When Jonathan Dunsby published his book titled *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* over a decade ago, he had reservations about the use of the term ‘discipline’ in reference to ‘performance studies’. He cautioned his readers by writing:

I trot out the term ‘discipline’ of musical performance studies as if it clearly existed, but it is as well to state that this term at present stands merely for ‘subject’ or ‘topic’. ‘Discipline’ carries the implication of a received body of knowledge and an orderliness in whatever is conducted in its name, however subversively. I shall repeatedly comment on the fact that this does not really seem to have been the case in musical performance studies.

(Dunsby, 1995: 17)

The intervening decade, however, witnessed a complete reversal of this situation, with performance studies rapidly emerging as a thriving research area marked by systematic investigation, methodological rigour and discursive cohesion. Consequently, students of musical performance at the beginning of the twenty-first century have an unprecedented wealth of ‘received body of knowledge’ on which to base their research. This includes extensive theoretical knowledge about the practice strategies of performers, the motor skills involved in playing musical instruments, the psychological and social factors that influence the way performers work, the acoustical properties and gestural elements of so-called expressive performance, and changing performance styles (e.g. Davidson, 2004, 2005; Day, 2000; Jørgensen and Lehmann, 1997; Parnutt and McPherson, 2002; Philip, 1992, 2004; Rink, 1995, 2002; Williamon, 2004). Indeed, such wide-ranging interest in matters of performance led various scholars to posit a change in the ‘musical object’ of research, implying a fundamental shift in the ontological status of music (Cook, 2001, 2003, 2007; Cook and Clarke, 2004). Musicology, according to this view, is steadily moving away from a score-based conception of music to one that regards it as in essence a performance art.

Without doubt, the most important factor that enabled knowledge production
in contemporary performance studies, and thereby facilitated its establishment as 'a musicological discipline in its own right' (Rink, 2004: 36), has been recording technology and the recorded artefacts it makes available. Although more recent digital technologies in the form of sophisticated software programs, which allow researchers to 'navigate and browse recordings' (Cook, 2007: 186) and provide visual representations of data, play an important role in extending the boundaries of what can be observed in and through recorded performances, the very existence of artefacts that can be used as objects of research in performance studies has been contingent upon the representational possibilities offered by audio recording technologies. Studying musical performance from the live event involves formidable difficulties, most obvious among them being the problem of obtaining and stabilising data from the fleeting performance for research purposes. In the absence of a seizeable phenomenon which represents the vanished event, and to which one can keep returning for detailed scrutiny, live musical performances resist sufficient objectification to become the focus of research.\(^1\) Arguably the most potent significance of sound recording since its beginnings has been the objectification and reification it affords performances by providing detailed acoustic representation of music as performed. These acoustic representations form the 'primary source documents for the study of performance' (Narmour, 1988: 318), the basic 'repository of evidence' (Leech-Wilkinson, 2001: 1) for researchers. In the words of Eric Clarke '[t]he perennial problem with the study of performance is its temporality and hence ephemerality, and if nothing else, concrete performance data [obtained from recorded performances] at least gives analysts and other parties the assurance that they are dealing with the same thing' (Clarke, 1995: 52). Without recording technology and recorded artefacts, we simply would not know what we now know about musical performances.

Since performance studies as a discipline relies to such a great extent on recordings as documents of performances, one would expect performers and their musicianship to be at the heart of the discipline's epistemological profile and the discourse that embodies it. As one of the most obvious answers one can give to the question 'What (who) do we hear in and through recordings' is 'The performer's music making', it seems only natural to expect performers to play a significant role in effectively shaping the nature of research, the mechanisms of knowledge production, and the sensibilities of the dominant disciplinary discourse. Such, however, has not been the case. Close study of musical performances over the last decade did not bring along a similar focus on performers in that their musical activities and musicianship continue to be represented, in theoretical writings, in terms of received notions, tools and concepts that historically were developed to understand the composer's musical activities. Performance making is still largely conceived in terms of fidelity to the composer's intentions as revealed in the score, rather than as a creative practice shaped by complex factors that include not only expert knowledge about performance traditions, but also a continual striving towards singularity driven by
an embodied aesthetic—epistemological quest to create musical meaning. John Rink has written in this connection that 'certain authors have all but robbed performers of their musical personae and artistic prerogatives, transforming them into museum curators, laboratory subjects, theorists and analysts, at the expense of their identities as musicians...And if such constraint is the end result, can we claim that performance studies has much to do with actual performance?' (Rink, 2004: 41)

The history of the relationship between recordings and the dominant disciplinary discourse in contemporary performance studies is yet to be written, but I would argue that the critical emphasis placed on two characteristics made possible for the first time by recordings, namely the repeatability and the spatial–temporal–social decontextualisation of the sounds of a performance, are more than likely to have played a significant role in reinforcing a work-based conception of music during the twentieth century: by insinuating the severance of the singular ties between the performer and the recorded performance, the technology presumably encourages one to hear the latter first and foremost as abstract musical structure. Clarke has written that with recordings '[t]he emphasis on abstraction and ineffability, which are powerfully associated with the ideology of music's autonomy and absolutism, is given extra impetus when the music is itself abstracted from the physical and visual circumstances of its production, and when all possibilities for communication between performers and audience have been eliminated' (Clarke, 2007: 50).

The relationship between the dominant ideology/discourse in performance studies and recording technology is set into relief when one explores the ways performers were represented in the music theoretical discourses of the pre-recording era, when live performance provided the only kind of context where one could encounter not only music, but also music making with all its artistry and magic. During the pre-recording part of music history, as the visible material cause of the sounding music, the performer was firmly connected to her performance in the musical experience of the listener. As the idea of a historical concert repertoire established the canon of classical music during the course of the nineteenth century, and different performances of canonic works highlighted the extent to which performers indeed determine the musical experiences of audiences, the performer came to be established as an autonomous category independent of the composer. The roots of contemporary performance studies go back to this period when the activities of the performer began to receive attention not only in pedagogical but also in music theoretical and philosophical writings. Most remarkably, as the first systematic investigations of musical performance were carried out in the absence of recording technology, theorists were already able to formulate some of the fundamental hypotheses of recent research (Doğantán-Dack, 2006), demonstrating that although fraught with difficulties, basing the study of musical performance on the live event is by no means impossible. For instance, the method employed by the Swiss theorist Mathis Lussy in this connection consisted of recording some of the details of timing, dynamics and phrasing he observed during live performances by
diligently annotating musical scores for forty years. As I shall discuss in a future publication, Lussy’s writings include invaluable materials, which up to now have not been brought to the attention of musicologists: the scores he annotated during performances shed light on the interpretative decisions made by some of the most important performers of the nineteenth century, among them Hans von Bülow and Anton Rubinstein, the two giants of Romantic pianism. In some cases, the annotations concern the same passages of music as interpreted by different pianists, forming the first historical examples of comparative performance analysis. While precious as musicological documents, Lussy’s annotations are nevertheless powerless to re-create an experience of the astounding musicianship of the said pianists, which written accounts describe. And without any acoustic documentation of their artistry, Bülow and Rubinstein are no longer within the chain of knowledge production as performers, though their ideas on music (Bülow, 1895–1908; Rubinstein, 1891) retain their potential to influence musical thought.\(^2\)

A study of the music theoretical discourses of the nineteenth century reveals that performers enjoyed a short-lived authority in matters of musical epistemology, and were elevated to the status of being the true source of musical knowledge. Music analysis and theory, particularly in connection with musical rhythm, were evidently informed by the performance practice of the day, and the musical score was regarded as subject to the authority of the performer who made it intelligible to the listener. The abundant performance editions from this period, in which the composer’s presumed incorrect barring and time-signature would be corrected by the editor – for example, Riemann’s editions (Phrasierungsaugaben) of Mozart (1883), Beethoven (1885) and Haydn (1895) Piano Sonatas – are the best-known examples of the kind of practice where the performer is granted the freedom to alter certain aspects of the notated score for purposes of musical intelligibility, overriding the authority of the composer in determining the essential features of the musical ‘work’. A typical statement from this period demonstrating the epistemological status of the performer’s practice reveals how radically our conception of this status has changed since then:

It is truly astonishing that Brahms, so rich in his rhythmic conceptions, has written [the beginning of Hungarian Dance No.6] in 2/4. Quibblers say: ‘if Brahms wished so!’ Can Brahms or any other genius wish for the impossible, the absurd, that which is against nature? Brahms, like Beethoven, etc. could have had moments of distraction. It’s up to us to resist their incorrect incitements. It is highly probable that Brahms played this piece differently than he wrote it. In any case, Bülow, who studied with Brahms, played it as we have shown.  

(Lussy, 1903: 17)\(^3\)

Determining to what extent recording technology played a part in transforming the way musicological discourse came to represent the performer’s role during the twentieth century requires extensive research into historical documents. It is, nevertheless, indisputable that the age of recording generated a discourse where the
relationship between the performer and musical knowledge embedded in performance became obscured at best, and non-existent at worst. Recorded performances, regarded as 'acoustic texts' (Cook, 2007: 184), have become epistemologically disconnected from their 'authors' in that the prevailing disciplinary agenda reiterates the conspicuous absence of performers in performance studies. Cook, for example, has written: 'much as I applaud the efforts that have been made in the last decade or two to develop a musicology of performance, we are vulnerable to the claim that the voices of performers have not really been heard' (Cook, 2005: 23). Stipulating the absence of performers while building the discipline's main research agenda on recorded performances is indeed an indication that performance studies is still overwhelmingly based on the ideology of 'the work' and its attendant bias towards the composer's epistemological primacy: accordingly, a recorded performance is regarded primarily as an acoustic representation of the musical score, and thereby a mediated manifestation of the composer's authority. Substituting the term 'acoustic texts' for 'recorded performances' — and implying that they are 'authored' by performers — is far from redressing the balance in favour of a footing of equality for the performer, since the kind of epistemological connection that is assumed to exist between a notated musical text, i.e. the score, and its author, i.e. the composer, is not easily and comfortably transferable to the realm of so-called acoustic texts: while any musicological work on a score starts from the assumption that it inheres an intelligible, rational musical design based on the composer's creative activity, no musicological study assumes that the recorded performance inheres an intelligible, rational and creative performer as its generating cause. The latter rather has to be argued for and demonstrated with ample evidence. As music theory and compositional practice developed hand in hand during the last four hundred years — from the Middle Ages onwards, theoretical attempts to understand the technical features and structural organisation of existing compositions were made with the pedagogical aim of providing models for aspiring composers — and since music analysis as a discipline took shape only as the composer's score came to be regarded as a 'final, fixed, immortal text' (Bowen, 1999: 429), the basic paradigms of intelligibility that composers have been working with and are able to notate with more or less precision, namely abstract relationships of discrete pitches and durations, turn out to be the very ones that are recovered/recoverable by analysts from a score. Sharing these symbol-oriented paradigms conceptually with the composer, theorists and analysts generally do not find it problematic to understand the composer's musical activities in their own terms. In this sense, the history of Western musical thought has been the site for the privileged relationship between the composer and the musicologist.

On the other hand, the basic components that preoccupy performers in their efforts to create musical meaning and intelligible musical gestures and shapes, namely tone colour, touch, articulation, and dynamic sense of phrasing and form are not recoverable easily — if at all — from the acoustic text, i.e. the recorded performance. More significantly, performers and musicologists have never interacted sufficiently
to develop the tradition of a shared conceptual plane. Being insufficiently equipped to ‘read’ the ‘acoustic text’ in terms of the variables used by the performer to create meaning, musicologists, it seems, fail to recognise the markers in the recorded performance that point to the agent responsible for them, i.e. the performer. It is, therefore, not surprising that as far as the dominant disciplinary discourse in contemporary performance studies is concerned, recorded performances, even if conceived as acoustic texts, exist without their authors and are ‘mute’ in that they do not make the performer’s voice heard; a recorded performance does not make the intelligible design, and musical knowledge behind it apparent to musicologists, who by and large rely on tools appropriate for exploring another kind of musical activity to understand what the performer does. Even if musicology has indeed left behind its almost obsessive focus on the score and moved on to a conception of music as a performance art (Cook and Clarke, 2004: 10), it nevertheless remains the case that researchers in performance studies are reluctant to represent performers as authorities in the generation of musical meaning and knowledge, and as creators on a par with composers, all the while using their recorded performances as basic research materials. Consequently, the prevailing disciplinary ideology assigns minimal epistemological worth to the musical voice of a performer, and requires her to have a textual voice shaped by the dominant discourse before confirming her presence within the discipline.

Even though sound-recording technology is often regarded as having broken the singular, causal ties between the performer and her performance in the listener’s experience by abstracting the acoustical features of a performance from its original place, time and social context of occurrence, as the direct and immediate consequence of the performer’s actions, a performance – whether live or recorded – is always indissolubly linked to its maker. Research in sound perception and cognition provides substantial evidence that images of sound and sound production are closely linked such that actions of the performer that produce the musical sounds are represented as part of the musical sounds themselves in the listener’s experience (Godøy, 2001). Listening to recorded performances is, among other things, aurally witnessing the performer’s actions, and observing her enactment of the music. As Rolf Inge Godøy has argued ‘there are motor schemata which run parallel to “pure” sound, constituting a “silent choreography” of sound-production integral to notions of musical sound’ (Godøy, 2001: 243). In a similar vein, Shove and Repp wrote that

[n]o one needs to see how high the feet are being raised to hear someone walking or to sense the continuity of the leg movements between the discrete footsteps. The series of footsteps is a natural, lawful consequence of the continuous movements of the legs (indeed, of the whole body). In this respect, their timing and amplitude ‘specify’ the continuity of movement. The same, we submit, is true of performance movement: the timing and amplitude of the sound-producing attacks lawfully specify the movement spanning a group of attacks, which one can hear as a unit of motion – as a gesture. Some may object to this claim on the
(false) assumption that all one hears are the attacks, for they alone produce the sound. However, attacks are nested events, constrained by, affected by and thus lawfully specific to the performer's actions. To hear the attacks is to hear the performer move.

(Shove and Repp, 1995: 60)

Hence, while one can choose to focus on abstract pitch and durational relationships in listening to a recorded performance, this does not mean that one can perceptually or cognitively erase the kinetic, bodily trace of the performer in the sound. It is important to note that the sounds and sound-producing actions heard in and through a recording do not simply refer to the performer: they rather constitute the performer and her musicianship. The performer qua performer comes into being simultaneously with the sounds she makes; the kinaesthetic markers that are embedded in the sonorous qualities of musical sounds are essential for the identity of the performing musician. As Naomi Cumming has observed the performer's 'identity as a musician cannot be known apart from the sounds she makes' (Cumming, 2000: 26). Ontologically, performers, whether they are seen or not, are firmly connected to their performances. Recordings, therefore, need to be recognised not merely as documents of performances that took place in some specific time and place, in one or several takes, but also as documents of the performer's musical voice and expert knowledge. As Peter Johnson observed, the musical voice of a performer is unmistakable once we have heard it, regardless of whether it is on CD or in a live performance. It is this performing voice that recordings capture so effectively and which becomes present every time we play a record or a CD. A recording is, literally, of the performer or ensemble engaged in interpreting the work.

(Johnson, 2002: 197)

In the words of Tim Day, the particular value of sound recordings lies in their potential to demonstrate 'stylistic traits in contexts, as part of an artist's voice or personality' (Day, 2000:149).

While it may be difficult – if not impossible – for non-performing researchers to immediately recognise the embodied expert knowledge that went into shaping the sonorous qualities of a recorded performance and the performer's conception of the music on record, the aesthetic–critical judgements made by a pianist listening to the recorded voice of another pianist, for example, would be motivated by a shared epistemological plane that is characterised by procedural action representations, originating in the expert production of musical sound sequences on the piano (Jäncke, 2006; Palmer, 2006; Schlaug, 2006). These action representations, which are continuously activated during listening, form the conditions of possibility for the acquisition of new knowledge about the art of piano playing while listening to recorded performances. In the words of Cumming, for a performer listening 'a
knowledge of what *might have been* in the performance of [a] sound is able tacitly to inform the moment of hearing it’ (Cumming, 2000: 55). Unless one has first-person experience of music making on the piano, the mere observation of the actions and sounds of a pianist would not lead to this kind of comparative cognition of her musicianship, which unfolds as one listens to a live or recorded performance. While one can still describe the musical movements, gestures and sounds observed accurately in terms of timing and dynamics in the absence of such first-person knowledge, one would have difficulty in attributing *pianistic* meaning to them. To use a term from ecological theory (Clarke, 2005; Gibson, 1986), a recorded performance *affords* expert learning and comparative enacting of the music for a performer, and – unlike in the case of a listener – does not ‘hold perception and action apart’ (Clarke, 2007: 49).7

The insistence on representing the performer's identity as a musician through a textual voice has been most acute in the literature on performance and analysis, a research area the aims of which have never been well defined in my view. The great majority of research in this area is built on the assumption that musical performance does not involve and reveal knowledge in the same way as music analysis, and that a performance is epistemologically creditworthy only when its sonic characteristics are justified by a rational, analytical, discursive knowledge basis, inevitably provided by the analyst. Janet Schmalfeldt's frequently cited article of 1985 titled ‘On the relation of analysis to performance: Beethoven’s Bagatelles Op.126, Nos. 2 and 5’ is a paradigm case for the kind of musicological discourse that renders the credibility and worth of the performer's musical activity contingent upon her displaying – in discursive language – an understanding of the score that is reached by means of institutionally established music analytical methods. As is well known, in the article Schmalfeldt alternately assumes ‘the roles of two musicians – a Performer whose forthcoming concert includes Beethoven's Six Bagatelles op.126, and an Analyst who is preparing a study of the same’ (Schmalfeldt, 1985: 2). Throughout the text, the ‘fictive Analyst’ (Schmalfeldt, 2005: § 3) enlightens the fictive Performer, who repeatedly expresses her gratitude for the insights and knowledge the Analyst provides. When the Performer asks herself what she has done to ensure that she can recreate the complete work as if it were her own, and on what basis she performs the work as she does, she replies by stating: 'If I succeed in finding confidence for the performance of the Second Bagatelle, it will be because I have tried more than ever to find an analytic basis for performance decisions' (Schmalfeldt, 1985: 19). I shall not dwell on the fact that such statements represent wishful thinking by analysts rather than the conditions of success on stage, nor on the fact that for a performer, the experience of owning a piece of music is born of a highly affective, embodied investment that leaves her aesthetic–kinaesthetic signature in the musical sounds, of an affective commitment to make the piece ‘work’, and not from an analytic contemplation of the score. To be sure, various musicologists have noted that the relationship between the fictive analyst and the fictive performer
in Schmalfeldt’s 1985 article is not one of equal partnership (Cook, 1999; Lester, 1995; Rink, 2002; Rosenwald, 1993) since throughout the text it is the analyst who speaks with authority about musical structure and interpretation and enlightens the performer. Rosenwald, for instance, wrote that the fictive performer is ‘throughout the experiment the analyst’s student, in one case cheerful and in the other mildly troubled. In neither case is she asking questions other than those the analyst would pose in any case’ (Rosenwald, 1993: 61).

There is, however, a more fundamental representational problem in Schmalfeldt’s text that, to my knowledge, has not been noted by any researcher in the field: this concerns the ontological state of the two fictive characters, and their epistemological credibility. How fictional indeed are the two characters created by Schmalfeldt, and how fictional are their analyses and performances? I would argue that since they do not occupy the same ontological and epistemological plane, the Analyst and the Performer in fact are not equally fictional. In the article, the distinction between the fictional Analyst – a persona created by Schmalfeldt – and the (implied) author collapses as the Analyst displays highly specialised expert analytical knowledge about the musical work under investigation. Representation of such expert knowledge by the persona becomes at the same time a representation of the intelligence, knowledge and opinion of the authorial perspective that holds together all the elements of the analytical discourse we, as readers, are aware of. There is, in this sense, no difference between the perspectives of the fictive Analyst and of Schmalfeldt on Beethoven’s Bagatelles. Epistemologically, once such a creditworthy analysis is provided, whether the analyst is fictive or not becomes irrelevant in terms of the expert knowledge offered through the analysis.

But is the same true for the fictive Performer? Following the Performer’s response to the Analyst, Schmalfeldt writes that ‘The Performer gives a complete rendition of Bagatelle no.2, op.126’ (Schmalfeldt, 1985: 19), inviting the reader to imagine a performance not only informed and inspired by the Analyst’s expert knowledge and insights, but one that is aesthetically satisfying. In other words, we are asked to believe that a fictive performance by a fictive performer is epistemologically feasible. However, as the expert knowledge of the performer qua performer cannot be revealed other than through the sounding music, i.e. as writing alone cannot represent her performance expertise, the fictional Performer in Schmalfeldt’s article remains distinct from the (implied) author – and thus truly fictional. The problem is not resolved by the information that Schmalfeldt herself sometimes performs: without actually hearing the interpretation of the fictive Performer and its relationship to what she has to say about the second Bagatelle in the article, we cannot draw from her textual voice a musical voice, and refer to her as a ‘performer’. The epistemological paradox of the article is that a fictional performer whose performance is not actually heard is not musically credible, while a performer who performs cannot be fictional because of the indissoluble link between her embodied presence and the musical sounds she produces. To be fair, in 1985, when Schmalfeldt published this pioneering
article on performance and analysis, technologies for accompanying texts with sound examples were not as advanced and readily available as they are now. However, for any present-day researcher who wishes to prescribe performance decisions by relying on the authority of analytical findings based on the score, there is no excuse for not demonstrating through a recorded performance of her own how exactly such analytical knowledge is translated into a sounding performance of the piece.

II

I have so far claimed that the performer’s musicianship cannot be known independently of the musical sounds she makes, and argued that as far as musicologists are concerned sound recordings – the primary source documents for research in performance studies – do not reveal performers’ expert knowledge about music and music-making. By way of countering the prevailing ideology that requires the performer to justify her performance through a discursive textual voice, I have implied that a recorded performance is its own demonstration, its own argument, if you like, in its specifically musical ‘language’. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the philosophical foundations of knowledge production and research in Western thought, which prize reason and propositional knowledge over and above affect and know-how, do not easily accommodate modes of knowledge presentation that lie outside the verbal realm. In this sense, the musical voice of the performer that is revealed through recordings does not suffice to make her heard as an equal partner to the musicologist in knowledge production. To challenge the disciplinary status quo, which is deeply rooted in this tradition giving priority to discursive knowledge, and to reclaim for performance studies the long-neglected epistemological primacy of the act of music making require using the tools of that very tradition, namely arguing and convincing. It will indeed take much discoursing to establish the fact that the possibility of any musicological knowledge about music is contingent upon the existence of a musical way of knowing that originates in music making. Rather than regarding this as a discouraging state of affairs that reflects the knowledge–political agenda of positivistic musicology and retreating to the realm of mere ‘doers’ (Kerman, 1985: 195–6), performers can take it as an opportunity to set aside their notorious image as inarticulate musicians, and fill in the epistemological gap in performance studies by articulating their perspective on matters of performance through a performer’s discourse. The establishment of such a discourse is essential if performers are to assume greater priority within the discipline – which in turn is essential, according to Rink, for the discipline itself to continue to thrive (Rink, 2004: 41).

The dominant discourse in performance studies is the expression of a primarily textual culture, and as such it seeks to ‘read’ recorded performances and construe their different levels of signification from a textual understanding of them. In contrast to this, the performer’s discourse would originate in an aural culture, celebrating a system of values that do not require meaning to be primarily read but
heard, a culture where new knowledge is aurally recorded; here, it is the performance that makes possible and drives the linguistic discourse. As such, a performer's discourse destined to play a role within the discipline needs to have both linguistic and non-linguistic components, and present the performer's voice both musically and verbally: it would have to provide an aural-discursive construction of the performer's perspective and identity as a musician.

To be sure, performers have been writing about their art and in that sense they are not as a rule inarticulate doers. However, most of this literature does not involve disciplinary concerns — an imperative to contribute to performance studies by presenting the performer's perspective to theorists and practitioners of music alike — and consequently does not find acceptance in musicological circles as presenting a legitimate knowledge producing perspective. In defining the nature of a performer's discourse that would find a space within the discipline of performance studies, it would not be desirable to attempt to delimit in advance the epistemological profile it would acquire, since it is difficult, if not impossible, to filter out the knowledge background of each performer—researcher who will take part in the formation of such a discourse: inevitably, some will have been trained as historical musicologists relying on the established terminologies and conceptual framework of musicology, some as music psychologists, and some as practitioners articulating their experiences as creative artists. Motivated by a particular knowledge background, a particular performer's perspective on music and performance will involve many different kinds of assumptions, information, images, and associations, which will contribute in unique ways to the formation of her performance interpretations, and performance signature; the representation of this perspective in language will accordingly involve a particular blend of knowledge, a particular epistemological relief. Moreover, the different kinds and modes of knowledge, which such a relief would project, do not necessarily form a hierarchy of importance. Clarke has noted, for instance, that

a person's knowledge of Hegelian dialectics might influence the performance of a Beethoven sonata, since sonata form structures can themselves be seen as an example of the operation of a dialectical process. The same might be equally said of a performer whose knowledge of biology led him/her to interpret a through-composed piece according to a metaphor of organic growth.

(Clarke, 1993: 208)

As such, it would limit the epistemological inquiry to dictate that only certain components of a performer's knowledge background are suitable for inclusion in a disciplinary discourse. On the other hand, starting without limits means that one cannot predict at the outset to what extent performers will be able to overcome the constraints of the dominant disciplinary ideology. In my view, the most fruitful approach in representing the performer's voice textually is to aim to record what otherwise would not be articulated in the discipline, i.e. the phenomenology of
performing and the performer's perspective on the cognitive–affective dimensions of music making.

In this undertaking, recordings play an indispensable role in integrating the musical voice of the performer with her textual voice. This new role would inevitably generate new meanings that go beyond the ones recordings have traditionally been assigned as either 'sound photographs' of musical performances (Fred Gaisberg in Day, 2000: 33), or created aesthetic objects à la Gould, or interpretations of a musical performance (John Culshaw in Day, 2000: 43). For instance, a recording that is intended and produced as part of a performer's discourse – as part of her knowledge production process – would be conceived as representing an intermediary arrival point, a narrative cross section from the unfolding 'life' of a piece of music in the hands of a particular performer, rather than 'the carefully controlled final state of a performer's interpretive activity' (Clarke et al., 2005: 31). As an integral part of the performer's research, recording would also provide the performer with the opportunity to theorise about performance practices by challenging, questioning, and even negating known ways of interpreting music, and presenting performance practices that are clearly driven by research imperatives – a practice that is not always viable in commercially oriented classical recordings. Recordings would thereby become a means of knowledge presentation and dissemination in performance studies.

III

The second movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.13 in C minor, the *Pathétique*, involves one of his best-known themes (Figure 1), and its rhythmic ambiguities have generated performance-oriented analyses in the writings of theorists such as Lussy (1912) and Hugo Riemann (1919). Other – score-based – analyses of the movement have been given by Donald Tovey (1931), Jeffrey Kresky (1977) and Bengt Edlund (1997). There is no space – nor is there any necessity – to exercise yet another score-based analysis of the movement here. As my own performance interpretation originates in an embodied, pianistic understanding of the music, I am rather interested in discoursing about the meanings that emerge from the act of performing it. In this unexplored territory, such well-known pieces reveal significations that have been concealed by a veil of familiarity.

![Figure 1](image-url)
The tempo—expression mark Beethoven gave to the second movement of the *Pathétique*, i.e. *Adagio cantabile* (moderately slow in a singing style), appears sparingly in his piano music, although he used it more frequently in his music involving strings and wind instruments. While the marking is sometimes interpreted as a performance direction to bring out the melody against the accompaniment, it more significantly represents an incitation to imitate the singing voice. My conception of the second movement of the *Pathétique* grows out of the implications of its *Adagio cantabile* marking, and can be expressed as a concise image of progression from restraint to relative freedom as I explain below. Such nut-shell conceptions of form that guide performance have been criticised as having a 'summary nature' and therefore no theoretical rigour (Cook, 1999: 13–15). It is important to note, however, that understanding of musical form in terms of a concise image, verbal or musical narrative, is not to be equated with a 'performer's analysis' — it is rather a mental representation that functions like a road map during performance, guiding the performer in her quest to create musical meaning. It is a way of representing the whole of the music to be performed to oneself before one plays the first note, as during a performance, there is no time to activate and play from a representation either of a Roman numeral analysis or of the levels of a Schenkerian one.

Another misconception that has to be amended is the idea that the performer's interpretative activity concerns local details rather than larger-scale structural relationships of a piece of music. Cook, for instance, has written that

> [w]hile the developing analytical literature on performance tends to focus on issues of structural interpretation, often on a relatively large-scale, there is a strong argument that large-scale structure is to a high degree hard-wired into music as composed, and that the performer's ability to generate musical meaning depends much more on the handling of details. (Another way of saying this is that the analytical literature on performance reflects the agenda of score-based analysis rather than that of performance).

(Cook, 2007: 189)

Whether there are systematic relationships and possible interdependency between the local and global expressive variations observed in a performance has not been investigated extensively in research. Nevertheless, the idea that the large-scale structure, or form, is hard-wired into music is difficult to hold: if this were the case, the large-scale form of a piece of music would always be identified in the same way by different analysts, and different performers would always work from one and the same formal understanding of it. While certain pieces of music may indeed display clear large-scale structural relationships, which can be identified, say, as sonata-form, some other pieces might inhere multiple analyses in this respect: the important point is that, in either case, the way a performer handles local details is very much related to her conception of large-scale relationships — or her lack thereof.
One of the major interpretative decisions the performer of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.13 makes, for example, concerns how each occurrence of the main theme is to be treated in performance, which means developing a conception of the relationship between its five appearances, spanning 66 out of the 73 bars that make up the movement; this certainly constitutes an understanding of the large-scale structure.

The formal identity of Pathétique's Adagio cantabile movement has been a matter of controversy among analysts: some, including Tovey (1931) and Cole (2001), have identified it as a 'Rondo' – a sectional form where the first section or refrain recurs (rather than returns) between contrasting sections – while others regard it as a large ABA form subsuming all five occurrences of the theme, the fourth of which represents a return after departure. The implications of this situation for performance resonates particularly well with Tim Howell's observation that, for a performer, relying on 'someone else's analysis, even if specifically targeted as "performer friendly", is almost the equivalent of asking someone else to practice on your behalf' (Howell, 1992: 702). Should the performer treat all of the occurrences of the theme as repetitions (as in Rondo form)? Or does the fourth occurrence involve a sense of return as in ABA? Here, the performer, it seems, has to turn to herself as the authoritative source in developing a performance interpretation. One can provide score-based arguments for one or the other of these interpretations – stronger ones for one of them in my view – but the point is that neither of these score-based interpretations could form a necessary basis for a performance interpretation, which can arise only from an intimate familiarity with the piece acquired through performance.

Some answers regarding the form of the second movement of the Pathétique begin to suggest themselves when the pianistic implications of the tempo-expression mark Adagio cantabile are considered. The direction to play the movement in a singing style is naturally associated with a musical texture that can be identified, in terms of the listening experience, as melody and accompaniment, the two components being experienced in their distinct textural functions within a unified whole. However, the pianistic phenomenology is far from this kind of standard, text-book description, as throughout the performance of the movement the melody never acquires a distinct textural role, never gains independence to 'sing' on its own. The melody can be brought out without difficulty, but this is not equivalent to singing on the piano: what is required is rather a sustained level of kinaesthetic tension that will translate into a sustained level of force, effecting dynamically uniform and steady connections between the successive tones. It is worth noting that a cantabile performance does not necessarily depend on the composed structure having a particularly 'vocal' quality: the composer can ask for a cantabile performance of a scale, of an atonal melody, etc. In the second of movement of the Pathétique Sonata, phenomenologically, the fingers of the right hand, which also have to take part in playing the accompaniment, cannot 'grow
into’ the keys as they would normally do when singing on the piano; the wrist is also not free to ‘breathe’ as in normative pianistic cantabile practice. Compare this, for example, with the beginning of the second movement of Beethoven’s Piano Trio Op.1 No.1 (Figure 2), which is also marked Adagio cantabile, where the fingers and wrist of the right hand are totally free to accomplish singing on the piano.

![Adagio cantabile](image)

Figure 2

However, in the fourth and fifth occurrences of the theme in the second movement of the Pathétique, a phenomenological change in the performance of the melody takes place: the accompaniment, now in triplets, allows the ‘singing’ fingers playing the melody more elasticity to sustain a certain level of kinaesthetic tension, and the wrist more ‘space’ to breathe. Hence, pianistically one notes a progression from restraint to more freedom to sing: the accompaniment, which at first creates a restricting environment for the melody, becomes relatively liberating towards the end and gives the melody the chance to thrive ‘vocally’. It should be noted that as the melody never acquires total freedom for a cantabile performance, Beethoven’s Adagio cantabile marking remains, in one sense, an imagined guiding force, rather than an actually, and fully, enacted one.

How does one now proceed from these observations, which still do not necessarily imply a specific performance for the piece? Pierre Boulez has written that ‘one’s [analytical] studies are of merely technical interest if they are not followed through to the highest point – the interpretation of the structure; only at this stage can one be sure that the work has been assimilated and understood’ (Boulez, 1975: 18). There are innumerable ways for a performer to construct an interpretation of her observations, analytical or otherwise, that would guide the temporal unfolding of the music during a performance. As I have argued earlier, this interpretation would ideally be represented in a compact form, so that it could be called upon with ease while performing. How the performer interprets her observations about a piece of music very much depends on her aesthetic preferences: for instance, should the relative pianistic freedom gained by the melody in bar 51 of the second movement of the Pathétique be interpreted as a goal, and expressed through the creation of a sense of direction towards bar 51, or should it be understood more as an event that just comes to pass, as it were? What were Artur Schnabel’s aesthetic assumptions when he introduced long drawn-out lines, and waves of dynamic changes in his 1934 recording of the second movement of the Pathétique (in Schnabel, 2002)? What aesthetic preferences drove Claudio Arrau in his 1963 recording of the Pathétique
(in Arrau, 1989) to choose for the second movement so slow a tempo as to create a quasi stasis, a feeling of labouring throughout?

My aesthetic preference in this regard is in favour of an interpretation that sees bar 51 as a return after departure, as a goal expressed through a sense of direction in performance, which is consistent with a narrative understanding of the melody as thriving in the rhythmic space opened up by the triplet accompaniment in bar 51. I have found that in performance this conception invariably leads me to override Beethoven's piano dynamic marking in bar 51 and keep the dynamic level forte till the coda. To those who might object to this performance choice on the basis of a Werktreue ideology, one only needs to point out that the notion of 'faithfulness to the composer's intentions as revealed in the score' is relative: Schnabel, who was considered – and considered himself – as one of the early practitioners of Werktreue, rarely followed the dynamic details of this movement as notated. Furthermore, there are performance traditions for many works that have not grown out of what is written in the score, such as the tradition of playing the opening of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto Op.18 in C minor much slower that the rest of the movement. As far as the Pathétique Sonata is concerned, 'it is far from obvious which elements Beethoven and his contemporaries considered essential for the integrity of a musical work' (Bowen, 1993: 141). Besides, one can give a musically meaningless performance of a piece of music, while playing all the pitches, rhythms and dynamics as notated. An aesthetically satisfying performance does not necessarily rise upon the pillars of Werktreue ideology. A performer rather aims to make a piece work aesthetically, to create a sounding phenomenon that is effective, moving – even enchanting and transforming – the conditions for which do not necessarily lie in a knowledge of how the score was interpreted by the composer's contemporaries, or how the piece works compositionally. All musical knowing originates in the embodied act of performance making, when the hand makes contact with the musical material, and begins to mould it. A recorded performance is a dynamic trace of this moulding and of the musical knowledge – of the 'intimate familiarity' (Brendel, 1990: 224) – that guides the process. It is the raison d'être for the textual aspects of the performer's discourse. Hence, my recorded performance of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.13,11 which can be heard on the accompanying CD (track 1), is that from which all textual aspects of this performer's discourse follow. The greatest challenge for performance studies is to recognise and theorise the musical way of knowing which recorded performances entail, so as to place it at the epistemological foundations of the discipline. Performance studies will thrive to the extent that it successfully represents the musical activities and experiences of not only those who listen to and theorise about live and recorded performances, but also of those who ultimately make musical experiences possible, namely performers.
Notes

1 I use the term ‘objectification’ to refer to the process of forming a conceptual object of understanding.

2 Though it is reported that Bülow (Day, 2000: 1) recorded on a cylinder, this has never been found.

3 Translation from the French original by the author.

4 The discussion concerns conventionally notated scores, and excludes electroacoustic, electronic and open works.

5 In reality, and broadly speaking, composers and performers work with all parameters of music; there is, nevertheless, an important difference of degree in the kinds of parameters with which each is preoccupied.

6 In contrast to this, no musicologist has ever complained that the voices of composers have not been heard in the discipline (even though the number of composers who have actually written about music and/or about their practice is very few), since the musical voice of a composer is seen as sufficient to establish his identity as an epistemologically creditworthy musician. Note that the issue I raise here is independent of the often-stated idea that performers as ‘doers’ are reluctant to talk about music.

7 In this connection, also note the recent neuroscientific evidence, which indicates that in expert performers, brain activation patterns for auditory and motor tasks are so similar that it becomes hard to tell which is which: ‘For the expert performers, perception and action seem to be just two aspects of one integrative skill’ (Bangert, 2006: 179).

8 Such a conception might, of course, also reflect the reality of various commercially available recordings.

9 Among his piano sonatas, it marks only the second movement of Op.13, and the slow four-bar introduction of Op.78 in F sharp.

10 See, for example, the second movement of his Piano Trio Op.1. No.1 in E flat; the second movement of his String Quartet Op.18 No. 2 in G; the second movement of his Wind Septet Op.20 in E flat; his Romance for violin and orchestra Op.50 in F; the third movement of his Cello Sonata Op.69 in A; and the second movement of his Trio for two oboes and English horn Op.87 in C.

11 Recorded as a single take at Middlesex University in April 2008. I am grateful to recording engineer Peter Williams for his assistance during the recording of this movement.

References


Tovey, D. (1931) A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas. London: Associated Board of RAM and RCM.


Discography
