

# "Authenticity in Performance: Eighteenth-Century Case Studies." By Peter Le Huray

George Houle

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Peter Le Huray. *Authenticity in Performance: Eighteenth-Century Case Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. xvii, 202p.

It is often difficult to apply general knowledge about historical performance practice to specific compositions, yet to do so is invaluable for musicians attracted to the performance of earlier music. Peter Le Huray's book offers chapters on Bach's C Major Prelude, BWV 870, Corelli's Violin Sonata Op. 5, no. 11, Couperin's *Huitième Ordre*, Bach's *Ouverture* in D, BWV 1068, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's C-Minor Passacaglia BWV 582, Mozart's D Minor String Quartet, K. 421, Haydn's "Drum Roll" Symphony in E-flat Major, no. 103, and Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata. Performances based on Le Huray's suggestions for dynamics, tempos, ornaments, nuances, rhythms, articulations, and editions would earn high praise from scholars, but the same directions considered at leisure in a book inevitably arouse doubts: are Mr. Le Huray's sources relevant to these compositions, and is he correct in his interpretations?

*Authenticity in Performance* begins with excellent advice "on choosing a good edition," and the discussion of editorial practices in two scores of Haydn's Symphony no. 103 in E-flat Major is a fine introduction to philosophies of editing and interpreting original sources (pp. 156-61). Explanations of French conventions of performance, particularly *notes inégales* and overdotting, are concise and very useful to performers new to these matters. Le Huray is aware of controversies on these details of performance in recent musicological literature and takes a middle path that is quite sensible.

Early instruments are briefly described, the harpsichord (p. 69), piano and clavichord (pp. 164-65), organs (pp. 102-7), and violin (pp. 24-26). There is a particularly commendable paragraph on how articulation in bowing technique can be included in the "singing style" admired by both Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart (p. 130). The late eighteenth-century orchestra is discussed in a short essay in Chapter 10. A discussion of voices and singing is included in the chapter on Handel's *Messiah*, which summarizes Tosi and Bacilly on singing technique and discusses the size of choirs as well.

Le Huray presents useful summaries of Muffat's 17-century orchestral bowing technique (pp. 26-28), Leopold Mozart's violin technique (pp. 124-34), C.P.E. Bach's keyboard fingering (pp. 8-12), and Couperin's fingerings. His comments on Couperin's discussion of cessation and

suspension of sounds are perceptive and should be carefully studied by all keyboard players (pp. 53-5).

There are significant problems in his suggestion that Muffat's French orchestral bowing instructions are applicable to Corelli's Italian solo sonatas. There is some evidence that Corelli's orchestral bowings were like Muffat's, but it is a stretch to use the stiff rules of orchestral bowing for soloist music, even when the solo part is not virtuosic.<sup>1</sup> Similar problems arise from the application of Leopold Mozart's bowing instructions, which were published in the year of Wolfgang's birth and addressed to novice and ripieno players, to Wolfgang's string quartet.

Peter Le Huray gives commendable weight to analysis by principles contemporary with the music as a tool of performance practice. Momigny's 1803 analyses of Mozart's Quartet K. 421 and Haydn's "Drum Roll" Symphony are extremely interesting, but might be regarded more as romantic than classic in their interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

There are details in the book that have been questioned or answered differently in research perhaps too recent to be included in Professor Le Huray's book. The discussion of fingerings, bowings, and the brief section on wind tonguing (p. 153) misses the connection of articulation with metrical structure in music.<sup>3</sup> The same neglect of meter clouds the discussion of consonance and dissonance on pp. 22-23.

The discussion of tempo words (pp. 36-38 and 134-5) does not take into account the relation of meter signs, note values, and tempo words. Tempo and meter are closely connected in the seventeenth century, when mensural signs and note values combined to indicate the tempo. Tempo words were used sparingly in the seventeenth century, mostly to reinforce indications implicit in notation. Even in the eighteenth century mensural signs, such as C and  $\phi$ , and proportions, such as 3/2 and 3/1, were understood as tempo indications. Time signatures stemmed from Italian seventeenth-century notation and gradually replaced mensural signs to indicate how many of what notes were included in a measure. Even these signs had strong connections with tempo because of their

1. See David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from Its Origins to 1761* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 257.

2. Heinrich Christoph Koch's *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782-1793) is closer to the classic aesthetic. See Leonard Ratner's *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), pp. 33-47, and Elaine Sisman "Small and Extended Forms: Koch's Model and Haydn's Music," *Musical Quarterly* 68 (1982): 444-75.

3. See George Houle, *Meter in Music, 1600-1800: Performance, Perception, and Notation* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987), Ch. 5.

associations with particular dances or genres such as pastorales or marches. It is only in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century that tempo words became independent arbiters of the speed of performance.<sup>4</sup>

The performance of the late eighteenth-century appoggiaturas recommended by Le Huray, specifically those notated by a small note in the figure appoggiatura-eighth-two sixteenth notes (p. 139) has been contradicted by a number of original sources cited by Frederick Neumann.<sup>5</sup> Rather than play these notes as four even sixteenth notes (Le Huray's suggestion), they were apparently played as a quick "grace-note," on the beat, eighth, plus two sixteenths. It makes a difference!

The concept of a series of "case studies" produces a guide that will be found very useful by many, but should be used carefully by professional performers and serious students. It is elegantly written, excellent on many topics, open-minded and non-dogmatic in tone. It is quite an enjoyable book.

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4. See Houle, *Meter in Music*, Chs. 1 and 2.

5. See his *Ornamentation and Improvization in Mozart* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 82-85. Don O. Franklin has investigated this in greater detail in a still unpublished study.