Introduction
Minding the Gaps

Recently, I was sorting through piles of old papers in my office: article offprints, discarded art projects, and programs from performances past, including one from a production of *Singing in the Rain* at my daughter's school. This particular material object provoked a cavalcade of memories: of my daughter playing the role of the film director, a part originally designed for a male actor; of two boys just entering puberty who gamely tap-danced and struggled with their breaking voices to emulate Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor. Clearly, the embodiment of roles made famous by others produced interpretative tensions. And yet, I did not evaluate these child performers in the same way as adult actors. I viewed my daughter's and her classmates' singing, dancing, and acting through the rosy lens of parental devotion. I did not attend the musical solely to be entertained, for it was a pedagogical performance at school – a demonstration of what the children had learned. As I thought about my daughter and her classmates singing, dancing, and acting, my mind turned to another musical performance by another set of schoolchildren over three centuries earlier: Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate's *Dido and Aeneas*, performed by girls at Josias Priest's school in Chelsea *c*. 1688. Was that event in the distant past so different than *Singing in the Rain* at my daughter's school? Was I witnessing in upstate New York a remnant of a much longer tradition of pedagogical performance, an echo of what other children from another time did in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England?

Admittedly, the questions prompted by this program are not the ones most parents would ask. They arose because for several years I have been researching music and performance in early modern English schools, compiling various documents and musical scores for my study. Still, it struck me that the questions raised by *Singing in the Rain* – the nature of pedagogical performance, the embodied realities of child actors, the relationship between past and present – could be fruitfully applied to early modern school performances, to the materials I had collected from the archive.

I am certainly not the first to become infatuated with the topic of early modern education and its relationship to the larger society. Kenneth

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Charlton,[1] Rosamond O'Day,[2] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos,[3] and Paul Griffiths[4] have recovered the lived experiences of early modern boys and girls, while literary scholar Lynn Enterline has drawn fascinating connections between theater and schoolroom, as she considered what pedagogues taught their charges about rhetoric, oratory, and gender, and how Shakespeare refashioned and subverted the lessons he learned at grammar school in his plays.[5] Another strand of scholarship examines the relationship between education and children as performers and characters onstage, as is exemplified by the essay collection *Childhood, Education, and the Stage in Early Modern England*.[6] Musicologists have taken up the broader subject of musical instruction in England and Europe, including a study by Bernarr Rainbow and Gordon Cox,[7] and an essay collection *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*.[8] My book is indebted in countless ways to the excellent historical and interpretative work done by my predecessors, but none of these studies provide a comprehensive view of school-based performances and the pedagogical purposes of such activities. In part, this has to do with the nature of the surviving sources. As I collected materials for my study, I kept finding gaps that pointed toward the things I might never know – missing musical notation, absent choreographies, the embodied physicality of performing children from centuries past.

Minding these gaps forced me to contemplate the nature of the archive, for these material remains are not performances: they simultaneously enlighten and occlude.[9] The logic of the archive (that documents reveal

[1] Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1999).

[2] Rosamond O'Day, *Education and Society, 1500–1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (London: Longman, 1982).

[3] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

[4] Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[5] Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[6] Richard Preiss and Deanne Williams, eds., *Childhood, Education, and the Stage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[7] Bernarr Rainbow and Gordon Cox, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice: A Survey from 800 BC* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006).

[8] Russell E. Murray, Jr., Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus, eds., *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[9] Rebecca Schneider has examined how the logic of the archive and its insistence on the ephemerality of performance has constrained analysis in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011), 87–110. Schneider's work is indebted in many respects to Diana Taylor's discussion in *The Archive and the Repertoire:*

positivistic truths) may be seductive, but it also limits us, constraining the questions we ask, the areas of inquiry we take on.[10] For instance, my daughter's program is the only trace of her performance I have. When I came across it during my office cleaning, the program provoked memories, for I had been there. I had witnessed the event firsthand. But what if I hadn't attended *Singing in the Rain*? What if the program were the only thing I had to reconstruct what happened? It lists the musical numbers, location of the performance, and the names of the participants, but little else. This thin program booklet also does not indicate who was in the audience and how they received the performance.

The repertory – the archival remains of performance in early modern schools – presents exactly this methodological crux. All that survives are a few scattered manuscripts, printed librettos, or plays with indications that they were performed at a school. To address the problem, I needed to develop a theory of absence, a hermeneutic comfortable with the "perhaps," the "maybe." Musicologists, often methodologically aligned with historians, have generally been uncomfortable with uncertainty. We seek evidence – librettos, musical scores – to support our claims. As Nicholas Cook observed in 2014, the musicological tendency is still to place undue weight on the authority of the score.[11] Thus, because it was thought that relatively few records of school-based performance survive or they survive incompletely, a thorough and systematic investigation of this phenomenon has not been attempted before now. As Neal Zaslaw commented in a 1977 article on *Orpheus and Euridice*, a masque given at a girls' school in Besselsleigh, "eight masques over half a century is hardly an adequate number for purposes of defining the genre or of demonstrating any continuities of tradition."[12] Zaslaw made a fair point. How does one study what has disappeared or survives in incomplete form?

This book tackles precisely that problem, as I deploy a methodology that copes with gaps and absences using various strategies. My documents of performance (to use theater historian Tiffany Stern's terminology) go beyond scores, librettos, and plays with music, although I consider those

    Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), although Schneider believes that Taylor draws a false dichotomy between archive and repertoire; for Schneider, the archive is also potentially performative.

[10] Nicholas Cook made a similar point about musicology in *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[11] Ibid., 11.

[12] Neal Zaslaw, "An English 'Orpheus and Euridice' of 1697," *The Musical Times* 118, 1616 (1977): 807.

as well.[13] I combed the archives to find descriptions of school performances in letters and documents written by pupils' family members, school records from local and national archives that mention performance activities, and newspaper advertisements. I collected printed and manuscript music connected with personnel who worked at schools, for musical-theatrical performances before an audience were only the most public manifestation of a larger pedagogical practice. I have even analyzed plays performed on the London stage that feature school-based singing, dancing, and acting to understand the place pedagogical performance occupied in the cultural imagination. Casting my net broadly has allowed me to recover a more nuanced picture of what was at stake when children performed at school, demonstrating that school-based performance and training in the arts were more widespread in post-Reformation England than has previously been recognized. The fruits of this archival labor will be considered in more detail in the chapters that follow.

My decision to think holistically about school-based performance, even beyond what materially remains, has been influenced by a range of scholars. Performance studies theorist Richard Schechner has argued that a performance encompasses activities that occur both onstage and off, and thus my decision to recover information about the constitution of the audience where possible and to think through the implications of location and the performers' identities.[14] From the discipline of music, Christopher Small and Carolyn Abbate have also analyzed performance, and I have adopted some of their approaches. In Small's 1998 study, *Musicking*, he explored music as an activity, as something people do, using Geertzian thick description to illustrate his thesis, a strategy I have sometimes used as I investigate what may have happened in the early modern schoolroom.[15] I have also been inspired by Abbate's compelling, but too rigid, assertion that performance is "drastic," that it is essentially opposed to the gnostic, interpretative enterprise. It may be difficult to think interpretatively *while* performing and performance unsettles and might even disrupt the semantic content of texts, but, as I argue throughout this study, these unsettling qualities and their potentialities can be subjected to hermeneutical

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[13] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[14] Richard Schechner, "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance," *The Drama Review: TDR* 17, 3 (1973): 8.

[15] Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: Wesleyan/University Press of New England, 1998).

inquiry.[16] To aid with this hermeneutical historical imagining, I have turned to phenomenological approaches developed in literary and performance studies, particularly Bruce R. Smith's formulation, in which he considers "the illusion of presence . . . in historical, culturally specific ways."[17] This has allowed me to flesh out my gap-filled sources by considering how the act of performance might push against text-bound interpretations and, more specifically, how the embodied acting, singing, dancing, and playing of early modern children might have disrupted or altered meaning. These disruptions might extend to the sound of the voice, as the scholarship of Gina Bloom about boy actors has shown,[18] or bodily gestures and move-ments, as described by Carrie Noland and Susan Leigh Foster.[19]

Nevertheless, I cannot time travel back to early modern England to witness these performance events for myself, so I am still reliant on texts for my interpretation. The understanding of my archival remains – these traces of performances past – has been substantially shaped by the work of theater historians and musicologists who have understood material sources through the lens of performance. In developing my methodology, the work of Stern and Rebecca Herissone has been particularly important. In their elegant studies of early modern print and manuscript culture, they have woven together gap-filled evidence to formulate a more coherent idea of how seventeenth-century creative practices are represented in the tex-tual record.[20] Herissone has classified the types of manuscript sources in early modern England, why they were created and for what purpose, and what they reveal about performance practices. Stern has described the "patchiness" of early modern plays: "every bit of a play as it was gathered together for a production was a paratext, in that every bit of a play was

16 Carolyn Abbate, "Music: Drastic or Gnostic," *Critical Inquiry* 30, 3 (2004): 505–536.
17 Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 27. Simon Smith's *Musical Response in the Early Modern Playhouse, 1603–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) has also influenced my thinking.
18 Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
19 Noland considered how gestures, "learned techniques of the body, are the means by which cultural conditioning is simultaneously embodied and put to the test" (p. 2) while Foster has approached "the body's involvement in any activity with an assumption of potential agency to participate in or resist whatever forms of cultural production are underway" (p. 15). See Carrie Noland, *Agency and Embodiment: Performing Gestures/Producing Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009) and Susan Leigh Foster, "Choreographing History," in *Choreographing History*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 3–21.
20 The aforementioned Stern, *Documents of Performance*; Rebecca Herissone's *Musical Creativity in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Kate van Orden's engagement with print culture has also informed this project in more subtle ways; *Materialities: Books, Readers, and the Chanson in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

'auxiliary' to every other bit: it was performance that made a text from those paratexts, with printed plays always falling a little short because [they were] always an incomplete reflection of that."[21] As Stern's comment indicates, the act of performance brought the most complete version of the "text" into being, a point also made by Stephen Orgel: "playhouse scripts were characteristically unstable, designed to be realized on the stage, and designed to change in the process of that realization."[22] Indeed, creators of early modern scores and plays purposely left gaps for the performer to fill. Bruce Haynes discussed the "thin writing" that characterizes early modern musical sources: "Thin writing was not thin because 'thick' writing hadn't been invented yet; it was deliberate. It accommodated spontaneous input from the performers."[23] The gaps in my archive sometimes point toward the presence of early modern performers and their role in the creative process; thus, to fully comprehend these documents of performance we must imagine their manner of realization by children and their teachers.[24]

Finally, throughout my study I demonstrate the persistence of some of these early modern pedagogical traditions, showing how historical practices might live on through embodied performance today. In so doing, I resist Peggy Phelan's influential claim that performance is ephemeral and irretrievable.[25] Instead, by re-animating a score or script, by performing it now, we might serve as a conduit between past and present. Musicologist Elisabeth LeGuin has observed: "as living performer of Boccherini's sonata, a work which he wrote for himself to play, I am aware of acting the connection between parts of someone who cannot be here in the flesh."[26] In other words, by playing Boccherini's score, a script he wrote for himself and his body, LeGuin conjured something of his physicality. Or, as

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[21] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 256.

[22] Stephen Orgel, *Imagining Shakespeare: A History of Texts and Visions* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xiv.

[23] Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.

[24] Cook discussed how performers became relegated to mere interpreters of the composer's intentions by the nineteenth century in *Beyond the Score*, 9–32. I argue for the importance of performers as creators on the Restoration stage in "'Our Friend Venus Performed to a Miracle': Anne Bracegirdle, John Eccles, and Creativity," in *Concepts of Creativity in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Rebecca Herissone and Alan Howard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 255–280.

[25] Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance: Representation Without Reproduction," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 146–166.

[26] Elisabeth LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 24.

performance studies scholar Joseph Roach has commented more radically, perhaps the performed past never actually disappears. In *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, Roach described a conversation with his students. "When [they] ask about the problems of reconstructing historical performances – tasks I have shared in producing such works as Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate's *Dido and Aeneas* with period instruments and dance styles – I now ask them: What evidence do we have that they ever died out?"[27]

Pedagogical performance was an activity, something children did, and thus I have organized my study around a series of performance-based questions. Chapter 1 further explains the methodological orientation of the project and defines the parameters of the study, delineating the purposes of various educational institutions in post-Reformation England (the grammar school, the charity school, the academy, and the boarding school) and the conflicted role music and dance played in English life and educational schema more generally. The chapters that follow explore how the schoolroom interacted with other performance spaces (the church, the court, the domicile, the concert room, the public theater) and performed identities (religious, gendered, classed). Each of these chapters opens with a reaction to a specific element of children's performance, as recorded in a diary entry, mandates in grammar-school statutes, a doting letter from a relative, and reviews of recent opera productions, before moving to a consideration of the archival remains of performance and the ways in which these documents might have been animated by early modern schoolchildren. By shifting between the material and the phenomenological I hope to mind the gaps in my archive in creative ways, putting flesh on the bones of early modern pedagogical performance. My study concludes with an analysis of a recent performance of *Dido and Aeneas* that engages directly with the specter of Chelsea: Deborah Warner and William Christie's production from 2008 at the Opéra Comique in Paris, where unruly schoolgirls interjected themselves into the action – running, dancing imperfectly, making noise – their unpredictable behavior providing a fleshly connection to the performative past.

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[27] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xii.

1 | Situating Pedagogical Performance

> I went this evening to see the order of the boys and children at Christ's
> Hospital. There were neere 800 boys and girls so decently clad, cleanly lodg'd,
> so wholesomly fed, so admirably taught . . . They sung a psalme before they
> sat downe to supper in the greate hall, to an organ which play'd the whole
> time, with such cheerfull harmony that it seemed to me a vision of angels.[1]

On 10 March 1687 John Evelyn documented his visit to the charity school
Christ's Hospital in his diary. For him, the sound of the children's psalm
singing, as well as their modest clothing and spotless environment,
revealed their piety and morality. In a wonderful moment of synesthesia,
Evelyn described their singing to the organ as a "vision of angels." At
Christ's Hospital he found a multimedia incubator of religious sentiment –
the school, with its "cheerfull harmony" and psalm singing and clean living
was simultaneously church, school, and concert room.

This study seeks to understand pedagogical performance as a node
through which various cultural energies flowed – spiritual, pedagogical,
and recreational – but in order to do so we must first understand something
of the educational institutions that formed in early modern England and the
role performance was thought to play in education more generally. Before
the Tudor period, children in England had frequently been educated in the
household; however, educational institutions developed in the sixteenth
century that helped to define the idea of childhood, as students were
educated in age-identified groups.[2] Although children's educational experi-
ences were affected by gender, class, and location (city or rural), as historian
Rosamond O'Day stated, "it is tempting to suggest that three distinct periods
of dependence were age-identified by seventeenth-century society: child-
hood, adolescence (in school) and youth (in apprenticeship or service)."[3]

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[1] John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1955), 542.

[2] Rosamond O'Day, *Education and Society, 1500–1800: The Social Foundations of Education in
Early Modern Britain* (London: Longman, 1982), 3.

[3] O'Day, *Education and Society*, 4. On childhood and the periods of life, see also Philippe Ariès,
Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred
A. Knopf, 1962), 15–49.

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Although O'Day's generalization is useful, early modern thinkers sometimes followed Galen's older method of classification: "infancy" up to age seven, when boys were "breeched"; "childhood" until fifteen; and "adolescency" from fifteen to twenty-five.[4]

This book focuses on the performances given by young people educated in grammar schools, academies, charity schools, or boarding schools for girls. This education could have begun as early as five, but usually commenced about seven or eight, after students could read or spell.[5] The end of schooling depended on a range of factors. Children from charity schools might take up apprenticeships or grammar school boys might go to university, the latter often happening around fourteen.[6] Girls' education was terminated for a range of reasons and at different ages: sometimes the parents could not pay the fees, as was the case with Edmund Verney and his daughter Mary (Molly), and sometimes they left to enter the marriage market.[7]

This early phase of education was essential, as the period of youth was simultaneously configured as one of exuberance and hope and of potential licentiousness, for both boys and girls.[8] To curb this potential unruliness, educators crafted strategies to shape their students into obedient, functional members of society, according to the gender norms of their time.[9]

[4] Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1999), 10–11. Paul Griffiths noted that the "boundary between childhood, youth, and adulthood were sometimes blurred"; see *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 32. See also Ariès's influential study, *Centuries of Childhood*.

[5] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 55 and O'Day, *Education and Society*, 62.

[6] The age when people took up apprenticeships varied; Carol Kazmierczak Manzione, *Christ's Hospital of London, 1552–1598: "A Passing Deed of Pity"* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1995), 147–150.

[7] Edmund told his son Edmund Jr. in a letter dated 2 February 1687/8 that he owed Mrs. Priest money and "could not pay Her and I ow hur Aboud 20 pounds for your sister . . . I do not intend to send you[r] sister to skool any moore." The British Library holds a microfilm copy of the Verney correspondence, and this letter can be found on the reel with the shelfmark M636/42.

[8] Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 34; Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24. On the potential unruliness of early modern girlhood, see Deanne Williams, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4–6 and Jennifer Higginbotham, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Sisters: Gender, Transgression, Adolescence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), particularly chapter 2.

[9] See, for example, Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 27–30. For an overview of the relationship between gender and pedagogy, see Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson, "'Shall I teach you to know?': Intersections of Pedagogy, Performance and Gender," in *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England: Gender, Instruction, and Performance*, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 1–17.

Although a few more enlightened educators such as Richard Mulcaster advocated for some degree of educational parity between the sexes,[10] many others claimed that boys and girls needed to be educated in radically different ways to prepare them for the disparate demands of their adult existence. For boys of the gentry, the middling ranks, and even below, this often meant a classical education at a grammar school.

Educating Boys in the Arts

By the early seventeenth century many communities supported a local grammar school, where boys learned the skills they needed to succeed in the public sphere.[11] These institutions had proliferated in the sixteenth century and were funded through various schemes: generally, a wealthy landowner, a clergyman, merchant, or yeoman founded the school.[12] The schoolmasters of endowed grammar schools had often taken ecclesiastical orders; freelance schoolmasters had to get permission from the local bishop to teach.[13] The student body varied. Some schools drew upon those who could pay fees, other communities had "free" schools that offered instruction for certain groups of children (the poor or relatives of the founder, for instance),[14] and a few included girls among the student body.[15] The register of scholars at the grammar school at Rivington lists girls from 1615 well into the eighteenth century.[16] In terms of class status,

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[10] As Anthony Fletcher pointed out, a small number of noblewomen were given a classical education – they were tutored at home; *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 366–67. For Mulcaster's views on the education of women, see *Positions wherein those Primitive Circumstances be Examined, which are Necessary for the Training Up of Children* (London, 1581), 166–183.

[11] An earlier version of this section appears in Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "Schoolboy Performance in the Post-Reformation North-East," in *Music of the North-East*, ed. Stephanie Carter, Kirsten Gibson, and Roz Southey (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, Forthcoming).

[12] Stow's *Survey of London* (1603) lists citizens of London who founded grammar schools. Many were from the merchant class, although sometimes yeomen founded schools. Foster Watson, *The Old Grammar Schools,* rept edn (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 46–49.

[13] O'Day, *Education and Society*, 27.

[14] Ibid., 19. Unfortunately, corruption sometimes undermined benevolence: "the parents who could afford to pay bribed the teachers to ensure places and preferential treatment for their children in school." See also Foster Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660: Their Curriculum and Practice*, rept edn (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 23.

[15] Co-education of the sexes in grammar school was common enough in the sixteenth century that educational theorist Mulcaster found it necessary to argue against it; O'Day, *Education and Society*, 185 and Charlton, *Women, Religion, and Education*, 132.

[16] GB-LRO DX/94/98, "Register, containing lists of scholars 1615–1833."