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What is performance? And why should we teach it?

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Abstract

This article was inspired by a speaker at a music education conference who complained that performances get in the way of real learning. This complaint prompted me to ask what musicians understand performance to be and why performance is not considered part of the curriculum or 'real' work of a musician. I suggest a model of performance education that addresses several lacunae in music education and finish by giving a sample of the responses of professional musicians to this kind of training, offering ways around their initial resistance that lead to genuine learning and growth.

Keywords: Performance, Performance Coaching, Music Education

Introduction

I once attended a paper given by an instrumental teacher[1] who complained that performances during the school term kept getting in the way of 'real learning'. In this comment lay the inspiration for this article. My first response was to wonder why performing and learning should be perceived as mutually exclusive. I then wondered about the underlying beliefs revealed by this statement – beliefs about performance and how to teach it. The view that performances get in the way of 'real work' or 'real learning' suggests that performance is not often seen as an essential part of music education.

This view of learning prioritizes 'music' over 'performance'. Performance is relegated to a peripheral position in learning. This idea makes performing far more difficult than it needs to be, and raises questions about what *does* constitute the 'real work' of a musician, performer or music learner. I instead advocate a model where performance becomes integral to music education.

In this paper I attempt to do three things. First, I ask what musicians understand by the concept of 'performance'. I discuss how the lack of clarity about performance might create resistance to the teaching of performance or prejudice against performance coaching. Second, I present the outline of a model of performance coaching, or performance education, that argues for the integration of performance into the task of learning. Finally, I present the insights of two professional musicians (case studies), who have experienced the kind of performance coaching I advocate. I intend to show that performance doesn't get in the way of 'real learning'. On the contrary, I hope to convince readers that learning to perform (and the experience of performing) is *part of* real learning and can enhance every other aspect of music when integrated skilfully into the curriculum.

Data and Methodology

To illustrate my points I use qualitative data from:

- Interviews I conducted with 11 musicians for

1. I am aware that classroom music teachers must often depart from their carefully planned programs, without warning, to put on spontaneous performances of unplanned repertoire for school functions. This is not what I mean here. The comment was made by an instrumental tutor, rather than a classroom teacher. I am simply offering a different way of viewing and incorporating the teaching of performance, particularly in studio and conservatoire teaching.

my doctoral research, after they had worked with my own teacher, a senior teacher of drama and performance at the University of Washington in the graduate Professional Actor Training Program, Cathy Madden.
- Two case studies of professional musicians, one who took my first performance course in 2018 and one who studied with Madden for several years.
- Six interviews in 2018 with professional musicians with permanent academic or performance positions (in tertiary institutions or orchestras).

My methods are philosophical and qualitative. As far as the philosophical method is concerned, the questions I pose are largely ontological and axiological. The value in this method of music education research, as Jorgensen (2006) describes, lies in clarifying terms, and exposing and evaluating underlying assumptions, amongst other things (p. 176). With respect to the qualitative approach, my research involves those methods described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) such as the use and collection of a variety of empirical methods, including "case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artefacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts" that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (p. 4). Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, "attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

The great omission

It is not my wish to single out or denigrate in any way the teacher who made the complaint about performance getting in the way of learning. Rather, I suggest that this opinion indicates a widely held – if unconscious – view that performance cannot be taught, is learned unconsciously, is an innate skill, or is somehow extra to music education. No other aspect of music has this status, except perhaps for that other elusive concept, talent.

Swanwick (1979) hints at the omission in his comparison of music with drama and theatre. He notes that while actors and directors discuss meaning, intention, character and plot (the very stuff of the play or improvisation), musicians are "more likely to settle for technical discourse: 'watch the dynamics', or 'use less bow', or 'Ligeti defines his Volumina as a piece consisting entirely of stationary and variously changing note clusters'" (p. 40). Swanwick also notes that once we accept composition, audition and performance as activities central to music, we are then obliged to notice that a lot of what takes place under the heading of 'music teaching' seems to be concerned with something else, such as coping with some aspect of traditional notation, aural training, dealing with the technical problems of an instrumentalist, or getting the choir to sing the right notes in some kind of balance and with a good blend of tone. As he puts it, "things go wrong in music education when they become ends and not mere means" (pp. 44-45).

I do not wish to claim that *all* music educators have this view that performance is extra. It should be noted that Jackie Wiggins describes music as being learned, from a Western perspective, "through engaging in the interactive musical processes of listening, performing, and creating," thus putting performance at the centre of these activities (2015, p. 27). Kabalevsky, too, stresses the important role of the listener in music education, thus subtly reminding performers of the importance of their audience (2009, p. 23).

It is nevertheless the case that none of my music teachers taught me how to perform. For these teachers, at least, performance did not have a central role in learning. I never discussed with them what performance was, what it was for, or what it could be. In the 'performance' stream of my tertiary studies, which I entered in the third (penultimate) year, there was never any discussion in 'performance' classes about performance, what it is, what it isn't, how we can do it differently, how we can do it better. Harmony, counterpoint,

composition, analysis, history, interpretation, technique, languages, conducting, musicianship: these were all taught, investigated, discussed and assessed. Our performances were assessed, too, but tuition, guidance, philosophy and discussion were lacking. In my Master of Music Performance studies, learning how to perform was not part of the syllabus. Swanwick (1979) confirms that this has traditionally been typical of colleges and universities, where "we get little disconnected units of music history, fragments of 'harmony and composition', some instrumental teaching, choral and orchestral performance on special occasions, and, more rarely, help with audition." "Enjoy it!" one teacher used to call, almost as an afterthought, as I was leaving my last singing lesson before an exam or concert. This was her contribution to my tuition in performance. The only extra help I received at getting to the heart of music and considering what we were doing as musicians on stage was incidental: from visiting professionals in masterclasses or from going to concerts and watching performers, perhaps what Swanwick might call "special occasions". Perhaps school music education has changed in the wake of Swanwick's C(L)A(S)P[2] approach, but tertiary institutions seem to change more slowly, being more concerned with 'conserving' traditions of the past. The musicians I interviewed didn't learn how to perform either: neither in their core studies nor from their practical teachers. It was something they either picked up in an independent and haphazard way or learned by doing. Yet in all these cases opportunities are missed to learn more about what performance is, how it can be theorized and what can be known of it outside an individual's haphazard experience of it.

I have created this diagram (Figure 1) to reflect my impression of my own music education, where interpretation was somewhat integrated with technique and musicianship, and performance was either understood as interpretation or was something you were supposed to just pick

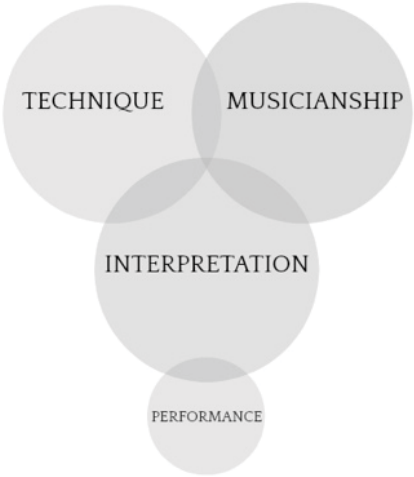

Figure 1

up or learn by doing. It's hard to imagine a conservatorium expecting any of the other skills mentioned above (counterpoint, harmony, analysis, history, etc) to be learned simply by osmosis or imitation.

The vision I have for performance education is, instead, depicted in Figure 2. Here performance

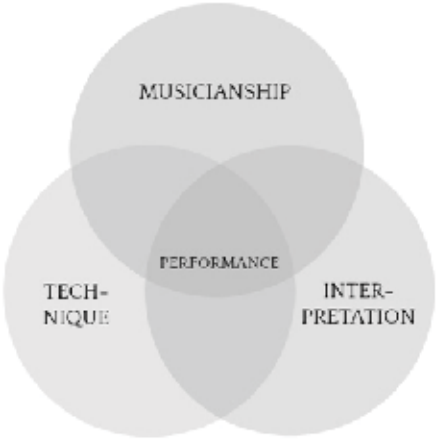

Figure 2

2 C(L)A(S)P stands for composition, (literature studies) audition, (skill acquisition) performance

is integrated into every part of music education. For simplicity's sake, I am dividing those parts into three: musicianship, technique and interpretation.

A plethora of meanings: what is performance?

While we talk about performance all the time, we don't tend to define it. It's a bit like asking people, "what is music?" – one of those things we take for granted and which only philosophers discuss. My recent work as a performance coach has shown me that when we – as musicians – communicate with one another about performance, we might be talking at cross purposes. When I asked five accomplished professional musicians (three women and two men) what they understood by the term 'performance', most needed time to find a definition they were satisfied with. One said, much to her own surprise, "I'm completely stumped," but did eventually arrive at "the generation of focussed activity and communication of ideas". Another gave a one-word answer, "show", and was unwilling to expand. Other answers included: "the ability to communicate", "a level of professionalism above others" "interpretation", "presenting music to people for enjoyment", "presenting entertainment on an artistic level", "that intangible thing that is beyond words", "the point of music", "giving the public something very special" and "the lifeblood of everything we do". As I continued with other questions, one interviewee became quite enthusiastic about identifying performance, returning constantly to refine his original definition, recalling a performance with Bernstein that "burned off the page" and observing that *that* was a performance. He ended by observing, "It's a special something. You can analyse it, but you can't analyse it in the senses. You can't say why some great performer doing it is so much better than someone else who does it just as correctly in one sentence … impossible. It would be a whole load of things. Words run out. Because music takes over. No matter how clever a wordsmith one is, there's something in the end you can't say. If you come out thinking, I've been changed, I've been moved, there's something special, then that's done it."

The word 'performance' is ubiquitous today, helping to confuse musicians about the phenomenon of music performance. There are so many meanings depending on context, user and background of the user.[3] In an attempt to parse out these various meanings and uses, I consulted the dictionary to examine how the word has been used through the centuries and across different fields to find out how the commonest usages *outside music* may have tampered with musicians' understanding of performance in subtle and subconscious ways.

The Oxford English Dictionary offers three main categories of definition:

1. The execution or accomplishment of an action, operation, or process undertaken or ordered, the doing of any action or work; the quality of this, esp. as observable under particular conditions: *spec.* the capabilities of a machine, esp. a motor vehicle or aircraft, measured under test. L15 [under this heading are subheadings including "something performed or done" L16, and "the extent to which an investment is profitable" E20].
2. The carrying out or fulfilment of a command, duty, purpose, promise, etc. M16
3. The action of performing a play, a part in a play, a piece of music, etc.; an instance of this, a public exhibition or production of a play, piece of music, etc. E17
    a. A ceremony, a rite. L17-M18
    b. A display of anger or exaggerated behaviour; a fuss, a scene. Also, a difficult or annoying procedure. M20

I suggest that when musicians use the word 'performance' we mean a mixture of all three categories, which makes music performance unnecessarily difficult. I will look at each in turn.

3 I would also like to suggest that much of the complexity attributed to performance anxiety (Kenny 2011, 12), is due to our lack of clarity about what performance is. I will save this argument for another article.

The Preponderance of Category One

It seems to be the first category of meanings (also the oldest, stemming generally from the late 15th century) that is most likely to muddle our definition of 'music performance' and lead to confusion. The most widespread use of the word belongs in this category, since it is applicable to almost any field: the execution of an action *as observable under particular conditions*. Note that under this category 'performance' also refers to the capabilities of a *machine* "measured under test". It is from this definition that we owe the idea of "peak performance under pressure", the name of a book by a former TOPGUN instructor and real estate agent (Driscoll 2012), as well as the name of a performance course currently taught at a major Australian university. This course has been at least partly designed by a performance coach who comes from the combined fields of sports psychology and the military, which may explain the emphasis on this particular definition of performance (category one). His website (called 'Winning on Stage') says that he learned "how to win serious competitions under adverse conditions" (Greene 2002, 2), again emphasizing this first definition of performance.

The only problem with this approach is that it seems to be based firmly on the assumption that by music performance we mean only what is contained in definition one: the execution of an action *as observable under particular conditions*, or capabilities measured under test. As Ilya Gringolts (violinist) puts it, the whole idea of playing to win is flawed and "taints the whole creative process" (Gringolts 2018, 1.08.36). Glenn Gould (pianist) concurred, noting that adjudicators tend 'to decry the unaccountable mysteries of personality, to downgrade those virtues of temperamental independence which signal the genuine re-creative fire" (in Bazzana 2004, 79). Gringolts notes that when people play to win, they continue to play to win, even after they have won a major competition, and that this "has become quite common now". As a result of this trend, notes Amir Farid, "What has become important in classical music has changed". "It can be exciting to 'score a perfect ten," he says, "but, I'm not interested in that" (2018, n.p.).

The idea of trying to "score a perfect ten," as Farid describes the phenomenon of playing to win, or playing 'perfectly', must come from the idea that a performance is about competition and being judged against a fixed standard of perfection. We set this up in students' minds through the exam system, the eisteddfod tradition and perhaps even more insidiously through our unreflected approach to teaching. For many young musicians, their first full 'recitals' are given as a collection of examination pieces to an examiner, and their first solo performances to a larger audience are given in eisteddfods and other competitions. The frequency of these experiences in the early years of being a musician must be at least partly responsible for the common mindset of scoring and winning. It may also come simply from the fact that so much of our "performing psychophysical history", as Madden describes it, is acquired in lessons with a teacher whose role is to offer information and skills to improve what we are doing. She observes after years of coaching musicians in performance that "by far the most common need musicians have in relationship to their audiences is to find a constructive response to their belief that everyone is there to judge them" (2014, 250).

Similar to peak performance under pressure is the idea of 'performance stress'. Soon after I began learning performance skills from Madden, I told my singing teacher that Madden taught performance. She looked completely nonplussed and asked, "What does that mean? Stress management?" It is the straying of music performance into definition one that leads to the idea that performance is a stress.

To summarise, category one seems to be responsible for much of the pressure and stress associated with performance today, as well as for the growing interest in performance anxiety.

Category Two

The second category of meaning for 'performance' is the carrying out or fulfilment of a command, duty, purpose, promise, etc, which dates from the mid-16th century. This definition may also play a role in confusing our idea of music performance, or at least in preventing us from having an empowering view of it. If, when we use the word 'performance' or *give* a 'performance', we have any sense – even unconsciously – of obeying an order, then we are removing our freedom of choice and therefore at least some – or all – of our agency and power as performers (Madden 2014, 173). Many children are forced to learn music because their parents learned (or couldn't learn) it as a child (Keng, as cited in Montefiore, 2014), or for cultural or status reasons (Montefiore, 2014), or because their parents have read that it will make them smarter (Schellenberg 2004; Tomatis, 1991). These children learn that performing (as part of their music education) is a duty and this belief limits the possibilities of what performance can be. Teachers can help children form more constructive ideas about performance if they recognize when this definition has crept into music performance. I will now examine the final category of meanings of the word 'performance'.

Category Three

It's not until this last category that any sense of creativity or communication or art comes into the definition, except that art and creativity are not actually mentioned. The words 'ceremony' and 'rite' (meaning 3a) do at least give a sense of occasion and possibility for transformation. Let us say for now that this third definition allows for or encompasses creativity.[4] By no means do I consider this a comprehensive definition of artistic performance. I am simply using the dictionary's categories of meaning to show how we confuse the meanings when we talk about music performance. If we could limit ourselves to one or the other definition when discussing music performance, we could be clearer about what is at stake and what is required to do it well.

Asking Musicians

The fact that there are these three broad definitions of performance may be responsible for much of our confusion about what we mean by performance. In addition, the negative connotations and implications of the various meanings of this single word have muddied the waters of our art. This confusion was demonstrated by the difficulty some of my recent interviewees had in defining performance. These people are professional and academic musicians and so eventually they were able to come up with a cogent and considered definition. But what was interesting was the variety of answers and that many of them hesitated (or felt stuck) and had to think long and hard before answering.

My aim is to clarify what performance is so that musicians can be more consciously constructive in their approach to it. One of the key indicators of coordination is clarity of intention (Cole 2016, 176; Madden 2014, 186). To clarify one's role on stage is to reduce or remove any anxiety that is due to confusion about purpose. If, as performers, we approach performance with the intention of executing an action under test we will have a very different outcome from the one we would have if we approach it with the intention of communicating with, revealing something to or inviting an audience to an experience. And if we are unclear about which of these we intend, we will have a different outcome again. Clarifying intention goes some way toward answering Amir Farid's observation of what is often lacking today in performers in this field: "What seems to lack in a lot of active classical musicians for me is a deeper understanding of what they're

4 Unfortunately, under this category, dictionary makers have included the mid-twentieth century idea of performance as "a display of anger or exaggerated behaviour; a fuss, a scene. Also, a difficult or annoying procedure." This meaning would more accurately – and more constructively for artists – form a completely new category. To confuse a display of bad behaviour with a considered, creative and communicative artistic performance suggests a rather primitive understanding of our art. Conflating artistic performance and performers with anger, fuss, annoyance and difficulty infers judgments about 'proper' behaviour, thus confusing musicians further, especially us classical musicians who so often want to be *right*.

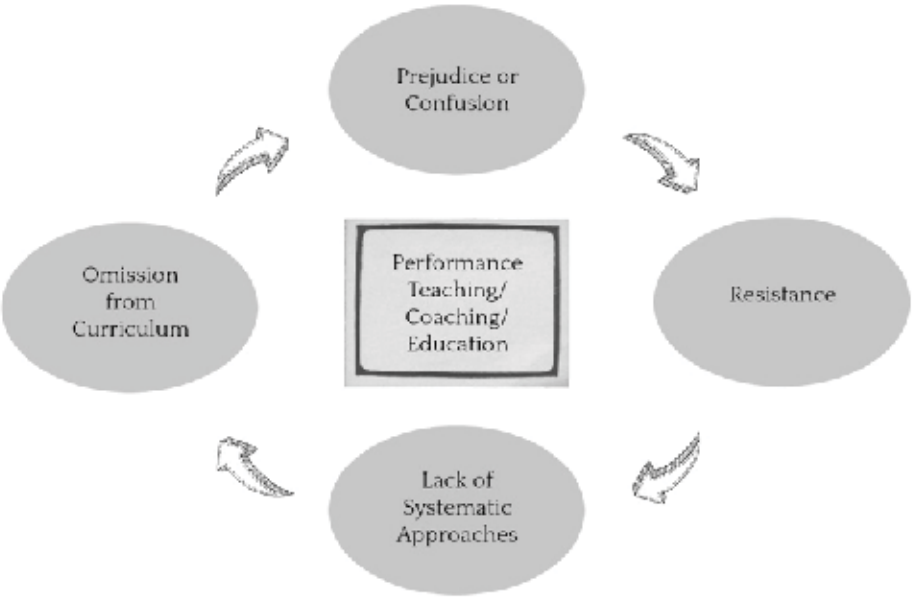

Figure 3

doing, in terms of context and, I guess function. Why it exists. What's the purpose of getting up on stage and playing a sonata to a thousand people? I don't always *sense* that understanding of why it's being done" (2018, n.p.).

In the following section I will connect this confusion about music performance with the tendency – until recently – to undervalue it as a meaningful part of music education.

Undervaluing Performance Education

I suggest that part of the reason for the lack – until recently – in our music education system of any systematic approaches to teaching performance is at least partly due to the confusion around what *performance* is, resulting in a vicious cycle or catch 22, as shown in Figure 3.

Musicians often don't see the importance of these skills when they are labelled 'performance'. There is also a preconception – as my interviewees revealed – that performance coaching consists of "things you should have learned in your music degree", such as bowing, presentation, movement, walking and stage etiquette. One professional performer called it a "wanky term", while another said that she "might vomit", as it was "rubbish, a deficiency fixer", before instantly editing herself and wondering if she was being too rude.

There seems to be another source of resistance in professional musicians: either a denial that there may be a higher level of confidence, creativity, artistry or mastery they could attain; or an unwillingness to ask for help or acknowledge a weakness. One tenor I contacted wrote to me saying, "Fortunately I do not come across colleagues these days who wouldn't have their act together performing Wagner roles on stage with me." But there is plenty of evidence, despite his claim that all his colleagues have their act together, that many pre-eminent performers have responses to performance that are less than ideal (Kenny 2011, 1). In my own research I interviewed a Wagnerian

soprano (whose path could easily have crossed that of the tenor above) who retired early due to a lack of what she called 'practical support' for her as a performer. 'Practical support' was the term she came up with when I asked her to give a name to my description of what I do for performers (which I otherwise call performance coaching). Another professional player I interviewed listed (confidentially) a number of 'household names' whom she knew personally and who suffered from what she called 'performance anxiety'.[5] She said it was difficult for her to refer colleagues to me, however, because "musicians generally don't like to talk about their performance anxiety".

When musicians are offered something mechanical *as part of performance coaching*, they start to be more open to it. That is, when a performance coach appears to be addressing definition one of performance (how to execute an action under certain conditions) rather than definition three, musicians take it more seriously. One pianist in my doctoral research described exactly this phenomenon after working with Cathy Madden:

> What she says about performance and performance suggestions… if she started with that, you wouldn't pay too much heed.. you'd just think 'all right, would you like a cup of tea now? And then you can go..' (laughter). But she establishes quite a bit of trust, a high degree of trust, because you sense her intuitive feel for how your body's working. And how your body's working is tied up with your personal psychology of performance and how your mind is interacting with your body, so by starting with the body, she frees your mind, or opens it to her suggestions.

Equally, there is a kind of professional cringe, or some other kind of unwillingness to learn from a performance coach. Or it may simply be our habit of placing the sciences above the arts. Musicians are more likely to seek help from – or take notice of – a psychologist than a performance coach. One of the five professionals I interviewed for this article had suffered significant emotional distress in her career. This person's attitudes (as described to me) revealed that she might well have been helped by a more constructive, creative and autonomous understanding – or interpretation – of performance. When I asked her what she understood by performance coaching, she spoke in condescending terms, saying it was "bowing, stage etiquette, fluff". Rather than addressing or re-evaluating her approach to her work, she sought help from a therapist and retired early. Another instance of this 'cringe' is the frequency with which I get asked, as a performance coach, whether I have a psychology degree. Similarly, Dianna Kenny talks about "treatment" and "prevention" of performance anxiety (2011, p. 13). Even where performance is highlighted in music education, therefore, it is frequently moved away from the concern of learning and education and into the realm of therapy.

Through the avenues of mechanics or therapy, then, musicians may be most easily reached. But it would be a shame if performance education ended there. If performance psychologists treat performance as 'pressure', or as 'stress' to be overcome (Greene 2002, for example) rather than an opportunity to reveal something to an audience, then it is likely to end there, and yet it can go so much further by engaging individuality, creativity and an improvisatory spirit by embracing some of the practices and insights of theatre and enlightened (category three) performance. In this section I have examined definitions of performance and suggested that, as musicians, our lack of clarity about our definition of music performance is connected to performance anxiety, the traditional omission of performance in the music curriculum and resistance to performance coaching or education. Next I will outline the pillars of a performance education that fit with the third definition of music performance.

5 I will deconstruct the term performance anxiety in another article; it is beyond the scope of this article.

Performance Education: A Model

What does an approach to performance education look like when it embraces category three of meanings of performance? Over the more than ten years of my performance research, I have created a list of skills that are not part of a traditional music education and that address music performance primarily as belonging to category three. Many of these I learned from Cathy Madden (mentioned above). I articulated them as part of her constructive approach to performing arts pedagogy in my master's thesis (2006).

Madden discovered, when she started experimenting with teaching the Alexander Technique to musicians that they would make some progress in coordinating and moving in her studio, but when they took the new skills and understanding into performance, things came unstuck, and, in her terms, they "would still go out of coordination when they performed". As she began to teach them about performance (from what I am calling in this article a Category 3 point of view) they were able to take the new skills on to the stage. So, what are some of the skills that enhance performance from this point of view? There are many, but I will list just list three and elaborate on one of these three. They are also illustrated in the case studies below. These skills were missing from my own instrumental tuition and undergraduate and postgraduate music studies. When learned and mastered, they make performing a piece of music easier and more enjoyable. They are: clarifying intentions, adopting an improvisatory mindset, and preparing for audiences and adrenaline. I will discuss the latter – preparing for audiences and adrenaline – in detail here, because of its close connection with that phenomenon that is frequently referred to as 'performance anxiety'.

Preparing for audiences and adrenaline

Mostly, when people talk about performance anxiety, they mean that they are uncomfortable with their response to playing or singing to an audience. This usually means one of two things: that they don't like the physical effects of adrenaline or that they don't like the things they tell themselves about the audience. Both these things can be addressed when teaching performance. The first, not liking to play or sing with higher amounts of adrenaline in our system than when we are practising, tends to be associated with the idea that performers should be calm or relaxed. This idea is gradually being debunked by performance coaches and researchers (Greene 2002, Madden 2014, Kenny 2011), but it is still widespread and represents the popular idea of performers at their peak (Cole, 2018). Changing our expectations of how we should *feel* on stage is an important part of teaching performance, as one case study, below, will show. The second point is to address what performers tell themselves about audiences. This is, again, frequently not addressed in performance coaching or music education. Notable exceptions are Madden (2014) and Kabalevsky (2009). During a panel session at the 2018 Sydney Chamber Music Festival (SCMF) I offered some of my strategies for inviting and including the audience while performing. One festival performer (who did not wish to be named) responded with his own philosophy on this, which was that his contract was with the composer, *not* the audience. In informal discussion afterwards, however, he did eventually acknowledge that he had a contract with the audience, too.

To be clear once more then, performance education is not just bowing practice or stage etiquette. The theory of performance and its application address deeply held beliefs (about audiences and the 'relaxed' state, for example) and begin to repair significant holes in the music education system that have traditionally caused us to think less than constructively about performance. When constructive ideas about performance are added to physical and therapeutic trainings that musicians find more accessible, such as the Alexander Technique or psychology, musicians begin to make real changes in performing and begin to see the value of integrating performance skills (Madden, personal communication 2018).

How professionals respond?

To illustrate how musicians can grow when they can get past their preconceptions of performance coaching and learn some of the skills listed above, I will give some examples from two case studies of professional musicians. One is responding to a combination of input from both Madden and me, and the other to my own alone. The musicians' comments reveal their responses to the practices of clarifying intentions and asking 'why', adopting an improvisatory or 'active play' mindset, and consciously and practically preparing for audiences. I will use another occasion to explain in detail what is meant and taught under these topic headings.

Case Study 1: 'Richard', pianist and conductor

When I spoke with 'Richard' during my PhD research (in 2011) he was one of the musicians I interviewed who had studied with Madden for more than a year, and so he was familiar with making performance plans and the idea of play as a strategy. Early in 2018 I spoke with him again about the performance course I was about to run. He asked my advice about a performance he had given recently on the piano, after 20 years of performing only as a conductor. He wanted my take on the possible reasons for the partial 'failure' of his performance plan. I asked him about the bigger 'why' of his plan, reminding him of the importance of connecting with this so that the 'why' became more compelling to him than how fast he could play, which, he said, had taken over as the motivation during the fast-moving passage that disappointed him. Acknowledging the truth of this, he also recalled his initial resistance to the importance of asking 'why', which he realised he *had* learned from Madden. This case study, then, illustrates a number of points: initial resistance to a performance strategy, the importance of 'why', and the importance of integrating the why with the play:

> Cathy didn't talk a lot about that [the 'why'], but when it came up in various forms, the 'why' seemed self-evident. It doesn't now. I understand. At the beginning it just seemed kind of silly. And even my very first lesson with Cathy … she said, 'Would you like to play?' We'd just met. So I played *Sonata Pathétique,* the second movement, and wiggled my elbows (demonstrating) and she said, "Why are you moving your elbows like that?" And I said, kind of arrogantly, "Well, it's an expressive gesture." And so she, in perfect Cathy form, said, "Well, if you'd like to try it without?" and I thought, "OK lady, if you say so, I'll give it a try." And the tone changed so much that I started to cry… The sound was so different. My life changed in that minute. In that instant, when that sound came out, I thought, "OK, you have something to teach me."
>
> But many of her questions where why questions, and it was very difficult for me to get to the point where I would even say, "Why ask why? It's obvious. It's because I love the music and everybody loves the music." And yet my piano playing had long since ceased to be music-making the way it was when I was conducting. I'm just now unravelling all those years of wrong thinking and wrong teaching and wrong playing. And it's thrilling! … And your thoughts about that are very helpful.

Case Study 2: 'Natasha', horn player

'Natasha' took my course earlier this year. Before she took the course she said that she was at the point of giving up performing because she was tired of being a 'nervous wreck'. She, too, demonstrates the resistance to performance ideas, but overcame this to make significant progress in making a constructive and inclusive plan for the audience, playing, and making friends with the effects of adrenaline. She wrote in her reflective journal during the course that it "was a major challenge" to "invite the audience" to her practice. "I was repelled by the idea at first, but forced myself to do it … I found that mentally having an audience actually focuses me in a way that feels familiar from performance, AND makes me play better! Maybe it's a tiny little shot of adrenaline sharpening me up. It CERTAINLY changes my breathing and the way I count myself in. Light bulb goes on...THAT is one reason why up till now, performance has felt so different from practice! I need to work up all my

solo pieces and major orchestral extracts with that in mind! Truly a revelation." In a coaching session as part of the course she observed how much fun it was to play *España* by Bujanovsky with the experimental, improvisatory ideas I offered her as performance intentions. "Many, many years ago, I played this in a Master's recital at Juilliard. *That* was not fun. I got through it, but it was not fun. It is such a fun piece, but because of its not inconsiderable difficulty, people can make it sound like the most terrifying kind of concert *étude*, but it *should* be fun." Finally, six months after the course, she posted to the course Facebook group that she had run out of beta-blockers in August and hadn't ordered any more. One of her hopes for the course had been that it would give her back the control and choice over whether she would take them or not before a performance. She wrote, "Yesterday I did a classical concert with some very extremely exposed and technically challenging high passages for my instrument. (Beethoven Symphony 2). I nailed the tough stuff absolutely – my 2nd horn turned to me at the end of the concert and said, 'Bloody hell that was amazing!' What did I learn? I learned that my heart is only going to race so much in performance, and that I can tolerate that. And that if I am prepared, performance nerves are only that. Did my performance feel great? NO, it was hard, hard work but joyful."

So, why teach performance? A Conclusion

I hope I have shown how we can view performance in more constructive ways than just 'getting in the way of real learning', by defining it and by examining its importance, its relevance and its centrality to music and music education. By preparing for what's going to happen on stage, we don't just improve what happens there, but actually make our approach to our entire *practice* easier, more whole, more fun, and more thrilling. By learning and practising 'performance' we can help ourselves to remember why we do what we do (particularly important when the going gets tough, boring or repetitive, as it does in mastering anything), enhance our entire artistic and creative process, enjoy ourselves more and thrill our audiences. Finally, perhaps it is time for a change of term: performance doesn't get in the way if we define it constructively and integrate it skilfully into music tuition, but the multiple meanings of the word 'performance' might do.

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