THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

The intricacies and challenges of musical performance have recently attracted the attention of writers and scholars to a greater extent than ever before. Research into the performer's experience has begun to explore such areas as practice techniques, performance anxiety and memorisation, as well as many other professional issues. Historical performance practice has been the subject of lively debate way beyond academic circles, mirroring its high profile in the recording studio and the concert hall. Reflecting the strong ongoing interest in the role of performers and performance, this *History* brings together research from leading scholars and historians, and, importantly, features contributions from accomplished performers, whose practical experiences give the volume a unique vitality. Moving the focus away from the composers and onto the musicians responsible for bringing the music to life, the *History* presents a fresh, integrated and innovative perspective on performance history and practice, from the earliest times to today.

COLIN LAWSON is Director of the Royal College of Music, London. He has an international profile as a period clarinettist and has played principal in most of Britain's leading period orchestras, notably The Hanover Band, the English Concert and the London Classical Players, with whom he has recorded extensively and toured worldwide. He has published widely, and is co-editor, with Robin Stowell, of a series of Cambridge Handbooks to the Historical Performance of Music, for which he co-authored an introductory volume and contributed a book on the early clarinet.

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COLIN LAWSON
and
ROBIN STOWELL

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TIM CARTER was born in Australia and studied in the United Kingdom. He is the author of the Cambridge Opera Handbook on Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (1987), *Jacopo Peri (1561–1633): His Life and Works* (1989), *Music in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy* (1992), *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence* and *Monteverdi and his Contemporaries* (both 2000), *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (2002), and *'Oklahoma!' The Making of an American Musical* (2007). In 2001 he moved from Royal Holloway, University of London, to become David G. Frey Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was chair of the Music Department from 2004 to 2009. He is currently preparing an edition of Kurt Weill's first musical composed in the US, *Johnny Johnson* (to a play by Paul Green).

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COLIN LAWSON is Director of the Royal College of Music, London. He has an international profile as a period clarinettist and has played principal in most of Britain's leading period orchestras, notably The Hanover Band, the English Concert and the London Classical Players, with whom he has recorded extensively and toured worldwide. Described by *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* as 'a brilliant, absolutely world-class player' he has appeared as a soloist in many international venues, including London's major concert halls and New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. His recent discography includes two volumes of sonatas by Lefèvre in their original scoring for C clarinet and cello. Colin has published widely, especially for Cambridge University Press. With Robin Stowell, he is co-editor of a series of Cambridge Handbooks to the Historical Performance of Music, for which he co-authored an introductory volume and contributed a book on the early clarinet.

NATASHA LOGES gained her B.Mus. in piano performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and her M.Mus. at King's College, London. She completed her doctoral thesis at the Royal Academy of Music, before taking up her current post as Assistant Head of Programmes at the Royal College of Music. She has published articles on Brahms's Lieder in *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* (2006), *Indiana Theory Review* (2005) and in *Music and Literature in German Romanticism* (2004). Natasha also works as an accompanist, and has performed in St John's, Smith Square, London and the Holywell Music Room, Oxford; she has also broadcast live for BBC Radio 3.

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Robin Stowell is Professor of Music and Director of the Centre for Research into Historically Informed Performance at Cardiff University. Educated at Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music, he is also a violinist/period violinist, and he has performed, broadcast and recorded with the Academy of Ancient Music and other period ensembles. Since his pioneering book *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (1985) he has published widely on issues of performance practice, organology, music of the 'long eighteenth century', violinists, chamber music and string playing in general. His more recent major publications include *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet* (2003), *The Early Violin and Viola* (2001), a monograph on Beethoven's Violin Concerto (1998) and a co-authored volume (with Colin Lawson) on historical performance (1999), the first of a series of which he is co-editor.

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Dering's Latin Motets for 1–3 voices and continuo was published in 2008 in the series *Musica Britannica*.

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Editors' preface

Over the past generation the intricacies and challenges of musical performance have attracted the attention of writers and scholars to a greater extent than ever before. The net has been cast widely, as research into the performer's experience has begun to explore such areas as practice techniques, performance anxiety and memorisation, as well as professional issues such as alcohol and drug abuse. There has even been greater recognition that a true understanding of musical excellence draws fruitfully upon such diverse fields as exercise science, psychophysiology, sports psychology, cognitive science and medicine. Furthermore, a relatively recent sub-discipline loosely embraced by the term 'performance studies' has circled around a large range of subject matter while not always fully engaging the attention of the executants themselves. At the same time, historical performance practice has been the subject of lively debate way beyond academic circles, mirroring its high profile in the recording studio and the concert hall. Histories of music nevertheless continue stubbornly to be based on composers and their achievements rather than on those musicians who have been responsible for bringing the music to life. Like Heinrich Schenker, many theorists have considered 'the mechanical realization of the work of art . . . superfluous', not least because 'a composition does not require a performance in order to exist'.[1] Whatever the reason, 'we have regarded performance as a totally secondary aspect of music, merely a clothing or a realisation of "the real thing", which are the written dots on the page'.[2] The complex relationship of score, musical work and performance demands a more flexible and detailed approach. 'For generations, we wrote the story of music as the history of compositions. But it is surely a mistake to think that music actually exists on library shelves in weighty collected editions. It is the history of performance that has shaped the course of music, and the history of

1 H. Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, ed. H. Esser, trans. I. S. Scott, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 3.
2 N. Kenyon, 'Musical Tradition in a Time of Anxiety', Twelfth Leverhulme Memorial Lecture, The Leverhulme Trust (2005), p. 6.

performance has never been written. The history of repertories and institutions and taste and reception is only beginning to be written.'[3]

The Cambridge History of Musical Performance takes up the challenge, aspiring to be nothing less than the largest and most comprehensive history of musical performance to be published in the English language. Apart from Frederick Dorian's *The History of Music in Performance* (New York, 1942), a now outdated book and of limited value, it can reasonably be claimed that there has been no previous publication on the subject, and certainly none matching the scope of the content and scholarly expertise represented within its pages. A collaborative project by leading music scholars, historians and practitioners, it seeks to trace the rich panorama of performance history, conventions and practices from the Ancient World to the present day, aiming to provide not only an invaluable and up-to-date source of reference about the subject but also an appreciation of the historical interrelationship of style and interpretation during the various musical epochs.

The format of this volume aligns with others in the 'Cambridge History' series. It reflects the research and performance experience of an international authorship, presenting a synthetic historical overview of a fascinating and complex subject that demands distinctive treatment. Much of the book addresses performance and performance practices in specific periods of history from times ancient to modern. From the Middle Ages onwards, an overview chapter for each period lays the historical foundations on which the immediately succeeding chapters are built, devoted respectively to vocal and instrumental performance. Case studies outline the performance history and the performance practice issues involved in interpreting a particular work or works from six of the periods under scrutiny. By way of introduction to this investigation of chronological developments, the opening chapters address broader issues that are immediately relevant to the performance of music, focusing respectively upon 'Performance today', 'Political process, Social structure and musical performance in Europe since 1450', 'The evidence', 'The performer and the composer', 'The teaching of performance', and 'Music and musical performance: histories in disjunction?'

With classical music increasingly being challenged in our society by pop music, world musics and a vast range of alternative mass entertainment, advocacy is clearly an important aspect of any performer's work. Yet the digital age has brought new opportunities, as the ways in which musical performance is disseminated have become subject to radical change. Contributors discuss these technological developments along with other performance-related topics

3 *Ibid.*

such as repertoires, audiences, criticism, careers, patronage and venues. An analysis of the complex and ever-changing relationship between composers and performers centres upon several areas of enquiry such as notational conventions, leadership roles and the cult of personality. Performance through the ages has been subject to a variety of didactic practices, often focusing on musical learning within institutions, whether church, court, university or conservatoire. An appropriate curriculum for performers beyond the immediate study of music has been promulgated in many different contexts, one eighteenth-century source prescribing for music students 'the whole of worldly wisdom, as well as mathematics, poetry, rhetoric and many languages'.[4] This idealism scarcely found long-term favour, though in more recent times theory and analysis have gradually been supplemented by a host of other performance-related subjects, such as acoustics, performance practice, psychology and world music. In addition, the increasing interaction of performers with their communities has brought into focus the benefits of music to disadvantaged members of society.

Recording has made musical performance durable, its natural evanescence captured and preserved by technology. No longer is music's sound necessarily inseparable from the actions of the performers creating it, with a perishability once described by Adam Smith (*The Wealth of Nations*, 1776) as 'leaving behind no tangible, vendible commodity'.[5] And social, economic and cultural change after Smith's day – with new expectations of a more leisured society for its edification and entertainment – meant that the virtuoso eventually became a social achiever, acclaimed for his skills and exploited for his marketability. This was a new situation compared with Smith's observation (1776) that being a professional performer was an essentially discreditable occupation, 'a sort of public prostitution'. Such change over so short a time underlines the advisability of examining concepts of canon, repertoire and music reception in relation to the ways in which musical performance has been marketed and distributed. Traditionally, music was listened to within some sort of social context, such as a concert or a liturgical setting. This experience generated a collective aesthetic response in groups of listeners, giving rise to a common understanding of what constituted a canon of exemplary works. But today's digital miniaturisation, and the unparalleled choice of recorded repertoire now available, puts consumers (with their own individual sensibilities and musical preferences) in complete control of what they listen to, when they listen and whether they listen to favourite moments or an entire work. Increasingly,

4 P. Poulin, 'A view of eighteenth-century musical life and training: Anton Stadler's "Musick Plan"', *Music & Letters*, 71 (1990), 215–24.
5 A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), ed. E. Cannan, New York, Random House, 2000, p. 361.

therefore, today's listening habits reflect little experience of music's original social environments and conventions. This moves us away from the old acceptance of a hierarchy of works to more contingent and less codified musical values – effectively a disruption that challenges established patterns and ideologies of reception, and questions the continuing relevance of the canon.

Given that musical performance takes place within the elusive medium of sound there is of course a sense in which much of its history before the invention of 'non-human storage of music'[6] has entirely disappeared. 'Time and again, therefore, earlier epochs characterize performance as something valid only for the present, or for veiled, mediated recollection; and though performance may have been reflected, represented and even to some extent "recorded" in literary or visual art, music in performance was not essentially open to scientific or even philosophical inspection.'[7] When Thomas Edison shouted 'Mary had a little lamb' into a phonograph in 1877, the musical world began to change; some twenty-five years later the recordings of Enrico Caruso acquired a mass market and the nature of the evidence for performance was revolutionised. Early recordings have recently attracted a great deal of attention, as have the attitudes and achievements of those pioneering musicians who embraced studio work with varying degrees of enthusiasm and reluctance during the first half of the twentieth century. Among pianists Wilhelm Kempff recognised the opportunity to achieve a perfect interpretation and over his long life became a studio master, exclusive to Deutsche Grammophon from 1935 until his death in 1991; yet on stage he was all too prone to disappoint, unable to reproduce the raptness or subtle variants of colour. During his lifetime, the art of recording and live performance became radically different in scope and intent.[8] By contrast, Artur Schnabel argued that recording went against the very nature of performance, by a dehumanising elimination of contact between player and listener. Though later convinced to record, he found the process difficult; 'I suffered agonies and was in a state of despair. . . . Everything was artificial – the light, the air, the sound – and it took me quite a long time to get the company to adjust some of their equipment to music.'[9] In Beethoven and Schubert an inspirational spontaneity (unfettered by insistence on accuracy) was his legacy.

6 J. Dunsby, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd edn, 29 vols., London, Macmillan, 2001, vol. 19, p. 346, art. 'Performance'.
7 *Ibid.*
8 N. Lebrecht, *Maestros, Masterpieces & Madness: the Secret Life & Shameful Death of the Classical Record Industry*, London, Allen Lane, 2007, p. 8.
9 A. Schnabel, *My Life and Music*, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1970, p. 98, cited in Lebrecht, *Maestros, Masterpieces & Madness*, p. 9.

In charting what he regards as the death of the classical recording industry, Norman Lebrecht has observed that Karajan, Pavarotti and Solti are the top-selling classical artists (respectively 200, 100 and 50 million records). He claims that classical sales as a whole amount to somewhere between 1 and 1.3 billion records, a similar number to the Beatles. Lebrecht's all-time classical chart is topped by Solti's *Ring Cycle* (18 million), the Three Tenors (14 million) and I Musici's *Four Seasons* (9.5 million). He excludes non-classical or crossover submissions such as *Titanic* (25 million) and Charlotte Church (10 million).[10] It is worth recalling here that much of today's terminology had no place in earlier times, with 'crossover' itself an obvious example. The same caveat applies to words such as 'genius' or 'masterpiece'. In other words, historical evidence for performance needs to be read in the spirit of its own times. Audiences for performers before the age of recording inevitably had different priorities. The appearance of Paganini or Liszt for a one-night musical stand was about more than just music, or worse still, musical accuracy. Moving back in time, it is clear that in Mozart's day musical cities such as Vienna and Prague boasted quite distinctive musical personalities. In earlier historical periods the question arises as to what can reasonably be defined as music (with or without notation). In recreating medieval song that is manifestly raw, dramatic and arresting, today's singer might be forgiven for feeling shackled by concerns such as the replication of 'correct' tempos, 'effective' dynamics and 'appropriate' textures, to say nothing of issues of pitch, temperament and pronunciation. How, for instance, might latter-day performers recreate the medieval sound world of lone minstrels, choirs of monks, troupes of liturgical dramatists, ensembles of early polyphonists or gatherings of enthusiastic scholars? Clearly, any investigation of any performances from before the age of recording will pose many more questions than can readily be answered.

This book is intended to stimulate intelligent thought about the role of performers and performance and shed new light on issues of performance history and practice. It includes contributions not only from scholars but also from accomplished performers, whose practical experiences have shaped their chapters and lent the volume a unique vitality and cogency. It aims to be wide-ranging but can never be exhaustive. Limitations of space have inevitably forced authors to be highly selective in their individual dissertations. Some have opted to use the microscope to address key issues relevant to their allotted topic/period, while others have considered a telescopic approach more appropriate to their needs. This decision has been theirs, but the final responsibility for content and coverage is ours.

10 Lebrecht, *Maestros, Masterpieces & Madness*, pp. 136–8.

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