's example, he declares that he is 'not persuaded that his renaming of the work as script really makes much difference', not only because 'the musical script as choreographing a set of social interactions maintains the idea that the musical work provides the design that underlies and thus determines the performance', but especially because 'when the question is framed in terms of work and performance ... the important relationships are between abstractions'; meaning that both 'the composer's agency as the one who created the script, and the performers' agency as those who embody it through actions and gestures ... are left out of the picture' (Auslander 2006: 101).

Such criticism would have required amending the model, yet Cook's position does not change: in *Beyond the Score* the concept of the score as 'social script' is still there, though it is used only sparingly within the confines of a single chapter (Cook 2013: 260, 273 and 275), and the only response to Auslander's criticism is the incorporation of his concepts, starting from 'musical persona' (Cook 2013: 325), into a system in which 'to focus on persona or on work is to take up a different perspective on ... the inherently multi-dimensional phenomenon of musical performance' (Cook 2013: 336). Yet, if this is the point, it is not clear why the same argument is not used to frame 'music as text' and 'music as performance' as different perspectives on equally constitutive dimensions of music.

### **Building the framework: media studies and performance studies**

In search of a model capable of holding musical text and performance together in a productive way, I shall invoke disciplinary perspectives that are more removed from musicological controversies, and therefore more able to break out of the impasse.

A first way towards overcoming the dichotomies that pervade the discourse of musicology is through media studies, as this research field ignores any hierarchies between the media. In Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), manuscripts, films, television and typewritten scripts are equally considered media connected to their social performance; in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), a wide range of media is presented in which text and performance are coexisting dimensions; and in Marshall and Eric McLuhan's *Laws of Media*, it is made explicit that 'the structures of media dynamics are inseparable from performance' (McLuhan and McLuhan 1988: 116). A far more recent line of research delves into McLuhan's thesis that 'the medium is the message' (McLuhan 1994: 7) with the corollary that 'the "content" of any medium is always another medium' (McLuhan 1994: 8) moving towards the elaboration of a new theory of mediation. In *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999), media scholars Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin discuss the 'double logic of remediation' (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 3–15), relying on 'our culture's contradictory imperatives for immediacy and hypermediacy', that is, its efforts 'to multiply

its media and to erase all traces of mediation', and possibly 'erase its media in the very act of multiplying them' (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 5). This logic can function in the sense of 'mediation of mediation', or as a claim of the 'inseparability of mediation and reality', or in the sense of media 'reform' (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 55), and can be extended to past media environments and to music considered as text, as performance, and as media production.

In his recent article 'Radical Mediation', Grusin undertakes a philosophical generalisation of this theory which leads to the concept of the immediacy of mediation. In so doing he confronts both William James's 'radical empiricism' (Grusin 2015: 127) and Hegel's concept of mediation, of which Adorno offers his own radical version, with 'the insistence that there is no such thing as immediacy' (Grusin 2015: 135). Grusin uses James's extension of the system of empiricism to the experience of 'relations' to establish that 'mediations' are no less 'immediate' than any other aspect of the 'real' (Grusin 2015: 126–8). He comes to the same conclusion by altering Adorno's claim: 'where Adorno cites Hegel as arguing that there is nothing ... that is not *mediated* ... I argue that there is nothing that is not *mediation* and that *mediation itself is immediate*' (Grusin 2015: 135).

These conclusions have relevant epistemological implications since the dichotomy between 'mediation' as process and the 'mediated' as the content of experience is, in a way, suspended, and this makes explicit what in the concept of 'remediation' was only implicit. What Grusin suggests is that the mediated 'content' (in McLuhan's terms) is never experienced separately from its mediation; that the 'content' of experience is so embedded in experience that even to think of such content as being 'mediated' by it is problematic, for the 'content' eventually experienced as 'mediated' by mediation would turn out to be another form of 'mediation', as is already implied by the concept of 'remediation'.

Grusin's concept of mediation is counterintuitive but not contradictory. In clarifying it, the first step is to recognise that the idea of a mediated content independent of its mediations relies on a largely arbitrary act of inference, not experience – this 'content' is an abstraction from experiences which never provide the mediated content 'per se'. The second step is to note that we can experience mediations only as material content of experience: they materially 'incorporate', instead of presenting or displaying, the mediated as an aspect of their mediation. In other words, it is the dichotomy of 'mediation' as frame and 'mediated' as content which prevents one from thinking about the reality of mediations, and sets the stage for establishing a primacy of the mediated (deduced by inference) over mediation (as experience). In a sense, Grusin's approach to mediation overcomes the impasse by applying the 'indiscernibility claim', originally invoked by Adorno against the concept/object dichotomy (Joll 2009: 239), to the mediation/mediated dichotomy, that is, against Adorno (O'Connor 1999).

Radical mediation can offer the epistemological ground for an understanding of musical experience beyond any hierarchical views. According to

radical mediation, the forms of musical experience can be seen as phenomenologically different but ontologically equal, for they are all immediate mediations, excluded from a criterion of greater or lesser proximity to music's true essence. Relations between them can be reconsidered as well, for in Grusin's model 'all connections involve modulation, translation, or transformation', and 'Mediation does not stand between a preexistent subject and object, or prevent immediate experience or relations, but ... transduces or generates immediate experience or relations' (Grusin 2015: 138).

Radical mediation thus implies on one hand the immediacy of mediation and, on the other, the interposition of intermediate instances and mediating processes. In this perspective, musical texts and musical performances are neither hierarchical nor oppositional terms: as radical mediations they offer immediate musical mediations, whose relation generates a continuum of musical experience.

Performance studies offers a second, effective way to get rid of ontological claims concerning musical works as well as essentialist views and dichotomic thinking. As Auslander recently claims, 'there is ... no ontological or epistemological gap between music and performance that needs bridging. Music "is" what musicians "do"' (Auslander 2015: 539–40). At first sight, this drastic identification of music and performance excludes the dimension of text. Actually, that of performance studies is 'a way of looking at performance that does not particularly privilege its textual elements but treats performances as texts in themselves' (Auslander in Cecchi 2021: 257), which proves consistent with the assumptions of performance scholars. And yet the tendency to exclude texts from performance is a symptom of a foreclosure that is not entirely justifiable, and potentially harmful for a theory of performance that aims to be all-encompassing as much as possible.

Fortunately, here the concept of 'performance' is so inclusive that it allows us to recover the pragmatic dimension of musical text as an aspect of performance in general, which includes the performance of the 'musical persona', as it has been quite recently reconsidered (Auslander 2020) and expanded (Auslander 2021). In this regard, I shall put forth two arguments. The first is that even composers who do not publicly perform the music they have conceived, composed and written out in notation, do actually 'do' something as musicians. They 'make music', and their activity is part and parcel of the general practice that has been termed as 'musicking' (Small 1998). In other words, composers 'perform' as musicians too, not least because their activity is a significant aspect of their 'musical personae'. The second is that texts (as scores, parts, lead sheets, tablatures etc.) are present and consulted by musicians on stage in different contexts that are in no way limited to the field of 'classical' or 'art' music.

Musical texts, then, express their performativity directly on stage and in live performances. I refer not only to the function of texts with respect to musicians, who frequently rely on a text in front of them to perform music in

rehearsal and in actual performance, to the extent that their absence in performance depends on memorisation skills which constitute an added value to their mastery, but also to the performativity of texts with respect to the audience. People attending concerts are influenced by the more or less apparent presence of musical texts on stage, where these are present. Thus, while it is certainly useful to put the ‘page to stage’ approach under scrutiny (Cook 2009: 781; Cook 2013: 37), the ‘page on stage’ argument challenges the exclusion of musical texts from theoretical consideration, insofar as that page, in its materiality, is more or less intensively, but nevertheless visibly used by musicians in performance. This pragmatic idea of musical texts experienced in their multifarious phenomenology reconciles with a performance studies perspective, not least as it is a question of ‘performativity’. Auslander himself is far from arguing against the presence and performativity of musical texts on stage, including their effects on the audience (Auslander in Cecchi 2021: 257).

Auslander’s concept of ‘reactivation’, based on Walter Benjamin’s idea that the reproduction ‘reactivates’ the experience of the reproduced object in the particular situation of the ‘beholder’ (Auslander 2018: 45–7) as spectator or listener, is more suited to reconsidering musical texts as performances in themselves. Even if scores are not ‘documents’ of a musical performance in the strict sense – they do not fall under the concept of ‘performance documentation’ – there is a sense in which notational texts can be seen as sites on which a performance takes place via the beholder’s reactivation from them. I refer in particular to the apparently paradoxical possibility of reactivating ‘the experience of a performance that never took place’ (Auslander 2018: 10), especially since documentation is also presented as ‘a set of instructions, with illustrations, for executing the performance’ (Auslander 2018: 12).

The combination of media studies and performance studies in an interdisciplinary perspective suggests rethinking musical texts as effective places of mediation. According to radical mediation, this form of musical mediation is no less immediate than any other musical experience. As media, musical texts are not only editorial products resulting from a collective performance, but they also demonstrate their performative potential when used in performance. Moreover, musical texts can even be considered as performances themselves, and as places of reactivation of possible performances. This interdisciplinary framework encourages further exploration of the text-performance relationship as a continuum of experience.

### **Outlining the model: ‘script’ between text and performance**

Understanding musical texts as media and, at the same time, as performances is crucial to my discourse. Yet radical mediation suggests that musical texts are only experienced as material instances, which I will term ‘editions’ – the clarification being that texts are not just ‘mediated’ (i.e., ‘displayed’, ‘presented’) by them but directly and materially embedded in editions as ‘immediate mediations’. Not in themselves, but only as ‘editions’ can texts be

considered results of the collective performance involved in the act of publication. In a short unnumbered note at the end of a journal article, Ronald Broude proposes what I consider to be the most pragmatic and clear definition of the relations between ‘text’, ‘edition’ and ‘work’: within an ‘edition’, which usually involves ‘various agents’ (editors, publishers etc.), the ‘text’ is the ‘unique arrangement of symbols by which a work is represented’ and is ‘established by an agent ... for some specific public purpose’ and ‘class of users’ (Broude 2012). As for the concept of ‘work’ he adds: ‘pragmatically what unites all forms of a work is that people competent in the repertoire to which it belongs can identify them as instantiations of the same entity’ (Broude 2012). The relevant implication here is that a text, as ‘content’ (in McLuhan’s sense) of a material edition, is in a relation of ‘representation’ with the work, whose pertinence is traced back to a negotiation between experts, which I would define as an act of collective or social inference. Consequently, editions are the result of social mediation involving performance even in their ‘indexical’ relation to the works ‘represented’, which can only be grasped by inference. The function of remediation is clear in that the work is a mediation which is the content of a text (another mediation), which is the content of an edition.

Musical performances as precise ‘venues’ also take place in a specific medium (the theatre, the stadium, the specific site, the television studio, the recording studio, the live concert in general) and can easily be brought back to the concept of ‘edition’ (a concert tour, a director’s staging, a theatre’s production, a musician’s recital, a film genre, a TV format). As both ‘venues’ and ‘editions’, performances, too, result from sets of pragmatic constraints involving a number of agents and mediators, and may be considered as ‘productions’ in their own right. As productions they can be repeated in, and adapted to, different venues and take place in different contexts with a high degree of recognition. In this sense, they are in no way ‘determined’ by texts or scores, for a text (e.g., a theatrical script) or a musical score is clearly just one ‘ingredient’ of performance (Hamilton 2007: 31–2). And yet texts, theatrical scripts, editions, scores, even represented works with the reference to their authors, contribute highly to such ‘determination’. While on the one hand texts are not seen as privileged elements of performance, on the other hand they share a constituent role with the other ingredients, even as ‘part of the expressive equipment musicians employ in the production of personae’ (Auslander 2006: 188). Yet, although scores can take the place of theatrical scripts, they need not be renamed ‘scripts’ – as Cook proposes – to regain their social meaning: they are socially meaningful already as texts established by editions to represent works.

I propose to reintroduce the concept of ‘script’ in a different place as a mediating and intermediate instance between text and performance. In outlining an operative definition of the concept, that I will name ‘performance script’ for the sake of clarity, I will discuss it alongside a range of approaches and similar concepts that converge on the mediating agency of the performer.

Thus, whereas a text is just a precondition of possible performances, the ‘performance script’ is the process towards actual performances.

In taking up the concept of ‘script’ I will not follow Cook, not only because I take Auslander’s criticisms seriously, but also because Cook’s proposal keeps the gap between text and performance open, whereas my aim is to fill it. My ‘performance script’ both implies and presupposes the text-performance continuum. In this respect, I find similarities between my model and John Rink’s emphasis on the ‘score-sound continuum’ in piano performance (Rink 2018: 97). There are two main differences in my perspective: that I refer to text as medium, which encompasses the score as one possible form; and that I want neither to reduce the performance of music to a matter of sound – as in Rink’s older ‘sound alone’ model (Rink 1999: 218) or in his more recent pursuit of a ‘music-as-sound’ perspective – nor merely to demonstrate that a musical performance is ‘more than “the music” alone’ (Rink 2018: 95). As performance scholars convincingly suggest, ‘Music is not sound disengaged from the physical being of the person who makes it’, and ‘the sounds I hear result directly from all aspects of the person’s physical engagement with the act of music making – all of the sounds and gestures that constitute the performance – not just the limited range of actions conventionally included under the word “technique”’ (Auslander 2015: 539).

A more clear convergence with Rink’s proposals relates to his concept of ‘performance “program”’, which ‘is never entirely fixed, although ... it may remain largely stable over time’, especially as it ‘involves rehearsal and actual performance in a durative and recursive process’ (Rink 2018: 97). Once again, in this case ‘performance script’ may be a preferable term, since it relates to schemas of behaviour in general and provides (or combines) ‘programs’ for action, thus encompassing the concept of ‘program’ as well as the sense of the performers’ inscriptions within the score. Moreover, the programs provided by ‘performance scripts’ need not be exclusively ‘narrative’, as Rink seems to privilege by insisting on the metaphor of ‘story-telling’ (Rink 2018: 92–5), perhaps because this is more in line with the restrained expressiveness one expects from ‘classical’ piano recitals or ‘program’ music. I would also include ‘rhetorical’ and ‘structural’ programs (Cook’s privileged terms); ‘mensural’, ‘idiomatic’ and ‘neumatic’ ones (to take Adorno’s terms as descriptive categories); and even ‘dramaturgical’ ones, for there is an aspect of staging and *mise-en-scène* in all musical performances, which is also the reason why I do not want to entirely discard the theatrical sense of the term ‘script’.

In terms of ‘reactivation’ theory (Auslander 2018), my ‘performance script’ is a place for ‘reactivation’. If the score stands for the ‘document’, the ‘performance script’ takes the place of a cognitive schema through which the performers, as the agents of actual performances, reactivate the performance from a musical text. In this respect, the actual performance would represent a ‘reperformance’. This last term is interesting in relation to ‘reproduction’. Auslander’s theory relies on a passage from Benjamin in which ‘reproduction’ is presented as involving a sense of ‘new’ production or ‘continuing’

production – a sense which Adorno could have drawn from Benjamin, but also from Hegel, or from the tradition of German music theory up until Riemann (von Loesch 2018). As a process of (re)production through reactivation, but also of (re)mediation, a ‘performance script’ does not merely ‘stand’ between text and performance, but it is an expression of the text-performance continuum which emerges and is perfected in rehearsal and in performance.

Terminologically, ‘script’ connects to ‘prescription’, which I intend to include in my operational definition. Yet, since a ‘performance script’ involves the agency of the performer, prescription cannot effectively refer to the musical text directly – a score by itself cannot actually prescribe anything to anyone. In a sense, it must take the form of a ‘self-prescription’ which relies on a set of preconditions including the performers’ idea of the score and its relation to performance, their imagination, education and training. The consequence is that the ‘norm’ or the ‘rule’ is not in the text but only in the performer, who actively transduces the score’s indications into a set of regulated behaviours perfected in rehearsal and in performance, the main places of planning, testing, repetition and habituation.

Such a perspective provides a framework to redefine the ‘neumatic’ as the superimposition of a performance script over the score by placing emphasis on Adorno’s idea of the ‘interpolation of sense in the text’ (Adorno 2006: 94), which points to the active contribution of the performer. In this respect, the ‘performance script’ is the place where a score’s instructions are transformed by the performer into a set of ‘self-instructions’. Even in collective performances, ‘self-prescriptions’ refer mainly to the individual performer and the personal ‘script’ is still in the foreground: a performer’s agency is no less involved when prescriptions are negotiated with other performers, conductors or composers, or obedience to their prescriptions is decided. Moreover, the ‘performance script’ cannot be replaced by the addition of detailed instructions in the score, as is the case with ‘enabling editions’ (Broude 2012). These are still ‘texts’, and the application of the rules proposed by the edition in performance is the domain of the performer: neither detailed descriptions nor additional inscriptions in themselves can contain the rules for their application.

Viewed from another perspective, ‘performance scripts’ are not written, although in the context of performances relying on scores a performance script can include inscriptions, or annotations, by the hand of the performer in and around the score. However, in this same context, ‘oral scripts’ are far more present and frequent: in addition to being present in music teaching and training, oral negotiations take place during rehearsal, especially when some kind of coordination is required, and they include aural, gestural, and even tactile suggestions, which generally complement written annotations. This does not change the concept: ‘performance scripts’ exist in a medium, but the medium is not predetermined.

In this regard, my concept recalls ‘script’ as used in cognitive theory (Mandler 1984), psychological therapy (Byng-Hall 1996), music education

(Borthwick and Davidson 2002) – where ‘script’ is ‘a set of beliefs and behaviors that regulate the social roles played by each individual’ within a social context (Davidson 2004: 64) – and cultural pragmatics (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004). In cultural pragmatics, unwritten ‘cultural norms’ and rules of conduct can be written down as ‘scripts’ and discussed in an intercultural perspective, and the sense that a ‘performance script’ can be derived from an actual performance is included in my model.

### **Implementing the model: ‘schema’ beyond text and performance**

The concept of a ‘performance script’ that is not linked to a written form requires the implementation of the framework in such a way as to include ‘oral’ performances in the model. The entry point is the concept of ‘entextualisation’, introduced in linguistic anthropology by Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (1990), as used by scholar of African oral poetry Karin Barber, who considers text and performance in this context as ‘two sides of a coin, inseparable and mutually constitutive’ (Barber 2007: 79). She distinguishes ‘performance theory’, which ‘stressed the emergent moment’, from “entextualisation” theory’, which is more ‘focused on the way in which fluid discourse is fixed, and made available for repetition, recreation or “copying” ... for transmission over space and perpetuation over time’ (Barber 2007: 71). This implies that ‘text’ as a concept is far from unrelated to ‘oral’ performances.

The presence and use of texts in the strict sense is well known in this same context. Elsewhere, Barber admits that ‘Written texts can be cues, scripts or stimulants to oral performance’ (Barber 2003: 324), which she does not seem to see as a contradiction. Now, I would consider it quite legitimate to ask what it is that makes a tradition a ‘written’ tradition, if not the presence and use of written texts with the functions mentioned by Barber – and, similarly, what makes a tradition an ‘oral’ tradition, if not the absence of written texts. Yet, answering these questions would solve the contradiction only in terms of what I envision as a mere preconception. To make this contradiction productive and useful for my model, it is safer to move towards a redefinition of the boundaries between ‘oral’ and ‘written’ traditions in relation to performance.

Ethnomusicologists are familiar with processes of ‘entextualisation’, as well as with the regular presence and use of written texts in ‘oral’ performances, including improvisations (Furniss 2008). A convincing way to consider these two aspects is by applying cognitive schema theory to musical performance. In his research into North Indian classical music, Richard Widdess proposes what I consider to be the most convincing model for the study of an improvised musical performance. It is seen as ‘composed by a large variety of specialised schemas’, not necessarily ‘formalised as music theory’ but inclusive of ‘relatively fixed patterns (“scripts”, “formulae” or “riffs”) and highly flexible structures (“plans”, “templates”)’ (Widdess 2013: 200). In clarifying his

approach he proposes this example: ‘a jazz performance ... might combine a harmonic schema (chord sequence) with a melodic script (the song tune), a temporal schema (metre), pitch schemas (key, scale, mode), a verbal script (lyrics), a formal template (song–solos–song) and a stylistic schema including aspects of sound, playing/singing techniques, ornamentation, rhythm, melodic conventions etc. that are typical of jazz’ (Widdess 2013: 200–1). I would add that in jazz performances a number of the specialised schemas involved are pre-combined and fixed (i.e., memorised) in rehearsal as the main place of refinement, repetition and habituation; that written music (e.g., lead sheets) is often used in rehearsal and actual performances; and that notation (e.g., for orchestral parts) is necessary for some performances which are no less typical of jazz. From a performance studies perspective, one could continue by saying that most of these aspects are further schematised through the habits of individual performers and collective performances for the creation and implementation of individual and collective ‘musical personae’.

Following this approach, the ‘performance script’ can be defined as the cognitive place of the ‘combination’ – through repetition and habituation, in rehearsal and in performance – of a number of specialised ‘schemas’. In this respect, ‘text’ can be defined, in turn, as a cognitive dimension which is independent of the medium involved. Ultimately, both material texts (editions) and entextualisation processes provide pre-formed combinations of just some of the possible schemas to be used in performance. To see a score as a written, notational combination of some schemas involved in performance implies that the presence and use of a score should not significantly alter the approach to musical performance, but at the same time the score serves as one of the components that provides indications about how the performance actually works.

In terms of performance, written and oral traditions are not as divergent as they have generally been depicted, especially since ‘exclusively’ written musical traditions are both historically unlikely and culturally unthinkable. To revive what has been framed as a ‘written’ tradition through actual performances means to (re)invent a social practice, to (re)establish contexts which legitimate and support it, and to supply an effective ‘oral’ (i.e., living and lively) tradition: written music has only existed and can only exist within oral practices, as much as oral practices are often inclusive of written texts, used in different ways.

Widdess concludes his application of cognitive schema theory to improvised performance in ‘orally composed and transmitted music’ with a very significant – though apparently incidental – statement: ‘we need not assume that those performers who rely more on memorised material are any less reliant on schemas’ (Widdess 2013: 208). I propose to extend this statement to performers who rely more on scores – whether memorised or not. When used in performance, the score becomes so radically embedded in the actual (re)mediation – not only as ‘memorised material’, ‘specialised schema’ (Widdess 2013), or in terms of ‘embodied cognition’ (Leman 2007; Leman and Maes

2014; Geeves and Sutton 2014), but also as text which is actually consulted in and for performance – that it becomes the performers’ cognition of their own performances, as expressed by Rink through the concept of ‘impersonating the music’ (Rink 2017).

To draw from my ongoing research,<sup>1</sup> Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli’s piano performance is clearly ‘oriented’ by scores in the usual meaning of editions of notational texts representing musical works, yet it would be extremely reductive to frame it as being ‘determined’ by scores. His performance results from the combination of many heterogeneous aspects: not only are ‘setting’ (e.g., the meticulous preparation of the piano under his supervision) and ‘personal front’, which in Erving Goffman’s terms includes ‘appearance’ and ‘manner’ (Auslander 2006: 108), as significant here as they are in any other performance, but the score, in itself a combination of specialised schemas, patterns and templates (harmonic process, melodic conduct, metre, formal outline and so on), needs to be processed by a ‘performance script’, which results in a combination of a set of other significant schemas of behaviour and habits. In the case of Michelangeli I might name: an idiosyncratic schema for ‘Nachklappen’ (i.e., the anticipation of the bass in the left hand with respect to the melodic pitch or the chord in the right hand); a personal idea of ‘portamento’ applied to the piano, which inspires a schema according to which larger intervals may require a delay in time; a very personal emphasis on phrase marks to identify the important meaningful – rather than simply structural – units by means of annotations in the scores, used as reference points in both performance and teaching, corresponding to his personal approach to the score. The latter aspect explains why I would define Michelangeli’s performance ‘style’ as predominantly ‘neumatic’ (my use of Adorno’s term in the frame of Cook’s emphasis on style is intentional), that is, oriented by a selection of instructions from the score, ‘interpolated’ by his musical and sonic imagination, as well as by his whole thinking about music, which already orients the choice of the music to be performed, according to the definition of music as ‘an expressive resource musicians use to perform their personae’ (Auslander 2015: 531). This interacts with a number of other factors, including a personal evaluation of how the actual instrument, in its actual state, should play in the space of the performance, also considered in terms of the actual conditions (air humidity was Michelangeli’s main concern) which could influence last minute decisions about important sonic aspects (dynamic excursion, pedalling, touch) but which also led him, as quite often happened, to make the decision not to play, and to cancel the concert. Even these aspects were involved in the construction of the ‘musical persona’, that is, they were useful for his self-presentation and authentication with respect to the audience.

Michelangeli’s decisions about the works and the editions used for performance are no less significant in this regard: his preference for some ‘Urtext’-style editions (sometimes declared in the liner notes of his studio recordings) is relevant; he often felt the need of a text established in accordance with the

intentions of the author (which was a crucial aspect of his mentality as well as his discourse) without intrusive ‘encrustations’ often found in ‘enabling’ editions curated by performers. Nevertheless, his sense that a work was particularly suitable for his musical persona, or simply attractive relative to his performance style, could lead him to include spurious works in his otherwise extremely selective repertoire, or to opt for texts established and significantly reworked by curators (including performers) worthy of his trust. All these aspects confirm that, also in this context, what is written, the score as edition which establishes a text which represents a work, is an ‘ingredient’ of performance which does not in any way ‘determine’ it, and yet it contributes greatly to the overall performance – not only of the music, but also of the performer’s ‘persona’. Michelangeli’s oral and aural ‘scripts’ (some are available either as unauthorised or authorised recordings) in his dialogues with orchestral players, especially in relation to piano concertos, where he provided examples at the piano, are even more significant and indicative than the annotations in his pupils’ or his own scores. The latter only make sense within the frame of a performance practice, to which recordings can testify far more effectively.

The concept of the ‘performance script’, then, is helpful to bring different perspectives into play and keep them together within a nuanced frame of reference for an all-encompassing theory of musical performance that includes both ‘texts’ as material editions and ‘text’ as a cognitive element relying on entextualisation processes – processes which are actively involved even in performances of written music. Entextualisation theory and performance theory ultimately converge in saying that musicians always perform something, including the improvisation they are negotiating in real time; something which is not necessary to define further when it is evident that it could be reperformed or reproduced, especially as it receives a title, that is, a label which identifies it; something which performs the same cultural function ascribed to texts, editions and works.

### **Encouraging dialogue**

The combination of radical mediation and performance theory provides the epistemological basis to escape the impasse in which the musicological discourse on text and performance has become stuck on account of the recent emphasis on music ‘as performance’. The exit strategy – on one hand a reflection on the complexity of the textual dimension, and on the other an operational (re)definition of ‘performance script’ as a mediating and intermediate instance between text and performance – provides a theoretical model for an exploration of the text–performance continuum. The implementation of the interdisciplinary framework by means of entextualisation theory and schema theory as applied to oral performance in ethnomusicology uncovers a cognitive space that makes it possible to go beyond the separation of text and performance, and at the same time to recognise the effectiveness of the textual dimension in performance. The model also brings forth

arguments for a reconsideration of the gap between ‘oral’ and ‘written’ traditions where musical performance is concerned, which has a number of methodological implications. In this respect, the ‘performance script’ is redefined as the effective combination of a number of cognitive schemas in performance, whether they are oriented by notational texts as scores or not. Whichever the case, the ‘performance script’ is oriented by processes of entextualisation that either transform the selection of some indications of the score into cognitive schemas for performance, in combination with many others, or directly provide cognitive schemas that orient the performance. In the latter case it is possible to ‘extract’ the text from performance as a cognitive schema in order to make it reproducible and recognisable for possible reperformance. There is, therefore, no decisive difference whether a musical performance relies more on memorised material, on written scores (which are often memorised), or on other, unwritten schemas combined in real time during performance; and there is no real cognitive discontinuity between text and performance in this regard.

This chapter is the result of an interdisciplinary dialogue as an epistemological instrument useful to overcome the unavoidable limits of disciplinary thinking – limits which emerge perhaps more clearly at moments of promised disciplinary turns and new paradigms, for these end up creating or enhancing cultural dichotomies and controversies that reside internally within the assumptions of a single discipline. The comparison with different disciplinary perspectives is all the more vital in the case of performance, which is the main field of research in the discipline of performance studies, as well as a main concern of ethnomusicology for many decades now. This is the reason why I have favoured dialogue with the disciplines that I consider to be natural extensions of musicology, increasingly oriented to the study of music in performance and media productions. I have tried to reconsider the contribution of past perspectives, in addition to the diverging assumptions of other disciplinary fields, not only relative to performance but also to the concept of text, in order not to risk getting caught up in problems which often disappear as soon as the perspective changes.

## Note

- 1 Some of the topics briefly mentioned in this paragraph are more extensively addressed in a previous chapter of mine (Cecchi 2016).

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