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Teaching and exploring the history and aesthetics Of the performing art of music

It is easy to talk about a history of a tradition that does not really exist, neither in the Scandinavia of the past 25 years nor on an international perspective. The history and aesthetics of the performing art of music do not belong to the panorama of aesthetic inquiry, either in the research program of the universities or in the teaching program of the music academies.

Warren Dwight Allen (1962) has divided the historical studies of music into popular and scientific genres; evidently the studies dealt with here belong mainly to the first category. Special aesthetic studies do not exist at all, if old examples (also rare) like *Die Asthetik des Klavierspiels* by Adolf Kullak (1860es) are not considered as aesthetic in a modern sense.

To the popular genre belong general historical overviews like *The Great Pianists* by H.C. Schonberg or *Die Grossen Geiger* by Joachim Kaiser and also biographies on individual artists of the past and present. More scholarly orientated are a few handbooks on performing practice (e.g. Reidemeister 1988) and the edited writings of historical authors like J. Quantz, Ph. E. Bach or Leopold Mozart. Very rare are works on the theory of interpretation and performing: the swede N.-G. Sundin (1984) has written one of the few. Still proceeding is the new German 'Handbook on musicology', Vol. 11 on *Musical Interpretation* by Her-

mann Danuser. In my own dissertation *Virtuosität und Werkcharakter* (1989;223 p.) the theory and history of music as a performing art are discussed not only as a history of ideas but also related to the analysis of music.

Lack of a detailed overview, many forgotten questions, in short lack of organized research can easily be noticed. Beside the general problems of music history and aesthetics one does pay attention to the question whether the problems of performing arts are just a field within the history and aesthetics of music in general or maybe an autonomous field of research. For the latter speaks the fact that the structure of writing music history or philosophy of art is thought for music consisting of works, not of performing activities. Only secondarily can these be dealt with in the general framework, which definitely does not help in the understanding of the problematics of the history and aesthetics of a performing art and the art of performance.

In the universities the number of lectures correlates with the amount of research done in a special fields. In the music academies the teaching program should be planned according to the real needs of the students. The reason for not teaching the history and aesthetics of the performing art of music can only be the late romantic and modernistic prejudice, according to which the art of performance is simply an art of interpretation which can be developed by studying the object of the act, the musical work. Unfortunately it is easy to show that a great deal of the historical repertory today has been created within a very different concept of art. The so called works are composed in a musical culture, that did not listen to music within the same framework of aesthetic perception as maybe Schönberg did. Obviously the panorama of historical styles includes the panorama of historical attitudes to music and performance, which would be important for the students to be aware of.

Some general goals can be formulated: especially in the academies it is necessary to help the students to get an overview of the forms and substance of performing, starting with the oldest documents and always related to the different historical concepts of music and its functions. In addition useful knowledge must be sought and connections with the actual concert repertory created. Information on the institutions, performing situations, practices, instruments, concert pro-

grams, and ideals must be given. Finally it must be possible to understand the world view and living and working conditions of an individual artist of a given periode and place.

After general lectures on these topics a practical approach is needed in order to show the students the basic methods of historical research and source criticism. Since there is plenty of unstudied literature of the past new sources are easy to find. In the universities the documentary aspect could be emphasized, in the academy the interpretative, even though both institutions should be concerned with each of these issues.

It is high time to take the historicism of our musical culture as a fact and to draw the appropriate conclusions even in the sacred field of the education of professionals. To understand the variety of historical concepts of art helps to understand the variety in our time. Even in the short history of new music (say since 1910/14) there are many different concepts of music and its artistic performance. The functional music of the late 20s ('Gebrauchskunst'), the aleatory styles that began in the 50es, graphic notations and various types of improvisation, electronic music and detailed notated serialism may serve as examples. Beside these there is a much more pronounced disparity from composer to composer and from performer to performer, which should be considered in a history and aesthetics of music as a performing art, one of the most confused areas in the fields of aesthetic research.*

* These ideas, goals and methodes are tried to be realised in special seminars in the Sibelius-Academy in Helsinki as well as the University of Turku this year.

