

Introduction

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The present volume has its thematic centre in the multiple relationships of archival sources and performance practice. A variety of approaches and perspectives have been considered: archival research *on* musical performance (i.e., on the history of musical performance, including the related texts and contexts) is just one possible field of investigation, together with the use of archival research *for* musical performance (i.e., aiming at the historically informed reenactment or performances of a musical work of the past). Other perspectives entered into the scope of this volume, starting from those concerning the archiving *of* musical performances, including rehearsals, especially when the multimedia dimension takes over, as in music theatre and in any work including music, dance, mime, performance art in general, audio recordings and (re)production technologies, audiovisuals, and the realization of musical instruments to be used in the performance of individual works, insofar as they challenge past and current archival practices (see the articles by Marco Cosci, Filipa Magalhães, Luisa Santacesaria and Valentina Bertolani in this volume).

Another unbiased attitude towards different approaches to musical performance and uses of archival materials intervened to further enrich the plurality of perspectives, not only allowed but solicited by this volume of *Archival Notes*: the consideration of ‘research-led performance’ and ‘artistic research’ not as opposing sides of a dichotomy, but as two approaches in principle distinct but in fact able to coexist and interact in different, profitable ways, as shown by the articles that

explore some productive combination of the two (see the articles by Luk Vaes and Marco Fusi in this volume).

The results of this project are quite surprising, especially for the diversity and complementarity of the contributions, which is reflected at two different levels: on one hand, the variety of composers investigated in this volume (Mario Bertoncini, Constança Capdeville, Mauricio Kagel, Egisto Macchi, Giacomo Manzoni, Kaija Saariaho and Giacinto Scelsi) and, on the other hand, the number of archival institutions involved in research beyond the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venice). These include the archives of Ircam (Paris), Paul Sacher Stiftung (Basel), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon), Akademie der Künste (Berlin), Historisches Archiv des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Munich) and Fondazione Isabella Scelsi (Rome), outlining at the same time a complex geography for the study of twentieth-century music, and a network of actual and possible connections and intersections to be further explored in the future.

The 'Articles' section of this volume opens with Luk Vaes's article on Mauricio Kagel, which takes us directly to the heart of some core issues of the research-led performance field that are faced by the Orpheus Institute's HIPEX (Historical Performance Practices of Experimental Music) project. It is no coincidence that two of the authors (Luk Vaes and Marco Fusi) are part of Ghent's research group that 'traces, reconstructs, and documents historical practices in the performance of experimental post-WWII compositions, deepening our understanding of the role of the performer in the establishing of new repertoire and new performance aesthetics'. Specifically, Vaes, after the pilot experience with Lachenmann's *Salut für Caudwell* in 2013, tackles the issue of two even more complex projects by Kagel, *Tactil* and *Unter Strom*. From a methodological point of view, the article draws on Paulo de Assis's discussion of the concept of 'stratification', which is significantly implemented by Vaes. This framework represents the skeleton for the exposition of the complex issues posed by the sources of these works and connected to the various forms of materiality and to their tradition.

Vaes's concluding paragraph, in which he recalls the difficulties that Kagel's peculiar 'instrumental theatre' – like many other experimental music theatre works – causes to theoretical reflection, is a trait d'union with the next two articles focusing respectively on the production of Egisto Macchi and Constança Capdeville, albeit from different perspectives. Marco Cosci considers Macchi's *A(lter)A(ction)* with a philological edge, questioning approaches based on the 'opera' vs 'music theatre' dichotomy, intended as an issue which is more broadly cultural than strictly generic. He illustrates how this core question has affected the work's source and (historical) performance tradition, opening up the discourse to the possibility of new performances. Instead, Filipa Magalhães faces the question of experimental

music theatre from the perspective of archiving this musical practice and the resulting works. Starting from the case study of Capdeville's music theatre, she thematises the problems of the 'archival' practices by resorting to the categories of the TKB – Transmedia Knowledge-Base for Performing Arts project, based on the 'post-custodial theory' of archiving in the digital environment. This approach is considered useful for the archiving of Capdeville's music theatre works, as many performers that collaborated in Capdeville's original performances – musicians, dancers, actors, and mimes – not only kept documents in their own custody, but their testimonies (memories) are often crucial for reconstructing specific aspects of these performances. Furthermore, Magalhães proposes a close analysis of the problems arising from the archival classification of the multifarious typologies of performance sources, questioning the desirability of using such standards as the ISAD(G) or the RISM descriptors.¹

The problem of archiving the performance is addressed, on similar methodological ground, in the second section of the article on Mario Bertoncini's *Suite "colori"*. Here, Valentina Bertolani explicitly brings to light an aspect that is latent in other articles of this volume: the archiving of, and the descriptors to be used for, the 'objects' (here intended as non-conventional musical instruments) that are necessary to perform many experimental works. The awareness of the problem is accentuated by Bertoncini's poetics, which is based on a close idea-sound-instrument relationship, so that the set of objects used in performance, together with their use, come to 'coincide' with the work itself. The first section of this same article, by Luisa Santacesaria, is based on her large experience as a performer side by side with the composer himself, and offers a detailed illustration of the instruments involved as well as of their specific use as required for the performance of *Suite "colori"*. Santacesaria's section confirms the focus of this volume on the material, concrete aspects of musical performance, intended as a privileged place to grapple with far-reaching theoretical problems, in which the centrality of the performer's body strikingly emerges.

The same is true of Marco Fusi's article, which takes us to the core of an equally complex matter: the unique relation between improvisation practice on such an early electronic instrument as the ondioline, audio recordings, and musical notation in Giacinto Scelsi's compositional process. By tracing the creative process of the *Divertimento n° 4* through interrelated tape recordings and elaborations for various other works, Fusi not only shows the complex nexus of network relationships between the tapes and the different works (such as *Ixion*, *Ixor* and *Divertimento n° 4*), but also offers a new research methodology on the border between researched performance and artistic research, that results in new knowledge on Scelsi's improvisation process and the role played by the ondioline in it. A digital approach

to the tape recordings (through software as IRCAM AudioSculpt or Max/MSP patch running the BACH library, among others) produced ‘performance materials that are consistent with Scelsian improvisations, from which an ad-hoc performance strategy can be conceived creatively by each performer on the basis of their technical and instrumental imagination’.

A recent performance is the starting point of Landon Morrison’s article on Kaija Saariaho’s experience with electronic environment, which echoes in the compositional process of *IO* and *Nymphéa*. This contribution offers new insights in the relationship between archival research and knowledge of the various software architectures, and addresses the role that a ‘digital sound archive’ – as envisioned by the composer in the (practical) context of her multimedia library system for recording production activities – will have in the future for the sake of (re)performances.

The ‘Perspectives’ section of this volume puts proper emphasis on the journey through such original materials as sketches, scores, parts, tapes – and including the historical recording conducted by Bruno Maderna – of Giacomo Manzoni’s *Parole da Beckett*, a work for two choruses, three instrumental groups and electronics. The author is Marco Angius, the orchestra conductor who visited the Manzoni collection at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini during the preparation of a new performance of Manzoni’s work in 2022. His contribution addresses some crucial aspects of *Parole da Beckett* starting from the complex notational system, especially of the choral parts, and considering their interaction with the orchestra and with the magnetic tape, which also affects the comprehensibility of the intoned texts.

The two contributions in the ‘Documents & Reports’ section are strictly connected to the topic of this volume. The first, by Gianmario Borio, concerns the ongoing project *Research-led Performance*, an initiative consisting in a series of workshops for performers held at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini since 2016. The project aims to encourage consideration of archival material for musical performance, and to increase awareness of the creative process of the works addressed in each workshop. In this perspective, the approach of research-led performance is regarded as ‘complementary’ to the field of artistic research, thus suggesting the possibility of a combination between them, which is effective in some of the articles collected in this volume.

The question of preserving and transmitting musical works that include electronics lies at the core of the second contribution, a report of the project *Ctrl+s | Conversations on the survival of electronic music*, conceived and realised by Federica Bressan, and produced by Tempo Reale, with the participation of Valentina Bertolani, Daniela Cattivelli, Francesco Giomi, Luisa Santacesaria, Giulia Sarno, Marco Stroppa, Stefano Trevisi, Alvis Vidolin and Laura Zattra. The ‘Documents

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& Reports' section hosts a revised transcription, edited by Luisa Santacesaria and Giulia Sarno, of the round table which concluded the project. The report covers many issues raised in the 'Articles' section by the contributions about electronic music (see the article by Landon Morrison in this volume) especially in terms of composition, preservation and archiving, but also with the aim of making new performances of works with electronics still possible in the future.

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Just as publication was imminent, we learned the sad news that Kaija Saariaho passed away on 2 June 2023. While an obituary was not possible at this point, Landon Morrison's article on her work bears witness to the attention that her music deserves. In the spirit of her innovative impulse, we trust that its publication in a volume devoted to the future of musical works between archive and performance is a worthy tribute to her legacy.

Notes

- 1 See <https://www.orpheusinstituut.be/en/projects/hipex> [accessed on 31 March 2023].
- 2 Paulo de Assis, *Logic of Experimentation. Rethinking Music Performance through Artistic Research*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2018.
- 3 Jean-François Trubert, 'Inventing a Genre: Mauricio Kagel and Instrumental Theater', in: *Revisiting the Historiography of Postwar Avant-Garde Music*, ed. by Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet and Christopher B. Murray, London and New York: Routledge, 2022, pp. 64–82.
- 4 *New Music Theatre in Europe*, ed. by Robert Adlington, New York and London: Routledge, 2019.
- 5 TKB is a 'digital relational platform for all interested creators, performers and researchers in sharing their creative processes, working methods or finished pieces in the performing arts field' in order to disseminate them to society in general, available at <https://tkb.fch.unl.pt> [accessed on 31 March 2023].
- 6 See *General International Standard Archival Description*, available at <https://www.ica.org/en/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition> [accessed on 31 March 2023].
- 7 See <https://opac.rism.info/main-menu-/kachelmenu/content> [accessed on 31 March 2023].