

Letter from the Editors

RON ATAR & URI GOLOMB

Meaning and Style in Performance

The last two decades have produced a vast amount of scholarly writing about musical performance. This literature has covered such topics as historical performance practice, the psychology of performance, expression in performance, the relationship between analysis and performance, and the links between performative interpretation and music reception or—in other words—the way in which music acquires meaning through the processes of listening and performance alike. These are just a few of the topics included in the broad spectrum of the field of musical performance studies.

The increasing scholarly interest in the performative aspects of music around the world, as well as in Israel, and the emergence of a new generation of researchers in this field, led to the decision by *Min-Ad*'s editorial board to dedicate one of its issues to this field of musicological research. Three articles and one book review will give readers an initial idea of the varied subjects encompassed in this field. This issue also contains papers covering other aspects of musicological research, such as historical research, the study of Israeli music, and a review of a book that deals with the relationship between poetry and music in Israeli popular songs.

Two of the performance papers—by Dorottya Fabian and Uri Golomb—deal with recordings of Bach's music, but approach his music and its performance from contrasting angles, both in terms of repertoire and in terms of theoretical approach. Fabian presents a study of thirty-five recorded performances of J.S. Bach's sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin (from 1981 to 2010). Her research reveals an increasing tendency to apply embellishment and improvisation among both "period" (associated with historically informed performance or HIP) and "modern" (or non-specialist) violinists. While attempting to account for the likely principles underlying choices of graces and embellishments, the paper also discusses the *delivery* of added notes and written-out ornaments, together with the overall effect this creates in terms of performance style and historical practice. Fabian's purpose is to present a study of "contemporary practice with a view to evaluating the level of individuality as opposed to homogeneity" in interpretations of Bach's works for solo violin.

Uri Golomb's paper focuses on one movement—the duet *Et in unum dominum* from the B-minor Mass—as a case study for wider issues in musical interpretation. In

his article, he proposes a distinction between two types of musical interpretation, which he terms “analytic” and “creative”—both born of an opposition to more neutral, literalistic readings of the score. Analytic performers are musicians who seek to expose to the listeners certain latent features that they discern within the notated score, whereas creative performers are engaged in reading interpretation into the music, inserting ideas that need not be grounded in any analysis of the musical material. The paper focuses on two performances of Bach’s duet—conducted by Eugen Jochum and Thomas Hengelbrock—as an illustration of the “creative” and “analytic” approaches respectively. These performances are set within the broader context of the duet’s reception and performance history

Ron Atar’s paper examines the topic of the composer as a performer. Bartók’s two recordings (1928 and 1936) of pieces no. 7-15 from *15 Hungarian Peasant Songs* provide us with invaluable insights into his performance aesthetics. In the notes, Bartók strictly preserves the structure and the character of the original Hungarian folk songs; his recordings, however, present a radically different picture. Atar argues that, through his performative interpretation, Bartók turned a collection of arrangements that looked simple on paper into a series of individual concert pieces, imbuing each piece with its own expressive character. He also claims that it is not merely that every piece (arrangement) has its own special character, but also that the fluent transition from one character to another function, according to Bartók’s renditions, creates a hidden narrative.

Eitan Ornoy reviews the *Recorded Music* volume of *The Cambridge Companion* series. This book—through its eleven chapters interleaved with shorter interpolations—contains selective articles addressing different aspects of the extensive field of recorded music research. Ornoy indicates that, being a conglomerate of theoretical essays and individual discourses, this book presents contrasting, even contradictory approaches toward several key issues. As a case study, he focuses on the discussions of live versus recorded performance in four chapters of the book.

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As already noted, performance studies occupy about half of this issue of *Min-Ad*; the remainder is dedicated to other, perhaps more traditional aspects of musicological research. Efrat Buchris’s Hebrew-language paper focuses on the oratorio *Il Sacrificio Di Jefte* (Venice, 1756) by Baldassare Galuppi. In this oratorio, Galuppi and his librettist re-interpret—and, in some ways, re-invent—the Biblical story of Jephthah’s sacrifice of his daughter. Buchris interprets this version of the story in light of eighteenth-century Christian standpoints toward this story, and reveals how Galuppi’s oratorio conveys key theological concepts—such as sacrifice, acceptance of fate, and surrender to God’s will—through text and music alike. Buchris argues that Galuppi’s oratorio reflects a musical rhetoric typical of its time,

revealing the way oratorios functioned, not merely as religiously affected musical genre, but as a tool in strengthening Christian faith.

David Buch's article reveals the role of Placidus Partsch—a Moravian teacher, poet, humanities scholar and Catholic priest—in creating the first collection of children's songs published in Vienna: the *Liedersammlung für Kinder und Kinderfreunde am Clavier* (Vienna: Ignaz Alberti, 1791). An interesting disclosure is that Mozart's three final lieder (K. 596-8) form part of this collection. However, the fact that scholars never analyzed the *Liedersammlung* beyond these three songs has prevented their basic understanding of the context of the songs. In his paper, Buch offers a survey of Partsch's life, focusing on his activities during the last two decades of the eighteenth century—during the Hapsburg monarchy—in a quest to clarify certain questions relating to the production and editing of the *Liedersammlung*. His paper also sheds light on the significance of this compilation for historical musicology and for the study of music education.

Liran Gurkiewicz's paper is a further contribution to the study of Paul Ben-Haim's "German" period, which also featured prominently in Vol. 9 of *Min-Ad* (see Joel Greenberg's article on Ben-Haim's *Quintet*, and Ronit Seter's review of Jehoash Hirshberg's *Paul Ben-Haim: His Life and Works*). The author suggests that Ben-Haim's ambition to write music containing Jewish elements had its origins already in Germany, long before the composer thought of immigrating to Eretz Israel. Gurkiewicz also points out several aspects of Ben-Haim's style in his oratorio *Joram* (Munich, 1932-33), and indicates their affinities with works written after Ben-Haim's *aliyah*, such as the first symphony (Tel Aviv, 1939-41). He argues that understanding Ben-Haim's German period is crucial to comprehending the individual development of this pivotal composer—as well as the development of Israeli art music in general.

Roger Kamien, in his review of Bathia Churgin's book *Transcendent Mastery: Studies in the Music of Beethoven* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2008 and reprint in 2011), hails the book as a masterpiece, describing it "a profound examination of Beethoven music in relation to the classical style". In this book, Churgin, founder of the Music Department at Bar-Ilan University, focuses on four compositions from four different genres in order to present fully Beethoven musical legacy: the Piano Sonata in D major, op.10, no.3; the Violin Concerto in D major, op.61; the Violin Sonata in G major, op.96, and the String Quartet in A minor, op.132. She analyses these works from a new and innovative perspective, demonstrating key features of the classic style amplified in these representative works.

Finally, this issue will feature Naphtali Wagner's extensive review-essay of Oded Assaf's *Music First: On Poetry and Music* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2012)—a wide-ranging, critical study of Israeli composers' settings of Hebrew poetry. Wagner, who himself studied this subject intensively (among other things, he published an analytical monograph on the songs of Sasha Argov), writes that Assaf's book "could spark a controversy on text-music relations in general, and on the setting of poetry in particular." In a sense, Wagner adds to this controversy in his detailed response to Assaf's interpretation of two settings of poems by Natan Zach: Matti Caspi's "How

does One Star Dare” and Nahum Heiman’s “Coasts.” Assaf argues that both composers did a disservice—however well intentioned—to Zach’s poetry; Wagner disputes this claim, especially with regard to Caspi’s setting, which he analyses as a kind of “reconstruction” of Zach’s poem, facilitating our understanding of it. However, he praises Assaf for his audacity and integrity in transferring the discussion of text-music relations from the ivory tower of academe into the public arena.

It should be noted that Wagner’s review features an analysis of Zach’s own spoken readings of his poems, which could be regarded as a further contribution to the field of performance studies, thereby linking it to the major theme of this edition.

As guest editors of this edition, Uri Golomb and I wish to thank Adena Portowitz, *Min-Ad*’s editor, and the music directors board for permitting us to be guest editors of a special issue relating to performance research.

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Guest Editors