

# Expanding the Scope of Music Theory: Artistic Research in Music Performance

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Artistic Research is a contemporary phenomenon that broadly refers to rigorous and systematic research undertaken in academic contexts by arts practitioners on their own creative processes and artistic products. As a field in continual emergence, evolution, and expansion, artistic research encourages a self-reflexive approach towards its own methods and outcomes. While artistic research in music performance is by now a well-established area, its connections with the discipline of music theory have so far not been explored in any significant detail. This article aims to take some initial steps towards investigating the relationships between these two ways of researching and knowing music. The discussion emphasizes points of tension as well as agreement, and promotes a view of artistic research in music performance as providing a robust broadening and bolstering of contemporary music theoretical activity.

Künstlerische Forschung ist ein zeitgenössisches Phänomen, das sich auf gründliche und systematische Forschung im akademischen Kontext stützt, bei der praktizierende Künstler\*innen ihre eigenen kreativen Prozesse und künstlerischen Produkte beforschen. Als ein sich fortlaufend in Entstehung, Entwicklung und Erweiterung befindliches Feld befördert Künstlerische Forschung einen selbstreflexiven Zugang zu den jeweiligen Methoden und Ergebnissen. Während Künstlerische Forschung in Bezug auf musikalische Interpretation bereits ein etabliertes Gebiet ist, sind ihre Verbindungen mit der Disziplin Musiktheorie bisher noch nicht detailliert untersucht worden. Dieser Artikel zielt darauf ab, die Beziehungen zwischen diesen beiden Arten des Erforschens und Wissens von Musik abzustecken. Die Diskussion hebt dabei sowohl Spannungsmomente als auch Übereinstimmungen hervor und vertritt eine Sichtweise von Künstlerischer Forschung im Bereich musikalische Interpretation, die eine tragfähige Erweiterung und Unterstützung von gegenwärtiger musiktheoretischer Praxis bietet.

SCHLAGWORTE/KEYWORDS: anglophone music theory; artistic research; englischsprachige Musiktheorie; Interpretationsforschung; Künstlerische Forschung; music performance studies; musical knowledge; musikalisches Wissen; page-to-stage approach; performative turn; subject position; Subjektposition

*“But we should never forget: first came performance”<sup>1</sup>*

My aim in this article is to introduce *artistic research in music performance* as a recent expansion of music theoretical scholarship that has the potential to contribute significantly to ongoing efforts to transform the discipline of music theory into a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse academic discourse community.<sup>2</sup> In the first section, I provide an overview of the historical evolution of music-theoretical thought in western culture, which is followed by a review of some of the history and main characteristics of artistic research. I then reflect on the problematic relationship traditional Anglophone music theory and analysis had with performers and performances throughout the twentieth century, and discuss selected recent publications in this connection. This is followed by a consideration of some of the ontological and epistemological divergences between tradi-

1 Small 1998, 218.

2 See Marvin 2021.

tional music-theoretical work, and artistic research in performance. The artistic research projects I summarize in the final section illustrate how theories of music can emerge from performers' systematic reflections on their own artistic practice and lived experiences of music making, and how artistic research becomes a mode of analyzing and theorizing music beyond established and institutionalized approaches.

## HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF MUSIC THEORY

The desire to contemplate musical phenomena in order to “illuminate, elucidate, understand, or explain”<sup>3</sup> them has ancient roots,<sup>4</sup> and made music one of the most extensively analyzed and theorized cultural and artistic practices in western societies.<sup>5</sup> Yet, drawing the disciplinary boundaries of music theoretical knowledge practices is far from straightforward. Historically, a staggering variety of theoretical perspectives have been adopted to generate knowledge about the origins, nature, and function of music, and a wide array of analytical methods emerged to study different kinds of musicking behavior<sup>6</sup> and musical products. Indeed, not only theoretical perspectives about music but also “the subject matter” of music theory “shifted dramatically over time.”<sup>7</sup> Particularly during the twentieth century, there have also been significant national differences in the ways music theory evolved. In North America, the specialization and institutionalization of the field of study during the second half of the twentieth century<sup>8</sup> led to the establishment of music theory as a discrete academic discipline, separating it from Historical Musicology and Ethnomusicology in university degree programs. In Great Britain, the term “musicology” continued to encompass “ethnomusicology, theory, and other subdisciplines of music studies,”<sup>9</sup> even though towards the end of the twentieth century an “American-style professionalism” infiltrated “British music theory and analysis, something most clearly represented by the journal *Music Analysis*.”<sup>10</sup> In the tradition of the German-speaking countries, *Musiktheorie* remained embedded within the wider practice of (historical) *Musikwissenschaft* throughout the twentieth century,<sup>11</sup> but with an important difference: mu-

3 Brown/Dempster 1989, 65.

4 See Kilmer 1971.

5 In this article, I write about “music analysis” as an integral component of “music theory” (see Maus 1993).

6 See Small 1998. Small argued that music is not a “thing” but something that people “do,” and proposed the term “musicking” to refer to all kinds of musical activities humans engage in: “*To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.*” (ibid., 9; original italics)

7 Christensen 2002, 1. For instance, topics such as harmony of the cosmos or notation of chant repertoire, which would have been part of formal music theory during the medieval period (ibid., 4), are far from the scope of music theory in the twenty-first century. Given the widely divergent subjects and approaches that historically appeared under the banner of “music theory”, some have even argued that “defining music theory is impossible.” (Rogers 2004, 1)

8 See Baker et al. 1997.

9 Cook 2015, 11.

10 Schuijjer 2015, 132. Nevertheless, it is still uncommon in Great Britain to speak of a “professional music theorist,” which has become a standard designation within disciplinary discourses in North America. For further discussion of this point, see ibid.

11 See McCreless 1997.

sic theorists taught, and continue to teach, at conservatoires and *Musikhochschulen* (Universities of Music) rather than at (comprehensive) universities, and primarily engage in the education of practicing musicians and music pedagogues. As Schuijjer recently argued, “German music scholarship [...] has tended to divide less along disciplinary fault lines than along institutional ones – that is, those that exist between *Musikhochschulen* and universities.”<sup>12</sup> In this connection, German music theory retained close ties with artistic practices, particularly through its innovative pedagogical application of historical knowledge, as in the case of contemporary teaching of *Satzmodelle*, *Partimento*, or historical improvisation.<sup>13</sup> Recently, there have been calls for a higher degree of disciplinary autonomy for music theory in German-speaking countries, with the aim of changing its traditional status as a subdiscipline of musicology.<sup>14</sup> As other articles in this themed issue of the *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* address developments in Germany in greater detail, my focus in this article will be on Anglophone music theory.

The emergence of music theory as an academic discipline in North America during the second half of the twentieth century has been marked by a substantial narrowing down of the heterogeneity that the area has historically enjoyed with regard to its subject matter and methods, and created a hegemony of formalist and positivistic (in particular, Schenkerian and set-theoretical) perspectives applied to musical “works” from the western art music repertoire.<sup>15</sup> From the 1980s onwards – and following New Musicology’s postmodernist turn that advocated epistemological pluralism<sup>16</sup> – the purview of music theory once again began to widen. Beyond the connections mainstream music theory had established with mathematics and logic, new interdisciplinary alliances were formed with philosophy, cognitive science, linguistics, computer science, neuroscience, literary theory, hermeneutics, semiotics, narratology, gender studies, philosophy, feminist studies, critical theory, cultural studies, etc. Exploration of non-canonical, non-classical, and non-western repertoires further broadened the scope of the discipline, and various discursive positions along the spectrum of objective-scientific versus subjective-aesthetic were taken up in late twentieth-century music theoretical scholarship.<sup>17</sup> In 1997, the editors of *Music*

12 Schuijjer 2015, 150.

13 See Holtmeier 1997.

14 See Sprick 2013.

15 See Goldenberg 2006. In her highly influential book titled *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (1992), Lydia Goehr argued that the concept of the “musical work” did not always exist in musical thought in the west and that it crystallized, and became regulative, only around 1800. The concept fortified the primacy of the composer’s artistic activity in musical creation, and changed the status of the musical score, rendering it the authoritative locus of the expressive content of a piece of music.

16 Epistemological pluralism is the position that “there exist multiple kinds and forms of knowledge, which may be incommensurable or inconsistent with one another, but none of which can be shown to be superior to or reducible to the other. [...] Epistemological pluralism is sometimes confused with relativism. Relativism, however, assumes that there are *no* standards for truth and knowledge, whereas epistemological pluralism, by contrast, assumes that there are a number of different, competing standards.” (Boumans/Davis 2016, 172–173; original italics)

17 See Broman/Engbretsen 2007, 11–15. Agawu (1997) reminds us that while there was a proliferation of anti-formalist and anti-positivistic music theoretical work arising from such interdisciplinary encounters, self-reflexive music-theoretical discourses that align with the new musicological agenda were by no means absent prior to 1980. Scholars mentioned by Agawu in this connection include Thomas Clifton and Edward T. Cone.

*Theory in Concept and Practice* wrote in their introduction that “music theory seems to be expanding in every conceivable direction.”<sup>18</sup> Two decades on, Duinker and Gauvin noted that “The Anglophone music theory community encompasses an increasingly diverse, interconnected web of subfields and areas of specialization.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition to an increased multifariousness of research topics, Anglophone music theory in the twenty-first century is characterized by two further developments. One of these is related to Giles Hooper’s observation that some scholars carry on as though “new” musicology “had never happened,”<sup>20</sup> and persist in producing older-style theoretical work based on formalist-positivistic perspectives<sup>21</sup> – as evinced by the continuing “appropriate reverence” for Schenkerian theory,<sup>22</sup> and the appeal of transformational or neo-Riemannian theory, which Agawu described as “an aggressive new formalism.”<sup>23</sup> The second development concerns an ever-deepening *self-reflexive turn* taking shape as a response to the uncritical preservation of certain discursive practices that have been deeply entrenched within the discipline. One can cite, in this connection, meta-critical studies that interrogate the epistemological status of music theoretical claims about music,<sup>24</sup> and probe “the phenomenological, conceptual and cross-cultural complexities” of the key terms of the discipline in order to “exert critical pressure” on them.<sup>25</sup> Most significant, however, is the growing scrutiny of “the frames of race, ethnicity, nationality, ability, gender, and sexuality that have bounded music theory and music theorists for generations”<sup>26</sup> – frames that continue to centralize, naturalize, and prioritize certain subject positions in relation to music theoretical knowledge.<sup>27</sup> The entry of artistic research into the academic scene during the twenty-first century coincides with these critical transformations taking place within the discipline of music theory. Investigating the great variety of approaches and projects that have emerged in the context of artistic research in music composition *and* in music performance would not be possible within the limited space of this article. Consequently, I will focus on the relationship between artistic research in music performance and music theory as it is practiced in Anglophone academic contexts, and leave an in-depth exploration of the connections between artistic research in composition and music theory for a future article. An important argument that will emerge from my discussion is that placing *the practice of performance making* at the heart of its *research methodology* puts artistic research in music performance on a collision course with the older, formalist approaches in music theory, but that, this very methodological core, grounded in performance, at the same time aligns artistic research in music perfor-

18 Baker et al. 1997, 1.

19 Duinker/Gauvin 2017, 1.1; also see Rao 2019.

20 Hooper 2006, 7.

21 These older-style practices formed “the original target of [Joseph] Kerman’s critique” (Agawu 2004, 268), as formulated in Kerman 1980, 1985a, and 1985b. Kerman’s advocacy of anti-formalist and anti-positivistic approaches in music scholarship is widely regarded as having triggered the emergence of New Musicology.

22 See Agawu 2004, 268.

23 Ibid.

24 See for example Broman/Engebretsen 2007.

25 Rehding/Rings 2019, xv.

26 Marvin 2021, 320.

27 See Conlee/Koike 2020, 2021.

mance closely with the self-reflexive strand in contemporary music theory, which seeks to undo the knowledge hierarchies and narratives that elevate particular subject positions and identities at the expense of others, and celebrates the diversity, situatedness, and contingency of knowledge-producing perspectives in music scholarship. Artistic research in music performance thus has the potential to become an important ally for music theory in the twenty-first century, joining the “hard work” of “reframing” the discipline so as to “accept new types of scholarship” and create “a more equitable field.”<sup>28</sup>

## A NEW PLAYER AT THE ACADEMIC TABLE OF MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP: ARTISTIC RESEARCH IN MUSIC

The rise of artistic research as “the latest (the last) scion in the family of knowledge in Western society”<sup>29</sup> is related to various changes that took place during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in national and institutional policies regarding the nature, function, and funding of higher education in Europe.<sup>30</sup> These changes include the transformation, in 1992, of polytechnics in Great Britain – institutions that traditionally provided education in vocational subjects and applied research – into universities, with the power to award their own degrees; and the impact of the Bologna Declaration, signed in 1999 with the aim of coordinating the standards and quality of higher education across Europe. In both cases, arts practitioners and the education institutions that housed them up to that point, found themselves subject to one of the fundamental obligations that has defined the modern western university since the nineteenth century:<sup>31</sup> that is, research, as defined by certain protocols developed over a long period of time within institutionalized knowledge practices. First recognized in the area of Design and Visual Arts within British university contexts in the 1990s, academic research that is methodologically integrated with artistic practice soon spread to other arts disciplines, as well as to Continental Europe and Australia. While the terms “practice-based” and “practice-led” *research* have been more common in Great Britain compared to “artistic” research, the academic practices these notions refer to all converge around the centrality of the artistic practice in the research process. Currently, the term “artistic research” is gaining traction also in British higher education.<sup>32</sup>

Some scholars have argued that artistic research is as old as art making and that the praxis of some artists in history can be labelled retrospectively as “artistic research.”<sup>33</sup> According to this view, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Arnold Schönberg, Paul Klee, and Glenn Gould, for example, were artistic researchers since they advocated certain philosophical positions with regard to art making, and made the critical and theoretical thought processes behind their artistic practice explicit. Such an argument is certainly not implausible, especially if one considers the fact that in the work of these artists, artistic skills and expertise merged with critical explorations of the artistic medium, techniques,

28 Marvin 2021, 322.

29 Coessens et al. 2009, 44.

30 See Enders et al. 2011; Soysal/Baltaru 2021.

31 See Rüegg 2004.

32 See Blain/Minors 2020.

33 See Coessens et al. 2009; Malterud 2010.

and tools, generating original insights and knowledge, and expanding artistic epistemologies in their respective areas of activity. Nevertheless, the contemporary phenomenon of artistic research has been bound up since its emergence with issues that go well beyond aesthetic and epistemological concerns; discussions concerning its institutional legitimacy and its role within academia have been crucial in shaping its emerging discursive identity – and discourse community – as a new discipline. In this connection, those engaged in meta-critical evaluation of artistic research with the aim of establishing it as a valid and sustainable academic discipline often resort to language of persuasion and emotion, resembling “genres of political discourse, leading to a manifesto or a declaration of value judgements.”<sup>34</sup> In putting forward their case for artistic research, some writers speak of the need to be “bold,”<sup>35</sup> while others mention “the courage” required to ask difficult questions about the place of artistic endeavors in academic research, and refer to the “ideological battlefield” between scholars and artists.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, in addition to addressing various artistic and theoretical/critical questions and concerns, a twenty-first-century artistic researcher in music performance would also be engaged in discourses that oversee how she would fit and work within established institutional structures, with whom she would collaborate, what she would teach (and learn), and how her academic activities would be funded. In this sense, and similar to all academic disciplines including music theory, artistic research is about identities and discourse communities as much as it is about new knowledge practices within academia. Even if we identify various components in Glenn Gould’s artistic praxis, for example, that match some of the defining attributes of artistic research in music performance, other crucial aspects of the contemporary discipline known as “artistic research” would be missing from his work.

While artistic research is by now a well-established field of enquiry in relation to all art forms, and enjoys a substantial research literature, dedicated journals and societies, there is no single definition or description that is shared across different arts disciplines. Nevertheless, there is wide consensus on what artistic research is *not*, and on some of its fundamental characteristics: accordingly, artistic research is *not* merely research *on* or *for* artistic processes or products.<sup>37</sup> A historical or music-analytical enquiry about Beethoven’s *Pathétique* Piano Sonata, for example, is not by itself artistic research, even though these can become part of an artistic research project. Artistic research is also *not* some research added onto some practice, as in the case of early Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in North America, which “by the 1970s turned into something of a production line,”<sup>38</sup> and involved a portfolio of performances and some supplementary historical or analytical commentary on the pieces included in the portfolio, rather than the intimate, reciprocal, mutually determining relationship artistic research cultivates between practice and research. In artistic research, art making, and the skills and expertise it thrives on, are *methodologically* integrated into the processes of original knowledge production; in other words, the lived experience of art making and the performer’s systematic reflection on her artistic practice are inextricably intertwined with the research as a source for questioning,

34 Doğantan-Dack 2015a, 30–31.

35 Lilja 2010, 131.

36 See Coessens et al. 2009, 146.

37 For a frequently referenced taxonomy regarding the relationship between artistic practice and research, see Frayling 1993/1994.

38 Cook 2015, 13.

analyzing, interpreting, and theorizing the phenomena being explored. The introduction of new lines of enquiry through the presentation and communication of “the insider’s expert perspective on art making”<sup>39</sup> is thus a distinctive contribution artistic research makes to academic knowledge cultures.

There are ongoing debates, and a wide variety of assumptions, regarding the conceptualization of the relationship between the practical and theoretical components of artistic research, the role aesthetic values and subjectivities play therein, and the nature of the research outputs – whether the final artistic product should, by itself, be considered a research outcome.<sup>40</sup> Disagreements also arise due to the inherent qualities of different fields of artistic practice. Within the broad area of artistic research in music, for example, the different cognitive, affective, embodied, and institutional demands of compositional versus performance activities create different expectations with regard to their research-equivalence. Nevertheless, artistic research in music composition and in performance both thrive on asking “the kinds of questions that would not naturally occur to the [non-practicing] researcher,” many of which are “intensely practical,”<sup>41</sup> a point that will be illustrated by the case studies I discuss in the final section of this article. Both domains have also generated *self-reflexive discourses* concerning their own epistemological status as knowledge practices in academia.<sup>42</sup> In this connection, they have been significantly influenced, similar to New Musicology, by postmodern critiques of the notions of knowledge and subjectivity.<sup>43</sup>

Since *artistic practice* is at the heart of artistic research, any discussion of the relationship between music theory and artistic research – whether in music composition or music performance – is, in a rudimentary sense, a discussion about the relationship between *theory* and *practice*, two terms that have formed one of the primary conceptual dualities in western thought since Aristotle distinguished them nearly 2400 years ago – as *Epistêmê* versus *Technê* – in terms of their knowledge, and thereby truth, affordances.<sup>44</sup> Various scholars have recognized that the distinction between theory and practice is not clear-cut, not least because *doing theory* is self-evidently a form of cultural and academic practice,<sup>45</sup> and because all cultural and artistic practices necessarily proceed from implicit or explicit theoretical assumptions about society, culture and natural phenomena. Arguments that attempt to retain a rigid separation between theory and practice are therefore manifestations of certain cultural-historical viewpoints and discourses, rather than any inherent characteristics of theory or practice that emphatically set them apart. One should

39 Doğantan-Dack 2015a, 32.

40 For debates concerning the epistemological issues related to artistic research, see: Borgdorff 2008, 2009, 2012; Cobussen 2007; Coessens et al. 2009; Dombois et al. 2012; Schwab 2013; Hannula et al. 2014; De Assis/D’Errico 2019.

41 Crispin 2015, 60.

42 See for example Croft 2015; Emmerson 2017; Howat 2004.

43 Some of the publications in book format that have advanced artistic research in music are: Crispin/Gilmore 2014; Doğantan-Dack 2015c; Burke/Onsman 2017; Impett 2017; De Assis 2018; Stévanse/Lacasse 2018; Brooks 2021; Huber et al. 2020; Reid et al. 2021. Both artistic research in composition and in performance are well represented within this literature, through diverse approaches that investigate a wide variety of topics related, but not limited to embodiment, agency, historical knowledge, technology, and material artefacts in musical creation.

44 See McQuillan 2019.

45 See Candlin 2000; Zuber-Skerritt 2001; McQuillan 2019.

also be wary of attempts to collapse the distinction between practice and theory altogether by making recourse to the argument that arts practitioners theorize in and through their practices:<sup>46</sup> such attempts nominally conceal the epistemological difference that nevertheless remains between *art making* and *theorizing art making* since the expert know-how and skills driving the practice – which are locked into the medium of the practice – cannot at the same time *explain or communicate* the nature and/or the principles of that artistic practice. The obvious point here is that music compositions or music performances are not *eo ipso* theories of music, even though their creation necessarily involves theoretical underpinnings.

Historically, music theory maintained close connections with both compositional and performance practices until the late eighteenth century. For example, eighteenth-century theories of melody, phrase structure, and form were thoroughly blended with compositional pedagogy in the works of music theorists such as Johann Mattheson, Johann David Heinichen, Johann Philipp Kirnberger, and Heinrich Christoph Koch,<sup>47</sup> and performance pedagogy featured in music theoretical texts of the same period in the context of thorough-bass realization, embellishment of melodic lines, and the practice of preluding.<sup>48</sup> Various developments that took place in musical thought from the late eighteenth century onwards – including the increasing specialization of composing and performing, and the rise of the idea of the musical “work” as the creation of the genius composer<sup>49</sup> – brought theory and composition even closer ideologically, while pushing performance out of the scope of music theory. It is, therefore, not surprising that much before the term “artistic research” emerged, musical composition was accepted as a research-equivalent practice deserving its own PhD program and degree within academia – the first PhD in composition being awarded in 1937 by the *Eastman School of Music* in North America.<sup>50</sup> It is also worth remembering that the professionalization and institutionalization of music theory was achieved largely through the efforts of composers such as Milton Babbitt and David Kraehenbuehl. Such developments further endorsed musical composition as the object of music theoretical and analytical scholarship. Any discussion of the potential connections between artistic research in performance and music theory thus needs to consider the place of music performance within the wider discourses of music (theoretical) scholarship during the last century.

## THE “PROBLEM” OF PERFORMANCE

Throughout the twentieth century, and much before the rise of artistic research, music performance – a drastic act<sup>51</sup> characterized by “strangeness, uncanniness, and defiance of the rational”<sup>52</sup> – became a problem for music scholarship. Particularly music-theoretical and analytical work, which focused on the musical score as a “final, fixed, immortal

46 See for example Melrose 2005.

47 See Wason 2002.

48 See Cohen 2002.

49 See Goehr 1992.

50 See <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/about/portraits/barlow> (30 Nov 2022).

51 See Abbate 2004.

52 Cook 2013, 328.



text”<sup>53</sup> encoding the composer’s artistic intentions and embedding all musical meaning, began to seek knowledge about music exclusively in the structural relationships between notatable musical parameters – largely through Schenkerian and pitch-class analyses.<sup>54</sup> A crucial consequence was the creation of a formalist, structuralist, and textualist blind spot within which the knowledge-producing affordances of the act of performing vanished. Cook has identified in this disciplinary condition the origins of “a long tradition of disparaging performers,”<sup>55</sup> – a tradition that allowed twentieth-century theorists to imagine performing music as a subjugating act to be carried out by an ideally self-effacing performer,<sup>56</sup> and performance as a composition’s “mechanical realization”<sup>57</sup> or “reproduction”<sup>58</sup> that can never attain the artistic perfection of the musical artwork. Adorno, for instance, argued in this connection that “an absolutely correct [performance] interpretation [...] is an *idea*: it cannot even be recognized in its pure state, let alone realized. Therefore [in performance] [...] something is *always* wrong.”<sup>59</sup> Twentieth-century Anglophone music scholarship has no shortage of such discourse that sets up a clear hierarchy between composers and performers, as well as between music theorists and performers in terms of (the value of) musical knowledge their respective practices yield.<sup>60</sup>

Music theory managed the “problem” that performance posed for the discipline in two ways: by eliminating performers and performances from its scope and dominant discourses on the one hand, and by creating a research area, namely the analysis and performance literature, that attempted, for the large part of the twentieth century, to subjugate, discipline, and (mis)represent performance as an epiphenomenon of theoretical knowledge about music, on the other hand. Artistic research in music performance, as a recent development, can be regarded as receiving – in spirit if not in matters of method – the baton of the countermovement that emerged in music theory during the last decade of the twentieth century,<sup>61</sup> in order to provide routes for the epistemological emancipation of music performers from subjugating disciplinary practices and discourses, and to value their art as a source of musical knowledge, insight, and understanding.

Music theoretical literature of the twentieth century abound in examples that deploy the first strategy to deal with the “problem” of performance, that is, the strategy of erasing it from its purview. For instance, in an article published in 1969, Benjamin Boretz theorized the foundations of *musical* thought, which, in his words “is the essential content of every musical activity,”<sup>62</sup> but set the boundaries of “every musical activity” as “compositional, analytic, theoretical, or merely auditional,”<sup>63</sup> denying performing not only the status of a “musical” activity, but also the possibility to connect meaningfully with music

53 Bowen 1999, 429.

54 Cook (2013) refers to this theoretical perspective as “the textualist paradigm,” a notion that I discuss in greater detail in Doğantan-Dack 2021.

55 Cook 2013, 54.

56 See Doğantan-Dack 2020a.

57 Schenker 2000, 3.

58 Adorno 2006.

59 *Ibid.*, 92 (original italics).

60 See Cook 2013; Doğantan-Dack 2017, 2021.

61 See for example Rink 1990 and 2002; Lester 1995; Cook 1999.

62 Boretz 1969, 1.

63 *Ibid.*

theory. In one of the most influential Anglophone music-theoretical texts of the twentieth century, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983), Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff removed performance from theoretical discourses explicitly and asserted that music theory is “not concerned with the performers’ activities, nor is it concerned centrally with the sound waves performers produce”<sup>64</sup> – an ironic assertion given that they identified the “goal of a theory of music” as “a *formal description of the musical intuitions of a listener who is experienced in a musical idiom*,”<sup>65</sup> but failed to recognize that epistemologically one can hear, listen to, and experience music *only as/through* a particular performance, whether actual or imagined.<sup>66</sup> I should note here that even the arrival of New Musicology – which impacted music theory in important ways and broadened its scope and repertoire, as I noted earlier – did not bring about any meaningful change in this situation. Indeed, the “othering” of performers was firmly installed in Kerman’s second book from 1985 titled *Musicology*, which played an important role in motivating the rise of New Musicology: here, Kerman patronizingly described performers as inarticulate “doers” and scholars as “talkers,”<sup>67</sup> implying that no scholarly, analytical, and theoretical “talk” can grow out of “doing”, or be presented by “doers.”<sup>68</sup> Consequently, it is the recent ascent of artistic research in music performance, rather than New Musicology, that fully embraces the knowledge, insights, and hitherto unimagined perspectives music performers can bring to music scholarship, and opens up long-overdue room for performers, as equals, at music scholarship’s academic table.

Much critical discussion already exists in the scholarly literature about the second strategy that music theory forged in the form of a research area known as “analysis and performance” to deal with the unruly phenomenon of performance making.<sup>69</sup> I thus provide here only a summary of this strategy and its flaws. At the root of the twentieth-century analysis and performance literature is the idea that the performance of a musical work is valid, correct, and artistically worthy to the extent that it is informed by analytical knowledge supplied for the performer by the expert (professional) analyst. The best-known publications representing this one-way flow of knowledge from analysis to performance include Edward T. Cone’s 1968 book titled *Musical Form and Musical Performance*; Janet Schmalfeldt’s infamous 1985 article where the fictional analyst lectures the fictional performer; and Eugene Narmour’s (1988) and Wallace Berry’s (1989) highly contentious texts.<sup>70</sup> During the last century, discourses that promoted this idea in various forms became increasingly authoritarian and prescriptive, and advanced “the belief in the

64 Lerdahl/Jackendorff 1983, 2.

65 Ibid., 1 (original italics).

66 See Leech-Wilkinson 2012.

67 Kerman 1985b, 196.

68 Kerman drove this wedge between theory and performance even as he criticized music theory for remaining “silent on the subject of musical performance” and for regarding “the actual sound of a piece [as] simply a surface nuisance, a sort of *Vor-vordergrund* to be got past as soon as possible in the search for deep backgrounds and rich middles.” (ibid., 197; original italics)

69 See for example Rink 1990, 2002; Lester 1995; Cook 1999; Doğantan-Dack 2017.

70 Cone 1968; Schmalfeldt 1985; Narmour 1988; Berry 1989. For an overview of the North-American music theorist’s approach to performance, see Cook 2012.

superiority of the theorist and analyst in terms of musical epistemology,<sup>71</sup> thereby setting the stage for what Cook termed the “page-to-stage” approach:<sup>72</sup> the myth that there is

a direct and immediate route from the page to the stage, [...] that discovering the structure and thereby the expressive character of a piece by analyzing the tonal-rhythmic parameters notated on the page would straight away reveal the expression the music should assume for an aesthetically compelling performance, on the stage. Through a sleight of hand that conceals the inevitable involvement of the artistic agency of the performer in performance making, this myth creates the illusion that theoretical, conceptual, and typically propositional knowledge about musical structures is sufficient to create a performance with artistic qualities.<sup>73</sup>

It should be noted here that while a performer can certainly choose to undertake score-based academic analysis as she develops a performance interpretation and find this kind of exercise illuminating and inspiring, such analytical work is *neither necessary nor sufficient* to make an artistic musical performance. The root of performance-making rather lies in a performer’s intimate embodied-affective knowledge of the music she plays, and her skills in interacting with her instrument. In any case, there is no empirical evidence to support the idea that performances informed by academic theory and analysis are valued consistently more highly by audiences.

The “performative turn”<sup>74</sup> that mobilized a paradigm shift in scholarly ontology from music-as-text to music-as-performance, and led to the establishment of Music Performance Studies during the twenty-first century, generated, in the Anglophone scholarly community, strong criticisms of the page-to-stage approach and its formalist-textualist epistemology that renders musical understanding a disembodied, ahistorical, essentialist process.<sup>75</sup> Within music scholarship broadly conceived, the performer’s experiences, skills, expert practical knowledge, and artistry are by now largely considered as valid and valued sources of musical knowledge.

Nevertheless, there are still misunderstandings and misconceptions about the nature of artistic research in music performance.<sup>76</sup> In this connection, it is worth clarifying several points here: firstly – and uncontroversially, I take it – the fact that many music scholars play an instrument, sing or compose, and that their scholarly research might be informed by their practical knowledge about creating music, does not render their activities of theorizing and analyzing music *eo ipso* artistic research. Secondly, while it would not be entirely unwarranted to regard the countermovement of the 1990s in the analysis and performance literature as a distant evolutionary ancestor of artistic research in music performance – since they both share the desire to draw from the artistic outputs of perfor-

71 Doğantan-Dack 2017, 447.

72 Cook 2013, 37. Cook borrows this term from theatre studies.

73 Doğantan-Dack 2021, 28.

74 Auslander 2006, 100.

75 See Cook 2001, 2013; Doğantan-Dack 2015a, 2015b, 2017, 2021; Klorman 2018; Parmer 2007; Rink 2015, 2020.

76 For a discussion of some these misconceptions, see Kahr 2018. Accordingly, the “three major misconceptions with regard to AR [Artistic Research]” include: “(1) a bias towards relying on language rather than a consideration of intrinsic artistic processes and expressions; (2) assuming the primacy of the linear methodological approach as in conventional science, as opposed to the fluid and multi-dimensional emergence and development of AR; and (3) the separation between object and subject, which dissolves in AR.” (Kahr 2018, 189)

mers, i.e., their performances, in researching musical phenomena – their methods, outcomes, and discourses nevertheless remain very different. Thirdly, even though it might be possible to find in some recent scholarship that involves performers as collaborators a remote kinship to artistic research in music performance – since both bring performers' artistic activities and expert knowledge into research undertakings – their methods, outcomes, and discourses also currently remain within separate knowledge realms. Artistic research in music performance is, in this sense, a new species of knowledge practice within academia, with its distinct method and discourses. In order to dispel misunderstandings and misconceptions about it, and put in relief some of the distinguishing characteristics of artistic research in music performance, I briefly re-visit below some examples from the Anglophone scholarly literature that involve collaborations with performers, but nevertheless clash with the basic epistemological principles and values of artistic research in music performance because of the ways they sustain certain troubling disciplinary discourses with regard to the representation of the music performer, and the limited role they assign to performerly knowledge within the research process.<sup>77</sup> As I noted earlier, artistic research is as much about method, as it is about representation of artistic identity and discourse.

An early twenty-first-century research project that involves the collaboration of a concert pianist, Gabriela Imreh, and two psychologists, Roger Chaffin and Mary Crawford, concerns the exploration of the practice strategies employed by an experienced pianist while memorizing a piece of music for performance – a research undertaking that resulted in a scholarly book titled *Practicing Perfection*.<sup>78</sup> Among the reasons why this is not an instance of artistic research in music performance, even though the pianist's practice was an integral part of the project, are that (1) similar to Chaffin and Crawford, Imreh studied her own strategies for memorizing music by employing systematic reproducible procedures typically associated with scientific research, and did not explore any of the singular, idiosyncratic, creative processes that would have shaped her pianistic practice;<sup>79</sup> (2) the project aimed to contribute to existing scientific knowledge, but no attempt was made to enrich the variety of human experience by creating, through artistic practice, something to be experienced; (3) in the resulting book, Imreh's performerly discourse was represented by the two psychologists who quoted, analyzed, and interpreted, i.e., controlled it within the context of a scientific discourse, creating a hierarchy of knowledge production and ownership. Had this been an artistic research project in music performance, particular aesthetic, epistemological, and even ethical perspectives and values behind the pianist's artistic practice and identity would have played a major role in shaping the project's method and discourses, and the research process would have impacted her practice in some meaningful way artistically, and not just in terms of the memorization of the music.

The other scholarly texts I shall mention are from recent North American analysis and performance literature, and in addition to presenting research that involves collaborations with performers, they are written by theorists who themselves perform music in various

77 I have written about some of these examples in greater detail in some of my earlier publications (Doğantan-Dack 2017, 2020b, 2021).

78 Chaffin et al. 2002.

79 To avoid any misunderstanding, it is the lack of the second methodological approach, rather than the existence of the first approach that in part prevents this project from being an artistic research project.

capacities: these are Jeffrey Swinkin's 2016 book titled *Performative Analysis: Reimagining Music Theory for Performance*; Daphne Leong's book *Performing Knowledge: Twentieth-Century Music in Analysis and Performance* (2019); and Janet Schmalfeldt's article titled "Who's Keeping the Score" and published in 2020.<sup>80</sup> Even though all three authors are sympathetic to the disciplinary changes brought about by the performative turn during the twenty-first century, several features of their research are strikingly at odds with the epistemological foundations of artistic research in music performance. Swinkin, for instance, gives no space to the expert performer's knowledge and singularly situated artistic negotiations and decisions that would have shaped the performance of "Du Ring an meinem Finger" from Schumann's song cycle *Frauenliebe und -leben*, op.42, which he, as pianist, recorded with soprano Jennifer Goltz as part of his analytical project. He discusses Goltz' involvement in the research process exclusively within an institutionalized analytical discourse, without any attempt to present her embodied skills, expertise, and artistry in their own terms. Goltz' performance knowledge is represented as her mapping, onto the sounding event, of the emotional-physical connotations of the musical structures that Swinkin identifies as an analyst. Unlike in artistic research in music performance, there is no attempt to explore discursive means of participating in the artistic community. While Leong goes further than Swinkin in acknowledging the contributions performer's experiences and knowledge can make to analytical thought about music, she does not open up unforeseen avenues for understanding and experiencing music that are not within the purview of established music theoretical approaches and concepts; in other words, performing does not become a way of extending the *scope* of music theory. Furthermore, Leong sustains the prescriptive discourse that has dominated much of twentieth-century analysis and performance literature: while paradoxically claiming to avoid "prescription, believing that interpretation is always open-ended,"<sup>81</sup> throughout the book she asserts what the performer "should" or "must" do, without realizing that such discursive structure signifies knowledge hierarchy, as well as the desire to control the agency of the performer. Schmalfeldt's 2020 publication is arguably the farthest from artistic research in that she renders the three pianists she consulted "as co-researchers"<sup>82</sup> – while analyzing the score of Scarlatti's keyboard sonata in F minor K. 481 – absent presences by not providing the reader with any information about their artistic, creative thought processes *or* their identities. We are not told what their names are, whether they themselves asked to remain anonymous, the kind of metaphors or imagery, if any, they used in talking about the Scarlatti sonata in question, whether they demonstrated their thoughts about the music on the instrument, etc. In essence, Schmalfeldt treats these performers as interchangeable members of a community of anonymous, depersonalized practitioners without a discourse culture of their own; as such, her article represents a backward step in the face of the progress that the self-reflexive strand within music theory has been making recently by demolishing the long-standing knowledge-political power hierarchies and inequalities within the discipline. All three music scholars I referred to write as members of traditional music theory's discourse community: the questions they ask about performance making are mediated by established academic theoretical constructs; they do not approach music-theoretical concepts and the discursive frameworks of their discipline meta-critically;

80 Swinkin 2016; Leong 2019; Schmalfeldt 2020.

81 Leong 2019, xiv.

82 Schmalfeldt 2020, 96.

and do not reflect on the epistemological resistance that the unruly act of performing poses for the seemingly stable conceptual tools of music theory.<sup>83</sup> They continue to think about music performance in terms of a deeply engrained cognitive map shaped by institutionalized music theory, which disciplines performance artistry and reduces it to a species of cognition, even if creative cognition, that seeks the clarification or construction of musical structures. Music performance is clothed in a lexical outfit that is immediately recognizable to professional music theorists, but simultaneously hinders the awareness and acknowledgement of the much wider meaning- and theory-producing affordances of the act of performing.

## ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The problem that music performance has traditionally presented for Anglophone music theory originates from the discipline's ontological and epistemological premises. These premises radically diverge from the premises of artistic research in music performance. Arguably the starkest divergence between these two areas of knowledge concerns their respective understandings of "music": while music theoretical ontology standardly reifies the music being studied and considers it as a fixed musical artwork with an unchanging ahistorical essence represented by the musical text, for the artist-researcher, the music she explores is understood to exist in a state of emergence in dynamic performance environments that has the potential to generate new expressive meanings through each act of performing. The epistemological differences between music theory and artistic research in music performance follow from this fundamental ontological divergence. Music theory aims to posit theoretical-analytical knowledge "as demonstrating [...] a given fact of everyone's hearing, which effaces any possibility for the music theorist to be a contingent and partial knower of the world."<sup>84</sup> In this sense, music theory typically hides the situated experience behind theoretical activity in order to create the illusion that the musical knowledge it puts forward is knowledge from nowhere, i. e., is "objective" knowledge. In artistic research, on the other hand, the aim is to *construct* meaning from a highly situated perspective, acknowledging all the while the plurality of meanings that any musical text or performance *necessarily* invokes; most significantly, the artist-researcher recognizes the impossibility of establishing a direct and single bridge between any meaning she may construct and communicate *linguistically* about a piece of music, and the *musical* expression this meaning might assume in performance. She rather embraces the epistemological premise that there are innumerable ways any given music-theoretical and analytical thought can manifest itself in the sounds of a performance because it is necessarily filtered through the different bodies, cultural backgrounds, social positions, aesthetic preferences, etc., different performers have. In this sense, artistic research in music performance forms a close affinity with the recent self-reflexive strand within music theory, which denies that there is an entity that can be identified simply as "the music

83 For instance, is the notion of "musical pitch" conceptually stable enough to retain its applicability as *the same concept* across performances on different instruments? Is "musical pitch" as experienced and conceptualized by a cellist the same phenomenon as experienced and conceptualized by a pianist, for example? The situated and contingent act of performing music raises similar issues also for other music theoretical concepts such as timbre, form, texture, etc.

84 Conlee/Koike 2021.

itself" without any consideration of the bodies, social contexts, and values of those who engage in musicking.<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, artistic research thrives on the intimate connection between the artist-researcher and the object of her research, namely the music she makes. In this connection, it represents "the other" of old-style music theory, where the theorist's engagement with the object of study is "distanced, technical, non-experiential."<sup>86</sup> In artistic research, the artistic values and aesthetic sensibilities that the performer brings to the research process are regarded as "validating the research, rather than compromising it."<sup>87</sup> Consequently, the discourse the artist-researcher uses to communicate her findings and bring to light the "insider's view" on preparing and making performances takes account of her complex lived experiences and values as an artist. In valuing and taking seriously the *subjectivity*, *agency*, and *identity* behind processes of knowledge production, artistic research thus joins the recent disciplinary efforts to make music theory a more inclusive and diverse area of scholarship.<sup>88</sup>

Another reason why music theory does not regard the complexities and subtleties of expert performerly experiences as epistemologically equaling the knowledge potential of the complexities and subtleties of music theoretical thought is that theorists take *listening*, modelled on the mental activity of a "fixated" musicological listener,<sup>89</sup> to be the main mode of knowledge-bearing musical engagement.<sup>90</sup> This is a "disciplinary and disciplined listening,"<sup>91</sup> which focuses attention singularly on the structural properties of the "sounded" musical text;<sup>92</sup> crucially, it "allows for the listening subject to imagine herself or himself as privileged or exemplary, as standing in for all auditors."<sup>93</sup> The important implication here is that theorists do not feel the need to contemplate the question whether the ways performers hear and listen to music *in the act of creating it* display experiential differences that can lead to different insights about music. They assume that performers are categorically identical to fixated listeners as far as the listening experience goes. Conceptualizations of music performance that music psychologists adopt in their research, for example, have been influenced by this notion of fixated listening. Caroline Palmer, for instance, who is regarded as one of the pioneers in empirical research in music performance, wrote that "the listener's and performer's experience of a musical piece can be described as a conceptual structure, an abstract message that specifies the relevant musical relationships in a piece,"<sup>94</sup> leaving out all the highly situated embodied, affective, multimodal factors that shape a performer's (listening) experience. It is important to emphasize here that performers (including singers) hear, listen to, and think about musical

85 See Marvin 2021; Conlee/Koike 2020, 2021.

86 Maus 1993, 266.

87 Cox 2009, 10.

88 See Marvin 2021, 322.

89 Biddle 2011, 68.

90 For a discussion of the ways music scholarship has constructed disciplined regimes of listening, and of alternative listening modes, see *ibid.*

91 *Ibid.*

92 Cook 2013, 4.

93 Biddle 2011, 73.

94 Palmer 1996, 25.

sounds always with and through their instruments, as “*instrument-cum-sound*.”<sup>95</sup> Their bodily attunement and sensitivity to the *materiality* of musical sounds and patterns, developed through extended interactions with their instruments, enable them to experience and aesthetically evaluate musical sounds at the micro-phenomenological level, in their fine and subtle details: the listening practices of performers do not thoroughly overlap with the listening practices of music theorists. Crucially, in disregard of the embodied expertise of performers and the different experiences and perspectives they can bring to music scholarship, disciplinary discourses also fail to acknowledge the *physical labor* of performing, which is a fundamental value that enables the existence of musical cultures in the first place: to remind my readers of the epigraph with which I opened this article, music performance, and by implication the embodied labor behind acts of making music, precede – epistemologically, evolutionarily, and developmentally – systematic acts of theorizing or researching music. It is the existence of cultures of music performing in human societies that allows musicology and music theory to exist as academic disciplines.

## TOWARDS NEW THEORIES OF MUSIC: CASE STUDIES IN ARTISTIC RESEARCH IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Many excellent examples of artistic research in music performance have emerged recently in the context of not only classical art music, but also jazz, popular, and ethnic musics.<sup>96</sup> Limitations of space do not allow me to summarize and discuss each of these in any significant detail. I will, therefore, briefly discuss some artistic research projects that mobilize historical knowledge in studying and creating musical performances, and also present examples from my own artistic research projects that engage more closely with music theory and analysis.

One approach that has gained popularity in recent years is the artistic recreation of historical performance styles. A project titled *Chasing the Butterfly* and carried out in 2008 by pianist Sigurd Slåttembrekk and music producer Tony Harrison concerned recreating the only recordings composer Edvard Grieg made in 1903 in Paris.<sup>97</sup> The research process involved developing a profoundly embodied understanding of Grieg’s playing, by recreating as closely as possible the composer’s recorded interpretations on his own piano at his home in Bergen, Norway. Slåttembrekk’s artistic research method yielded original knowledge that was than “generalized” in the form of a *performing style* in order to record another piece by Grieg, which the composer himself never recorded. This is research that would not be possible without the artistic skills, understanding, aesthetic sensibilities and judgment of an expert performer. By asking how the rhythmic subtleties and swing heard on Grieg’s recordings can be theorized, the project expands the scope of music theory to *the lived experience of performing* musical rhythms, or rhythm as an embodied phenomenon in performance: this kind of research offers music theory the opportunity to engage in novel conceptualizations of musical phenomena based on experiential content that is not available to theorists who are not at the same time expert performing artists, thus broadening what can be known about music. Anna Scott’s doctoral re-

95 Doğantan-Dack 2015b, 172.

96 See for example Kahr 2022; Till 2017; Lemmens 2012; Östersjö 2022.

97 Slåttembrekk/Harrison 2008.



search<sup>98</sup> is another example that involves the re-enactment of performances of the music of Brahms by pianists from the composer's inner circle: the project generated not only original musical performances by Scott, but new knowledge regarding the expressive and technical possibilities afforded by Brahms' piano music as well as the "agenda-laden, polemical and historically-situated language" that constructs in twentieth-century music scholarship a Brahmsian identity predicated on the notion of "restraint".<sup>99</sup>

More recently, fortepianist Tom Beghin's project titled *Inside the Hearing Machine: Beethoven on his Broadwood*<sup>100</sup> brought together artistic and historical research in an attempt to conjure up the sonic and tactile environment that Beethoven, growing increasingly deaf, would have experienced through the technological intervention of the so-called "hearing machine" (*Gehörmaschine*), prepared by the piano-maker Matthäus Andreas Stein, as the composer was working on his op. 109, op. 110, and op. 111 piano sonatas. What this project reveals is a highly situated experiential understanding developed by Beghin during the research process, allowing him to integrate historical acoustic-technological knowledge, haptic analysis, and aural observations with his aesthetic judgment to produce new artistic performances of Beethoven's last piano sonatas, generating hitherto unimagined musical meanings for them.

In my own artistic research projects, I have been concerned with discovering the expressive potentials and meaning affordances of classical pieces of music from the piano repertoire through embodied, phenomenological inquiry. In each case, artistic practice has been at the center of the research method and generated technical and interpretative questions related to the making of artistic musical performances on the modern instrument of the piano; each project also led to novel performance interpretations made available through recordings. One of these projects was motivated by my desire to understand the reasons "why the physical *feel* [the kinaesthetic-tactile sensation and the activity generating this sensation] of the *Arioso dolente*" from Beethoven's piano sonata in A flat major, op. 110, "is different in comparison to many other cantabile passages of music from the piano literature; and why achieving a performance interpretation that is both 'arioso' and 'dolente' is not straightforward and unproblematic."<sup>101</sup> For an artist-researcher

[t]he factors that motivate the transformation of such preconceptual images and sense impressions, which hover fleetingly – as a hunch – over the crossroads of artistic practice and artistic research, into articulated foundations for systematic enquiry are complex: creative impulses, artistic passions, desire for personal understanding, ongoing research interests can all play a part to varying degrees. While these factors would be blended in unique ways in any given artistic research context, the moment that the artist-researcher seizes a sensation or image and keeps it from receding into the distance within the sensory continuum by marking it for sustained attention, is always in the middle of – and at times in the thick of – an ongoing creative activity. For the artist-researcher, any journey of discovery and creation originates and unfolds within an already established individual creative discourse and praxis, having a distinctive relationship with existing cultural discourses and traditions.<sup>102</sup>

98 Scott 2014.

99 Scott 2014, 5.

100 Beghin 2017.

101 Doğantan-Dack 2015b, 170 (original italics).

102 Ibid., 175–176.

It is important to emphasize that the question that motivated this project would not arise from merely a music theoretical perspective, since in order for the question to be able to suggest itself one needs to have attained, through long-term, sustained interaction with the instrument of the piano, a certain kind of know-how associated with cantabile practice. The gist of this project lay in a novel interpretation of Beethoven's performance indication "Arioso dolente" based on my subjective and personally idiosyncratic experiences as well as culturally learned responses to the music, and to other works of art that I found relevant in this context. Arriving at such a novel understanding of the term "Arioso dolente" was anything but simple and required not only delving into a phenomenology of artistic piano practice, but extensive practical enquiry to study and compare the embodied feel of a large number of passages from the piano literature, *and* extensive interdisciplinary theoretical enquiry on the biomechanics of the human hand, the psychology of bimanual activities, as well as historical musicological, keyboard-pedagogical, and analytical enquiry. These research processes jointly resulted in an original formulation of the principles of *normative pianistic cantabile practice*, which has not been done before in scholarly and pedagogical literature, and which presented *generalized new knowledge* that other researchers, and pianists, can draw from and build on. These normative principles of pianistic cantabile practice in turn enabled me to explain why the first *Arioso dolente* of Beethoven's op. 110 felt so different in performance: while "arioso" indicates a singing style of performance, the musical material of the first *Arioso dolente* does not construct a bimanual engagement with the piano that would fulfil the principles of normative pianistic cantabile, which involve the seamless rhythmic transformation of an arsis to a thesis, or vice versa, in the hand that accompanies the melody. In other words, "[r]ight hand motion is not composed in [the first *Arioso dolente*] relative to the left hand motion, which fails to create a dynamic frame in preparation for the movements of the singing hand."<sup>103</sup> In the second *Arioso dolente*, however, the changes in the musical material, including the frequent rests introduced in the melody and the shifts within the triplet units in the accompanying hand, prompt a transformation towards normative pianistic cantabile practice such that the performance acquires a kinaesthetically flowing and animated quality. In attempting to describe these and other embodied experiences, an artistic researcher faces an important challenge that needs to be managed: this is "not simply the familiar difficulty of framing embodied experiences in words: it's one of communicating to people who don't share the bodily experience in question."<sup>104</sup> In this respect, the artist researcher has a responsibility, in my view, to strive towards a clear and intelligible communication of the nature and characteristics of her embodied performance experiences, not only to those who are already in her artistic discourse community (e.g., community of professional pianists, for example) but also to those in other music scholarly discourse communities. Even though she cannot guarantee success of communication, the striving for such communication constitutes an important merit and virtue of the artistic research process.

One of the most significant aspects of my artistic research project on the Finale of Beethoven's op. 110 is that the new *theoretical knowledge* I generated on normative pianistic cantabile, which proved effective in explaining the embodied differences between the two instances of the *Arioso dolente*, also motivated an original *embodied conceptualiza-*

103 Doğantan-Dack 2015b, 187.

104 Cook 2013, 311.

tion of the formal plan of the Finale of op. 110 – “embodied conceptualization” referring to the totality of the ideas and understanding derived from tacit knowledge and representations that are specific to the sensorimotor domain.<sup>105</sup> Accordingly, I began to create a performance interpretation built on a kinaesthetic narrative that unfolds from “constraint, unease and difficulty to ‘sing’ pianistically in the first *Arioso* towards release from constraint and ease of ‘singing’ in the second *Arioso*.”<sup>106</sup> Contrary to the standard critical interpretations of this Finale in the musicological literature,<sup>107</sup> which assign the two fugues the function of healing the psychic wound that the two *arioso* sections presumably lay bare, I interpret the second *Arioso* as being sufficient in itself to bring to an end the suffering one can experience in the first *Arioso*, without the need for the final fugue to take on this function. My recorded interpretation thus attempts to create a musical narrative based on a certain embodied trajectory discovered through artistic practice and theoretical enquiry, and moving from a heavy heart and a reserved and poised mourning in the first *Arioso dolente* (“Klagender Gesang”) and fugue, to a release from this suffering gradually in the course of the second part in *L’istesso tempo di Arioso* (“Ermattet, klagend”; *Perdendo le forze, dolente*) (see Audio example 1).<sup>108</sup> This is an interpretative alternative that is not discoverable through traditional music theory and analysis, and attests to a performer’s origination of musical signification. While this particular performance interpretation, if presented on its own, would not be sufficient to qualify as “artistic research”,<sup>109</sup> its presentation as the artistic culmination of a complex research process that I narrate in detail within a scholarly publication platform, renders it an integral component of the particular artistic research project in question. I should also emphasize here that while the performance interpretation given as Audio example 1 is the way it is precisely because of the specific research processes that led up to it, *it does not represent a direct, immediate and necessary translation, into performative terms, of the ideas and narratives the textual component presents*: this is because there can never be such a translation from linguistic formulations about a piece of music to the performance of that piece. There are *always* multiple ways that one and the same interpretative, theoretical, or analytical *idea* can be given expression in the performance of any piece of music. In between the idea and the performance lies yet another layer of contingency: the aesthetic tastes and preferences of a specific performer in making music. Consequently, a different performer might create a different sounding interpretation from the same analytical idea or even kinaesthetic narrative.

105 For a discussion of the notion of embodied concepts, see Bermeitinger/Kiefer 2012.

106 Doğantan-Dack 2015b, 196.

107 See Tovey 1931; Maynard 2003.

108 See the score under: [https://imslp.hk/files/imglnks/euimg/7/77/IMSLP534073-PMLP01488-Beethoven\\_Piano\\_Sonatas\\_Henle-vol2\\_no31\\_pp291-308.pdf](https://imslp.hk/files/imglnks/euimg/7/77/IMSLP534073-PMLP01488-Beethoven_Piano_Sonatas_Henle-vol2_no31_pp291-308.pdf) (30 Nov 2022).

109 In another publication, I have put forward the argument that not all performances are *ipso facto* instances of research, and wrote: “the fact that performers rigorously think about what they do, that they experiment on a daily basis with the music they play, and that they are involved in complex cognitive and affective operations and implicit theorizing, is not in my view sufficient to render the resulting performance a research activity. To hold such a view would collapse the distinction between research and virtually any other kind of activity that involves expertise and skill. A necessary condition for research is the dissemination of the new knowledge in a format that can be accessed and built upon by other researchers in the discipline” (Doğantan-Dack 2012, 39).

🔊 [https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan\\_ArtisticResearch\\_01.mp3](https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan_ArtisticResearch_01.mp3)

Audio Example 1: Ludwig v. Beethoven, Piano Sonata in A flat major, op. 110 (1821), Finale; performed by the author in 2015.

In another, recently completed artistic research project, I similarly develop a performance interpretation of the *Corrente* from Johann Sebastian Bach's E minor keyboard Partita (BWV 830) based on an embodied-hermeneutical understanding of the music.<sup>110</sup> The motivation for this project, and the source of the original research question that kindled my interest in an artistic-research venture, was the unusual manual-haptic experiences the performance of this movement generates. Similar to the origination of the project on Beethoven's piano sonata op. 110, I wanted to understand the factors that render *my* lived experience of performing this piece on the modern instrument of the piano at a particular tempo so remarkable, in the sense that it is an experience that affords, for me, a high degree of "grabiness,"<sup>111</sup> demanding my attention both as a researcher and an artist, and persistently wanting to make itself known and understood in greater detail. Once again, new knowledge about this particular *Corrente*, which I shared through a published research article and a recorded performance, was acquired in a deeply situated and contingent context of artistic practice: for another pianist with smaller or larger hands, for example, or a harpsichordist, "the music" would generate different kinds of manual-haptic experiences, and thereby different expressive meanings. The artistic research process regarding the E minor *Corrente* consisted of continuously moving between doing and reflecting, and connecting my score-based observations with embodied experiences of performing. In this process, a first layer of analytical signification emerged as I provided an explanation of the astonishing degree of bimanual synergy that the music generates in performance: this analytical activity centered around the syncopated patterning of the two lines in the music (see Example 1/Audio example 2), and also involved a phenomenological account of the embodied experience of delivering a particular tone within a musical-manual gesture that recurs throughout the *Corrente*, namely the G4 in the right-hand in bar 10 representing an arrival on a weak part of the beat following a syncopation. What this analysis demonstrated is that a performer does not, indeed cannot, experience the "sounds" she creates merely aurally. As I already discussed in the previous section, her "listening" to the musical sounds is inextricably intertwined with kinesthetic, tactile, visual sensations as well as their affective resonances, and is situated in unique embodied, cultural-historical, and personal contexts. As the embodied-hermeneutical process of meaning construction in relation to the performance of the E minor *Corrente* unfolded, I was able to develop an understanding of this music in terms of the intimate intersubjectivity of a dancing couple. While relying on imaginative associations, this interpretation was thoroughly supported by evidence from empirical and theoretical research on the embodied dynamics of interpersonal coordination, and on social embrace. In this connection, I brought into my analysis the concept of "we-space" employed in social science research to discuss the dynamics of mutually coordinated face-to-face encounters, and

110 See Doğantan-Dack 2021.

111 According to O'Regan et al. (2004) "grabiness" is a quality, which jointly with "bodiliness," is "responsible for giving the particular qualitative character to the exercise of sensorimotor skills which people have in mind when they talk of the 'feel' of sensation or experience. [...] [Grabiness] has the capacity to monopolize your attention and keep you in contact with it." (ibid., 82)

established its connections with the dynamically emergent keyboard topography that materializes through the play of force-counterforce exchanged between the piano keys and the pianist's hands. The concept of "we-space" and its associations with embodied experience enabled me to *theorize* the E minor *Corrente* as a sonification of human sociality, and underline the experiential continuity between performing this music and the dynamics of embodied intersubjectivity.<sup>112</sup> *This is music theory that grows out of the lived experience of music making*, and as with any other theory of music it is generalizable as a framework that can be applied when analyzing other pieces from the keyboard repertoire.



Example 1: J.S. Bach, Keyboard Partita in E minor BWV 830 (1731), *Corrente*, mm. 1–13.

🔊 [https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan\\_ArtisticResearch\\_02.mp3](https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan_ArtisticResearch_02.mp3)

Audio Example 2: J.S. Bach, Keyboard Partita in E minor BWV 830 (1731), *Corrente*.<sup>113</sup>

The final example I present here is an artistic research project in which I mobilized artistic practice in order to critique and challenge one of the deeply rooted myths of music theory. It is a project that once again resulted in a publication, in the form of a journal article, as well as a new performance interpretation. In this project titled "Artistic Research in Classical Music Performance: Truth and Politics," I scrutinize one of the most persistent and pervasive theoretical discourses on performance expression, putting forward the belief that the pitches and rhythms notated in a given musical score exclusively determine their performance expression, which is to be achieved through the (only) correct "reading" or "deciphering" of the musical meaning of the written symbols. As I discuss in my original article in relation to this project,<sup>114</sup> music theoretical and pedagogical texts abound in discourses that keep re-presenting this view. Among the best-known instances is a passage by Heinrich Schenker, where he argued that

[i]f, for example, the Ninth Symphony had come down to us – like most of the works of Sebastian Bach – without express dynamics symbols, an expert hand could nonetheless only place

112 The concept of "we-space" is used in research to refer to "body-centric action-space," which is "an emotion-rich coordinative space dynamically structured via the ongoing engagement of social agents" (Krueger 2011, 644). Within this space, "agency does not emerge atomistically from a single source (the individual acting agent), but is instead distributed across the temporally-extended dynamics of co-regulated interaction." (ibid.)

113 This performance has been recorded at home, using modest technological resources that were available domestically during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown; readers may prefer listening to it with headphones.

114 Doğantan-Dack 2015a.

those symbols – according to the content – exactly as Beethoven has done. [...] Performance directions are fundamentally superfluous, since the composition itself expresses everything that is necessary.<sup>115</sup>

There are many similar examples from performance pedagogical texts as well. To quote just one of them, pianist Samuil Feinberg wrote:

What exactly does “reading the musical text” mean? Many people might think that I regard the composer’s markings as being of primary importance – those governing tempo, expression, and other nuances. But, in fact, I am referring only to the actual notes themselves. This musical notation in itself tells a pianist so much that if he is capable of assimilating it, then all the composer’s other indications regarding performance become self-evident. [...] This means that interpretation [depends] [...] only on the notes themselves, which any true performer can read, hear, and make perfect sense of.<sup>116</sup>

The reason this idea is in fact a myth is that what it lays down as

learning to recognize *the* meaning behind notated musical symbols, i.e. the “objective” expressive content of “the music,” amounts to learning to perform canonical pieces of music in accordance with their performance tradition and within the currently accepted expressive style. Contingency is packaged and marketed as universality and necessity. Yet, unless particular performance traditions and styles are invoked, there are no plausible grounds for maintaining that the tonal-rhythmic patterns gleaned from the score of a given piece of music make specific expressive demands on its performance. [...] Through a sleight of hand, the current performance style, the current way of performing canonical pieces of classical music, come to represent *the* expressive meaning embedded in the score.<sup>117</sup>

While one can provide theoretical arguments to invalidate this myth nourished by traditional music theory’s textualist ideology, and which controls performances of music from the classical tonal repertoire, in this project I have chosen to employ artistic practice as the main research tool to effectively and conclusively reveal its untruth. This method involved taking Rachmaninoff’s *Moment Musical* op. 16 no. 5 – a piece I was working on at the time of engaging in this research project – and removing all original and editorial performance markings including tempo, dynamic and character indications, and “contemplating *only* the pitches and rhythms in accordance with the grammar of expressivity that is standardly associated with the classical genre (and hence, without attempting to cross over genres by turning this classical piece of music into jazz, for example).<sup>118</sup> I then created a performance interpretation that departs radically from the established tradition of performing this piece in accordance with the composer’s performance markings, yet makes musical sense as an example of classical music (see Audio example 3). My method in preparing this performance interpretation was experimentation, with the aim of breaking away from established performance styles for this piece while at the same time

115 Schenker 1992, 10.

116 Feinberg 2007, 23.

117 Doğantan-Dack 2015a, 35 (original italics).

118 *Ibid.*, 37 (original italics). For a discussion of the philosophical issues surrounding expressiveness in music performance, see Doğantan-Dack 2014. Artistic research projects could further explore the musical, and cultural, consequences of eliminating the principles of the expressive grammar of classical music performance (constituted by such practices as phrasing and grouping, among others) in performing tonal repertoire.

working within a familiar expressive performance grammar (e.g., delivering subtle ritardandi at the end of structural units, phrase arching, etc.). Most significantly this artistic outcome conveys, arguably more powerfully than theoretical argumentation, the new knowledge that this project generated, i.e., the knowledge that there is no single performance expression that can be gleaned merely from the notated pitches and rhythms in a score, and that what music theoretical and pedagogical discourses present to music performers as the *only* way is in fact only *an option*.

🔊 [https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan\\_ArtisticResearch\\_03.mp3](https://storage.gmth.de/zgmth/media/1169/Dogantan_ArtisticResearch_03.mp3)

Audio Example 3: Sergei Rachmaninoff, *Moment Musical* in D flat major op. 16 no. 5 (1896); performed by the author in 2015.

As the projects I presented in this section indicate, artistic research in music performance has the potential to generate not only hitherto unimagined meanings in pieces of music from the western art music repertoire, but also unimagined, and even unusual, *theories* that can explain these meanings: in expanding what can be known about music, and how music can be known, it helps release music theory from its remaining restrictive frames, frames that have solidified around the idea of music-as-text since the nineteenth-century. By also helping to “uncover uncomfortable truths”<sup>119</sup> about the epistemological premises of music theory and taking on its discriminating discourses that for so long have not welcomed performers as equal partners in disciplinary knowledge practices, artistic research in music performance supports music theory’s recent quest to become a more inclusive and diverse academic discourse community and to embrace and celebrate the great variety of subject positions, of bodies, and identities that different modes of musicking involve.

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<sup>119</sup> Marvin 2021, 320. For discussions of the various myths presented as truths in music scholarship see Doğantan-Dack 2015a; Leech-Wilkinson 2020, chapter 6.

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