STM 1994-95

The Emperor's New Clothes — Performance Practice in the 1990s

By Per F. Broman

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> There is nothing about the concept of a work, the relations between works and performances, or works and scores, or works and experiences of them, that is going to tell us where the locus of musical meaning 'really' resides. There is no muse to appeal to. All we have are complex theories, and the practices to which these theories become attached; and these theories never become so well worked out that they provide all the answers. […]
>
> If change is not desired, at least we might learn to accept another fact, that competing theories, agents, and even ideologies are indispensable to a healthy, living and changing practice, and that such competition should be encouraged and not seen as problematic. The tension existing between fidelity and unconstrained interpretation is a healthy one. For what actually results from such competition is a wealth of marvellous and very distinctive performances of musical works.[2]

Introduction

> Imagine, if you can, that Martian musicologists of ten thousand years hence are attempting to reconstruct an authentic performance of Chopin's E minor Prelude […]

1. This essay was originally a term paper for Julie E. Cumming's Seminar in Performance Practice at McGill University, Montreal in the fall of 1994. I would like to thank Professor Cumming for her invaluable comments and encouragement without which this study would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Professor Leo Treitler for giving me the opportunity to read his manuscript for "Postmodern Signs in Musical Studies" and Alexander Treitler who drew my attention to it, Hans Ek and Nora Engebretsen for reading the whole manuscript, and Dr. Gunno Klingfors for giving me an update on his current position and research as well as for reading the draft. Richard Taruskin's several articles on this issue were a major source of inspiration, particularly the article "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past" in Nicholas Kenyon, ed. *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 137-210. A shorter version of this paper was read at the Music Graduate Society Symposium at McGill University, March, 1995 and is forthcoming in *Journal of the McGill Graduate Society* (McGill University, Montreal) 5 (1996).
2. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 278.

This is one of the assumptions in Nicholas Cook's book *Music, Imagination, and Culture*.[3] He goes on to discuss what a performance of this piece would have sounded like:

> […] the opening note lasted exactly three times as long as the second one, the eighth-notes of the left hand in the first eleven bars were all of precisely the same length, and, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, the dynamic level was exactly the same throughout the first eight bars.[4]

The situation is similar today. From an ancient text, a sounding piece of art is reconstructed, often with the claim that this is the way it actually sounded. Just as a Martian's cultural "musical" background would substantially influence "its" interpretation, humans of today are influenced by their own musical culture when trying to interpret music written for and within a different society hundreds of years ago. This comparison with Martians is particularly interesting in relation to the Baroque tradition, which was almost unknown during some eighty years in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In this paper, I will address issues of performance practice today with a particular emphasis on late Baroque music. The common thread through the first two parts of this study will be Nikolaus Harnoncourt's two collections of popular essays *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech* and *The Musical Dialogue*.[5] These two books by Harnoncourt offer an insight into a successful performer's way of thinking. He apparently made strong efforts to study Baroque treatises, trying to get close to what could have been the original sound or rather "original intentions." I will also briefly discuss some general aspects of the "authentistic" (to borrow Richard Taruskin's very useful term, a term I will use throughout this paper[6]) performance movement.

In the second part, I will confront Harnoncourt's arguments with Gunno Klingfors, a Swedish scholar and performer of Baroque music. His doctoral dissertation, *Bach Returns: Source Critical Studies in J. S. Bach's Performance Practice*, is a highly substantial scholarly work on performance practice with some surprising conclusions.[7] The

3. Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
4. Cook, 122.
5. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech*, trans. Mary O'Neill (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1988) [*Barock Music Heute: Musik als Klangrede*, (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 1982)] and *The Musical Dialogue*, trans. Mary O'Neill (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1989) [*Der musikalische Dialog*, (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 1984)].
6. Taruskin tries to invent a neutral word that has neither good nor bad connotations. "Authentistic" is a term avoiding "authentic" ("authentistic being to authentic as Hellenistic was to Hellenic") which is a un-reachable goal according to him. See Richard Taruskin, in Nicholas Kenyon, ed., 148.

goal of this confrontation with Harnoncourt is not, however, to put Harnoncourt against the wall by establishing philosophical and scientific models illustrating faults in his assumptions — such an intention would be entirely unfair since I base much of my discussion on texts written after Harnoncourt's books — or to prove who is right in the ongoing debate. I will use Harnoncourt's books as a case study and problematize some of his opinions, opinions which I believe are still common within the early music community as a whole (although far from all hold these opinions today, including Harnoncourt, from what I understand), in order to draw attention to the problems in today's "authentistic" movement, aesthetically as well as on a practical "archeological" and commercial level. One could indeed argue that discussing "authenticism" is a finished chapter in the cultural discourse. However, in public discussions, the term authentic is still in use — without quotation marks.[8]

In the discussion following in the third section, I found articles by Leo Treitler and Umberto Eco on the condition of today's culture in general (Eco) and musical culture in particular (Treitler) very helpful in explaining some of the phenomena and dilemmas involved in this issue.

This is a "textualization" of the "authentistic," in the sense that the actual sound tends to diminish in importance. Thus, I have not included any sound recordings by Harnoncourt or others in my investigation. To compare what Harnoncourt says to what he does in front of a microphone might be one of many interesting next steps.

I

Is it at all possible today to reconstruct the music of, let us say, the Baroque period? Almost everyone denies that it is possible. Nikolaus Harnoncourt also has his doubts when he considers himself "very sceptical as to whether complete understanding [of the historical sources] remains possible today."[9] Even so, Harnoncourt claims that it is possible and even necessary to perform Baroque music in an idiom different from that of the Romantic era. His chief claim in the book *Baroque Music Today: Music as*

7. Gunno, Klingfors, *Bach går igen. Källkritiska studier i JS Bachs uppförandepraxis*. (Ph.D. diss. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, School of Music and Musicology, 1991). I have not found any reviews of the thesis. I have only been referred to reactions through the author: The work has not been reviewed by experts in the field due to the Swedish language, but the reactions of the International Bach Society have been positive. Violin makers to whom Klingfors has talked, agree that his results regarding the sound and construction of the violin are logical. See part II of this text.
8. For example, the word was used in the 1995 program from the Drottningholm Court Theater, Stockholm, Sweden (p. 15).
9. Harnoncourt, 1982, 32. As a further indication of this, he uses "authentic" within quotation marks (p.14).

Speech is, as the title suggests, that there are similarities between Baroque music and the spoken word that are the key to a good performance:

> The music of the past has become a foreign language because of the progression of history, because of its remoteness from the present, and because it has been taken out of the context of its own period. Individual aspects of a piece of music may well be universally valid and timeless, but the message as such is linked to a particular time and can only be rediscovered when it is translated, as it were, into our contemporary idiom.[10]

This statement is highly problematic mainly for two reasons. First, what does Harnoncourt mean by "translated?" One meaning of "translate" is, according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, "To change from one form, function, or state to another; convert or transform," that is, the original expression is changed into a new and, one would wish, equally understandable form.11 This definition recalls the way we translate old stage plays or operas into a contemporary context. Hardly anyone has any general objections to the idea of staging an opera or a play in a *milieu* different from that for which it was originally intended, that happens even in the sometimes conservative world of opera.[12] It lies within the concept of a play or opera that the writer/composer only offers the text (and music) and maybe some stage directions. The producer, director, and stage designer are as important as the writer/composer. By reinterpreting the work, the director hopefully makes the story "speak" to us directly again. This would correspond to the way Baroque music was performed during the early twentieth century. That seems not to be what Harnoncourt means when he continues: "This means that if the music of past epochs is in any way relevant to the present in a deeper and wider sense, if it is to be presented with its total message intact, the understanding of this music has to be relearned from the principles that underlie its very essence."[13] This is the second problem. With that statement, Harnoncourt rather seems to remove himself from the concept of "translation." What does "total message" mean to him? Is it like when a theater director exceeds the plain translation of a historical play and highlights dimensions of the work other than those intended by its creator? Wieland Wagner, for example, gave a new perspective to Richard Wagner's opera by staging it in 1956 as *Meistersinger ohne Nürnberg* after the destruction of the

10. Harnoncourt, 1982, 23.

11. For a comprehensive treatment of translation and its problematic aspects, see George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language & Translation*, Second Edition (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

12. For example, the listing of all the different version of Bizet's *Carmen* on film by Carlos Saura, Francesco Rosi or Peter Brook is somehow challenging for our fantasy but by no means upsetting. See Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 130-146.

13. Harnoncourt, 1982, 23.

city during World War II.[14] For sure, in this case, an important message concerning the state of Germany at the time of the performance would reach the audience. Another example that is not directly connected to society could illustrate the problems regarding translation versus historicism in instrumental music. When Harnoncourt speaks about the natural trumpet and its "false" seventh, eleventh, and thirteenth partials used intentionally by Bach, he argues that "Though these tones seem rough and off-key, they *sounded normal* [my emphasis] to the listeners at the time…"[15] How would a translation be done in this case? Should it use the "corrected" partials to which we are accustomed, or shall the original "false" notes sound? If we choose the latter, we are not really translating the music. In order to hear these "false" notes as normal sounding, we have to completely re-program our harmonic perception. Randall R. Dipert gives us similar example. When Gluck used the clarinet, a relatively unfamiliar instrument at the time, his intention could have been to "startle" the audience. Dipert suggests that, in order to achieve the same effect today, the clarinet line should be performed on a new instrument, for example a synthesizer: "This example shows how difficult it is to play a work 'the way the composer intended it to be played' when we try to take into account *all* of his intentions."[16]

The problem of discussing "message" in instrumental music though is obvious. The "text" is not semantic at first sight. Harnoncourt is of the opinion that there is a message even if no text is present:

> But suddenly, out of a clear blue sky, musicians came up with the idea of making language itself, including dialogue, the basis of music. […] The midwife of this idea was, of course, classical antiquity, as was to be expected at that time.[17]

According to Harnoncourt, the arrival of the new style, later known as the Baroque, in Italy around 1600 put a musical emphasis on the semantic content suggested by the text. This close relationship between text and music remained throughout the Baroque and Classical eras. It also remained in purely instrumental music:

> An immense vocabulary of figures each possessed of a specific meaning ultimately resulted from the work of this first generation of operatic composers, figures which were familiar to every educated listener. Thus the reverse was also possible — this repertoire of figures could be used independently, without any words: the listener makes the verbal association through the musical figure. This adaptation for instrumental music of what had initially been a vocal musical vocabulary is of the gre-

14. Stewart Spencer, "Wagner's Nuremberg," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4 (1992), 21-41.
15. Harnoncourt, 1982, 87.
16. Randall R. Dipert, "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance," *Musical Quarterly* 66/2 (1980), 210. The author wishes to thank Joakim Tillman, Stockholm University, for recommending this article.
17. Harnoncourt, 1982, 131.

> atest importance in understanding and interpreting Baroque music. This vocabulary has its roots in the very first idea of speech-song, which Monteverdi had stylized into a high art form.[18]

This interpretation is not at all controversial. Indeed, rhetoric[19] was a part of J. S. Bach's education as well as Latin and fencing and common at the time.[20] This, of course, also corresponds perfectly to the famous article by Ursula Kirkendale considering *Ein Musikalisches Opfer* as an oration given by Bach to Frederick the Great of Prussia.[21] The difficult part is instead the adaptation of the concept to a contemporary performance.

Harnoncourt's understanding of rhetoric in music implies, as I understand it, two aspects, the semantic and the syntactic. He is surprisingly vague, and fails to make a clear distinction between these meanings and how they relate to each other. If we focus on the syntactic aspect of "musical meaning," Harnoncourt seems to indicate that it could be reached in two ways: by articulation of the musical ideas (including what we normally call articulation as well as dynamics and tempo) and timbre (the instrumentarium and intonation).[22] According to Harnoncourt, articulation is absolutely the most important means of expression in Baroque music.[23] He argues further that

18. Harnoncourt, 1982, 133.
19. I am here using Rhetoric in a broad sense. The concept has changed during history meaning both musical figures as well as formal structure. See, for example George J. Buelow's article "Rhetoric and Music," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 15, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), 793-803.
20. As a poor but musical child Bach was able to study at the highly recognized school *Ritterakademie* in Lüneburg, a school for upper class children. Fencing, for example, was also part of rhetoric — one should be able to defend oneself. His education consisted furthermore of, for example, Dance and Riding. Gustav Fock, *Der junge Bach in Lüneburg: 1700 bis 1702* (Hamburg: 1950).
21. Ursula Kirkendale, "The Source for Bach's *Musical Offering:* The *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 33 (1980), 88-141.
22. In the *American Heritage Dictionary* we read under **articulating**:
"1. To pronounce distinctly and carefully; enunciate. 2. To utter (a speech sound) by making the necessary movements of the speech organs."
23. Harnoncourt, 1982, 47.

"The individual note is therefore articulated (pronounced) like an individual syllable."[24] In an ideal performance, the educated audience (included in the term *musician*)[25] understands the music performed by comprehending the rhetorical figures as well as the formal and harmonic structure. Harnoncourt tells the *musician* that a Baroque piece might express something more than just one emotion which is beauty. One might then ask: Why only articulate on an individual note-level? Would not the spectrum of expression become larger with a variety of approaches to articulation? The answer from Harnoncourt's point of view seems obvious, it is more historically correct. But if Harnoncourt is concerned with the idea of translating or revealing Baroque music for the listener today, would not a more flexible attitude toward performance be appropriate as well? Such an approach could be highly motivated at a time when the spectrum of expressions in general culture is vast. This is not in fact what Harnoncourt aims at when he suggests "as in the case of a foreign language, we must learn vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation — musical articulation, the theory of harmony, the theory of phrasing and accentuation."[26] A performance should then follow the historical rules and become "our own natural speech." But, if the content of a musical piece is well known to a musician-type of audience, why then is Harnoncourt's definition of articulation the solution to understanding the piece? Who recites an iambic pentameter verse or an antique hexameter by emphasizing the meter? The meaning of the poem lies not within the structure exclusively. The opposite question is also relevant in the case where the *musicians* are not familiar with musical rhetoric: If they do not perceive the message, why then bother to make the rhetorical figures obvious? Harnoncourt believes that there is something important to listen for and to experience in Baroque music — something different than in music after the French Revolution. This something was earlier concealed and must be rediscovered, studied, and understood verbally. What does it *really* mean "to *understand* Baroque music" for Harnoncourt? Probably not the same kind of understanding that a Schenkerian analyst acquires after finishing a graph. It might be closer to the understanding that makes an experienced audience laugh during a performance of a montage-piece by P. D. Q. Bach or Hoffnung — understanding by recognition.

Articulation does not contain the whole truth, though. Should not a profound comprehension of music arouse a particular emotion in the listener as well? Historically there are probably many possibilities. One source relevant for Baroque music is Jo-

24. Harnoncourt, 1982, 42.

25. Harnoncourt says "By the term 'musician,' I mean all those who participate professionally in the life of music, including those who listen to music professionally, and the public as well" (page 19 in *Music as Speech)*.

26. Harnoncourt, 1982, 39.

hann Mattheson's book *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*. Peter Kivy's understanding is that Mattheson did not support any "arousal theory," he was

> rather giving a "possession" account: that is to say, claiming that music is expressive in virtue of representing the motions and dispositions of the vital spirits; or, what apparently comes to the same thing for him, *representing* [my emphasis] the emotions, pure and simple.[27]

This reading of Mattheson contradicts today's idea of "meaning" in art music, which is closer to the arousal theory. A purely intellectual way of listening does not seem like the goal today outside the community of professionals. Another important point raised by Harnoncourt is that today we listen to the same pieces many times, "we are like children who want to hear the same story over and over again […]."[28] It is not possible to hear a Bach Cantata for the first time more than once. The demand to make the audience "understand" the music after only one performance was higher at the time of J. S. Bach. I am close to believing that the concept of "music as speech" is not necessarily that important today in relation to musical understanding.

On the other hand, can we not say that we already do understand Baroque music today? Most concert attendees feel the affect of pain in the recitative number 61 from the St. Matthew Passion by J. S. Bach — *Erbarm es Gott Hier steht der Heiland angebungen. O Geißelung, o Schläg, o Wunden* — accompanied by aggressive dotted figures in the orchestra. An Occidental *Mensch* of today knows what it is about. We have all seen the tortured suffering of Jesus. We have seen it in the movies and on stage in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Today, we may have lost the understanding of rhetoric in the historical sense but our ability to feel the contextual rhetorical meaning in general has not declined: *The Shining*, a horror movie by Stanley Kubrick for example, used works by Krzysztof Penderecki to create tremendously frightening effects. There is no room for doubt regarding the interpretation of the music in that context. However, a picture-oriented way of perceiving music creates ambiguities that a precise language does not. Another example from the movies could illustrate this: The Vietnam film *Platoon*, directed by Oliver Stone, uses Samuel Barber's beautiful piece *Adagio for Strings* during the most slaughterous moment. Here, we arrive at another major argument made by Harnoncourt: the built-in contradiction between the image and the spoken word, a contradiction particularly relevant for us today:

> […] I like to say that music prior to 1800 *speaks*, while subsequent music *paints*. The former must be *understood*, since anything that is spoken presupposes understanding.

27. Peter Kivy, "Mattheson as Philosopher of Art," *Musical Quarterly* 70 (1984), 255. Kivy also gives us an alternative to Mattheson, the theorist Wolfgang Caspar Prinz (1641-1717) who was in favor of the "arousal" idiom according to Kivy.

28. Harnoncourt, 1982, 27.

> The latter affects us by means of moods which need not be understood, because they should be *felt*.[29]

Harnoncourt makes the distinction between speech as represented by a historically correct interpretation of Baroque music, and painting as the similarly correct interpretation of the music of the Romantic period. However, he does not give any indication as to what kind of speech or what kind of painting he implies. The two antitheses seem also somewhat arbitrarily chosen, supporting the prevalent emphasis on articulation in the "authentistic" movement. They also raise some questions: Is the kind of speech implied in Harnoncourt's assessment poetry or prose? What kind of romantic painting is implied? Does he have the late Turner's painterly scumble, almost impressionistic, images of English landscapes in mind, or are Delacroix's very precise images of humans and human expression suggested? I conceive of some of the latter's paintings as "speaking." A guess would be that Harnoncourt considers someone like Turner as the ultimate example of a romantic painter. The comparison shows the problems inherent in any attempt to produce generalized formulas to describe a complete period of art. Also, why would a person in the 1990s really give up the ability to conceive pictures out of abstract objects, an ability particularly emphasized since the arrival of the film medium and television?[30] Seen from the perspective of the 1990s, why should there be one way to perceive music prior to 1800 and a completely different way for music composed after that year? Surprisingly, when Harnoncourt gives us more specific information about what listening to music really means in "speech mode," as in the key chapter, "Origin and Development of Music as Speech (Klangrede)," it could just as well make a perfect description of music as (moving) pictures, or make up the plot for a Hollywood movie:

> In a dialogue-like, speaking music, the principal preoccupation is never with the beauty of the music; it is filled with passion, it is full of spiritual conflicts, which, though often terrible, are usually resolved.[31]

In one important way, though, music has a close relationship to language: we learn it very young, almost the way we learn how to speak. The Japanese violin pedagogue

29. Harnoncourt, 1982, 39.

30. Of course, I do not mean to imply that the inner perception of images inspired by outer stimuli is new but it is emphasized much more today than before. It is impossible even to write an article on a computer without being confronted with images and symbols on the screen. The extremely quick development in *cyberspace* (here used as synonymous to *Internet* and its different interfaces used not only as a transmitter of text but its potential creating a whole new global culture) with the possibility of transferring not only text but sound and images (hypertext) as well does not encourage a more purely text oriented way of perceiving "reality."

31. Harnoncourt, 1982, 136.

Shinichi Suzuki was not the first person to discover that.[32] Further on, we develop our skills in music schools and conservatories. Harnoncourt here makes a valuable point in his discussion of the rise of the uniform educational system in music — the Conservatoire. His critique of the Conservatoire system, beginning after the French Revolution, first in France but later through Europe, is devastating: "After all, it wiped out everything that had formerly been considered important."[33] He claims that, in the uniform system, the broader sense of education, including a general education, vanished. Within the Conservatoire system everyone should perform a piece in the same way using the same methods.[34] This was, at the time, related to the political aims of the new French regime — a regime also imposing a uniform French language on the whole country as a means of political control.

The uniform training of musicians in a symphony orchestra is of course a necessity for today's demands for a clean and *égal* sound. However, the uniform education could also turn into a disadvantage in the context of attempts to change different performance parameters, particularly so the tempi. Common education and listening habits due to uniform recordings have created standards that are difficult to change. In the case of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony, for example, Bo Marschner shows that although the composer's first *Originalfassung*-score was used, the tempi changes corresponded to the later revised version in the recordings investigated.[35] Against these uniform tendencies, there is a completely opposite force in progress due to the new technologies of the late twentieth century: from the 1980s, for the first time in history, it has been possible to listen to good recordings from six or even seven decades ago through the digital re-mastering and editing technique of analog tape to Compact

32. Shinichi Suzuki, *Nurtured by Love; a New Approach to Education* (New York: Exposition Press, 1969).

33. Harnoncourt, 1982, 25.

34. According to Klingfors (p. 71), the Paris Conservatoire's official voice-technique book, *Méthode de chant du conservatoire de musique* from 1803, was used all over Europe (translated into Swedish in 1814). Strangely enough, the contemporary composer Karlheinz Stockhausen advocates an approach to composition education similar to Harnoncourt's approach for performers. A student should follow an experienced composer for as long as seven years, be his assistant and learn the craft. See Mya Tannenbaum, *Conversations with Stockhausen*, trans. David Butchart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 76.

35. Bo Marschner, "Partitur und Werktreue: Zur Frage der Traditionsbedingtheit bei Interpretationen Brucknerscher Symphonien auf Schallplatte," Proceedings from the Nordic Musicological Congress Turku/Åbo 15.-20.8.1988, *Musiikki* 1-4, 1989, 351-67. This result corresponds to my own very modest investigation of different interpretations of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Even if conductors such as Christopher Hogwood and Roger Norrington claim their interpretations correspond to the tempi indicated by the composer, the tempo changes not indicated in the score mostly take place according to the romantic tradition.

Disc. This invention may have a greater impact than obvious at first sight. From now on, and only from now on, it will be possible to choose between good sound recordings (although the old ones are not in stereo) from different periods with completely different approaches to performance practice. The most recently released CD is no longer necessarily the one reflecting the latest results in performance practice research, but might be a recording made closer to the turn of the century. The CD thus becomes the absolute work or "the text" itself.[36] We can even call it a museum piece in a huge sonic museum. Harnoncourt seems very pessimistic on this matter:

> …what role should music play in our own age? […] if we do not succeed in combining our listening habits […] whether by re-establishing an equilibrium between supply and demand in contemporary music, or by fostering a new understanding of classical music—, the end is in sight. If we fail we will become nothing more than the curators of a museum.[37]

His description sounds just like the stagnation of the repertoire of art music at certain institutions, for example the big opera houses, which have become musical museums. However, there are many possible functions for historical music other than that of making the audience understand the rhetoric. Instead historical music could be a historical guide like the Folk Music revival during recent years in Sweden, as described by the Swedish ethnomusicologist, Märta Ramsten: "To perform and study folk music must not be a way of dreaming back to the 'good old days', but a way to study history and culture with the spectacles of the people."[38] This utopian statement is probably not relevant for Harnoncourt. He argues that it "would be absolutely senseless to come to know and understand this music, to want to perform it as 'early music,' from the point of view of musicologists or musical archivists."[39] His opinion points

36. The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* is not an album made simply by adding pop tunes one after another on a piece of vinyl, it is a complete whole — a piece of art in the way it is put together. In 1994 at University of Luleå, School of Music, Piteå, Sweden, *Sergeant Pepper* was presented in a concert *live*. All the songs were performed as close as possible to the original sound-track. One could have any opinion of whether this is appropriate or not, but one thing is for sure, the event's significance is more than a simple reconstruction, it probably marks the arrival of extending the definition of "the text."

    For an extensive overview of the work concept in the history of Western music see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. For a discussion of the function and ideology of the museum today, see Andreas Huyssen, "Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium," *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

37. Harnoncourt, 1982, 21.

38. [Att spela och studera folkmusik skall inte vara ett sätt att drömma sig tillbaka till s.k. 'bättre tider', utan att se historien och kulturen med folkets ögon], Märta Ramsten, *Folkmusikvågen: The Folk Music Vogue* (Stockholm: Rikskonserter, 1985), 72.

39. Harnoncourt, 1984, 25.

towards what could be described as the two concepts of performance — the historical scientific and the practical intuitive performance. These two concepts do not necessarily coincide at all times, instead, the frequent clash between these two concepts is one important key to the whole "authentistic" debate.

By reading Harnoncourt repeatedly I have found that his ideal listener is probably someone who knows his Quintilian, is well informed about the present stage of research in performance practice and, on top on that, knows about the theoretical grammar of music in the sense of being able to follow the harmonic and contrapuntal structures. This intellectual way of listening might then be combined with an arousal theory of listening as described above. Is this realistic given the general perspective of society today? Although many of us are bi-musical or even multi-musical, to use Bruno Nettl's very useful term from ethnomusicology,[40] I cannot see how to expect a general listener to have acquired so restricted and specialized knowledge of Baroque music — a knowledge that includes a speech-related way of perceiving music which is different from our common picture-oriented way. The state of affairs today is, to an extreme extent, reflected by the pluralism of the anachronistic "global village" where the paint of all epochs and geographical boundaries disperses or melts down into a dazzling mix. Baroque music is just one out of many musical languages.

Harnoncourt's ideals are also elitist to an inconceivably high level and oppose the tendencies of the beginning of the performance practice movement. It was then a reaction against the mainstream musical scene. It was anti-elitist and non-commer-cial.[41] Now, when "authentistic" performances can be market leaders, the situation is quite different.[42] This idea of the highly qualified listener who "understands music" somehow matches Nicholas Cook's comment on Schoenberg's claim that he understood Mahler's First Symphony only after having heard it with a bad conductor ("All the tensions were alleviated, banalized, so that one could follow"):[43]

> It seems to me that there is something extremely strange, not to say perverse, about the idea that a listener can only understand a work when it is played so badly that

40. See his *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 11. I am using the term in regard to different genres within Western music as well.
41. For an historical review of the early music movement see Laurence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended Against its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century," *Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983), 297-322.
42. It is difficult to say which recordings sell the most. For example, of Polygram's different companies there is only one, to my knowledge, Archiv Produktion, focusing on "authentistic" recordings. The others, like London and Deutsche Grammophone, continue using modern instruments.
43. Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, trans. Leo Black (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), quoted in Cook, 228.

> everything becomes banal — unless, of course, one thinks of this 'understanding' not in the sense of an aesthetic response, but in terms of aural training.[44]

II

Harnoncourt's scholarly ambitions are small, although he does express a profound view from inside the music, as in *Baroque Music Today*. The way a conductor studies a score is highly different from, for example, a music theorist's way. A number of practical considerations must be taken into account such as different articulation marks in different parts, obvious inconsistencies for a theorist. This appears in some of the works by J. S. Bach.[45] A conductor cannot just ignore such a case of inconsistency but has to decide whether to consider it as a misprint or intentional by the composer. Harnoncourt's basic assumption is that the composers knew what they were doing as in the case of the instrumentarium:

> Each period has precisely the instrumentarium best suited to its own music. In their imagination, composers hear the instruments of their own time and often write with certain instrumentalists in mind: idiomatic writing has always been expected […] Although many works of old masters are regarded today as virtually un-playable (wind parts in Baroque music, for example), this is due to the fact that musicians approach these works with present-day instruments and a modern style of playing in mind.[46]

The problem with Harnoncourt's statements occurs exactly here where his pragmatic role as a performer is clearest: by referring to the authentic instrument as an important source for understanding Baroque music he authorizes his own interpretations by their use of copies of period instruments. If we instead face the new discoveries in "instrumental archeology" regarding the German tradition at the time of J. S. Bach as put forward by Gunno Klingfors, some of Harnoncourt's conclusions could be questioned.

Klingfors claims that many of today's copies of Baroque instruments are misconceptions. In cases where there remain authentic instruments, these instruments are often played in a historically incorrect way.[47] I will here briefly articulate some of Klingfors's theories regarding the instruments of the violin family — the "backbone" of a Baroque orchestra. No violins from Bach's time have remained in authentic condition

44. Cook, 228.
45. Harnoncourt, 1982, 43.
46. Harnoncourt, 1982, 17.
47. Klingfors is particularly concerned with breathing technique for wind instruments and voice.

which makes this whole issue very problematic.[48] Not even the body of, for example, a Stainer violin remains unchanged today.

Klingfors uses two main methods to determine what could have been the sound of a violin, viola, or cello:[49] first, physio-acoustical methods, including the physics of the instruments as well as acoustical circumstances at known performances, and second, historical references describing the sound of the instruments in question. From a vast number of sources, he builds a chain of evidence that I have trouble breaking.

Klingfors concentrates his effort on the lost pieces in this puzzle, for example the bridge, strings and the bow. These details are of extreme importance for the sound, particularly so the properties of the strings.

> The string tension is very important for the timbre and loudness: the higher the tension the louder the sound. The tension is determined by the mass (density (material) multiplied with its dimension and length) and the frequency [the pitch].[50]

During the Baroque, gut strings were mostly in use.[51] These strings have lower density and the fundamental tone has a louder sound than the higher partials in the overtone series. There are ways of increasing the mass, for example, by twisting a couple of thin strings, making one larger, or by winding a thin silver layer around the low G-string on the violin. The string tension during the Baroque era was not higher in the higher strings, according to Klingfors, but equal in all four strings.[52] When the tension in the string is not the determinant of the tuning, only the mass is. The consequence is that the lower strings need a higher density and thus will sound louder than the copies of Baroque violins today.[53]

Klingfors considers his discoveries regarding the bow as a confirmation of his theory on string characteristics. The weight of an Italian Baroque bow could have been as high as 56 grams, that is the same as modern bows. Modern copies of Baroque bows are lighter.

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48. Klingfors, 173.
49. In his thesis, Klingfors also includes the double bass and violone in the violin family.
50. [Strängspänningen är av utomordentligt stor betydelse för klang och ljudnivå: ju högre spänning, desto högre ljudnivå. Strängspänningen bestäms av strängens massa (=densitet (strängmaterial) * grovlek * längd) och frekvensen.] In Klingfors, 159.
51. Metal strings as well as strings made out of silk were known although not commonly in use, see Klingfors, 156.
52. On today's violin instruments the tension between the highest and lowest strings could differ by as much as 67% for A=440 Hz., Klingfors, table 13, 165.
53. As mentioned before, the string dimensions mentioned here are only relevant to German and partly Italian tradition. Klingfors believes that the Baroque instruments used today are not that far from the French instruments.

There are iconographical indications that German Baroque bows could even have been heavier than the Italian bows.[54] The use of heavier bows suggests a more weighty way of performing as well as louder dynamics — thicker strings need higher excitation from the bow.

Another striking part of this chain is room-acoustical. In terms of air volume, the of Thomas Church in Leipzig is larger than the *Großer Musikvereinsaal* in Vienna and as large as the *Concertgebouw* in Amsterdam. The Chapel of the Castle in Weimar is three times as large as the Baroque-style Drottningholm Court Theater outside Stockholm.[55] To perform Bach's music under such circumstances points towards a higher dynamic level than earlier assumed.

As mentioned above, Klingfors found witnesses for his claims in the treatises as well. The following quotation is from 1702 by François Raguenet:

> Their [the Italians'] violins are mounted with strings much larger than ours; their bows are longer, and they can make their instruments sound as loud again as we do ours. The first time I heard our band in the Opéra after my return out of Italy, my ears had been so used to the loudness of the Italian violins that I thought ours had all been bridled.[56]

Since we know that Bach was in favor of Italian and German instruments, we can assume, according to Klingfors, that the sound of German or Italian Baroque violins was louder than that of the copies of these instruments today. He concludes:

54. Klingfors, 177-178.

55. Klingfors, 73.

56. Oliver Strunk, "Parallèle des Italiens et des Français," *Source Readings in Music History: From Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era* (London : Norton, 1950), 486, quoted in Klingfors, 179.

> In the sources used here, there is no support for the nowadays commonly accepted view that the sound level of the violin family increased substantially from the second half of the eighteenth century.[57]

This clearly opposes Harnoncourt's assumption that if

> […] we take by way of example a violin built by Stradivari around 1700, as *he* built it, outfit it with the gut strings, bridge, tailpiece and sound post which were used then, and play it with a master bow from the same period, it would sound much softer than one built by the same master, but reconstructed in the 19th or 20th Century and played with modern strings and a modern bow.[58]

I find Klingfors's evidence regarding the stringed instruments very convincing. Not only did he make an extensive study of the treatises but he also made practical experiments on the instruments. For example, by increasing the total string pressure to as high as 35 kg by using thicker gut strings he proved that his theory was possible.[59]

Harnoncourt is concerned with reconstructing old instruments. For example, he investigates the wind pressure in the medieval portative organ in order to find out the dynamic level of the instrument.[60] But he also admits that he is biased regarding timbre when he talks about the instruments of the Baroque period: "It is not possible for me to deal with this topic objectively, since each of these challenging questions forces

57. [I de källor som använts här finns inget stöd för den nuförtiden allmänt vedertagna uppfattningen att violinstrumentens ljudnivå ökades radikalt fr o m andra hälften av 1700-talet.] In Klingfors, 166.

There are more references in the thesis to historical descriptions of the violin, here by Leopold Mozart in 1756: "Endlich muß ich noch erinnern, daß ein Anfänger allezeit ernstlich, mit allen Kräften, stark und laut geigen; niemals aber schwach und still spielen." quoted in Klingfors, 178, or: "Everything indicates that Bach was in favor of the German professional violin [building] ideal as it was formed in Dresden and Berlin at that time. The finest representatives of this style seem to have played in a very powerful way. The conclusion must be that at the time of Bach the violin sounded in a completely different way than the modern baroque violin." [Allt talar för att Bach omfattade dåtidens tyska professionella violinideal som det utformades i framför allt Dresden och Berlin. Denna stils främsta företrädare tycks ha spelat mycket kraftfullt. Slutsatsen måste bli att Bachtidens violin klingande på ett helt annat sätt än den moderna barockviolinen.], Klingfors, 181, or regarding the Stradivari and Stainer violins (Bach owned a Stainer violin): Thomas Twining in a letter 1791: "I believe I have got possession of a sweet Stradivari which I play on with much more pleasure than my Stainer, partly because the tone is sweeter, mellower, rounder, and partly because the stop is longer. My Stainer is undersized, and on that account less valuable, though the tone is as bright, piercing and full as that of any Stainer I have ever heard, Yet, when I take it up after the Stradivari, it sets my teeth on edge. The tone comes out plump all at once […]" in Klingfors, 181.

58. Harnoncourt, 1982, 74.

59. Klingfors, 176.

60. Harnoncourt, 1984, 14-15.

me to take a personal stand."[61] The use of period instruments is not the only key to a satisfying performance for Harnoncourt: "Faithfulness to the original sound can thus be a fundamental help in approaching many works, but for others, precisely because of its spectacular nature, it can degenerate into meaningless sound fetishism."[62] However, how the instruments actually sounded is an important issue for how we perceive of the music.

What Klingfors found was there the whole time in the treatises and the iconographical sources. If we consider his conclusions to be correct, there must be a serious misunderstanding if "each period has precisely the instrumentarium best suited to its own music" but the instrumentarium used by "authentistic" groups today does not correspond to the historical instruments. This must imply that we have all completely misunderstood the sonic representation of Baroque music. This is by no means made as a condescending comment, this article is not a trial. I believe instead that this brief discussion proves how pragmatically the musical scene works. To locate all historical evidence before playing one note is of course impossible and would in fact result in no music at all. And, from another contemporary perspective, to create a revival of the early music revival with all the new facts using completely new ways of approaching Baroque music, including the use of re-designed instruments and altered performing techniques, is not realistic. Too much is invested both economically and ideologically in the present stage. Another question related to the consequences of a different sound than earlier presumed is: What kinds of performances of historical music can we accept? Do we want a string-sound that is sometimes loud, dark, harsh and focused on the lower register? Are we willing to permit "negative affects," like "bad" intonation and "ugly" timbres, in our living rooms?[63] Regarding voice technique, as expressed by Peter Phillips, the "authentic" sound could surprise us: "we can guess at the type of sound produced by sixteenth-century choirs, and the evidence suggests that imitation of them would be highly undesirable."[64] Klingfors strongly believes that the kind of singing used in rock music, with a distinction between chest and head voice is closer to the Baroque way of singing. The ultimate question would then be: Do we want to hear Michael Jackson singing Bach? Maybe the answer is — not yet. It is probably for our own best that the "authentistic" music sounds the way it does.

61. Harnoncourt, 1984, 78.
62. Harnoncourt, 1982, 69.
63. Klingfors's understanding of affect-theory is much broader than the one that Harnoncourt expresses, see Klingfors, 360.
64. Taruskin in Kenyon, 143.

III

To sum up the discussion this far, in the society of the present, we favor a more picture-oriented way of perceiving reality. When considering music in "picture mood" it receives an ambivalence as illustrated by "misunderstanding" in the movie *Platoon* discussed above. Harnoncourt is outspokenly against the idea of perceiving the music between 1600 and 1800 as "bliss." Music has to become something other than just beautiful to him. To emphasize the language-oriented mode of performing/listening becomes then a way for Harnoncourt to impose his own aesthetic ideals. This is very natural. His ideas correspond to his own ideal sound in the same way as Leopold Stokowski's Baroque interpretations did to Stokowski's — and, more important, to the present taste. To use Taruskin's words, "It's Not Historical — It's Much Better Than That."[65]

However, when Harnoncourt chooses to focus on certain aspects and parameters of music, he disregards others. These other aspects might not have historical relevance but rather have a reasonable relevance in today's society. There are many possible examples here. For example as the chorus enlarged, from just a couple of singers (or even only one[66]) on each part in Bach's Choir in Thomas Church to a large chorus today, its function became social as well as musical. We can not say for sure which staging of *Carmen* is the most adequate — it depends. Stravinsky's outburst in *Poetics of Music* that the use of large orchestras and large choruses is a "lack of understanding" that "betray[s] a complete lack of musical education"[67] could thus be seen from a different perspective. By increasing the ensemble some aspects of the work indeed get lost but other aspects of the whole performance process will gain from the enlargement and instead increase the musical education.

Probably in any culture in history and in our postmodern culture in particular, popular trends in the arts tend to develop into dogmatic systems of their own. In Leo Treitler's valuable article "Postmodern Signs in Musical Studies,"[68] he brilliantly describes the transformation of the classical Swedish department store Nordiska Kompaniet into the arcade. Earlier, one made the decisions according to "natural classes"

65. The quote was submitted as the title for an article in *New York Times.* However the editor changed it, thus creating hostility among musicians. See Richard Taruskin, "Tradition and Authority," *Early Music* 20 (1992), 311-14.

66. See for example the discussion on how many singers Bach had on each part: Joshua Rifkin, "Bach's Chorus. A Preliminary Report," *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 747-754; Robert L. Marshall, "Bach's Chorus. A Preliminary Reply to Joshua Rifkin," *Musical Times* 124 (1983), 19-22; Joshua Rifkin, "Bach's Chorus. A Response to Robert Marshall," *Musical Times* 124 (1983), 161-162.

67. Quoted by Taruskin in Kenyon, 182.

68. *Journal of Musicology* 13 (1995), 3-17.

(gender, age) through genre (coats, hats) through style. After the transformation though, there exists a collection of boutiques, selling a diversity of products sharing the same trait of focusing on one particular group of customers. Each boutique now offers a selection of hats *and* coats as well as small accessories like umbrellas in matching colors, sizes and styles. In today's society, one has to choose a lifestyle and to maneuver in the archipelago of ideologies and market places where the actual material (cotton — wool or, regarding music, organ — Mozart) has no particular significance, only what it represents: To enjoy Mozart might only show that a person signs up for high aesthetic ideals. To listen to Milton Babbitt's music in North America might just be a gesture of Political Correctness in the academic world of Music Theory. The medium is the message. I fully subscribe, chapter and verse, to Treitler's observations regarding:

> […] the gradual tendency to collapse all terms about the individual's reception of music — 'hearing', 'listening', 'interpreting', 'understanding' — into 'reading'. Why, suddenly, 'reading'? Certainly not in the sense of reading scores. It is a sign of the distancing from 'music itself' […][69]

"Reading" here strongly applies to the idea that the meaning of a work does not lie in the work itself but in its social or economic context of today, not Märta Ramsten's context from the time of the creation of the work.[70] This distancing is perfectly present in the way an interpretation of, let us say, a Baroque piece using copies of old instruments can become appreciated on the basis of an attempt to master a difficult instrument. A mediocre performance of a trumpet concerto using a natural trumpet is viewed by some to be superior to an excellent performance on a modern instrument. The means by which the music is produced is of value in and of itself even if the sounding results are often inferior in terms of intonation and accuracy. (Here, of course, I am not referring to excellent groups such as Concentus Musicus.)

Two other authors can cast light on the whole business of authenticity: one is the aesthetician George Dickie and the other is the semiotician Umberto Eco.[71] According to Dickie, there exists an "artworld," consisting of critics and know-how-ers, that determines what is to be considered as "real art." Although Dickie is mainly concerned with contemporary visual arts in his book *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*, his results easily transfer to "authentistic" musical tendencies: somebody came up with the idea that a Baroque violin has the properties described by Harnoncourt abo-

69. Treitler, 12.

70. See footnote 38.

71. George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974). Dickie borrowed the term from Arthur Danto. I am grateful to Jan W. Morthenson for drawing my attention to this book. Also see Umberto Eco, *Faith in Fakes*: *Essays*, trans. William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983).

ve. Eventually, the progressive "artworld" accepted that as a fact. Today, virtually everyone accepts it.[72] I am not in the position to proclaim Klingfors "the boy who said — The emperor is naked" in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*, but he might as well be.[73]

To understand the music of the past in terms of the past is not possible. We all seem to agree to that. This is particularly true given that we Westerners cannot even understand our own cultural representations. In Umberto Eco's hilarious journey on the North American continent, from the essay *Travels in Hyperreality*, he confronts different imitative, or in his own word "fake" representations of the arts. In the *Museum of Living Arts* in Buena Park, Los Angeles, a variety of wax reproductions of famous paintings, like the Mona Lisa, are displayed next to sidewalk artists' reproductions of the same works. Not even photographic copies of the originals are provided:

> The Palace's philosophy is not, 'We are giving you the reproduction so that you will want the original,' but rather, 'We are giving you the reproduction so you will no longer feel any need for the original.'[74]

Although the music of the Baroque era is not fake, the claim of making music speak more directly to us by using more or less well founded evidence definitely is fake. Why? In the same way that a Heavy Metal tune speaks more directly to a Heavy Metal fan and Gagaku more to a classical Japanese musician than to myself, the understanding of music is related to the language of a person's "immediate geographical and historical boundaries"[75] as well as to his or her cultural background. Even if we desperately want to understand the music of J. S. Bach on his terms, we cannot do that.

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72. There are strong similarities to Thomas S. Kuhn's definition of a paradigm shift in the way the results and techniques from the early music movement gradually take over even "modern" orchestras' ways of performing old music. See his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Second Enlarged Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).
73. Indeed, there are many scholars claiming to be the little boy. The discussion about overdotting is a typical example where Frederick Neumann questions the prevalent opinion in Baroque performance practice. His latest article on this issue is "Notes Inégales for Bach, Overdotting for Everybody? A Commentary on an Attempt to Revive Dolmetsch's 'Rhythmic Alterations'," *Historical Performance* 13 (1994), 12-24. An answer by Stephen E. Hefling followed: "Déjà Vu All Over Again? Rhythmic Alteration vs. Neumann's review of *Rhythmic Alteration in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Music: Notes inégales and Overdotting*," *Historical Performance* 7/2 (1994), 85-94. This example strongly indicates that the discussion is not over.
74. Eco, 19.
75. To paraphrase Joseph Schillinger in *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* (New York: Philosophical Library 1948), 1.

However, Eco overlooks one important aspect when he patronizes American popular culture: The way the *Museum of Living Arts* exhibits fake artifacts turns it into a *real* museum of fakes. The museum is unique, there is nothing like it in Italy. In the same way, Harnoncourt represents with his "authentistic" music a *real* fake of Baroque music — a music that is as good as any other contemporary representation of music from the Baroque era. Not only is the sonic representation fake, its context is fake. Listening to a CD featuring the Viennese Concentus Musicus and the Swedish Adolf Fredrik Bach Chorus conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt while relaxing in a comfortable couch in the living room and sipping a drink is as far from the Protestant clerical reality of the Thomas Kirche in eighteenth-century Leipzig as one would wish to get. It is impossible to even come close to a decent "translation" of the message as Harnoncourt wishes. But musically, at the present stage, Harnoncourt's interpretations are among the best representations that we have — they are tailor-made for the current public taste. Or, as Taruskin describes it: "It is the latter [historical performance] that is truly modern performance — or rather, if you like, the avant-garde wing or cutting edge of modern performance […]."[76] Does not Taruskin's claim that "authentistic" performances are strongly related to modernism show substantial similarities to Harnoncourt's statement: "those musicians who are also open to contemporary music often turn to original instruments, if they play early music at all, because they understand that this significantly expands their range of expression."?[77] The old is indeed the modern.

The "industry of iconism," to use Eco's term, here represented by the record companies, radio stations and their confederates, makes sure that the fakes we hear are not only up-to-date fakes but also in full accordance with the "sound" of the individual record company.[78] They also give us several versions of the same piece, that is, many "readings" of the same "text." We do not have to "understand" the music at the first hearing. Taking all these understandings of performance practice, the whole issue of the performance of old music naturally extends beyond the narrow scope of gut strings of a certain density or trills starting on or off the beat. The issue becomes so complex and confused that not even Umberto Eco is able to keep his feet firmly on the ground:

> But surely this hand-to-hand battle with history [the recreation of a Venetian palazzo in Florida], pathetic as it may be, cannot be justified, because history will not be imitated […]

76. Taruskin in Kenyon, 193.
77. Harnoncourt, 1982, 76.
78. Roger Bédard referred to a conversation in which he was told by a radio producer that the record companies are very concerned about creating a sound of their own by using different microphone placements and other techniques. They are aiming at creating a particular SONY or London sound.

But subsequently on the same page he claims:

> Here, [in New York City] moreover, the Gothic and the neoclassical do not seem the effect of cold reasoning; they illustrate the revivalist awareness of the period when they were built, and so they aren't fake […][79]

What is the difference? Is fake today worse than that of yesterday? To understand the past seems to become an impossible task, to understand the present — almost as difficult.

79. Eco, 28.

Coda

The Martians mentioned in the introduction are indeed ourselves. Last year they took *Gestalt* in Stockholm. A Swedish scholar, Dr. Carl-Gunnar Åhlén, found a phonograph recording with the Danish bass singer Peter Schram (1819-1895) made in 1889. Before a broadcast discussion on performance practice, in which Åhlén would participate, he turned over the tape to the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm for an analysis.[80] Later he asked for the results and received the following answer: "We didn't make an analysis, we thought someone was joking with us."[81] Schram's way of singing was so diametrically different from today's that the recording could just as well have come from another planet.

80. KTH's department for acoustics has specialized in analyzing and interpreting the human voice.

81. I got this anecdote from Gunno Klingfors in a phone conversation 28/11/94. I traced the occasion for Peter Schram's recording: "An seinem 70. Geburtstag, dem 5.9.1889, gab er an der Kopenhagener Oper seine Abschiedsvorstellung als Leporello Im 'Don Giovanni'. Am gleichen Aben wurde seine Stimme im Hause des Generalkonsuls Gottfried M. Ruben mit einer Edison-Maschine auf einem Zylinder aufgenommen. Auf diesem singt er ohne Begleitung einige Phrasen aus der Katalog-Arie des Leporello. […] Die Echtheit des hoch intressanten Dokuments ist sehr wahrscheinlich, und damit ist die Frage nach dem ältesten Sänger, dessen Stimme uns durch eine Aufnahme (wenn auch nicht in Form einer Schallplatte) gehalten ist, auf eine unerwartete Weise neu gestellt worden. In Karl J. Kutsch and Leo Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, Zweiter Band, (Bern, Stuttgart: Francke, 1987), 2665.

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