

Performance Analysis

Performance Analysis:

A Bridge between Theory and Interpretation

Edited by

Madalena Soveral and Sara Zurletti

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PREFACE

Interpretation always takes place whenever one faces a sign or a group of signs, whether that be a sacred, philosophical, literary, musical, pictorial or any other instance of text. The assignment of an interpretation always presents itself to the sign's recipient in the form of an interpretative decision. Hermeneutics is the discipline that studies the meanings transmitted by signs, especially in the case of works of art. There are in fact contents which are more immediately evident, in contrast with others which demand a more elaborate interpretation. For example, concerning the works of the past, only a hermeneutic activity comprising of many different skills – so much so that it is impossible to clearly enumerate them - may enlighten the signs, allowing the appropriation of the cultural content of that tradition, so that the work remains alive in the present and, potentially, in the future.

That is just the case with music. Since it embraces an essentially interpretative moment - through which we may have access to the musical message -, it faces complex interpretative problems. Hermeneutics does not refer just to the performance itself, which includes a virtually infinite spectrum of readings of the same text, but exists within that same text. Hermeneutics in music plays its role on three different levels: theory, composition and performance. Music theory - the set of information sedimented, structured and shared by a community at a certain moment - is the only way to have access to history and to question the attempt to uncover the past. But theory must also be constantly questioned and put into perspective in order to keep its functionality; composition is precisely an attempt to provide an adequate answer to the technical-expressive questions mentioned by theory, to formulate a musical thought that is simultaneously a synthesis of the past and a projection into the future. Performance is ultimately the transmission of the musical meaning embodied in that thought.

So, this book has a double goal: to promote a critical discussion founded on philosophical assertions - facing strictly theoretical problems - and further on to enlarge the discussion to problems concerning music theory, composition, performance and criticism. All of this from the point of view of its relationship with semiotic universes – stratification of languages, forms, performance styles, criteria of judgement, listening habits -, which are more and more diversified and complex.

Performance analysis demands in fact both theoretical competences in a multidisciplinary sense – philosophical, philological, technical, historical – and other competences deeply rooted in the concrete experience of music, therefore in a strict relation with instrumental and vocal practice. This volume fits the critical literature available with a wide reflection which binds theoretical aspects with a rich series of practical observations on the problems interpretation involves. Indeed, the goal of the volume is to show how concrete execution is completely filled with theoretical implications and involves a series of effective decisions which direct the performance and each time define the musical outcome in a different way. So, in this volume, interpretation shows itself to be a central point between a boundless amount of information channelled in the performance, which they define, and a similarly boundless number of different senses which result from the execution in relation to the listener. The essays included here examine both the theoretical specification of information which precedes the performance, the performance itself – concerning its technical parameters and the way it faces performance tradition -, and also the “effects” of the performance: issues of value, beauty, comprehension, and their criteria.

The topics are organized into four chapters, which correspond to the following areas of research: musical hermeneutics, historical and analytical approaches, physical and psychological processes in performance, and artistic practices in the 21st century.

The first section deals the question of interpretation from a hermeneutic perspective. Five articles present a critical discussion based on philosophical concepts, providing important conceptual bases for research in musical interpretation. Questions such as text, temporality, notation, for instance, help to specify some interpretative problems, such as the aesthetic criteria of the musical creation as well. The chapter concludes with a questioning about the relationships between notation, interpretation and performance. How might the relation between notation and its performances be? Can a score annotated with *private*, idiosyncratic signs be proposed as a canonical specimen? When is an interpretation authentic and musically effective? How can notation be harnessed in creative decision making?

The second chapter deals with these questions. Six papers examine different topics connected with the interpretation and performance of works from different historical periods by exploring their relationship with research. The main goal is to examine how and to what extent a performer – reading the written symbols and translating them into a sonorous discourse – makes his/her choices through analysis and how this knowledge can be used in the interpretative process. Starting with a reflection about the notation

of New Music and its presence in executive and compositional practices, the following papers present an analytical study of the score, attempting to demonstrate the relevance of the structural aspects for issues regarding performance, and how these can affect the performer's formal conceptions of the works.

Beyond this analytical perspective, focused mainly on single aspects of the score, empirical research on music performance has brought significant gains providing an essential guide to understanding musical practice and experience. Four studies develop analytical approaches to recorded interpretations, presenting a model for interplay between analysis and performance and their relationship to the listening experience. Focusing on the recordings of famous pianists who influenced the art of musical interpretation in the past century (e.g. Schnabel, Backhaus, Lazar Bermann, Gould and Pollini), the essays point out the mutual influence between musical structure and expressivity in musical interpretation. Moreover, the comparison of different interpretations of the same piece provides a characterisation of differences in individual performance style. It is shown that each performance is characterized by subtle variations regarding timing (tempo) or dynamics and that these variations may be related to the creative processes of expressivity and interpretation in different piano repertoires.

However, the most recent developments in musicological research, in particular psychological approaches to performance, allow us to better observe, to better analyse, a whole set of complex mechanisms of musical experience, opening a way to study another kind of phenomena which intervenes in a decisive manner in the performative process. So, in addition to the aesthetic, historical and analytical perspective of *musical interpretation*, presented in the two initial sections, the next section highlights the emergence of a new field of music theory broadly labelled as *performance studies*. Focused on physical and psychological events, this field explores areas such as gesture, bodily movement, expression, emotion, a whole set of processes that act within the framework of performance.

The third chapter opens precisely with a questioning about these two knowledge areas, their specific contents, methodologies and processes. In contrast to the traditional model of research, "based on a clear-cut division of academic labour between artists and theorists", more recent studies use a combination of these two opposing forms of knowledge, offering insight into and training in new forms of research. The notion of *artistic research*, as presented in the first article, allows for these "figures of artistic hybridity", seeking to form a communicative chain between artistic experience and scientific research.

It is self-evident that artistic experience, with its specific processes heavily based on individual experience, is particularly dependent on and inseparable from physical involvement. Human motion “is crucial not merely for the performance process but also for the affective representation and communication of music itself”. The following papers address these issues. Starting from the performative techniques in which body movement, gesture, facial expression are observed from an aesthetic and artistic perspective, the essays attempt to offer an interplay between gesture and expression in the construction of musical meaning and its communication in performance. Since the communication and perception of expressive qualities of performance is linked to numerous factors, such as the physical listening conditions (Clarke, 2003), we conclude the chapter with a study of acoustic spaces. This essay discusses the vital importance of the “performity” of acoustic space from an architectural perspective as well as from both composer and performer points of view. The contribution that each specific acoustic can bring to the interpretative process, and the performer’s creativity in the presentation of repertoires through different environments will be discussed.

Interpretative and creative work, as is well known, is always nourished by the reality of the cultural context, by the aesthetic conceptions of each historical moment. This question is of particular importance at this juncture. The issues raised by cultural diversity, and by the increasing numbers of crossovers between musical genres and activities, entail a new methodological positioning in terms of research, bringing about significant changes in the way we perceive music and practices.

To complete the book, 4 essays offer a brief panorama of contemporary artistic practices, their challenges and their controversies at the present time. Through analysis of cultural phenomena (intersections between activities, musical genres and cultural fields), the essays present and discuss such implications in different creative and performative contexts.

Proposing a space for reflection in which one tries to imagine the relation between the scientific field and the interpretative process, this collection endeavours to reflect the central issues of research in Performance Analysis, trying to establish connections between different disciplines, methodologies and research trends. The diversity of viewpoints revealed by composers, performers and theorists bears testimony to the complexity of this topic which must remain open to other debates, to other points of view, thereby providing new perspectives for this dynamic research field.

The texts gathered in this collection originate from the Conference *Performance Analysis: a bridge between theory and interpretation*, which

was held in Porto on the 4th-6th October 2016. We are most grateful to the authors of this volume, without whom it would not have been possible to realize this project. Our thanks also go out to Inês Lopes (Music Department of the Superior School of Music and Performing Arts of Porto) and to Mr. Fabio Regazzi (Department of the Arts in the University of Bologna) for their kind help in transcribing the musical examples. Our special thanks go out to CESEM (Centre for the Study of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Music of Lisbon) and to its director, Prof. Doutor Manuel Pedro Ferreira, and to the coordinator of CESEM/IPP, Prof. Doutora Ana Liberal, for their enthusiastic support for this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

MUSICAL HERMENEUTICS

MUSICAL INTERPRETATION
TEMPORALITY OF MUSIC AND MUSICAL NOTATION:
AT THE ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM OF
INTERPRETATION

ENRICO FUBINI

Whether or not to grant the interpreter the quality of artist or creator has been abundantly discussed. To address the subject which concerns us properly, we need to relativize this old debate for the benefit of a more fundamental issue: that of knowing why the problem of interpretation arises in music. Indeed, the crucial point is not the figure of the interpreter but rather the written musical page.

The phenomenon of notation is not proper to music, but characterizes all arts and the forms of expression presenting an essentially temporal dimension or, in other words, being deployed in time. When such is the case and you need to avoid committing a work to memory alone between one reading and another, it is necessary to invent a more or less developed system of symbolic notation that provides this work with a satisfactory survival in time (satisfactory, of course, in relation to a set of requirements varying with historical periods). There have been many discussions about the adequate or inadequate character of musical notation, and its development in time. However, before going into this central problem, we need to clarify a preliminary point. If we admit that musical writing is still imperfect to this day and leaves a margin of indetermination for the one who has to re-express it in sounds, can we imagine it being perfected later in such a way as it leaves the musician with no uncertainty or doubt, and therefore with no room for freedom? To answer this question, we need to clarify what the temporal nature of music in the western tradition and other traditions is up to our own days. Temporality in music means the impossibility of measuring its happening in time using a unit of measurement, otherwise by approximation.

All measurements of time can be summed up as being in the measurement of a certain space travelled at a constant speed, and modern musical notation fixes a rhythmic unit (the bar and time signature) divided

into lower units, by postulating a constant speed of performance. This is a construct that gives only a very approximate image of the temporal reality of music. Evidence of this is that the spatio-temporal scheme of music offered by scores is constantly corrected or altered by expressions such as “slow down”, “accelerate”, “push”, “hold back”, “accentuate”, etc. In other words, the time in which the musical work is performed cannot be measured with a unit of measurement. Wanting to return to a Bergson type of image, we would be tempted to say that the tempo of music is lived time, whilst that of the score is time-space. Other more remote philosophical references also come to mind. We remember Hegel for whom music reproduces an inner rhythm or the flow of consciousness.

“The ego is in time”, Hegel writes, “and time is the being of the subject itself.” Since time and not spatiality as such provide the essential element in which the tone in respect of its musical importance gains its existence and since the temporality of the tone is that of the subject, the tone invades the self even according to this commonality, grasps it in its most fundamental being and puts the I into temporal movement and its rhythm into movement. (*Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*) Between the real time of the performed music and how it is created as tone and spatial time as indicated in the score, there is no true parental relationship, but a leap of quality that the interpreter is brought to perform using all indications provided by the composer, verbal instructions that will always remain approximate. The term *rallentando*, for example, means little for as long as the performer does not insert it into the general context represented at the time of its appearing by the tempo of the melody, by what precedes and follows, by the tone, sonority and finally by the general rhythm according to which he or she thought he had to perform the piece as a whole. It is only within this extremely complex network of relations that the *rallentando* of the score is transformed concretely into a certain rhythmic tempo. All the indications of rhythm, tempo and tone figuring in the score or which, failing explicit notes from the composer, the performer necessarily implements in his or her performance, or which the editor adds in the score, ceaselessly remind us that the score, with its time signature at the beginning of the page and perhaps a precise metronome reference, is only an abstract schema which has to be made real by the performer. The temporality of the music cannot be measured by any instrument, because the more accurate the instrument is, the greater the distance between the concrete flow and musical temporality. It is not without reason that the rhythm of the music has often been compared with the vital rhythm of our psychic and physical being, a rhythm that obeys an internal logic, a pace proper to it, rich with

somersaults, pauses, suspensions, accelerations and slowing down. All that cannot be translated into a system of signs, unless only approximately, in the same way as the movement of poetic speech cannot be expressed in graphic signs. Only the speaker can find the rate of respiration of a text.

Should we conclude that the musical score is affected with a congenital defect? From a certain point of view, we need to observe that for as long as music is designed according to this type of temporality, the score as a metric schema could never reflect the sound reality of music, just like the metric schema of verse by Homer and Virgil is for the reader only ever an addition in seeking poetic rhythm. Saying that the score is inadequate in relation to the musical reality is not to say that it is disloyal, and even less pretending that the problem of musical interpretation is reduced to the problem of the technical perfection of the score. The score is neither loyal nor disloyal insofar as it is not a copy of the music but another type of reality. Whether it is perfect or otherwise, easy or difficult for the performer, the score is the only means the performer has to give the musical work its fleeting reality, and it cannot be avoided. Even if this score is enriched with indications of every kind, instructions for expression, rhythm, tone, dynamics, whatever, they will only be vague suggestions intended to reconstruct a reality that is altogether different from the graphic symbols of the written page.

Once this inevitable fact is admitted, the true function of the score is better understood in its double relationship with the composer and the performer. We have just seen that we can rightfully talk about a defect of the score, because that would leave us to suppose that it lacks something we could add, whilst nothing is ever missing. It is what it can and must be. Just as we have rightly observed, every score is perfectly complete and sufficient in relation to the musical requirements proper to each historical period. The presumed inadequacy or - as some have said even less appropriately - the incomplete character of the score is a part of the very condition of the existence of music and its requirement for being interpreted to be brought to life on the occasion of each new performance.

Until now, we have spoken a little abstractly about the score, forgetting that it is not something stable, fixed and graven in stone in the flow of musical history. It is only by examining the transformations it has suffered over the centuries that we can better understand the real issue of the problem of interpretation. The myth of inadequacies and things missing from the score arises only when we think about music of the past. In comparison with the scores of today, can we talk of inadequacy? The musicologist and the editor are confronted with the real problem of filling in gaps, transforming the old score into a modern score. Going from this observation, we could jump to

an erroneous and hasty conclusion that the further we go back in time, the more scores would be backward and sketchy, and the nearer we are to our own time, the more perfect they would be. We would then imagine that the problem of interpretation becomes complex and grows when we go back in time - and on the contrary tends to disappear as we approach the present.

Someone who has some experience in music knows that this is not the case. Thinking in this way can only confuse the philological problem of reading the old text (a problem occurring for all arts and symbolic forms of human expression) with the problem of interpretation. In reality, it is as difficult to offer a good interpretation of a Palestrina Mass, a Vivaldi concerto as for a Schönberg quartet. However perfect and precise the score is, there will always be a problem of interpretation. We need to return to the history of scores. If we distance ourselves from that assumption that the score would have undergone evolution according to the generic forces of technical progress, we still have to look for the reasons for these profound historical transformations in phenomena which are not only more complex but also intrinsic to the music itself. The transformation of the symbols through which the music was fixed in writing is not linear and, as we can easily see, does not simply evolve. In reality, this corresponds to two linked orders of requirements:

- 1) the type of relationship the composer intended to establish with any performers and the audience;
- 2) the structural requirements that arise from the type of music of a given period.

We can mention a few typical examples. In the history of music, for the score, we go from one extreme to the other via an infinite continuum: from the total absence of support to a score that is as complete and technically perfect as possible. It would be wrong to associate the former situation to the origins of music and the latter to our own time. This is so even if we think about jazz and the absence of scores from its origins, from the persistence of oral transmission in many musical cultures such as the Hebrew tradition for example, or furthermore the return of improvisation in some avant-garde music. These examples appeal against the idea that the absence of a score is in itself linked with primitive music. Then, what can the complete absence of a score mean? This absence creates completely different relations between the composer, the performer and the audience than what we are traditionally accustomed to observing in the most recent western music. Over the last two or three centuries of musical history, particularly Romantic music, we have become used to the notion of the “concert” as a mainly aesthetic event, which we attend with a certain

passivity. In this understanding, the music is “received”. Even if there are many people in the concert hall, musical reaction is seen as a strictly individual experience. In this psychological and sociological framework, the performer assumes the typical function of a mediator, the one whose job it is to transmit the composer’s artistic message to each individual. Only within this perspective does the problem of interpretation arise in terms of loyalty or disloyalty, interpretation, creativity or technical passivity. In this case, the score takes on a heritage value, a message clearly containing the will of the composer. As much as possible, performers should respect this message and offer it to each listener in its entirety. On the other hand, should they, or better, could they, annihilate their personality completely by doing their job? This is the problem of interpretation in the terms imposed by our Romantic and post-Romantic civilisation, where an individualist idea of music prevails, as much from the point of view of the composer as from that of the listener.

We can sometimes forget that in other cultural, musical and historical situations, the problem could not arise in this form and there would be no sense in asking whether the performer is a creator or a technician. Let us have a quick look to see the musician’s condition, that of the performer and the listener if there is no score. The absence of a score means there is no composer as a creator. It also means there is no performer in the traditional meaning of a mediator between the composer and the audience. Where there is no score, there is a tendency towards an almost total fusion between the composer, the performer and the listener. The musical event becomes a kind of collective ritual. Beyond the aesthetic event, music tends to become an ethnical and religious event. To get an idea of this dimension of musical performance, we have only to think about the function of music among primitive people, Gregorian chant, some kinds of popular singing - and nearer to us, the first jazz bands and some forms of avant-garde improvisation with their aura of initiation. In all the examples we have just mentioned, certainly in differing degrees, the composer and performer tended to be fused together in a single person, in the same way as the performer and the audience tend to form a single community. The problem of the fidelity of the interpretation would then no longer mean anything. The music is created and re-created in the very act of its performance and the audience too, if we can talk of an audience, participates in musical creation. Between the composer, the performer and the audience, the relationship tends to dissolve and tensions are reduced. The score is replaced by tradition that serves as a canvas, a common substrate through which the community builds and enriches its heritage at each performance.

The music then consists of a musical tradition based on memory, a kind of constant kernel, and a multiplicity of changing forms required by the circumstances of the performance, by the mood of the performers, the happiness of their getting together and an infinity of other factors that are difficult to analyse.

For us, today, the problem takes a very different form. To begin with, Romantic music, symphonic music, the concert hall audience, the figure of the prestigious performer who is the conductor of an orchestra or a soloist have contributed to creating the premises of a completely new situation for the performer, even from a psychological point of view. If the musician of the baroque era knew those to whom his music was aimed, who performed it, when and how it would be performed, Romantic musicians consider themselves as addressing themselves to the whole of humanity and that they are putting over an imperishable message. Any performer becomes a potential enemy, liable to deform the message and its intentions. This is why the composer tends to leave nothing to the free choice of the performer, carefully tending to the least details of his/her score that becomes the only means of guaranteeing the survival of his/her creation. However, the incomprehension the Romantic musician suspects can also come from the performer and the audience listening to the music in a concert hall from the other side of the performance, and could not apprehend it otherwise than through the more or less faithful version offered by the performer. In Romantic music, we find the origin of the dilemma between diametrically opposed concepts between the performer, the passive and impersonal translator and the creative interpreter, and even a creator of music that becomes new each time it is performed. The performers notice that that the perfect score left to their care by the composer is always susceptible to different interpretations, whilst the audience encourages showing off, and often goes to the concert, not so much to hear a composer but a famous performer. From their side, musicians claim and require loyalty, and use all the means at their disposal to avoid problems.

This situation, which is typical of our musical civilisation over the past two centuries, has resulted in an even more serious complication. Performers, musicians, musicologists and critics have been pushed to project relations of interpretation brought about by Romanticism onto the entire musical past. It is difficult to think it could have been any different. Looking at more or less incomplete scores of the past, obsolete or insufficient notation for performing in our time, musicologists are working hard to transform the old musical score into a modern score. This process of revision affects the nature of old music, even if there is no way to get

around that. It would be wrong now to believe that we can read old music and give it consistency with the same attitude, the same state of mind as the performer of old, by recreating situations, socio-cultural and artistic relations, even those carrying out improvisation and even with freedom of interpretation possible as we have already mentioned. This would be living in cloud-cuckoo land! All too often, musicologists stubbornly look for an impossible truth, or rather, they chase after a false reality. When we deal with a Baroque score, with the missing bits, it is useless to adopt the attitude of the philologist with an ancient parchment when trying to recreate a missing syllable or word. For musicians of then, the score was complete and that was how they wanted to define their music: nothing more or less. The so-called missing bits are only seen as such by the performer of today who claims to find everything written. A fertile imagination, taste, creativity of the performer musician of yesteryear needed to be able to find expression in the task of authentic interpretation that consisted of living the time frame suggested by the composer. Any canvas allows theoretically infinite solutions, but in practice determined within a margin of possibilities sometimes suggested by composers themselves and limited by the musical taste of the period. Today, musicologists, in their work of re-writing the old score in modern language, must be aware of the fact that they are establishing only one of the possibilities contained in the old manuscript, that other truths are possible because the work was designed as something open in the direction of the performer and therefore the audience.

We should never forget that all the modern revisions, transcriptions and orchestrations of old musical works, though necessary for safeguarding our heritage, necessarily represent an arbitrary impoverishment of the work because it is stiffened and imprisoned in a closed form, whilst the composer wanted it to be flexible and open.

To return to our original ideas, we have seen through a few brief glances how the existence of a process of performance and interpretation in music is linked to the very temporal nature of music, with its way of taking its place in history and going forward into posterity. This is what we are confronted with. It is not *the* problem of interpretation, but a multiplicity of problems related to interpretation. Performers are neither a technician nor a creator, if an opposition between these two terms is admitted, but they have been both and many more things in history. For as long as music, temporal art, will be felt as an expression of vital rhythms, an image of an interior time, both physical and spiritual, the score will remain with us with its abstract symbols, in the same way as the figure of the mediating performer will be

needed in one way or another to give new life and concrete temporality to these symbols.

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HERMENEUTICS OF THE CANTIGAS: RECOVERING NOTATIONAL SENSE

MANUEL PEDRO FERREIRA

The interpretation of a musically notated source is not only a question of applying the appropriate rules and conventions allowing us to read, and translate the written signs into visual or sonic configurations; interpretation, in a hermeneutic sense, implying a conscious methodology, has everything to gain from stylistic, codicological and historical awareness. In short, the recovery of the source's meaning should go hand-in-hand with its internal critique.

A case in point is the 13th-century collection of over four hundred songs in Galician-Portuguese, known as the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. These are monophonic songs dedicated to the Virgin Mary, compiled at the court of Alfonso X of Castile and León, the “Learned King”. This repertoire, very popular among contemporary performers of early music all over the world, can illustrate the hermeneutical circle as formulated by Friedrich Schleiermacher: that just as the whole is understood in reference to the individual, so too, the individual can only be understood in reference to the whole.¹ Individual song and editorial project cannot be disentangled in interpretation, which implies a spiralling movement between them.

Typical hermeneutical questions, derived from classical Latin rhetoric, should thus at the outset be asked of this repertory:

- (1) who is the author (*persona*) — *Quis?*
- (2) what is its subject (*materia*) — *Quid?*
- (3) why was it created (*causa*) — *Cur?*
- (4) how it was composed (*modus*) — *Quomodo?*
- (5) when it was composed and written down — *Quando?*
- (6) where it was composed and written down (*tempus*) — *Ubi?*

¹. Mantzavinos, C. 2016. “Hermeneutics”. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Accessed Oct. 1, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/hermeneutics/>.

(7) by which means it was composed and written down (*facultas*) — *Quibus facultatibus?*

The answers are sometimes easily arrived at, but others are unavoidably tentative and problematical.

Quis? The author was King Alfonso *and* a team of anonymous collaborators who, directly or indirectly, answered to him.²

Quid? The subject is the worth and deeds, mostly in the form of performed miracles, of the Virgin Mary; but *also* the proximity to her of the King, his parents and close friends, allowing their prayer to play an intermediary role in their subjects' quest for salvation.³

Cur? The collection was created as a personal devotional gift, but *also* as a protective talisman against the devil, an instrument to enhance the international prestige of the monarch and a repository of narratives and songs to feed Christian propaganda in areas recently taken over from Islam.⁴

Quomodo? Presumably by stages, division of work among collaborators, circulation of partial copies before compilation, writing of books, occasional text/music revision and performance of selected songs.⁵

Quando? Between around 1264 and 1284; the first compilation of one hundred songs was ready around 1270, while the last form of the collection

² Montoya Martínez, Jesús. 1979. "El concepto de 'autor' en Alfonso X." In *Estudios sobre literatura y arte dedicados al prof. Emilio Orozco Díaz*, edited by Antonio Gallego Morell, Andrés Soria, and Nicolás Marín, 455–62. Granada: Universidad de Granada. Snow, Joseph T. 1979. "The Central Rôle of the Troubadour *persona* of Alfonso X in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 56: 305–16. Schaffer, Martha E. 1997. "Questions of Authorship: The *Cantigas de Santa Maria*." In *Proceedings of the Eighth Colloquium of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar*, edited by Andrew M. Beresford and Alan D. Deyermund, 17–30. London: Queen Mary and Westfield College, Dept. of Hispanic Studies. Ferreira, Manuel Pedro. 2006-7. "Alfonso X, compositor." *Alcanate: Revista de estudios alfonsíes* 5: 117–37.

³ Kennedy, Kirstin. 2004. "Alfonso's Miraculous Book: Patronage, Politics, and Performance in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*." In *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification*, edited by Nils Holger Petersen et al., 199–212. Turnhout: Brepols.

⁴ Ferreira, Manuel Pedro. 2016. "The Medieval Fate of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*: Iberian Politics Meets Song", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 69 (2): 295-353.

⁵ Parkinson, Stephen, and Deirdre Jackson. 2006. "Collection, Composition and Compilation in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*." *Portuguese Studies* 22: 159–72.

took shape from around 1280 onwards, and was still in progress at the time of the King's death.⁶

Ubi? At the court, and mostly in Seville.⁷

Quibus facultatibus? Manuscripts, oral transmission, and the joint contribution of clerics, courtiers, and jongleurs.⁸

These answers imply that authorial coherence can be expected only up to a point, that a song may exist in different versions, and that the transit between composition, manuscript and performance practice is not obvious at all. It is quite unlikely that the King controlled the particulars of music notation; its status was probably most often that of musical adaptation or transcription by expert copyists rather than composition through writing, as happened in the corresponding poetry.

Thus the notational traces in the sources may represent either a well-established composition, or, in some cases at least, merely a tentative solution arrived at by a member of the team, copied down before trial by performance. Even if the written melodic version were acceptable, performance would have been based on its oral, memory-based equivalent, which may have incorporated some kind of variance.

When confronting the notation the first problem facing the modern musician is, of course, to know which rules and conventions to apply, since the two notational systems used in the surviving medieval manuscripts differ from those described in contemporary musical treatises. I have written elsewhere at length on this subject, so I will take for granted that

⁶ Ferreira, Manuel Pedro. 1994. "The Stemma of the Marian Cantigas: Philological and Musical Evidence." *Cantigueiros* 6: 58–98. Translated with corrections and a postscript in Ferreira 2009, *Aspectos da música medieval no ocidente peninsular*. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional—Casa da Moeda / Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1:196–229.

⁷ González Jiménez, Manuel. 2009. "Alfonso X y Sevilla". In id., *Estudios alfonsíes*. Granada: Universidad de Granada / Universidad de Murcia, 347–60. When the probable dates of composition and compilation of the *Cantigas* are compared with the King's itineraries, it is clear that, with the exception of the Appendices in the Toledo MS, they were composed and copied while Alfonso was in Seville or in the surrounding regions.

⁸ Ferreira, Manuel Pedro. 2012–13. "Jograis, *contrafacta*, formas musicais: cultura urbana nas Cantigas de Santa Maria." *Alcanate: Revista de estudos alfonsíes* 8: 43–53.

these notations record not only the melodies, but also, with a variable degree of accuracy, their rhythmic profile.⁹

I will instead concentrate on the connection between the notated music and the poetry it conveys. This is part of interpretation as an activity directed at the *appropriation of the meaning of a text*. Unlike instrumental music, song is a two-layered complex of tone and language, and should be approached as such. It can even be argued, regarding the *Cantigas*, that the purpose and design of the whole collection privileged the literary contents over the music.

The typical poetical structure (*zajal*) with lines featuring a medial caesura can be illustrated here by CSM 183:

Pesar á Santa Maria	de quen por desonrra faz	a
dela mal a sa omagen,	e caomha-lho assaz.	a

Desto direi un miragre que fezo en Faaron		b
a Virgen Santa Maria	en tempo d' Aben Mafon,	b
que o reino do Algarvetíi' aquela sazón		b
a guisa d' om' esforçado,	quer en guerra, quer en paz.	a

R/. – Pesar á Santa Maria...

En aquel castel' avia	omagen, com' apres' ei,
da Virgen mui groriosa,	feita como vos direi
de pedra ben fegurada,	e, com' eu de cert' achei,
na riba do mar estava	escontra ele de faz.

R/. – Pesar á Santa Maria...

One interesting feature of the *Cantigas*, in general, is the attention given to the rhyming word of each verse, of which the last rhythmic accent is made to coincide with the former's lexical accent. This is so common and expectable that Higinio Anglés made it an invariable implicit principle

⁹ Ferreira, Manuel Pedro. 1993. "Bases for Transcription: Gregorian Chant and the Notation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria." In *Los instrumentos del Pórtico de la Gloria: Su reconstrucción y la música de su tiempo*, edited by José López-Caló. La Coruña: Fundación P. Barrié de la Maza, vol. 2: 595–621. Id. 2014. "Editing the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Notational Decisions." *Revista portuguesa de musicologia*, n.s., 1: 33–52.

in his 1943-1958 edition.¹⁰ Whenever the notation allows this principle to stand it is wise to follow it, for rhyme is a crucial organizing factor in this poetry and accordingly, the distinction between a stress on the last or on the penultimate syllable at the end of the line, could not but be meaningful for the audience and be transmitted in the music.

This does not need to be substantiated further. However, there are both extensions of this principle, and exceptions to it. In this paper I will explore both issues, and then address the role of the performance and the performer in dealing with them.

An extension of the rhyme/rhythm concordance rule can be found in the treatment of some caesuras. A caesura is a break or pause, usually near the middle of a line; formed by metrical constraints or by the flow of natural speech, it can occur after either a stressed or a non-stressed syllable. Long lines in the *Cantigas* tend to have a medial caesura. Music can either ignore or reinforce caesuras; it can also impose regularity on them, and thus change the way the poetry is scanned in singing.



Figure 1-1. Incipit of CSM 16 in the Toledo MS, E-Mn 10069.

¹⁰ Anglés, Higinio. 1943–58. *La música de las Cantigas de Santa María del rey Alfonso el Sabio*. Vol. 2, *Transcripción musical*. Vol. 3, pt. 1, *Estudio crítico*. Vol. 3, pt. 2, *Las melodías hispanas y la monodía lírica europea de los siglos XII–XIII*. Barcelona: Biblioteca Central.

The performance of *Cantiga* 16, for instance, as implied in the notation, clearly contradicts the seemingly warranted view, expressed long ago by Dorothy Clotelle Clarke, that the position of the caesura, and therefore of the principal inner accent, fluctuates within the poem.¹¹ This is especially clear in the earliest source, the Toledo MS (Madrid, BNE, Mss. 10069), where it appears as the twelfth song (Fig. 1-1). The poem has long lines of thirteen syllables with masculine endings, including the refrain:

*Quen dona fremosa e bõa quiser amar,
am' a Groriosa e non poderá errar.*

E desta razon vos quer' eu agora dizer
fremoso miragre, que foi en França fazer
a Madre de Deus, que non quiso leixar perder
un namorado que ss' ouver' a desasperar.

Quen dona fremosa e bõa quiser amar...

The music, apparently modelled on the refrain (Fig. 1-2), reinforces the lexical accent on the fifth syllable (below written in bold) and imposes a break (denoted by a dash) after the sixth, thus assimilating the feminine caesura to the end of a hemistich:

*Quen dona **fremosa** / e bõa quiser amar,
am' a Groriosa / e non poderá errar.*

In the second hemistich there is a prolongation, or suspension of the movement before the last two syllables, thus: 13 = 5' + (5+2). However, while the medial break in the Toledo MS is clear in the refrain, extending for two longs, in the strophe the situation is different: the fifth syllable is still the melodic target and coincides with the periodic beat but the rhythm changes into long-short, thus providing continuity. In the Escorial MSS only this version survives.

¹¹ Clarke, Dorothy Clotelle. 1955. "Versification in Alfonso el Sabio's *Cantigas*". *Hispanic Review* 23 (2): 83-98.