

Writing Artistic Research Report on Western Classical Music Performance: The Important Aspects to Be Voiced Out by A Performer Researcher

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Abstract

There is only a small number of published articles about music as performing. Based on the review of related literatures, we found that there are three contributing factors to this phenomenon. The first is related to the learning model in music performance. The second is related to the structure of knowledge in music performance. The third is related to the research paradigm in music performance. The aim of this article is to discuss aspects that are important to be voiced out by a performer in writing artistic research on classical music performances. A narrative review was conducted which focused on answering two main questions. The first is what are the important aspects that need to be included in the writing of artistic research reports for classical music performances? The second is how to describe the voices of performers in an artistic research report of classical music performances? Subsequently, the answers to these two questions provides an overview of how the practice of music performance and research in an academic environment can be carried out in conformity. Based on a review of the related literatures, this article is expected to contribute to writing an artistic research report on Western classical music performance.

Keywords: Research in Classical Music Performance, Performer's Perspective in Artistic Research, The Voices Of Performers in Artistic Research, Practice in Classical Music Performance Research, Artistic Research in Classical Music Performance.

Introduction

The parameter of classical music performance is individual achievement. Specifically, it is related to musical performance skills which are defined as instrumental techniques. According to Palmer (1997) music performance provides a rich domain for the study of both cognitive and motor skills. Common forms of music performance in the Western tonal tradition include sight-reading (performing unfamiliar music from notation), performing well-learned (prepared) music from memory or from notation, improvising, and playing by ear (performing music from aural presentation. Expertise in instrumental techniques may be more recognized than expertise in practice (Jorgenson, 2002). The expertise level of instrumental techniques offers a unique and valuable contribution in terms of new styles, techniques, or

interpretations (Krampe & Ericsson, 1995; p. 97). With regards to the classical music performer, Dogantan Dack, (2017; p.131) stated:

“The profession of the classical performer is one of the most demanding cultural practices. Born of a passion for making music and a love for the artistic possibilities, challenges and pleasures of one’s instrument, a lifetime commitment to it involves a rigorous routine to maintain high- level technical expertise”

However, the lack of appreciation for performers in classical music performances has been echoed centuries ago., John Hawkins’s remark in his book on music history of 1776 as quoted by Haynes (2007; p.3):

“Tradition only whispers, for a short time, the name and abilities of a mere performer, however exquisite the delight which his talents afforded to those who heard him; whereas, a theory once committed to paper and established, lives, at least in libraries, as long as the language in which it was written “

Haynes (2007) emphasized too that a text-fetishism does not allow performers to change any detail of the “masterpieces” of the past. Therefore, Benson (2003; p.29) stated that there is a prominent view that the conception of the role of classical musicians is much closer to that of self-effacing servant who faithfully serves the score of the composer. In our opinion there are two factors that influence the above. The performer's perspective in classical music does not have a strong tradition as shown in music composition, musicology and philosophy of music (Djahwasi and Saidon, 2021).

There is only a small number of published articles about music as performing in the perspective of the performer (Auslander, 2004). Dogantan-Dack, (2015) stated that the area of musical performance has just started to engage in substantial and sustained debates about the cultural policies, ideologies, academic discourses, theories and methods that are shaping artistic research in this field. The research in classical music performance should emphasize on how to avoid a classical music performance falling into the trap of only generating generic repetitions of famous works (Skoogh and Frisk, 2019).

In the context of research, the identity and "mode of existence" of works and performances are the most difficult questions to answer related to ontological question in classical music performance (Pryer, 2013). Like other performing arts, the reality of classical music performance is within the scope of the event. Not surprisingly, the assumptions of ontology or the nature of reality in classical music performances are described as inhabiting many ontological realms (Dogantan-Dack, 2014), mutant (Goehrs, 1992) and the puzzlement in a broad sense (Morris, 2010). In this regard, Benson (2003) describes ontology of music performances as "untouchable" by the performer. Comparing research in other fields of the arts with music performance, the views of Kerman (1985; P.17) are worth pondering more deeply:

“In the circumstances it is idle to complain or lament that critical thought in music lags conceptually far behind that in the other arts..... Semiotics, hermeneutics, and phenomenology are being drawn upon only by some of the boldest of musical studies today. Post-structuralism, deconstruction, and serious feminism have yet to make their debuts in musicology or music theory”.

Burwell (2016) stated that although the practice of classical music performance does not consist in the application of theory, we cannot wisely assume that expert players do not have theories about their own skills. Professional skill has a core of artistry, that artistry is itself a form of knowledge (Schon, 1987).

Our observation and review of the related references found that there are three

contributing factors to the phenomena. The first is related to the learning model in music performance. The second is related to the structure of knowledge in music performance. The third is related to the research paradigm in music performance.

Based on the discussion above, there are two main aspects that require further clarification for research in classical music performance. The first aspect is performers must go beyond the preoccupation with developing technical skills; they should engage with musical material in a critical and thoughtful way, rather than following the 'thoughtless' tradition (Krivenski, 2011). The second aspect is how to make music performance research as an agent of development and innovation (Kramer, 2002).

The aim of this article is to review and discuss a number of aspects that are important to be voiced up by a performer in writing the artistic research report of classical music performances. The review of a number of articles and discussions was guided by two main questions. The first is what are aspects that need to be conveyed by performers in artistic research of classical music performances? The second is how to describe the voices of performers in artistic research of classical music performances?

Conservatory Learning Model

Historically, the structure of knowledge in classical music performance is built on the paradigmatic view of the conservatory (Perkins et al., 2017; Kingsbury, 1988, p. 51; Schon, 1987, p. 13). The conservatory, which was the forerunner of the classical era, later gave birth to a number of great composers and performers, such as Mahler, Paganini, Fernando Sor,

Francisco Tarrega and others. The founding of the conservatory in Paris was established in 1795. Then followed by the establishment of the conservatories Prague in 1811, Vienna in 1817, London in 1822, Milan in 1824 and Brussels in 1832 (Zaslaw, 1989).

Students in conservatoires in general invest more time in practising than students in universities (Hamann et al., 1998; Kostka, 2002; Lammers & Kruger, 2006). Generally, the training of performing arts specialists in conservatories have been relatively in isolation (Gaunt, 2016). The classical conservatoire tradition seems to be concentrating on the craft of an individual discipline (Gaunt, 2016) and characterized by teacher-student centre (Johansen and Nielsen, 2019; Virkkula, 2015).

The learning model of the conservatoire context is generally presented as an activity pursued with the aim of acquiring "individual virtuosity" (Goehr, 1973, p. 589) rather than musical understanding, or musical meaning. The pursuit of excellence in musical performance is the paradigmatic activity of the conservatoire, and superiority in outstanding professional performances is a matter of 'surprisingly general agreement' even among critics (Schon 1987, p. 13).

Perkins (2013: p.197) states that 'as educational institutions, conservatoires remain largely unresearched. The conservatoires' seemed to be slow at modifying their curriculum in order to meet the demands of the contemporary musician (Porton, 2020). This is problematic in many contemporary contexts where long-held assumptions about the purpose and value of the performing arts are being challenged (Gaunt, 2016). This has resulted in conservatoires facing a dilemma (Carey and Lebler, 2012). The exploratory approach to instrumental learning based on expert performers as teachers has other implications, where the status of teachers as performers resulted in prioritizing their artistic values over pedagogical values (Nicolas and Carbonel, 2021; Purser, 2005). In consequence,

the regional conservatory in France tends to trained musicians with a tendency of not having intellectual understanding of what they were performing (Raevskikh, 2017). The content of courses and their relevance for the programme is not addressed by research and more affiliated with very strict practices (Jorgensen, 2014).

Indeed, the conservatory has produced a virtuoso level of performers, but lacking in terms of publications of literature based on research and discussions on pedagogical themes. The tradition carried out by the conservatories produces paradigms in classical music performances which place the important notion of the *virtuoso* or level of perfection (Frisk, 2017). This forms a paradigm that classical music performer activities prioritize product rather than process, and achieving results rather than achievement in activities (Levinson, 2011). There are less discussions about how the performer's perspective is voiced up in the writing or research report. This aspect makes the implication that skill in musical performance is considered inferior to purely intellectual procedures (Burwell, 2012).

Structure of Knowledge in Music Performance

The musical term of performance, in the simplest way of thinking and in a first sense, represents the action of faithfully rendering, staging, performing a musical composition by an instrumentalist (Nelida and Ghisa, 2018). Previous scholarly dissertations of classical piano performances show that academic writings on music performance are more associated to the musicology discipline and instrumental techniques (Tindall-Gibson, 2020; Cho, 2020; Alshibli, 2018; Rispoli, 2017; Grinberg, 2016; Leeson, 2016; Roxburgh, 2013; Caboverde, 2012; Fisher, 2012).

The question is what actually is the scholarly basis in classical music performance? Quite a number of literatures have shown that the structure of knowledge on classical music performance was built by relying on other fields of study, such as musicology, ethnomusicology, instrumentation techniques, music theory, and musical composition. The implication is that investigation on classical music performance is rather bland and seemed to be distant because the majority of the research reports did not include the performer's views.

According to Timmers and Honing (2002), the main issue when analyzing Western classical music is that the discipline usually focuses on the score rather than the performance. The contradictions surrounding research in classical music performances has led up to the issue of score and performance (Pryer, 2013; Cook, 2014; Timmers and Honing, 2002); representational and non-representational (Walton, 2015); performative and critical interpretation (Levinson 1993); and a new musical work into being, or a 'version' of the old one (Scruton, 2019).

In discussing the source of analysis, musicologists from generation to generation have behaved as if scores were the only real thing about music (Kenyon, 2013). Heinrich Schenker (2002; p. 3) in his book *The Art of Performance* states that methodically, a compositional work *does not require a performance in order to exist. The reading of the score is sufficient*. Philosophically, the art of interpretation in Schenker's approach model is known as hermeneutics (Kramer, 2011).

As a figure who greatly influences the thinking of music analysis in the current era, Schenker's approach can be considered as building the knowledge about music obtained by non-musical ways (Swanwick, 2016). In this perspective, music analysis is part of the study of music starting from the music itself, in this case the score; and not from external factors (Bent

and Drabkin, 1987).

The musicology has a well-established platform for explaining music from an academic perspective. This is an indisputable argument as the analysis model of musicology is based on verifiable facts and documents, and typically the investigations are retrospective (Cook and Clarke, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising that the musicological approach in the view of philosophy is labeled positivist (Kerman, 1985; Beard & Gloag, 2016).

In contrast to musicology, the parameter of classical music performance is individual achievement. Specifically, it is related to the skills of musical performance which is commonly defined as instrumental techniques. Expertise in instrumental techniques may be more appropriately recognized than expertise in practice (Jorgenson, 2002). The expert level of instrumental techniques offers a unique and valuable contribution in terms of new styles, techniques, or interpretations (Krampe & Ericsson, 1995).

However, musicology requires the appropriate proportions to be placed in a classical music performance dissertation. Without appropriate proportions, the involvement of musicology in a dissertation is nothing more than a concert or opera guide (Dahlhaus, 1983). There are three main arguments regarding the incompatibility of views of the research in music performance with the musicological approaches. The first is related to the manner of musicology is not the manner of music performance (Beard and Gloag, 2005; Gramit, 2002). Secondly, the musicological perspective is at odds with the nature of reality of music performance as musical behavior (Timmers and Honing, 2002). The third is related to classical music performance itself which is not a sub-discipline that is affiliated with musicology (Cook, 2014).

Musicology has an important role to understand the musical structure for achieving a critical interpretation (White, 2003). Musicological approach provides a framework for the composer to communicate their intentions, while other aspects are left deliberately open (Kenyon, 2021; p.23). The relationship between musicology and artistic practice is not something foreign to musicology. As stated by Lang (1997), musicology is involved in the basic artistic questions of music. The conclusion that can be drawn is based on the description above, both musicology and instrumental techniques in classical music performances have their respective advantages.

Research Paradigm in Arts

The term 'research' is used to denote a systematic investigation to the end of the acquisition of new knowledge, and a 'researcher' is a person who pursues research (Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes, 2007). However, the issue of 'research in the arts' is an urgent one (Borgdorff, 2012). In one side, varied terminology is used to try and label different forms of practice use in research such as practice-based, practice-led, studio-based research, etc. In other side, this is problematic, as there are no clear definitions and guidelines for what these terms stand for.

Of the various terminology of arts research, practice-based research and practice-led research are the terms most commonly used in arts research (Sullivan, 2006). Our review based on previous research in classical music performance shows that the practice-based research is very dominant (Cho, 2020; Tindall-Gibson, 2020; Alshibli, 2018; Rispoli, 2017; Grinberg, 2016; Leeson, 2016; Roxburgh, 2013; Caboverde, 2012; Fisher, 2012).

According to Linda Candy (2006) practice-based research is defined as:

“...an original investigation carried out partly through practice and the outcomes of that practice, with the doctoral thesis being demonstrated through creative outcomes including ‘images, music, designs, models, digital media or other outcomes such as performances and exhibitions.... Whilst the thesis context and climate may be stated in words, it can only be understood in direct reference to the creative outcomes”

Practice-based research is a collective notion that may cover any form of practice-oriented research in the arts (Borgdoff, 2012). However, a pragmatic approach to practice in research without incorporating basic conceptions of notions and theories will cause practice to lose its scholarly meaning. It is not surprising that Candy and Edmond (2018) in the recent article explain that the practice-based research approach has yet to reach a settled status in terms of its definition and discourse, despite its presence in academic contexts for over 35 years. According to Djahwasi and Saidon (2020) it is no exaggeration to interpret it as an anomaly between art theory and art practice in an academic environment. On one hand, art researchers’ work to produce established theories of art, on the other hand, artists work to produce creative works of art.

What Aspects Need to be Conveyed by Performers in Artistic Research of Classical Music Performances?

Based on review of the related literatures, we found that there are three aspects that need to be addressed by performers in research of classical music performance. The first is to integrate aspects of understanding and practice in scores and sounds. The second is to facilitate intentional and creativity aspects of the performer. The third is to develop multi-layer knowledge of music performance.

The nature of classical music performance is found in the close relationship between score and performance, because only by performing the score can be heard (Morris, 2007). Davies (2004a) seems to support this view: ‘Performance calls for concentration on the business of sounding the work. Integrating aspects of understanding and practice in scores and sounds is crucial aspects that need to be conveyed by performers in research of classical music performance. According to Stublely (1995) the relationship between the performer and the score in the Western art music tradition has sparked considerable discussion among philosophers, performers, and critics since the eighteenth century.

Silverman (2007) asserts that if the role of performer is obliged to interpret and make music based on the score, then the meaning of the music is largely the responsibility of the performer. The performers need analysis and interpretation in music in order to give meaning to their performances. In this respect, Rink (2001; p.217) stated that the main concern in research of classical music performance is to investigate how composers conveyed 'meaning' (defined in any number of ways) in the score and how contemporary performers translated it into sound.

Taruskin (1997) stated that a study in practice of performance, ideally, is an attempt, on the basis of documentary or statistical evidence, to bridge the gap between what is written in the old musical texts that survive and what was actually heard in typical contemporary performances. According to Swinkin (2016) in dealing with the discrepancy between scores and performance, one should be humble not to try to force a correlation that does not exist. Benson (2003) suggested “composing” and “performing” better understood as two facets of one activity. Meanwhile, Rothstein (2005; p.237) suggested that “artistically, the performer has to provide the listener with a clear work experience, not an analytical understanding of

it"

The second aspect to be addressed is to facilitate intention and creativity of performer. Research in musical performances needs to consider all sides of the personal's creative personality (Kurmanaev, 2016). This is because the characteristics of performers in classical music performances depend on the influence of personal qualities (Shuter-Dyson & Gabriel, 2012). In the structure of musical performance, intentional and creativity aspects of the performer are significantly adjusting with the nature of interpretation and the degree of prominence of certain manifestations" (Squire, 2010; Akhmanova & Veselitsky, 2011).

Bowen (2006) affirmed that the new research will make performers aware of other levels of expression and will enable them to master not only new accents (new sounds) but new languages (and new meanings) from the repertoires. The need to consider the different types of performance traits. We proposed to divide performance character into three categories which consist of styles, traditions and innovation of performers.

The third aspect is related to multi-layered knowledge of music performance. Leech Wilkinson and Prior, (2017; p.8) emphasized that research in classical music performance is supposed to form an understanding of music as a multimodal phenomenon by involving the senses of sound, the senses of vision, and the senses of motion. With regards to this, we found interesting view which Cox (2017) illustrates as musical imagery. Specifically, the musical imagery is classified by Cox into visual imagery for the sight of visual representations in the form of scores, motor imagery for sounds performed and auditory imagery for sounds heard. The visual musical imagery symbolizes artistic standards in western classical music traditions which is compiling a set of principles such as reading notations, writing notation and identifying notation. The motor musical imagery describes how sound is produced based on instrumentation techniques. Furthermore, the auditory musical imagery symbolizes how music is given meaning. In this respect, the terms of analysis in music performance does not only concern scores but also includes elements of instrumental techniques and sounds. The greatest benefit of combining a score analysis and a sound analysis is to mediate between the composer's ideas and the actions and intentions of the performers (Kenyon, 2013). We believe that the effort of further understanding of these two factors are very beneficial for both musicology and music performance. As Cook (2014) said, this effort is not to displace traditional musicology but rather to rethink it from the inside.

How to Describe the Voice of Performers in Artistic Research of Classical Music Performances?

Artistic research projects about live musical performance are particularly valuable on two accounts, both of which concern the future direction of music performance studies. One has to do with the role and status of performers within the discipline. The performer's authentic voice and discourse within the discipline (Dogantan-Dack, 2012). 'Aesthetic' experience was construed as a kind of parallel to intellectual knowledge, but one that was perceptual rather than conceptual in nature (Bowman, 1998)

Methodically, the meaning of musical performances in the first-hand inquiry research paradigm is to preserve the purity of methods which dealing in communicable experiences in order to get worthwhile knowledge could be said to arise from musical experience (Swanwick, 2016). The research methodology must explain the separation of process and product. In other words, what concept or approach is applied to separate processes and products in classical music performance must be clearly stated.

Indeed, unlike the words in a literary text have. However, in the classical music

performance, the presence of quality of sounds in the form of the pitch, rhythmic, dynamic, and other which related to score cannot state to encode and represent in the form of verbal language (Stubley, 1995). Langer (1957, p. 235), stated that "because the forms of human feeling are much more congruent with musical forms than with the forms of language, music can reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach" In other words, the language is not the only means of communicating in classical music performance research. There must be a reciprocal relationship between language and practice.

Responding to the statement above, the role of verbal and non-verbal text in performer-based research on classical music performance needs to be further clarified. Borgdorff (2006) has an interesting view that can be accounted for, that not all practice is considered as research and which criteria of practice must be defined as academic research? The existence of practice in classical music performance research must have a role in connecting between intellectual conditions and artistic production (Slager, 2004). The presence of practice should be intended as research in order to enhance knowledge and understanding in practice of classical music performance (Borgdorff, 2012).

No research can be completely free from the researcher's personal perspectives and experiences (Wilson, 2018). However, communicable experiences do not only explain how musical knowledge is acquired based on first-hand inquiry or personal knowledge but must also explain its significance to knowledge (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975). Graves (2002) in his article "Art as a Rational Activity" has a sophisticated theory to reconcile the theory and practice in art.

"Analysis can be conceptualized but intuition is nonconceptual. Analysis yields objective knowledge; Intuition yields subjective knowledge A work of art, both body and meaning, is a composite of objective and subjective features. The body of a work of art presents itself to both analysis and intuition, and its meaning rests within the interrelation between the intellectual content of its logic and the sensate content of its aesthetics. Good a work of art is one which succeeds in establishing an appropriate relationship between its objective and subjective features, which is another way of saying that it embodies its meaning well.

Graves' opinion is in line with the view of Timmers & Honing (2002); Rothstein (2005) who defined the meaning of musical performance as a reflection of musical behaviour which is "a combination of intuition, experience, and reason". In the term of research methodology, a model of this meaning is generally defined as first-hand inquiry research. In this perspective,

The different performances of the same work will have different properties as a result of being generated in different contexts (Gracyk, 2017).

Gaut (2010: p.08) narrows down the range of what is relevant to elements within the research in art. He pointed out that the artist's activity manifested in the work is the central object of investigation. Documentation of practice and recital in musical performances, whether in the form of audio or video-audio, must be placed as legitimate objects and concrete forms of knowledge (Auslander, 2004). In this perspective, the emergence of a researcher and a researched become one entity (Smith and Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2009; Barone and Eisner, 2012) in which the investigation model consists of the dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

The research in music performance should emphasize the correlation between performer's personal characteristics and the features of his/her artistic activity (Kurmanaev, 2016). The most important aspects in doing artistic research in music performance is not only

about the willingness and ability to do research, but the crucial point is to have adequate competencies as a practitioner, and the knowledge generated by a practitioner process must be pursued explicitly (Hernandez, 2013).

Conclusion

The aim of this article is to discuss aspects that are important to be voiced out by a performer in writing artistic research reports on classical music performances. Based on the review of related literatures, the aspects that need to be voiced up by the performer includes integrating the understanding and practice in scores and sounds, facilitating intentional and creativity aspects of the performer, and developing multi-layered knowledge of music performance. These three aspects could serve as a framework and guide in the reporting of research on music performance.

In the perspective of learning model and structure of knowledge in music performance, by answering the aspects that need to be conveyed by performers in artistic research of classical music performance would help in the reconciliation of the contradictions surrounding artistic research particularly on the issue related to score and performance (Pryer, 2013; Cook, 2014; Timmers and Honing, 2002); representational and non-representational (Walton, 2015); performative and critical interpretation (Levinson, 1993); and a new musical work into being, or a 'version' of the old one (Scruton, 2019).

In our opinion, Arnie Cox's view regarding the nature of music performance can be used as a basic reference in understanding a domain area in music performance. Cox's idea of musical imagery in the form of the visual, the auditory, and motor is explicitly in line with the view that the role of the performer is not only to read the scores, but also to sound the scores.

In addition, David Graves' opinion can be a philosophical basis to justify the boundaries between the perspective of objectivity and subjectivity in musical performances. The greatest benefit of combining a score analysis and a sound analysis is to mediate between the composer's ideas on one side, and the actions and intentions of the performers on the other side (Kenyon, 2013).

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