Chapter I

Historical Background for Lussy’s Theory of Expressive Performance

One of the most important principles of the ancient art of rhetoric, a principle that provided the model for theories of compositional practice throughout the eighteenth century, was that if the orator was to attain his principal aim of eliciting affective response from his listeners, he must first make sense. The passions could be stirred to the degree that the listener could follow the connections between ideas, and comprehend the logic of the speech. As obvious as the validity of this principle may sound, its profound implication concerning the mechanisms of human psychology, the fact that the affective and cognitive processes operate interactively has often been overlooked.

Modern secondary literature concerning eighteenth-century music theory presents the rhetorical model as functioning mainly to emphasize the structural analogies of verbal and musical composition, playing down the role of affective content in the recognition of music as a language. Compositional treatises of the eighteenth century, however, display an awareness by their writers of the subtle interaction between cognitive and affective factors shaping the compositional processes as well as the listening experience. Indeed, if there is one subtext common to the various eighteenth-century treatises on compositional practice, it is the idea that the composer has to guide the listener along recognizable paths structured in accordance with the affective response desired.

Current critical writings on the musical aesthetics of the eighteenth century, on the other hand, define the characteristic musical experience of the eighteenth-century listener primarily as sensual and affective. Accordingly, feelings play the superior role over and above reason in shaping the listening experience. Yet, the actual eighteenth-century sources on musical aesthetics – the writings of authors like Batteux, Rousseau, Krause and Sulzer – attest to a constant effort to come to terms with the fact that music, while giving rise to powerful feelings, is also understandable and thus meaningful. In fact, the desire to keep together the cognitive and affective dimensions of the musical experience would often lead these writers to stretch the limits of “the understandable” so
as to cover non-verbal and non-conceptual modes of cognition. Batteux, for instance, would write:

If I were to say that I could derive no pleasure from a lecture that I did not understand, my confession would in no way seem strange. But if I ventured to say the same of a piece of music, people would ask whether I considered myself enough of a connoisseur to appreciate the merits of so carefully constructed and fine a composition. I would dare to reply yes, for it is a matter of feeling. I do not pretend in any way to calculate the sounds, their interrelationships or their connection with the ear. I am speaking here neither of oscillations, string vibrations, nor mathematical proportions. I leave such speculations to learned theorists; these are akin to the grammar and dialectic of a lecture which I can appreciate without going into such details. Music speaks to me in tones: this language is natural to me. If I do not understand it, art has corrupted nature rather than perfected her.¹

For the eighteenth-century listener, familiarity with the idioms, essential for cognitive and affective involvement with music, often amounted to a familiarity with the passions of the soul. Even though the passions, as species of sensations, were opposed to the higher faculty of the intellect in philosophical writings of the period, music aesthetics regarded them as the ultimate solution to the puzzling reality of music's intelligibility without recourse to conceptual cognition. For the passions always came with their natural expressive manifestations, immediately and universally recognizable by all men. As early as 1719, DuBois, in his Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture, argued that nature has marked each passion with its unique visual expression, tone and gesture. Passions were so closely related to their defining marks that observing one of them would be sufficient immediately to infer the kind of passion responsible for it. The same idea was expressed in Les beaux-arts réduits à un même principe by Batteux, who stated that passions and actions invariably appear together in nature. Batteux recognized that the passions commonly identified as love, hate, rage, etc. were only a small part of the thousands of other natural passions, which — although they could not be put into words — were nonetheless immediately understood as meaningful. Batteux wrote: "It is enough that they are felt; they do not have to be named. The heart has its own understanding that is independent of words. When it is touched it has understood everything."²

The immediate impetus of music aesthetics toward formalism, was that it added to intelligibility to conceptual structures of musical beauty. Eighteenth-century analyses of the mental processes of the mind, according to Hume, Hartley and Condillac, with its categorically divided into the will, and the "laws of the cooperation of the reason and sense thus required recognition of the reason in affect," and specifically musical causality behind musical beauty. Hume wrote in his Treatise of Human Nature, "The harmony behind music consists of beauty and virtue, and the principle of beauty and virtue lies in the harmony; and concluded "It is not the greatest pleasure we can have, but what we enjoy in listening to it a good ear."³ During the Enlightenment, music aesthetics, understood music as a function of the arts of the intellect, in terms of its simplicity and beauty of music."⁴ ²⁴⁴ Michaelis wrote that "the passions are different in that they "represent a reaction. The ear is only a receptive organ; it is useful to the sensations, but it never the less understands the sensations."

If the intellect is the judge, it is the judge between, integrates, and it is natural that an analysis of it use of no code of cognitive standards.

² Ibid., p.41.
⁴ Ibid., p.200.
long as music expressed the passions, its intelligibility was thus secured. The immediate implication of this idea, which was to have far-reaching reverberations in music aesthetics all the way into nineteenth-century formalism, was that it was now possible to assign affective content—in addition to intelligibility—to structures not conforming with the conceptual structures of language.

Eighteenth-century discussions concerning the elements and processes of the mental life, as presented in the writings of figures like Hume, Hartley and Condillac, favored the concept of a non-unitary mind, with its categorically distinct “higher” faculties of understanding and the will, and the “lower” mechanisms of sensations and feelings. The cooperation of the rational and the affective faculties in musical experience thus required reference to a special faculty—one that would perceive the reason in affect, and the affect in reason. The functioning of such a specifically musical faculty was recognized mainly in the perception of musical beauty. Hutcheson, in An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue of 1725, argued that the sense of beauty and harmony behind musical experience is “a sense some way distinct from hearing,” and concluded that “in music, we seem universally to acknowledge something like a distinct sense from the external one of hearing, and call it a good ear.” During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, music aesthetics, under the sweeping influence of Kant’s analysis of the cognitive functions of the mind, urged a redefinition of this musical faculty in terms of its synthesizing capacity. In his article “The Intangibility of music” published in the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung in 1806, Michaelis wrote that the musical sounds of which we are consciously aware are different from those that merely stimulate the ear, because they “represent a response, the product of mind, imagination and emotion. The ear is only music’s external route to our mind. Our soul apprehends the sensations we hear and relations them to one another.” Michaelis continued:

If the intellect is the source of that cognitive clarity which thinks, differentiates between, integrates and coordinates the multiplicity of our sense-impressions, it is natural that an art that does not express itself through words, which makes use of no code of concepts, will lack a certain clarity if one judges it by purely cognitive standards.4

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4 Ibid., p.200.
The musical faculty thus operated with its own peculiar laws, and the aesthetic evaluation of music invoked affective criteria as the ultimate source of musical judgement. Technical correctness meant little if the music could not touch and move the soul. As Sulzer wrote in the article "Musik" in Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste (1771–1774), however learned, correct or well-wrought a composition may be, it is not a genuine piece of music if it fails to stimulate the emotions. All that the listener needs is a sensitive heart; with this he may judge whether a work is good or bad, even if he lacks all musical knowledge.5

The assumption underlying this and many other similar claims was that infallibility of musical judgement would be guaranteed by the first-hand knowledge of the manifestations of the passions — each distinguished by its specific dynamic shape and flow — which the listener would immediately perceive in good music through their formal analogies to music’s movements.

In their attempt to account for the psychology of musical experience, particularly with reference to the creative musician, eighteenth-century writers frequently invoked an innate capacity for receiving and affectively responding to vivid impressions. For an account of the relationship between the impressions and the passions, they turned to Descartes more than to empiricism, which otherwise was largely shaping the philosophy of the period. Hence, throughout the century, the nature and mechanism of the passions continued to receive a psychophysiological account in accordance with the well-known scheme put forward in Les passions de l’âme, where Descartes defined passions as powerful movements of the soul originating in sensations and resulting in bodily disturbances.6 According to this scheme, when the sensory nerves were stimulated, this caused the "animal spirits" in the blood to rush to the pineal gland, the seat of the soul, and produced there an impression like a seal would on wax. The impression, in proportion with its degree of strength, agitated the soul leading to the experience of a passion. The soul then caused — once again via the "animal spirits" — the action of the motor nerves and hence the bodily agitation. It was not until the late nineteenth century that psychology would challenge the main outline of this rather crudely mechanistic view — i.e., sense-impression leading to mental activity experienced as the passion causing the bodily activity.

5 Ibid., p.110.
As far as the musical experience was concerned, the importance of the Cartesian scheme lay in its direct, one-to-one relationship between impressions and passions. Provided one had the sensitivity to receive musical impressions, there was no mistaking the affective content that accompanied them. The truthfulness of the impression to the expressive quality of the object of impression was assumed without question. Thus, in discussing the listener’s experience of music, Chabanon would state that to understand the expressive content of a piece, it was sufficient to note the impression it made. “It is impossible,” he wrote, “that you would not recognize whether it is sharp or sweet, ardent or tranquil; the movement alone would indicate it to you.” The musical expression was revealed in the dynamic qualities of the musical impression.

In this connection, writers considered it necessary to distinguish artificial and genuine passions. Genuine passions were those arising from one’s own impressions, while artificial passions were learned through social conventions. To count as genuine, the listener’s affective response had to result directly and primarily from the impressions made by the music during the listening experience. In the case of the composer, the distinction implied that unless his knowledge of the passions came from the impressions acquired through close contact with nature – both human and inanimate – he would never succeed in touching and moving his listeners, who would recognize the artificialness in his musical expression. For, as Rousseau argued, discovery of the true nature of the passions and emotions of the human heart could “only be acquired by intimacy with the world.”

In the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics, the main characteristic of the creative artist that elevated him to the status of a “genius” was this outstanding capacity to receive vivid sense-impressions. Through his innate sensitivity, impressions excited his creative activity to the utmost degree, resulting in the expression of the different passions in forms congruent with the nature of his impressions. In the article “Genie” from the Allgemeine Theorie, Sulzer stated that “nature seems to lay its foundations first by making the people whom she has endowed with special genius outstandingly sensitive to particular things. The soul of limited sensitivity

which cannot be stimulated to activity is not a genius no matter how powerful the intellect may be."9 As far as the art of music was concerned, such sensitivity was simply a prerequisite for any practicing musician, who—genius or not—had to be receptive to the different manifestations of the passions. Mattheson, arguing for this necessity wrote: "Some minds are like wax and others are like stone. Though the one which is hewn in stone is more durable, in music we prefer a brain which is more like wax than stone, because it grasps things more easily, and has a more pliable nature."10

One of the most persistent ideas in music aesthetics, an idea that kept its validity all throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was that the most clearly recognizable manifestations of the passions took place in the voice. Beginning with DuBos, every writer who dwelt on the nature of the passions noted the effects they produced on the vocal organs. Batteux would refer to the voice as "le tableau du coeur humain." Rousseau, in his Essai sur l’origine des langues (1764) argued that "feelings make the organs of speech spring to life, imparting to the voice all their vibrancy."11 Next to the first-hand experience of the various passions, the inherently expressive nature of the voice rendered it the ideal model for a musician wishing to write music destined to touch and move the listener.

The idea that the passions revealed themselves most clearly in the voice brought with it the question of whether the speaking or the singing voice should be regarded as the expressive model for music. In musical aesthetics, this was largely resolved in favor of the latter. DuBos, in his Réflexions of 1719, already pointed out the difference between singing and speaking, and observed in a perceptive remark that the words of a song "have quite another energy when they are sung, rather than declaimed."12 During the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, writers would turn to the advances being made in anatomy and physiology to understand the uniquely expressive nature of the singing voice. In this connection, the mechanism of

11 Quoted in Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries, p.69.
12 Ibid., p.19.
the vocal organs and the phenomenon of respiration received particular attention, and were included as topics of discussion in the most widely read music dictionaries of the period, beginning with Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*. In the article "Voix", Rousseau referred to the discovery made by a certain M. Dodart that

in the singing voice, more so than in the speaking voice, there is a movement of the whole larynx; that is, of that part of the windpipe, which is shaped like a canal that ends at the glottis, and wraps and supports the muscles. The difference between the voices is thus due to the difference between the larynx sitting in repose on these attachments in speech, and the same larynx suspended [on them], active and moved by an up and down waivering [in singing]. This waivering may be compared to the movements of gliding birds or to those of fish that sustain themselves at the same place against the current. Even though the wings of one and the fins of the other seem to be immobile, they make continuous vibrations, which are so short and so quick that they are imperceptible.13

The mechanism of respiration as it functioned in speaking and singing was also a topic of discussion especially during the later decades of the century. Castil-Blaze's *Dictionnaire de musique moderne* had an entry for "respiration", which largely drew from Mengozzi's *Méthode de chant*14 and stated that

the action of breathing in singing differs in several respects from breathing in speaking. When one breathes in order to speak, the first action is that of inhalation when the body swells and the upper part moves forward a little; when it sinks, it is the second action called exhalation. These two movements work slowly when the body is in its normal state. By contrast, in the action of breathing for the purpose of singing, in inhaling, it is necessary to flatten the body and make it rise again quickly, while swelling and lifting the chest. In exhaling, the body should return very slowly to its normal position and the chest should fall gradually in order to conserve and control, just as long as possible, the air which one has inhaled.15

Opposing speaking to singing was a concern mainly for writers on music aesthetics, who wanted to find the ultimate expressive model for music in one or the other. For the music theorist, on the other hand, such an opposition had little validity: music had to have both speech-like and song-like qualities. From speech, it took those structural features that would render it comprehensible, while singing provided the elements

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of expression. The rhetorical model of composition with its insistence on intelligibility and moving expression, was able to accommodate both functions of the human voice.

Beginning with Mattheson, theorists had recognized that sense-making in music, as in speech, had something to do with the organization of the sense-units or groups of sounds. Mattheson argued that every idea, be it verbal or written, consists in certain word- or word-phrase combinations, or periods; but every such phrase also consists in smaller caesuras up to the close with a period. A whole structure or paragraph is developed from such phrases, and from various of these paragraphs a main part or a chapter is finally developed. That very briefly is the outline of all that can really be spoken, written, sung, or played.\footnote{Harris, Ernest C. Johann Mattheson's "Der vollkommene Capellmeister": A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary. Michigan: UMI Press, 1981, p.381.}

Comprehensibility, accordingly, required the boundaries of these units at each level to be clearly delineated through various kinds of punctuation.

Theorists often associated different cadential formulas in music with different signs of grammatical punctuation, establishing parallels between the degrees of closure each would assign to the unit it ended. In his \textit{Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition},\footnote{Koch, Heinrich Christoph. \textit{Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition}. Leipzig: Adam Friedrich Böhm, 1782–93. English translation of part ii and part iii by Nancy K. Baker, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983 as Introductory Essay on Composition.} Koch referred to musical punctuations as resting points, "Ruhepunkte des Geistes", and wrote that more or less noticeable resting points are necessary in melody just as in speech. Although providing many examples of punctuated melodies, Koch did not cite any criteria for recognizing the internal resting points of melodic constructions, arguing that one could tell them only by feeling. A few decades later, in \textit{Traité de mélodie} of 1814, Reicha similarly referred to "points de repos" in delineating melodic segments, but was more explicit about how different resting points can be recognized. He cited length, silence, and more importantly the natural capacity of certain scale degrees as potential cues for observing melodic punctuation. Theories of melody, in modelling the speech-like features of music, concentrated on the means of connecting melodic segments. Therefore, the phrase as the basic unit that could stand meaningfully on its own was examined mainly in its capacity to create larger-scale forms.
In discussing the requirements of musical comprehensibility, theorists argued that the main resting points of a melody, those marked by half or full cadences, had to fall on the strong beat of the measure. In this connection, eighteenth-century theorists have been criticized for confusing tonal emphasis with metrical emphasis. However, it was precisely because of their awareness of this potential distinction that they would insist on keeping them together. Koch, for instance, was well aware that tonal emphasis within a group of pitches would be altered depending on metric emphasis. Taking the sequence of notes shown in figure 1.1, Koch argued that different metric settings would completely alter the surface similarity as each would be reduced to a different outline.

![Figure 1.1](image)

Koch stated that the metrical settings of this melody as shown in figures 1.2a and 1.3a, would respectively imply the reductions given in figures 1.2b and 1.3b. Hence, metric emphasis was recognized as different from but interacting with tonal emphasis.

![Figure 1.2a (above), 1.2b](image)

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18 In *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, New York: Schirmer Books (1989) p.28, William Rothstein writes that "unfortunately theorists from the 18th century have insisted that cadences must fall on downbeats, or worse, that cadences are downbeats regardless of where they fall. In so doing, these theorists have confused tonal emphasis with metrical emphasis. The consequences of this confusion have been severe. Composition manuals of the late 18th century, including Koch's, insist that phrases must end on downbeats, while the music of their own time contradicts this."
In current critical writings, eighteenth-century compositional practice is presented as shaped uniquely under the pervasive influence of ideas of rhetoric. There is seldom any mention of the other ancient verbal art that occupied a decisive place in the music theoretical thinking of the period, namely the art of poetics. Yet, it was primarily with reference to the principles of poetic structures and poetic movement that the expressive features of a melody, i.e. its internal shape and flow, were discussed throughout the century. It was agreed that melody, as the key to the creation of large-scale forms, was like prosaic speech and hence subject to rhetorical principles, while in the determination of its internal structure it behaved much like poetic speech. In fact, the beginnings of that line of thinking that assimilates music’s surface structure and prosodic movement, which in the second half of the nineteenth century would lead theorists like Rudolph Westphal and Jules Combarieu to analyze musical rhythm in terms of poetic rhythm, are found in eighteenth-century theories of melody.19

In this connection, theorists argued that the expressive power of melody resided in its temporal organization – its rhythm and meter – which corresponded to the temporal shape and flow of the many different passions. The expressive features of poetic feet, which music could capture through similar metric divisions, were regarded as most appropriate for the expression of the passions. Mattheson, in his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, devoted an entire chapter to the expressive characters of various “tone-feet”. He argued that the iamb, for instance, which consists of a short sound followed by a long one, is “moderately gay, not hasty or running.” The trochee, on the other hand, presumably possessed something “satiric

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yet rather innocent; nothing of the serious nor mordant." 20 "No melody," wrote Mattheson, "has the power to arouse a real feeling in us [unless] all movement of tone feet [is regulated] to such an extent that they achieve a certain pleasing relationship with and against one another." 21 Kirnberger likewise pointed out the importance of durational relationships in the formation of the expressive content of a melody. He noted that

a succession of notes that mean nothing by themselves and are differentiated from one another only by pitch can be transformed into a real melody - one that has a definite character and depicts a passion or a particular sentiment - by means of tempo, meter, and rhythm which give the melody its character and expression. 22

Kirnberger continued that the most moving melody would be "completely stripped of all its power and expression if one note after another were performed without regulation of speed, without accents, and without rest points, even if performed with the strictest observance of pitch." 23

The eighteenth century made no clear differentiation between the activities of the composer and the performer. Musicianship often implied being active in both domains. It was only during the course of the nineteenth century that composing and performing came to imply separate kinds of involvement with music. Among the various factors that contributed to the establishment of "the performer" as an autonomous category, the vital role was played by the emerging awareness of an historical concert repertoire. Playing music other than one's own, specifically in the case of the solo instrumentalist, was rare until well into the 1830s. 24 With his performance tours around Europe from 1834 to 1847, it was Liszt who, playing the music of the past as well as introducing the music of his contemporaries, broke this mold. 25

21 Ibid., p.364.
23 Ibid., p.375.
24 Improvisation, which was once a standard part of a concert by Mozart, Beethoven, Czerny, Dussek, etc., would gradually decline with the rising idea of the concert repertoire, thus moving the performer one more step away from the compositional practice.
25 It was again Liszt who established the tradition of playing from memory, which for the first time in music history implied unprecedented cognitive demands for the performing musician.
As far as music aesthetics was concerned, the crucial implication of the concept of an historical repertoire was the notion of "the score" as the embodiment of the music. It is no coincidence that philosophical speculations concerning the nature of musical performance began only with the recognition of the score as such, leading to the conception of the performer as someone who "does" something to the score, which is a view that is still with us today. During the nineteenth century, debates on issues of musical meaning often favored the view that the score remained mute and dead until brought to life and made to speak by the performer. In one of the rare eighteenth-century discussions within music aesthetics concerning the nature of the performer's relationship to music, Chabanon, anticipating this typically Romanticist idea, argued that meaning in music arose only during performance. He wrote: "The tones of music being null and without meaning by themselves, they acquire it only by the inflections given to them, by the contrast that is placed there. If you deprive them of this unique means that they have of expressing themselves, they remain mute and inanimate," and added that the composer "like Pygmalion, molds the statue; the performer, like Amour touches it and makes it speak."26

Viewing the performer as one who animates the music by his touch, who breathes life into the matter of music, remained the favorite conception of the performer's activity throughout the nineteenth century. Occasionally, oppositions came from writers who claimed that musical meaning was strictly in the score. Herbart, one of the first proponents of formalism, would argue that the aesthetic pleasure of music did not depend on the experience of actually hearing it while performed, but merely required that the "notes only be heard, indeed only be read."27 He added that it is the fantasy and not the ear that perceives the music. Such a claim was unthinkable for the nineteenth-century listener, for whom the point of departure for any musical experience — whether defined cognitively or affectively — was always the sounding phenomena experienced as unfolding in time. Experiencing music meant experiencing its performance, and the performer during performance.

In this sense, everyone can know about either the score or music, as they have substituted the stage of the orator, and the role of the listener for the first time in the history of the eighteenth century, together with the performer.

According to each, a good composition is well adapted to the purpose of its performance. The critic can judge through analogies and comparisons, the "Du zittert Unschuldsjungfrau", to the expression of an orator, and so on. The performer distinctly, and with expression, learned the universe, and was the means of a comprehensible translation of the score of a concertina, a flute, a harpsichord, a violin, or a cello, by the orator and, in time, sounds through a single voice.

In discussing performance, Herbart frequently referred to the "interpreting" ability to be performed. He wrote that the passage must be performed "as a language of a language...as a language of music...as a language of future language...as a language of music...as a language of future language...as a language of future language...as a language of...".

whomever performs a passage is most often the interpreter of the text, the reader of language, the reader of music...as School of Claus. The interpreters are not the only performers in the music is subjective, they are the interpreters of the text, the reader of music...as School of Claus.


performance, and precisely in its indispensable role the activity of the performer during the eighteenth century was simply taken for granted.

In this sense, eighteenth-century writers did not feel the need to theorize about either the psychology of the performer or his relation with music, as they have in the case of the composer and the listener. The performer was fundamentally regarded as the agent fulfilling the final stage of the rhetorical art of music, namely its execution. Indeed, it was with reference to rhetoric that Gottsched, in his Ausführliche Rede Kunst,28 for the first time introduced the term “Vortrag,” which in the second half of the eighteenth century became the standard name for performance together with the corresponding French term “exécution.”

According to eighteenth-century writers, a good performance, just like a good composition, was characterized by comprehensibility and expressiveness. The criterion of comprehensibility was invariably explained through analogies to oratory. In his Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen, Quantz compared musical performance to the delivery of an orator, and stated that the musician must “seek to play each piece distinctly, and with such expression that it becomes intelligible to both learned and the unlearned.”29 The means available to the performer for a comprehensible delivery of the music were the same as those employed by the orator and concerned the delineation of sense-units or groups of sounds through accentuation.

In discussing the issue of expression in performance, writers frequently referred to the necessity of having “genuine feeling” for the piece to be performed. Türk wrote that

whoever performs a composition so that its inherent affect even in every single passage is most faithfully expressed and that the tones become at the same time a language of the feelings, of this person it is said that he is a good executant...Genuine feeling for all the emotions and passions which are expressed in the music is typical of good execution.30

In accordance with the aesthetic ideals of the eighteenth century, only those feelings that resulted from the impressions received through close contact with the music could count as "genuine." Thus, the psychological mechanism used in explaining the listener's afferent response to music also accounted for the generation of expression in performance.

The eighteenth-century term used for judging a performance that did not display any genuine feeling was "mechanical." Fulfilling the requirements of comprehensibility through proper grouping of notes was not sufficient to take a performance out of the domain of "the mechanical" unless one played with "genuine feeling." As C.P.E.Bach wrote "most technicians do nothing more than play the notes. And how the continuity and flow of the melody suffers. Play from the soul, not like a trained bird."31

As vague as such statements were in illuminating the nature of expressive performance, there was one source to which the performer was consistently directed in his search for expression. Just as the composer was urged to find his expressive model in the human voice, so was the performer. The advice to listen to singers was typical of method books written for instrumentalists throughout the eighteenth century. According to C.P.E.Bach, any instrumentalist who wanted to learn the essentials of a good performance had to take every opportunity to hear artistic singing. He wrote that "in so doing, the [instrumentalist] will learn to think in terms of song. Indeed, it is a good practice to sing instrumental melodies in order to reach an understanding of their correct performance."32 Türk, likewise arguing that listening to singers is the best way of understanding the essence of expression in performance, wrote: "for, certain subtleties of expression cannot really be described; they must be heard."33 The more instrumental playing was inspired by singing, the more aesthetically satisfying it became. There was something the listeners heard in the singing voice that they also wanted to hear in instrumental performance.

Within music theory, the most significant step toward an understanding of the expressive potentials inherent in the musical structure was taken by Jérôme-Joseph Phélypeaux de Momigny. In his "premier système de musique" (first system of music), which at the time was considered the most systematic of its kind, Momigny called the turn or cadence at the end of a phrase a "cadence", which he explained as "a conclusion", "a consequent", or "a return to the main key".34 This marked the beginning of a more systematic approach to the structure of music, a shift away from the more improvisational and expressive practices of the previous century.

32 Ibid., p.151.
33 Türk, Daniel Gottlob. School of Clavier Playing, p.337.
36 Momigny called the turn or cadence at the end of a phrase a "cadence", which he explained as "a conclusion", "a consequent", or "a return to the main key".
taken by Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny, who theorized that the expressive elements in music followed from the principle of action-repose (action-repos), which at the same time organized its structure. Momigny, like his predecessors, started from the premise that music is the art of moving the soul by expressing the passions, and that it could achieve this aim by behaving like language in certain respects. He wrote that “grammar, logic, and the art of oratory are three things without which one is unable to compose or perform well other than by instinct.”34 Momigny’s significant departure from his predecessors was in his claim that language and music were subject to laws of understanding innate with man. In this regard, his theories display the decisive influence of Kant, who proposed that the forms in which the acts of understanding, i.e. reasoning and judgement, are carried out are within us and not received from outside. According to Kant, logic, as the science of laws under which the mind operates, would thus be conceived as inherently psychological.

It was precisely in this sense that Momigny called his theory “doctrine of musical logic.” He wrote that “there is a logic of sounds as there is one of ideas or of words that present them” and that the laws of this logic are written in “our soul, in the way we perceive.”35 Musical logic determined the ordering of tones and demanded that the tones follow one another not in any order but in a subordinated fashion, and cadentially.36 The principle of this musical logic came from the theory of tonality: Momigny argued that tonality is the subordination of the diatonic pitches of a key to a principal note, called the tonic. He wrote: “The tonic is the center of gravity, the goal of all goals, the end of all ends. It is to the tonic that the scepter of the musical empire is entrusted.”37 According to Momigny, the hierarchy of sounds was a purely psychological phenomenon and could not be derived from the physical nature of sounds.

Categorizing the pitches as diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic, as in figure 1.4, Momigny stated that in the key of C major, all diatonic pitches can cadence among themselves and mutually be the antecedent or consequent of one another.

36 Momigny called the smallest unit of meaning, the minimal melodic unit possible, a “cadence”, which involved an antecedent (l’antécédent ) and a consequent (le conséquent ), or a “raised” (levé ) and a “lowered” (frappé ) tone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

7 diatoniques. 5 chromatiques. 5 enharmoniques.

The same was not possible in the case of chromatic tones, each of which had to attach to a diatonic tone either as an antecedent or as a consequent. Enharmonic ones, on the other hand, had to cadence with chromatic ones, for they could not unite with diatonic tones or among themselves. Thus, Momigny argued that if two chromatic or enharmonic tones are heard to follow one another, one could not conclude that they cadence between themselves, for the second would not be the consequent of the first. Hence, in the succession of notes given as figure 1.5, the consequent of F-sharp, to which it is naturally subordinated, is not D-sharp but G; the D-sharp is the antecedent to the E that follows G.

Figure 1.5

The most important assumption behind Momigny's theory of musical logic was that the temporal elements of music could not be conceived separately from its tonal elements. The arsis-thesis relation – the experience of a rise and fall in the tension of his poetry – was the resultant of the interaction of active and passive procedures.

In the case of a rising or falling rhythm, the two beats are separated by a space, as in duration. Here, in a polyphonic context, the integration of these active and passive procedures is the very essence of the resulting musical experience. In the case of a falling rhythm, the upper voice is imposed upon the lower, the lower voice is imposed upon the upper, and rhythm becomes rhythmically imposed upon itself.

Momigny's was a theory of music as a rhythm of emotional expression. The succession of notes and the heretical rhythm of his music were seen by him, and he described them, as "natural actions" and "natural actions of the eye" as part of what he called "natural actions of the eye". In this perspective, he believed that the experience of music was deeply embedded in the experience of the listener, who would see in the notes what they meant, not just hear them.

With respect to this theory, it is important to note that music is a complex interaction of elements, both passive and active, and that the experience of music is a deeply personal one, dependent on the listener's perspective and the context in which they experience it.
rise and a fall — was not only a metric phenomenon, borrowed from
etry, but more importantly a tonal phenomenon. For, in their sub-
integrated nature, when tones followed one another, they created spans
ction and repose, a musical ebb and flow.
In this context, Momigny, in a later treatise (1821), differentiated
icial (temps factices) and natural (temps naturels) beats. The artificial
sts divided a whole piece into equal time-spans and were thus equal
uration, implying no tempo fluctuations. Natural beats, on the other
d, were qualitatively different from one another as either beats of
on or beats of repose, and their duration differed depending on the
es that occupied them. Momigny argued that the natural measure
pling of these two qualitatively different durations, the time
ction always preceding the time of repose. Hence, it was the inher-
ualities of time-spans determined tonally that were responsible
 the generation of musical measures. The expressive content was not
osed on the tonal content by way of the temporal elements of meter
hythm, but rather the tonal relationships gave rise to the dynam-
pressive nature of measure and rhythm.
Momigny argued that even though the beats of the natural measure
reared equal to the eye, in a good execution they were not equal at all.
he score, when perceived visually, represented none of the qualitative
ence durational differences between the beats, none of the music-
ction and repose. Momigny’s frequent references to music “for the
 as opposed to music “for the ear” reflect his uneasiness with the
ng concept of the score as the locus of music. For him, music lay in its
erience; and performance was not the turning of what the performer
 in the score into sound but a realization of what he heard in his
ad. More specifically, it was not a “doing” of something to the score, 
 principally a musical reading of it.
With reference to performance, Momigny was the first to distinguish
actuation (ponctuation) and phrasing (phrase). His definition of punctua-
tion retained its eighteenth-century meaning of grouping. Punctua-
tion, he argued, is the art of setting off the different periods and their
embers: “In performance, it is achieved by attacking the first note of
each sense-unit that needs to be separated from the previous one, and

Indeed, Momigny argued that it was poetic meter that borrowed its principles
from musical meter.
Momigny, Jérôme-Joseph de. La seule vrai théorie de la musique. Paris: chez

making the ending felt not only by a silence that follows but also by an appropriate inflection."\(^{42}\) Phrasing, however, was not only putting together the different periods by punctuation, but also subordinating the phrases and the periods to one another. Momigny gave no principles as to how phrasing is to be achieved. However, he hinted that in good phrasing the listener would hear where he is in the musical discourse, which was not absolute but depended on what preceded and what followed. According to Momigny, the feeling of the conclusiveness of the cadence would often tell one his location in the musical period.\(^{43}\)

Momigny's persistence in explaining musical phenomena in psychological terms foreshadowed the developments that took place in music theoretical thinking during the course of the nineteenth century, which closely paralleled the developments in the newly rising science of psychology. It was predominantly through its incorporation within the experimental physiology of the period that psychology would gradually acquire the status of a scientific enterprise. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed important advances in the knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system, particularly in the realm of sensations. In 1816, Charles Bell discovered that the sensory and motor nerves were connected with the spinal cord at different roots, and hence constituted functionally different systems. Within older physiological systems, including Descartes's, the relationship between sense-perception and bodily movement, mediated by the experience of the passions – i.e. the affective qualities that accompanied impressions – was regarded as the instantaneous functioning of a preordained bodily mechanism. Any role assigned to the mind or the soul merely had the purpose of saving the axiom of the freedom of the will essential for moral action. With Bell's discovery, however, the mind, which during the nineteenth century gradually lost its associations with a non-physiological soul and came to be identified with the brain, was now assigned an active role in the transmission of the input from sense-perception to motor response, coordinating the interaction of these two distinct systems. A series of experiments carried out by Helmholtz in 1850 had great significance for sensory physiology: for the first time, it became possible to measure the speed of transmission of nerve impulses, something that had been discovered by other means. The development in this direction has been of increasing importance within the last quarter of the century, while in the early period, the understanding and feeling of sensations to music was still regarded as bodily responses, and as such, like any other sensations, are related as sensations were in the eighteenth century.

The most important thing that was seen was that they were not just the result of experience as such but provided the basis for the understanding of sensations, and sensations were frequently related in the relations by being transformed. The relations between sensations were then reduced to properties. One of the earliest accounts of the relations between sensations and emotions was given by the eighteenth-century philosopher and writer, who wrote: "...the sensations themselves are really the very core of sensations. They are the source of the emotions, and the emotions are the source of sensations."


of nerve impulses. The finding that the transmission was much slower than had been assumed further reinforced the implications of Bell's discovery, while invalidating the assumption of instantaneous passage from sensation to movement. The circuit from sensation through emotion to bodily response could now be studied as a temporal sequence of events like any other natural occurrence, and the relationship between stimuli and sensations, and between sensations and emotions, could be formulated as scientific laws.

The most important implication of these discoveries for music theory was that they allowed writers to regard the psychology of the musical experience as constituted of stages taking place in time, and further provided the basis for the argument that the mind interprets the incoming sensations, and thereby also determines the affective response to music. While the so-called tone-psychologists, like Helmholtz and Stumpf, concentrated on the initial stage of the musical experience investigating the relations between acoustical stimuli and aural sensations, music psychologists, like Riemann and Kurth, attempted to explain how these sensations were interpreted by the musical faculty.

One of the significant differences between nineteenth-century accounts of the listening experience and those of the eighteenth century concerned the way impressions themselves were defined. During the eighteenth century, sense-impressions had been thought to impose themselves on the mind, together with their accompanying affective qualities. The mind was presented as a passive receiver in the mechanism of sense experience. The various advances made in physiology and psychology during the nineteenth century demonstrated that the mind was active not only in interpreting the sense-impressions, but also in selectively determining which of the incoming stream of impressions would enter consciousness. The mind could choose to attend to part of the sensory field and exclude the rest, and it could impart intensity to selected impressions. Therefore, the fact that a listener received impressions from the music no longer guaranteed that he would immediately recognize an expressive content in them. It had to be secured first that he did attend to the relevant musical impressions, and secondly that his musical faculty interpreted them meaningfully, thereby allowing him to experience the expression.

Therefore, the issues of comprehension and affective response, which in the eighteenth century were discussed by reference to music's analogy with the immediate intelligibility of the passions, became increasingly dependent for their account on the mental structure and musical experience of the listener, i.e. on what he brings to the listening experience. In
this sense, the domain of the musical faculty in the nineteenth century became more specifically the “musical,” i.e. musical ideas and musical moods; and the non-musical world of experiences was no longer regarded as providing infallible support for musical comprehension. Even though the analogy between the motions of music and those of the emotions did remain intact throughout the century, writers no longer felt comfortable attributing music’s intelligibility to this resemblance. For one thing, the domain of the emotional life was much widened, and incorporated the "unconscious." The expressive manifestations of the emotions would in no way be as easily recognizable and classifiable as eighteenth-century writers had claimed them to be. Moreover, the aesthetic ideal of Romanticism praised the individual and the self-expressive rather than the expression of generic emotions.

Thus, the assumption of a common emotional life expressible in instantly recognizable forms became more and more difficult to hold. The validity of the eighteenth-century argument that the listener can affectively respond to music to the degree that he understands the musical language was now contingent not on his knowledge of the passions, of the movements of the inner life, but specifically on his musical knowledge. In his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* of 1876, Fechner, who came to musical aesthetics from psychophysiology, wrote: “It is still possible for a person of relatively small general culture to experience stronger and profounder direct musical impressions – in fact to understand and enjoy music better than a person of wide general culture, if the former has more experience of grasping and pursuing musical relationships.”

The idea that the functioning of the musical faculty, which governed both the cognitive and affective dimensions of the musical experience, did not necessitate the input of non-musical experiences rested on an important assumption: if indeed the listening experience took place within the domain of “the musical,” the generating source of this experience had to be strictly the music itself. There was no longer any need to explicitly refer to the passions of the soul as music’s recognizable expressive content. One could argue that musical structures themselves inherently had expressive potentials that any listener with sufficient musical experience could perceive. This indeed was the argument put forward by

the formalist music aesthetics of the nineteenth century, the best-known advocate of which was Hanslick. Its grounds had already been prepared in music theory by Momigny.

Modern critical writings on nineteenth-century formalism most often present it as an attempt to rid musical experience of any essential connection with affective response. It is maintained that according to the formalists, listening to and understanding music has nothing to do with responding to its expressiveness but is strictly an issue of grasping its structural relationships. However, throughout the Vom Musikalischem-Schönen of 1854, Hanslick would repeatedly define his purpose as the exploration of the source and conditions of the listener’s affective response to music. He would argue that “every true work of art will establish some kind of relationship with our feelings...The whole question lies in the specific manner in which music arouses [them],” claiming that his “examination does not exclude spiritual content but rather seeks to determine the conditions.”45 This content was to be found nowhere other than in the musical structures. Hence, Hanslick wrote:

Each element (i.e. every interval, every timbre, every chord, every rhythm, etc.) has its own physiognomy, its own precise mode of affecting the listener. In fact, each individual factor necessarily contributes to the precise emotional effect of any passage on the listener. The thorough study of the nature of each single musical element and its connection with a distinct impression and the referring of these detailed observations to general laws – this would constitute the establishment of a philosophical basis for music desired by so many.46

It was a small step from Hanslick’s position to the argument that the generating cause of not only the listener’s but also the performer’s affective response to music would be found in the musical structures themselves. Yet, Hanslick did not take this step. Nor was it taken by any other writer until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Writers continued to explain the psychological mechanism of the performer by reference to the eighteenth-century notions of “the impressions” and “genuine feelings.” In Esquisse d’une philosophie of 1840, Lamennais had stated that

though in itself a sound may have expressive power, this power has to be applied and set in motion by the artist. The artist then must possess yet another

46 Ibid., p.24.
power— that of portraying exactly the feeling he seeks to communicate. And if this is true of the composer, it is equally true of the performer. The effectiveness of his performance will depend on the vividness and truthfulness of his inner impressions, and on the subtleties of his own feelings. 47

Throughout the nineteenth century, the human voice continued to provide the model for expressive performance. The tradition of advising the instrumentalist to listen to singers continued unbroken. In fact, method books written for instrumentalists, such as Friedrich Wieck's *Klavier und Gesang* 48 and Thalberg's *L'art du chant appliqué au piano* 49 explicitly referred to the voice in their titles. In the introduction to *L'art du chant*, Thalberg argued that the best advice one could give “to persons who occupy themselves seriously with the piano, is to learn, to study, and to discuss the beautiful art of song. To this end, one should never miss the opportunity of hearing great artists, whatever their instruments, and especially great singers.” 50 The listeners’ preference for performances approaching the expressiveness of the singing voice was also revealed in the concert reviews of the period. In 1829, after hearing Paganini, Friedrich Wieck wrote: “Never have I heard a singer so moving as an Adagio played by Paganini.” 51 Much later, the reviewer of a Rubinstein concert of 1877 would still use the same criterion when he stated that “nothing can be more simple, unobtrusive, and poetically beautiful than his delivery. He shines with a special grace, producing a tone from the instrument, combined with the most admirably perfect phrasing, which shows him to be a singer by natural instinct.” 52 Chopin, whose pianistic

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50 Bomberger, Douglas E. “The Thalberg Effect: Playing the Violin on the Piano.” *The Musical Quarterly* 75/2 (1991): 206. The “beautiful art of song” here refers to the bel canto style of singing, distinguished by the fascinating breath control and sustaining powers of the singers. Wieck also uses the same expression: “When I speak generally of singing, I mean only beautiful singing, which is the basis for the best and most complete musical performance.” The term, in the nineteenth century, was used to distinguish it from the Wagnerian declamatory style of singing— particularly by anti-Wagnerians.


52 Ibid., p.80.
style was inspired by the art of the great singers of the first half of the nineteenth century, is known to have frequently said to his students: “You must sing if you wish to play.”

There was one very significant exception to such characterizations of expressive performances as “singing”: Liszt’s playing was rarely described as such, but rather in reference to his declamatory, or “speaking” style. Berlioz wrote of him that “he speaks piano, like Goethe speaks German, like Moore speaks English.” Liszt himself is said to have emphasized the rhetorical aspects of performance in his teaching. He was one of the few performers responsible for the rise of a “school of playing” modelled after their own manner of performing. Indeed, the idea of individual styles of performance was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, related to the idea of the performer as an interpretive musician. These styles could be as divergent as Liszt’s was from Chopin’s, as Anton Rubinstein’s was from Hans von Bülow’s. The fact that each of them would be regarded as expressive in their own way by listeners brought up the question of what constitutes the essence of expression in performance. Within such diversity, the need for a theory of performance that could give a generic account of expressivity became all the more urgent.

One of the important features of nineteenth-century psychology was that theories of emotions tended to emphasize their expressive manifestations in behavior rather than their subjective experience. Perhaps because the “Romantic” emotions no longer displayed clearly recognizable signs, psychologists became more interested in discovering what, if any, universally identifiable behavioral forms emotions would take. Lotze, in Medizinische Psychologie of 1852, would for the first time describe in detail the nature of emotional expressions as they appeared in the face, posture and breathing. In 1872 came Darwin’s influential The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, as well as Spencer’s “The Language of Emotions”, where the emotions were defined as bodily responses


54 For nineteenth-century listeners, Anton Rubinstein and Hans von Bülow represented the two extremes of the spectrum of expressive performance. The latter’s temperament was regarded as the direct opposite of the sensual, spontaneous, magnetic and physically powerful delivery of Rubinstein. Bülow’s performances were often described as analytic and serious.

to stimuli. Within this climate, the grounds for a theory of performance presenting the performer as displaying expressive behavior that arises from his affective response vis-à-vis the music has been fully prepared. Hence, in 1874, the Swiss music theorist Mathis Lussy offered the first theory of expressive performance incorporating the developments in nineteenth-century psychology and physiology.