

CHAPTER THREE

EXECUTION AND EXPRESSION

H.C. Koch's Twofold Definition of *Ausführung*

Heinrich Christoph Koch, in his *Musikalisches Lexikon* of 1803, defines the word *Ausführung* in two ways.¹ In the first sense of his definition, *Ausführung* is the portion of the act of composition in which the good composer, with the help of skill and taste, elaborates the ideas emerging from *Begeisterung* (“inspiration”) and set forth in *Anlage* (“disposition”), that are the primary content of a piece of music. It is the part of the process in which a composition moves from the composer’s imagination to paper. In the second sense, *Ausführung* is the act of

¹ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon (Faksimile-Reprint der Ausgabe Frankfurt/Main 1802)* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), 187-94. Wiebke Thormählen’s paper “The Cultural Politics of the Virtuoso Gesture in Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 29” presented at the international conference on “Music and Gesture” at the University of East Anglia in August 2003 first made me aware of this quality of Koch’s definition. Koch’s compositional theories are set out more thoroughly in his *Introductory Essay in Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody, Sections 3 and 4* trans. Nancy Kovaleff Baker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), where the relevant stages of the compositional process are described in detail (see in particular chapter four, “The Arrangement of Larger Compositions,” 165-248.) See also Nicole Schwindt-Gross, *Drama und Diskurs. Zur Beziehung zwischen Satztechnik und motivischem Prozeß am Beispiel der durchbrochenen Arbeit in den Streichquartetten Mozarts und Haydns* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1989), particularly 75-106, which offers a useful overview of the intellectual contexts of Koch’s theories. For a look at the history of the concepts “composition” and “performance” and their relation, with an extensive bibliography, see John Butt, “Negotiating Between Work, Composer and Performer: Rewriting the Story of Notational Progress” in *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 96-124.

making music sound, the practice for which Koch's generation of musicians in German-speaking lands also often used the fittingly rhetorical term *Vortrag*. Indeed, Koch's division of musical practice, including composition and performance, into segments reminiscent of the rhetorical categories *inventio-dispositio-elaboratio-elocutio* is a trope in eighteenth century writings from Meinrad Spiess to Johann Nikolaus Forkel.

Koch's inclusion of performance in the compositional process is not new. Spiess, who was born in the seventeenth century but wrote on musical topics far into the eighteenth, wrote:

The musical figures, the so-called manners, coloraturas etc. are the elaboration and end decoration of harmonic composition...the first, namely the musical figures...are set on paper by the composer. [The other elements of music], also manners, coloraturas etc. are left to the *judices* or powers of judgment and virtuosity of the vocalists and instrumentalists. However, it must be always attended to that the manners and *colorateur* to be performed, be, so to speak, put into the mouths of the performers.²

It is unquestionable that all of the composers and theorists we will encounter in this chapter were to some degree operating in an intellectual

² "Die *Figurae Musicae*, die sogenannte *Manierae, Coloraturae &c.* seynd die Zierd und Geschmuck der harmonischen *Composition*... Die erste, nemlich die *Figuras Musicae*...setzt der *Componist* zu Papier. Die andere, fc. die *Manieren, Coloraturen* usw. überlasset man dem *Judices* oder Beurtheilungs-Geist, und *Vituosité* der Herren *Vocalisten* und *Instrumentalisten*. Jedoch muß gleichwohl allzeit dahin gesehen werden, daß jeder Stimme die etwa zu machende *Manier* oder *Colorateur*, so zu reden, ins Maul gegeben werde." Meinrad Spiess, *Tractatus musicus compositorio* (Augsburg: Johann Jacob Lotters seel. Erben, 1746), 135.

context where classical rhetorical strategies were still very real.³ Without ignoring this factor, I will pursue expressive elements of composition and performance not so easily quantified, perhaps, as the Quintillian rhetoric of the learned orator, elements that emerged concurrently to the gradual disappearance of this older, humanist paradigm.⁴ The one by no means needs to rule the other out; it is better, perhaps, to imagine the two ways of thinking about composing and performing music – the “rhetorical” and the “expressive” – as two layers in the historical record that nonetheless occupy the same period in history.⁵ Indeed, “rhetoric” and “expression” are a sloppy binary opposition, since the former need not in any way preclude the later.⁶

Koch’s *Ausführung*, then, unites the rhetoric of composition with the rhetoric of performance, by bringing both “text” and “act” under one

³ See, for instance, Schwindt-Gross’s claim that Koch’s theories drew directly on his rhetorical training, in *Drama und Diskurs*, 73-75. For the role of rhetoric in eighteenth-century theories of performance see, in a large literature, George J. Buelow, “Music, Rhetoric, and the Concept of the Affections: A Selective Bibliography,” *Notes* 30 (1973), 250-59. John Irving, *Mozart's Piano Sonatas: Contexts, Sources, Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Tom Beghin, *Forkel and Haydn: A Rhetorical Framework for the Analysis of Sonata Hob. XVI:42(D)*, DMA Dissertation, Cornell University 1996; and George Barth, *The Pianist as Orator: Beethoven and the Transformation of Keyboard Style* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁴ Cf. J. Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). On the dangers of the exclusive use of rhetoric as a tool for understanding eighteenth-century music see Peter Williams, “The Snares and Delusion of Musical Rhetoric: Some Examples from Recent Writings on J.S. Bach” in *Alte Musik: Praxis und Reflexion*, eds. P. Riedemeister, and V. Gutmann (Winterthur: Amadeus, 1983), 230-40.

⁵ See Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003), 19-26.

⁶ Cf. David Yearsley’s claim that the arch-rhetorician Johann Mattheson saw all rhetorical expression as individual (that is, not allegorical) in *Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint in the North German Baroque* (PhD Dissertation: Stanford University, 1995), 288.

umbrella. This is a critical detail. The history of musical composition in the late Enlightenment often stops with the examination of the compositional act itself, the expressive practice (if indeed it is viewed through the lens of expressivity at all) of the composer at his writing desk.⁷ With the exception of those works intended to be received as improvisatory or fantastic, the role of performance in the wider practice of composition, and with it the musical work's first interactions with the world around it, gets short shrift. This chapter will use Koch's double definition as a point of departure for the exploration of the grey area between the composition and performance by reflecting on the somewhat arbitrary border between "creation" and "reception."

To do this we will have to face problems of sources. If musical materials like sketches and autographs are the historical sources for the study of compositional processes, what are the sources for past musical performances? The history of music created in the eras before recording technology is constructed from written documents, from the mortal remains of the first kind of *Ausführung*. We must face the challenge of looking for traces of the second kind, of performance *in* written sources. Later in this chapter I will introduce quartets by Luigi Boccherini and

⁷ The essays in Christoph Wolff, ed., *The String Quartets of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven: Studies of the Autograph Manuscripts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), are exemplary studies of this kind, particularly Ludwig Finscher, "Aspects of Mozart's Compositional Process in the Quartet Autographs," 121-153; Marius Flothuis, "A Close Reading of the Autographs of Mozart's Ten Late Quartets," 154-178; and Christoph Wolff, "Creative Exuberance vs. Critical Choice: Thoughts on Mozart's Quartet Fragments," 191-215. All of these, however, need to be read in light of the insights gained into Mozart's compositional practice by Ulrich Konrad in his study of Mozart's sketches, see *Mozarts Schaffensweise: Studien zu den Werkautographen, Skizzen und Entwürfen* (=Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, Nr. 201) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

Paul Wranitzky as a foil against which to investigate one of Mozart's "Haydn" quartets, looking in their texts for signs of such historical acts of performance. As I will show, each of the three composers approaches the challenge of performance differently.

Boccherini composes performance into the musical fabric of the quartet itself; Koch's second kind of *Ausführung*, in a very real way, becomes the guiding principle of the work. Wranitzky, by contrast, focuses on *Anlage* and compositional *Ausführung*, but leaves little evidence that he was concerned with the bodily dimensions of his music's actual physical performance. Mozart engages thoroughly with both. Subtle variations of dynamic and temporal nuance, introduced into the texts of the "Haydn Quartets" throughout the compositional process, reveal Mozart's interest in questions of control, performance, expression, and the contradiction between extreme detail of written instruction for execution in performance and the goal of ineffable and individual expression. In a culture of performance and notation obsessed with the transparency of signs, even the slightest displacements of such "stage directions" – across both senses of Koch's definition – had most important consequences.

Execution and Expression

Eighteenth-century German writers on music treated performance with kid gloves. Their justification of instrumental music, in the face of the criticisms voiced against it by many philosophers of the

Enlightenment, depended on a consensus that wordless music was a palimpsest of the spoken oration.⁸ The unlimited potential of acts of performance, their endless capacity for nuance, was both part of the metaphor and a threat to it. An overly nuanced and therefore overly individual performance could disrupt the seamless journey of affect – or the structures behind affect – from notated sign to receiver via performance. Indeed, in this chapter many of my arguments will depend on seeing performance as a kind of communication.

In his well-known comparison of the performance of instrumental music and oratory (“musical execution may be compared with the delivery of an orator”), Johann Joachim Quantz notes *Vortrag*’s inherent unpredictability:

We know the effect in a discourse of good delivery upon the minds of the listeners; we also know how poor delivery injures the most beautifully written discourse; and we know again that a discourse delivered with the very same words by two different persons will sound much better from one than from the other. The same is true of musical execution; a piece sung or played by two different people may produce two quite different effects.⁹

⁸ See footnote 3 above.

⁹ “Man weis, was bey einer Rede ein guter Vortrag für Wirkung auf die Gemüther der Zuhörer thut, man weis auch, wie viel ein schlechter Vortrag der schönsten Rede auf dem Papier schadet man weis nicht weniger, daß eine Rede, wenn sie von verschiedenen Personen, mit eben denselben Worten gehalten werden sollte, doch immer von dem einen besser oder schlimmer anzuhören sein würde, als von dem andern. Mit dem Vortrag der Musik hat es gleiche Bewantniß: so daß, wenn ein Stück entweder von einem oder dem anderen gesungen, oder gespielt wird, es immer eine verschiedene Wirkung hervorbringt.” Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* (Repr. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), 101. English translation based on Edward R. Reilly’s translation *On Playing the Flute* 2nd Ed (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985), 119. Note how Reilly uses two translations for the word *Vortrag*: “delivery” and “execution.”

Thus for Quantz there are as many potential performances as there are interpreters. For him, and many of the theorists who followed him, this is not necessarily an advantage, for many a bad performance can ruin a perfectly good piece – that is, prevent it from conveying the message inherent in it.

“Execution,” thunders Leopold Mozart in his *Gründliche Violinschule* of 1756, “is everything.”¹⁰ In the twelfth and final chapter of his influential treatise, Mozart’s father takes aim at those performers who are unable to make sense of musical notation:

To read the musical pieces of good masters properly, according to the rules [*nach der Vorschrift*] and to play them in keeping with the dominant affects of the piece, is far more artistic than to study the most difficult solo or concerto...For not only must one observe exactly all that has been marked and prescribed and not play it otherwise than it has been written, but one must also play with a certain sensitivity [*Empfindsamkeit*]; one must throw oneself into the affect to be expressed and apply and execute in a certain style all the ties, slides, accentuations of notes, the forte and piano, in a word, everything that belongs to a tasteful performance of a piece, which can only be learned from sound judgment and long experience.¹¹

¹⁰ “An der guten Ausführung ist alles gelegen.” Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule (1756)* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), 252. My translations in the following are based on those in Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing 2nd Edition*, trans. Editha Knocker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951). Here, as I will argue, *Ausführung* and execution are the same thing.

¹¹ “Die musikalischen Stücke von guten Meistern richtig nach der Vorschrift zu lesen, und nach dem im Stücke herrschenden Affekte abspielen ist weit künstlicher, als die schwersten Solo und Concerte studieren...Denn man muß nicht nur alles angemerkte und vorgeschriebene genau beobachten, und nicht anders, als wie es hingesezt ist abspielen: sondern man muß auch mit einer gewissen Empfindsamkeit spielen; man muß sich in den Affekt setzen, der auszudrucken ist; und man muß alle die Züge, die

Like Quantz, Leopold Mozart is aware that notation does not translate automatically to performance; he even grants a space for “a certain sensitivity” although his qualification of the loaded word *Empfindsamkeit* suggests he is not altogether comfortable with it.¹² Like many of his contemporaries, he believes that the player should experience the affects that are the contents of the piece. At the end of the passage, he lists a number of “performative details” of dynamics and articulation whose proper execution is mark of good performance. As not all of these are amenable to notation, knowledge of their use is best to be gained through “sound judgment and long experience.” The appeal to experience is interesting, because it suggests, as I will argue in a moment, that good performance is a matter difficult to describe in words. In Leopold Mozart’s case, however, one gets the feeling that such experience, all things being equal, might best be acquired from *one* book – his.

Some authors, nonetheless, were more inclined to allow good performance a certain positive ineffability. Despite his clear conviction that good performance must be transparent, even at the opening of the section on *Vortrag* in his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen*, Emmanuel Bach warns against mechanical playing.¹³ After a

Schleifer, das abstossen der Noten, das Schwache und Stärke, und, mit einem Worte, alles was immer zum schmackhaften Vortrage eines Stückes gehöret, auf eine gewisse gute Art anbringen und vortragen, die man nicht anders, als mit gesunder Beurteilungskraft durch eine lange Erfahrnis lernet.” *Ibid*, 253.

¹² See chapter four, “Utopia Performed,” below.

¹³ “Worinn aber besteht der gute Vortrag? In nichts anderen als der Fertigkeit, musikalische Gedanken nach ihrem wahren Inhalte und Affekt singend oder spielend dem Gehöre empfindlich zu machen” Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu Spielen* (repr. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994), 117.

passage criticizing both those who play with too fast (“die geschwinden Spieler”) and those who play too slowly (“[die], die einen aus Gefälligkeit einschläfern”), he notes that both “play mechanically [while] expressive playing requires good thinkers, who are able to submit to certain rational rules and perform according to them.”¹⁴ For Bach, then, mechanical playing does not equal rational playing. Expressive performance that moves the listener depends on “good thinking” (“gute Köpfe”).

Such good thinking implies, of course, being aware of and following rational principles. At some point, however, rules can no longer help. Experience of good performance is then the only substitute:

In order to acquire insight into the true contents and affect of a piece, and in the absence of the signs necessary to judge the notes that appear therein, that is if they should be played slurred or separate etc, and also what is to be considered in the application of embellishments, one is well advised to seek out opportunity to hear both individual musicians and ensembles. This is even more necessary; since these matters of beauty are often depend on contingent forces.¹⁵

Like Leopold Mozart, when faced with the problem of those musical parameters most challenging to notation, Bach appeals beyond rules to experience. No system of notation is complete enough to convey

¹⁴ “üben ihr Instrument bloß maschinenmäßig aus, da zu dem rührenden Spiel gute Köpfe erfordert werden, die sich gewissen vernünftigen Regeln zu unterwerfen und darnach ihre Stücke vorzutragen fähig sind.” *Ibid.*, 116-117.

¹⁵ “Um eine Einsicht in den wahren Inhalt und Affekt eines Stückes zu erlangen, und in Ermangelung der nötigen Zeichen, die darinnen vorkommenden Noten zu beurteilen, ob sie geschleift oder gestossen u.s.w. werden sollen, ingleichen, was bey Anbringung der Manieren in Acht zu nehmen ist, thut man wohl, daß man sich Gelegenheit verschaffet, so wohl einzelne Musicos als ganze Musikübende Gesellschaften zu hören. Dieses ist um so viel nöthiger, je mehreren zufälligen Dingen meistentheils diese Schönheiten unterworfen sind.” *Ibid.*, 120.

every nuance of good taste in performance. Only its experience in person can supplement rules in a treatise; indeed, that is the difference between his manner of instruction and Leopold Mozart's. Bach urges the student specifically to observe as many performances by good musicians as possible, for the rules, no matter how rational, can never substitute for experience. The section on performance in the second part of the *Versuch*, which deals with the art of good accompaniment, begins with a warning: "it is an error to believe that the rules of good performance are limited only to carrying out manual instructions."¹⁶

Yet despite these warnings it is clear that for Emmanuel Bach a good performance *can* be based on rational rules. The performer must know the rules of performance, and, importantly, take the trouble to observe others putting these rules into practice. His inclusion in the second part of the *Versuch* of a rationalized set of instructions for a highly irrational genre, the free fantasy, then, comes as a surprise. It is worth dwelling for a moment on this irony. *Phantasieren*, like *Vortrag*, seems for Bach to be fundamentally learnable. Fantasies, indeed, can be captured in notation and sold.¹⁷ Yet every observer of Emmanuel Bach as a fantasist remarked on the unique qualities of his improvisation.¹⁸ This

¹⁶ "es ist ein Irrthum wenn man glaubt, daß sich die Regeln des guten Vortrags bloß auf die Ausführung der Handsachen erstrecken." *Ibid.*, 242. Interestingly, both Emmanuel Bach and Leopold Mozart stress that accompanists and tutti-players are more likely to possess the experience they deem necessary for convincing performance.

¹⁷ See Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasy and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 34, on the market power, for instance, of Bach's two fantasies in his fourth keyboard collection for *Kenner und Liebhaber*.

¹⁸ For descriptions of Bach's powers of performance at the clavichord see *ibid.*, 151-55. Neal Zaslaw has warned against taking all such reports at face value: see his "Ornaments for Corelli's Violin Sonatas" in *Early Music* 24/1 (February 1996), 95-115.

contradiction between the mechanically reproduced text and the unlimited expressive range of performance lies at the heart of the problem we are studying in this chapter. I will return to the free fantasy in a later chapter; it stood, I will argue, for the irrationality of human performance itself and was perhaps even the space in which musical aestheticians tried to hide their unease with *all* performance.

Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, in his article on *Vortrag* in Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, concentrates instead (in terms reminiscent of Quantz's discussion of the subject) on performance's dangers:

Execution is that through which a piece of music becomes audible. A great deal of the good or bad impression that a piece makes upon the listener depends on it. A mediocre piece can be much improved by good execution, while bad execution can take the most excellent music and deface it to the point that it is unrecognizable and, indeed, intolerable.¹⁹

Schulz recognizes the power of musical performance; good performances can “rescue” bad music, just as bad performances can ruin good pieces. This is not the same as admitting music's pure contingency on performance:

¹⁹ “Vortrag ist das, wodurch ein Tonstück hörbar wird. Von dem Vortrage hängt größtenteils die gute oder schlechte Wirkung ab, die ein Stück auf die Zuhörer macht. Ein mittelmäßiges Stück kann durch einen guten Vortrag sehr erhoben werden; hingegen kann ein schlechter Vortrag auch das vortrefflichste Stück so verunstalten, daß es unkenntlich, ja unausstehlich wird.” J.A.P. Schulz, “Vortrag” in Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967-70), vol IV, 701.

Since music can only reach the ear through performance, that is execution, and the composer, while composing a piece, always has the requirements of the execution of the same in mind, and presumes that exactly that which he has thought and felt will be performed, that means that the study of execution is the very most important component of practical music-making, but also the very most difficult, because it takes extremes of ability as a prerequisite, and has as its final purpose the highest development of the musician into a virtuoso.²⁰

Because music, unlike the other fine arts, can be received only with the senses of hearing, the composer depends on the performer's ability to translate the sign of musical notation into musical sound exactly ("gerade so") as it they were imagined in the act of composition. This one-to-one translation is the primary duty of the virtuoso.

Another late eighteenth-century theorist of performance, Daniel Gottlieb Türk, distinguishes between *Vortrag* and *Ausdruck* ("expression").²¹ Türk emphasizes the difficulty of presenting the content of a piece, its "dominant character." While *Vortrag*, for Türk, is primarily a mechanical matter, *Ausdruck* is more difficult to describe, the province

²⁰ "Da die Musik überhaupt nur durch die Aufführung oder den Vortrag dem Ohr mitgeteilt werden kann, und der Tonsetzer bey Verfertigung eines Stücks allzeit auf den Vortrag desselben Rücksicht nimmt, und dann voraussetzt, daß er gerade so, als er gedacht und empfunden hat, vorgetragen werde, so ist die Lehre von Vortrage die allerwichtigste in der praktischen Musik, aber auch die allerschwereste, weil sie gar viele Fertigkeiten voraussetzt, und die höchste Bildung zum Virtuosen zum Endzweck hat." *Ibid.*, 700.

²¹ See Daniel Gottlieb Türk, *Klavierschule oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende (Faksimile-Reprint der 1. Ausgabe 1789)* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1997), especially the sections on *Vortrag*, 332-334, *Ausdruck*, 347-350, and "feeling" in performance, 369-375. See also Malcolm Bilson, "Execution and Expression in the Sonata in E Flat, K. 282," *Early Music* 20/2 237-44. For an appraisal of Türk's aesthetic position see Nancy November, *Haydn's Vocality and the Ideal of 'True' String Quartets* (PhD Dissertation: Cornell University, 2003), 161-164.

of the “true master” and not the “ordinary musician.” Yet he never frees himself fully from the notion that the content to be expressed (its “dominant character”) is already somehow present in the piece to be performed. Expression for him seems less a field of freedom for the performer and more a means, for all of its ineffability, of transferring the semantic content of music to the listener. His ideal performer brings these out in as much detail as possible, ideally adding little of his or her own.

Herder on the Performance of Language

Türk’s position, like the other ones we have encountered here, is a late expression of the *Affektenlehre*, the so-called “doctrine of affections.” The idea that instrumental music must have a specific semantic content was part of German reception to the writings of French writers like Charles Batteux, who argued that the highest forms of art were those that imitated nature. Hard-line mimetic theorists had little patience for instrumental music; that the authors I have cited here all speak of instrumental music is, however, not a contradiction. These authors were trying to claim a mimetic status for textless music that their opponents said it lacked.²²

²² See, in a large secondary literature: Bellamy Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music in 18-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982); Peter Le Huray and James Day eds., *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Carl Dahlhaus, “Das 18. Jahrhundert als musikgeschichtliche Epoche” in *Die Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts* ed. Carl Dahlhaus (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1985), 1-69; and Laurenz Lütteken, *Das Monologische als Denkform in der Musik zwischen 1760 and 1785*

Many such theories saw language as a *neutral* bearer of content. In the 1770s, however, new and different ideas about language started to cast their shadow on music. Johann Gottfried Herder, for instance, proposed that human language is personal, unique, and “historical,” which for him is a cognate of “unique.”²³ One of Herder’s first important texts was his *On the Origin of Language* of 1770, in which he argued against models of meaning that depend on a direct relation between things and the words used to describe them.²⁴ The occasion was a contest sponsored by the *Akademie der Wissenschaften* in Berlin. Herder set out to debunk the theories of Etienne Condillac in a celebrated thought-experiment. Condillac had imagined that two children left alone in a desert (and hitherto unable to speak) could develop a language from scratch. Each would recognize the cries of the other as more than just “natural signs” of fear; the *sounds* of the cries would become *signs* of fear. A natural sound would become a word, making the jump from a “natural sign” to an

(=*Wolfenbüttler Studien zur Aufklärung* 24) (Tübingen: Niemayer, 1995). David Schulenberg’s “Expression and Authenticity in the Harpsichord Music of J.S. Bach,” *The Journal of Musicology* 8/4 (1990), 449-476, compares early eighteenth-century notions of expression to “expressive” modern performances. For a look at the expressive potential of J.S. Bach’s music, useful as a frame to later eighteenth-century contexts, see David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²³ See Reinhart Koselleck, “Geschichte” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* Bd. IV, eds. Otto Brunner Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Kotta, 1972), 678-717.

²⁴ Johann Gottfried Herder, *On the Origin of Language* trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (New York: F. Ungar, 1967). The following paragraphs draw heavily on Charles Taylor, “The Importance of Herder” in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995). For a recent musicological take on Herder see Rafael Köhler, “Johann Gottfried Herder und die Überwindung der musikalischen Nachahmungsästhetik,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 52/3 (1995), 205-19.

“instituted sign.” A one-to-one relation would be established between sign (the cries) and the signified (fear).

The problem with this argument – upon which Herder pounces – is that the children would have to “know” how words work, how they can stand for things at all, before the experiment begins, or else it would not function. Therefore Condillac’s scenario cannot describe the *origin* of a language, since some kind of language must already be present. For Herder, instinct alone does not provide the requirements for language to work; only the capacity for reflection (what Herder calls *Besonnenheit*) can do this. He offers his own version as an alternative to Condillac’s scenario. The word for a lamb, onomatopoeic as it may be, did not arise in human language only because *this* animal made *that* noise. It arose because humans reflected on the animal that bleated and agreed eventually on a name for it. Indeed, depending on who and where they were, they agreed on many names for it. That is the connection to historicism: if every culture has its own language, then every culture has its own history.²⁵

Herder’s opponents, as Charles Taylor writes, “reified” the linguistic sign, by presuming that words just stood for things: “people introduced signs to ‘stand for’ or ‘signify’ objects (or ideas of objects) and once instituted these plainly could be rightly or wrongly applied. The error from a Herderian perspective was that they never got this constitutive feature into focus.”²⁶ By fighting against the destabilizing

²⁵ See the section in chapter one on historicism, above.

²⁶ Taylor, “The Importance of Herder,” 89.

dangers of the act of performance, defenders of the integrity of the musical sign like Leopold Mozart showed that they thought similarly.

For Herder, the expression inherent in human speech is like a “performance” that resists being written down:

The whispered Ach! is just as much the sound of melting love as it is of sinking desperation; the fiery Oh! just as much the expression of sudden joy as of rising anger; of increasing admiration as of growing floods of complaint; are these sounds there only to be written as interjections on paper?²⁷

This passage from his *Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples* reveals a similar critical view of written notation:

And another thing. Read through Ossian’s poems. In all of the characteristics of bardic song they resemble another nation which still lives and sings and acts on earth today, and in whose history I have more than once recognized without illusion or prejudice the living story of Ossian and his forebears. They are the five Indian nations of North America: war-cry and lament, battle song and funeral dirge, historical paeans on their forefathers and to their forefathers – all this is common to Ossian’s bards and to North American savages alike...Now look at how all the travelers...have described the tone, the rhythm, the power of these songs even for strangers’ ears. Examine how all the reports agree on how much these songs depend for their effect upon living movement, melody, gesture, and mime...With Denis’s translation [of Ossian] our feet are firmly planted on dull earth: we can hear something of

²⁷ “Das matte Ach! ist sowohl Laut der zerschmelzenden Liebe, als der sinkenden Verzweiflung; das feurige O! sowohl Ausbruch der plötzlichen Freude, als der auffahrenden Wut; der steigenden Bewunderung, als das zuwallenden Bejammerns; allein sind dies Laute da, um als Interjektionen aufs Papier gemalt zu werden?” Herder, *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, Werke I, 699-700.

the content and the meaning conveyed in our decently poetic idiom; but not a sound, not a tone resembling all the barbarous tribes, not a single living breath...to set our pulses racing and bring us the living sound of their songs.²⁸

The point seems similar to the one made by Emmanuel Bach, who advised those who want to learn how to perform well to seek out good performances. Just as Denis's translation did not begin, for Herder, to do the native North American war cry justice, the musical text – supplemented, perhaps, by a treatise on *Vortrag* – was not enough for Bach. Isaiah Berlin writes of Herder: “[his theory of] expressionism claims that all works of men are above all voices speaking, are not objects attached from their makers, are part of a living process of communication.”²⁹ This has important consequences for art: “to say that

²⁸ “Aber noch mehr. Gehen Sie die Gedichte Ossians durch. Bei allen Gelegenheiten des Bardengesangs sind sie einem andern Volk so ähnlich, das noch jetzt auf der Erde lebet, singet, und Taten tut; in deren Geschichte ich also ohne Vorurteil und Wahn die Geschichte Ossians und seiner Väter mehr als einmal lebendig erkannt habe. Es sind die *fünf Nationen* in Nordamerika: Sterbelied und Kriegsgesang, Schlacht- und Grablied, historische Lobgesänge auf die Väter und an die Väter – alles ist den Barden Ossians und den Wilden in Nordamerika gemein...Nun sehen Sie einmal, wie alle Reisebeschreiber ...vom Ton, vom Rhythmus, von der Macht dieser Gesänge auch für Ohren der Fremdlinge sagen. Sehen Sie nach, wie viel nach den allen Berichten darin auf lebende Bewegung, Melodie, Zeichensprache und Pantomime ankommt...Bei Denis stehen wir steif und fest auf der Erde: hören Sie etwa Sinn und Inhalt in eigner, guter poetischer Sprache, aber nach der Analogie wilden Völker kein Laut, kein Ton, kein lebendiges Lüftchen...[daß] uns hebe und schwinge, und den lebendigen Ton ihrer Lieder hören lasse: wir sitzen, wir kleben steif und fest auf der Erde.” Johann Gottfried Herder, “Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of the Ancient Peoples (1773)” trans. Joyce P. Crick in *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 72. German in Herder, *Werke* II, 454-55. Ossian was later revealed to a forgery of the Jacobite poet James Macpherson, a fact that would seem to have little bearing on Herder's thinking.

²⁹ Isaiah Berlin, “Herder and the Enlightenment” in *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Earl R. Wasserman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 47.

art is expression is to say that it is a voice speaking rather than the production of an object.”³⁰ The work of art is not an unchanging object, and the voices that are speaking in it are not voices declaiming the same thing over and over. That is a fundamental difference.

Execution and Expression at the End of the Eighteenth Century

Some thirty years later, the music critic Johann Karl Friedrich Triest wrote a series of articles about the history of music in Germany in the eighteenth century. In the fourth installment, he describes the state of composition and performance in the wake of the operatic successes of Graun and Hasse:

While applied music [opera] achieved such a pleasing form through the works of Graun and Hasse, pure music [instrumental music] went through an important period of change as well. Until then, harmonic artifice was the only quality deemed worthy of praise in such creations. The forms of such pieces were, to a greater extent than those of applied music, quite thoroughly *rhetorical* and not *poetic*. Concertos, sonatas, toccatas, preludes, and even so-called fantasies all betrayed this timid character...The *Ideal*, that to which pure music has more in its power than applied music, and the *suggestion* of this ideal, pure music's great attraction, lay completely outside of the field vision of composers who when

³⁰ *Ibid*, 71.

they composed were merely calculating. In short, this frosty music making was without spirit and life.³¹

Instrumental music's strength, for Triest, is its ability to communicate the expressive power of the "ideal" in both performance and composition. However, a new style arose, transplanted directly from the opera, which solved one problem ("composing by calculating") but caused another: monotonous accompaniment and "melodic emptiness." Instrumental music would have lost its way:

...had not one man fortunately stood up to seize the reins of music as it foundered – someone who combined originality with profound study and opened a path for pure music that could otherwise hardly have been anticipated. Like Ossian, he touched the strings, and the empty tinkling – did not die entirely away, but shrank before his magic power, as long as the latter held sway.³²

³¹ "Während nun die angewandte Tonkunst durch Hasse und Graun eine so anmuthige Gestalt bekam, erlitt auch die *reine* Musik eine bedeutende Veränderung. Bisher war ein künstlicher Gang der Harmonie das einzige gewesen, was man an Produktionen der Art schätzte. Ihre Formen waren, noch mehr als die der angewandten, durchaus nur *rhetorisch*, nicht *poetisch*. Konzerte, Sonaten, Toccaten, Präludien und sogenannte Phantasien sogar, alles trug diesen ängstlichen Charakter ... Das *Ideale*, welches die *reine* Musik ihrer Natur nach mehr in ihrer Gewalt hat, als die angewandte, und dessen *Andeutung* ihren größten Reiz ausmacht, lag vollends außer dem Gesichtskreise der Komponisten, die nur rechneten, indem sie schrieben. Kurz, dieses frostige Tonspiel war ohne Geist und Leben..." Johann Karl Friedrich Triest, "Bemerkungen über die Ausbildung der Tonkunst in Deutschland im 18ten Jahrhunderte (part four)" *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 3/18 (1801), col. 297. Translation adapted from "Remarks on the Development of the Art of Music in Germany" trans. Susan Gillespie in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 344.

³² "...wäre nicht glücklicherweise ein Mann in Deutschland aufgestanden, der die Zügel der mattwerdende Tonkunst faßte, der mit tiefem Studium Originalität verband und für die reine Musik eine Bahn eröffnete, die man sonst kaum gehndet hatte. Wie Ossian griff er die Seiten, und das leere Geklingel – verstummte zwar nicht, aber es

This man was Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, whose skill at the keyboard, his “fine powers of nuance by the expression of emotions and ideas” (“feine Nuanzierung beym Nachbilden von solcher Empfindungen und Ideen”), which “came from the man himself, more than they were forced upon him from the outside” (“mehr aus dem Menschen selbst kommen, als ihm aufgedrungen werden”) was as much a part of his genius as his ability to compose. “Bach was another Klopstock,” Triest concludes, “who used tones *instead of* words.”³³

In 1800 an anonymous author in the same periodical wrote:

It is possible to learn, with patient discipline and prolonged practice, to play an instrument skillfully and pleasantly; but inspired composition can be neither learned nor taught. In the former, mechanism has much to do with the impression one makes, in the later Genius creates form and materials in a manner that cannot be understood. It does seem that the art of the performer is the more useful of the two, because the performer brings out that which the composer has received from the benevolent hands of Nature. Yet Genius cannot create masterpieces without a long education, deep study, and strict criticism...I hardly need to mention, by the way, that there are both manual laborers and artists among performers. The former play the notes mechanically, the later delve into the spirit of a composer, and are able to summon this spirit at the right place and the right time; they know the limits and the effects of their

wich vor seiner magischem Kraft, so lange dies wirken konnte.” Triest, “Bemerkungen,” col. 299. Translation from *Haydn and His World*, 345.

³³ *Ibid.* For a further discussion of Triest’s essay, particularly his championing of an expressive, performance-oriented aesthetic see Nancy November, *Haydn's Vocality*, 74-79 and 155-65. The comparison with Klopstock raises the interesting association of high-quality instrumental music with the Pindaric ode, a genre whose influence in late eighteenth-century Germany was built on both its impressive degree of artifice and its expressive potential. See Mark Evan Bonds, “The Symphony as Pindaric Ode” in *Haydn and His World*, 131-53.

instrument most exactly, and this spirit receives a very special power in their hands. Those who play like this are also born to compose.³⁴

It seems clear from these passages, which are representative of writing on performance in the last decades of the eighteenth century, that there has been some sort of shift from a strictly mimetic to a more expressive conception of musical performance *and* composition. This shift parallels a change in thinking about expression in language, and, indeed, in literature. But this shift is not free of contradictions. The contradiction, for instance, inherent in Koch's double definition of *Ausführung* is fully in evidence the anonymous article in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. Good performance, *unlike* good composition, can be learned, and in fact it is the best performance that transmits the natural wonder of genial composition. Yet everybody knows that genius is not enough to make a good composer, and everybody knows that the best performers, "in the proper place," bring their own ideas to bear. And those who can play so well are as good as the best composers; the

³⁴ "Durch ausdauernden Fleiß und anhaltenden Uebung kann man nämlich ein Instrument fertig und angenehm spielen lernen; aber geistreich komponieren lehrt und lernt niemand. Dort trägt der Mechanismus vieles zur Wirkung bey, hier schafft das Genie auf eine nicht zu ergründende Art die Form und den Stoff. – Es scheint zwar, als ob die Kunst des Spielers nur um so verdienstlicher sey, weil er sich selbst giebt, was der Kompositeur aus dem gütigen Händen der Natur empfängt. Allein auch das Genie kann ohne eine lange Schule, tiefes Studium und eine Strenge Kritik keine Meisterwerke hervorbringen...Kaum brauche ich übrigens noch zu bemerken, daß er auch unter den ausübenden Musikern Handwerker und Künstler giebt. Jene spielen die Noten mechanisch ab, diese dringen in den Geist des Kompositeurs ein, und wissen ihm am rechten Orte und aus der Fülle ihrer eigenen Gedanken zu heben; sie kennen den Umfang und die Wirkung ihres Instruments aufs genaueste, und er erhält unter ihren Händen eine ganz besondere Kraft. Wer so spielt, ist auch zum Komponieren geboren." Anonymous, "Wodurch erhebt sich der dichtende Tonküntler über den ausübenden?" in *Allgemeine musikalsiche Zeitung* 2/17 (1800), col. 289-90.

meaning they bring to a performance is as important as the meaning that is somehow already present in the music, waiting for the good performer to bring it to expression. Both practices depend on a mix of irrational inspiration and rational learning, concepts that are sometimes held to be opposites, yet collide in the practice of performance.

Mozart on execution and Expression

Leopold Mozart's son Wolfgang never wrote an aesthetic treatise, although he once threatened to do so.³⁵ He left behind, however, a substantial body of commentary on the problems of execution and expression. One of his better-known statements on performance seems to suggest that he is a follower of his father's views on the subject:

Wherein consists the art of playing *prima vista*? In this: in playing the piece in the time in which it ought to be played, and in playing all the notes, *appoggiaturas*, and so forth, exactly as they are written and with appropriate expression and taste, so that you might suppose that the performer had composed it himself.³⁶

³⁵ See the letter to his father of 28 December 1782: "ich hätte lust ein Buch – eine kleine Musicalische kritick mit Exemplen zu schreiben – aber *NB*: nicht unter meinen Nammen..." ("I could imagine writing a book, a small musical critique with examples – but *NB*: not under my own name"), Wilhelm A. Bauer, and Otto Erich Deutsch, eds., *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gesamtausgabe* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962) vol. 3, 246. (Hereafter *Briefe*.)

³⁶ "und in was besteht die Kunst, *Prima vista* zu lesen? in diesem: das stuck im rechten tempo wie es seyn soll zu spielen. alle noten, Vorshlåg Etc: mit der gehörigen expreßion und gusto, wie es steht auszudrücken, so, das man glaubt, derjenige hätte es selbst Componirt, der es spielt." Mozart, *Briefe* 2, 228, translated in Robert Marshall, *Mozart Speaks: Views on Music, Musicians, and the World. Drawn from the Letters of*

It is critical, however, not to miss the conjunction “and” after the stricture to play the note “exactly as they are written.” The qualities of “appropriate expression and taste” are also a requirement of good *prima vista* playing. In addition, the *illusion* of unity between performer and composer is a key part of Mozart’s definition of good performance. Note that he does *not* write that it “should sound as if the composer had performed it himself” or that the “performer should understand all of the affects the composer intends,” as his father might have. The performer must play the composer; the *illusion* of spontaneity is what counts.³⁷

Mozart’s description of bad playing is also telling:

I should mention that before dinner [Abbé Vogler] scrambled through my concerto [K. 246] at sight...He took the first movement *prestissimo*, the Andante allegro and the Rondo believe it or not, *prestississimo*. He generally played the bass differently from the way it was written, inventing now and then quite another harmony and even melody. Nothing else is possible at that pace, for the eyes cannot see the music nor the hands perform it. Well, what good is it? That kind of sight-reading and shitting are all one to me...³⁸

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and other Early Accounts (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), 201. (Hereafter *MS*). It is common to read this as proof that Mozart tolerated little freedom in performance; that for him, proper expression was proper execution. See for instance Lewis Lockwood, “Performance and ‘Authenticity,’” *Early Music* 19/4 (1991), 501-6 and Marshall in *MS*, 207. For a similar argument see Bilson, “Execution and Expression.”

³⁷ Mozart was proud of his ability to write individual music for individual performers, see the letter of 28 February 1778: “denn ich liebe dass die aria einem sänger so accurate angemessen sey, wie ein gutgemachtes kleid” (“I like for an aria to fit the singer like a well-made garment”), *Briefe*, 2, 304.

³⁸ “NB: vor dem Tisch hat er mein Concert...Prima vista – herabgehudelt. das erste stück gieng *Prestißimo* das Andante *allegro* und das Rondeau wahrlich *Prestißißimo*, den Baß spielte er meistens anders als es stund, und bisweilen machte er eine ganz

In the first part of his critique Mozart focuses on matters of faulty execution, that is on Vogler's misreading of his tempo markings (and, apparently, his consequent inability to play his part cleanly). In the second part, he damns Vogler for making up his own bass line and harmonies. By all accounts, this document shows that Mozart was a stickler for absolute fidelity on the part of performers to his musical texts. But as we shall see shortly, Mozart's strong criticism here could be more than a little disingenuous.

Execution and expression are concepts that return again and again in Mozart's correspondence and in the documents of his opinions on performance. Taking note of the distinction between the two makes understanding Mozart's interventions in the texts of his music, in matters of performative detail, easier. Like the warnings in the pedagogic treatises quoted above, Mozart's admonitions are attempts to preserve the integrity of the musically notated sign by steering the performer's taste. But this worry, I would argue, is always accompanied by another one: the fear of compromising the spontaneity of their expression. In Mozart's case we should always remember that his most adamant denunciations of interpretive freedom are expressed in letters to his father, who was himself a renowned and even fearsome defender of compositional integrity in the face of performative license. As in so many cases, it is easy to hear the younger Mozart protesting too loudly. In this context,

andere Harmonie und auch Melodie. es ist auch nicht anderst möglich, in der geschwindigkeit. die augen können es nicht sehen, und die hände nicht greifen. ja was ist den das? -- -- so ein Prima vista spielen, und scheissen ist bey mir einerlei." *MS 202-203, Briefe 2 228, [Mannheim, 17 January 1778].*

this description by the composer André Grétry of a performance by Mozart as a child, makes for interesting reading:

Once in Geneva I met a child who could play everything at sight. His father said to me before the assembled company: “So that no doubt shall remain as to my son’s talent, write for him, for tomorrow, a very difficult sonata movement.” I wrote him an Allegro in E Flat; difficult but unpretentious; he played it, and everyone, except myself, believed it was a miracle. The boy had not stopped; but following the modulations, he had substituted a quantity of passages for those that I had written.³⁹

Grétry has caught the young Mozart doing exactly that of which Mozart later accused Vogler. We might do well to recall this passage when we read, as we so often do, that Mozart was a stickler for exact reproduction of his notation by other performers; for as Grétry noticed, the matter is not so simple.

Unlike Emmanuel Bach, Mozart did not necessarily telegraph the expressive qualities of his playing with facial gestures, yet this should not be taken to suggest that Mozart’s playing in any way lacked expression. “I do not make grimaces,” he wrote to his father “and yet play with such

³⁹ “Je rencontrai jadis à Genève un enfant qui exécutait tout à la première vue. Son père me dit en pleine assemblée: Pour qu’il reste aucun doute sur le talent de mon fils, faites lui, pour demain, un morceau de Sonate très difficile. Je lui fis en Allegro en mi-bémol, difficile sans affectation; il l’exécuta; et chacun; exépte moi, crit au miracle. L’enfant ne s’était point arrêté; mais en suivant les modulations, il avait substitué une quantité des passages à ceux que j’avais écrits” Cited in Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Mozart: Die Dokuments seines Lebens* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 415, translation in *MS*, 13. This passage seems to suggest that the young Mozart went further than simply to ornament the recapitulation.

expression that, as [Stein] himself confesses, no one up to the present has been able to get such good results out of his pianofortes.”⁴⁰ His famous dismissal of Clementi is in the same vein: “Clementi plays well, so far as execution with the right hand goes. His greatest strength lies in passages in thirds. Apart from this he has not a kreuzer’s worth of taste or feeling – in short he is simply a *mechanicus*.”⁴¹

The Place of Genius in Composition and Performance

Eighteenth-century theories of genius often link the term with the notion that it must be somehow restrained. Koch’s idea of compositional process has something of this nature. *Ausführung* must restrain the impetuositities of *Begeisterung* with the strictures of taste, so that “the composer, in the fire of his work, should not be in danger of being tempted by less important ideas onto a false path” (“der Tonsetzer in dem Feuer der Arbeit nicht in die Gefahr kommen soll, durch Nebenideen auf Abwege geleitet zu werden.”)⁴²

⁴⁰ “daß ich keine grimaßen mache, und doch so expreßive spiele, daß noch keiner, nach seinem bekenntniss, eine Piano forte so gut zu tractieren gewust hat.” *Briefe* 2, 83. [Augsburg, 24 October 1777].

⁴¹ “Der Clementi spielt gut, wenn es auf execution der rechten hand ankömmt. – seine force sind die terzen Paßagen – übrigens hat er um kein Kreuzer gefühl oder geschmack. mit einem Wort ein blosser Mechanicus.” *Briefe* 3, 161 [Vienna, 12 January 1782]. There is clearly more to this account than Mozart’s reasoned professional opinion; jealousy for instance, or differences of national style (and the need to trumpet his awareness of the latter to his father). Yet they are typical for the mature Mozart, who rarely mentions performance without mentioning “feeling.”

⁴² Koch, “Ausführung,” 189.

Put another way, the real creative act in composition happens at the beginning of the process; expression comes before execution. The rest is filling in, and serves to remedy the instability of the spontaneous idea. Yet Koch's idea that a piece of music's *Ausführung* includes its performance (*Vortrag*) gives this model a different weighting; indeed, it introduces its own degree of instability. Koch has accepted the place of genius in good performance as well. There are two places, then, to seek it in the realization of pieces of music: once in the moment of inspiration (*Begeisterung*) that lies behind every good piece, and once in truly inspired performance. This is an important shift. It leaves us, however, with an important question: does the *performance* of a genius require restraint as well?

If the doctrines of the *Affektenlehre* demanded a one-to-one translation of concepts from language to music, first by knowledgeable composition, then by tasteful performance, then a more expressive approach puts meaning in the hands of the performer too. The individual performance can *add* meaning to music, not just *transmit* meaning through music. This is a crucial difference: the role of the performer moves from that of executor to that of interpreter, of co-creator of meaning, while at the same time composition becomes less a site of the rationalized disposition of semantic structures ("dominant characters") and more one of irrational inspiration. The boundary between composition and performance is blurred. With this blurring comes the danger of a breakdown in communication, as the relations between affect, inspiration, composer, performer, and audience become increasingly undefined. Mozart as a composer was aware of this and drew the

appropriate consequences. He wrote performance, when circumstances allowed him, into the music, actively engaging himself in its interpretation.

The Expressive Rhetoric of Mozart's Compositional Practice

Until the late twentieth century much of what was written on Mozart's compositional practice was based, at best, on naïve readings of the documents of his life, and at worst on outright forgeries. Ulrich Konrad's book *Mozarts Schaffensweise* corrected this state of affairs by calling three aspects of received wisdom on Mozart's creativity into question.⁴³ The first is that "Mozart composed without aids of any kind, in his head, without a clavier and without writing anything down," the second that "in the manner a work emerges and grows, independent of its dimensions, swiftly towards its final state and was then in this form 'saved' in Mozart's memory, practically without danger of its being lost," and third "that the actual act of writing the music down was for the most part a mechanical one, a procedure that took little time, and was free of the influence of any of the circumstances in which it took place."⁴⁴

Konrad debunks all three of these conceptions. He traces how they grew out of the testimony of questionable witnesses or were based on outright falsehoods, particularly the anecdotes reported by Ferdinand

⁴³ Ulrich Konrad, *Mozarts Schaffensweise*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

Rochlitz in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.⁴⁵ Then, he surveys the surviving sketch materials that can be connected with Mozart, over 300 items. These items taken together, he writes, are enough to establish a fully new conception of the way Mozart composed. Under these new circumstances we must ask ourselves

When exactly, and how, and why did the process begin that led to the composition of the “Jupiter Symphony”? What very particular quality was this process, that it could lead to this and only this piece? Did a vision of the completed work stand at the beginning, or did it grow, planned or randomly, towards its final form? To what extent was Mozart involved consciously in the process – did he control it in all of its details with his musically-thinking intellect or did he stand “beside himself,” exposed to the unconscious creative forward motion without will of his own?⁴⁶

If Mozart composed anything like the way Koch suggests good composers do, then the answer to the last question must be a definitive “no.” The first question is more problematic. Where does *Ausführung* stop? Is it possible to find performance, both in the compositional and in the reproductive sense, in Mozart’s musical materials?

An insight of Konrad’s about Mozart’s sense for process suggests a good place to start:

⁴⁵ See in addition Maynard Solomon, “The Rochlitz Anecdotes” in *Mozart Studies* ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 1-59 and Ulrich Konrad, “Friedrich Rochlitz und die Entstehung des Mozart-Bildes um 1800” in *Mozart – Aspekte des 19. Jahrhunderts* ed. Hermann Jung (Mannheim: Palatium Verlag/J & J Verlag, 1995), 1–22.

⁴⁶ Konrad, *Schaffensweise*, 26.

The basic forms of Mozart's sketches were not chosen randomly or carelessly, but in the most exact estimation of the task to be accomplished. This requires that Mozart have had a sensitive feeling for the extent of the compositional challenge not only for the entire work, but for its constitutive parts. Mozart thinks universally while composing only to the extent that he has a virtual compositional goal ("an idea of the work") either in mind or exactly recognizable in his imagination. This complete work as goal, however, is composed of sections, which perform their own musical functions because of their relations to each other and to the whole, and therefore make their own demands on the work of composition.⁴⁷

The main question to be addressed is: where in the act of composing did Mozart's conception of the musical materials reach the point at which he was completely satisfied? Is there a moment of conception, and should we seek it at all?

If there is one, it is difficult to imagine that it should be found *only* in the moment of solitary *Begeisterung*.⁴⁸ Mozart's composition often began at the keyboard, that is in private performance.⁴⁹ Depending on the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 499.

⁴⁸ Yet Richard Kramer argues that in the case of Schubert songs earlier versions often reveal more: "to understand the phenomenon of Schubert song, we are obliged to return to the moment at which it is conceived." Kramer, *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving of Song* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 3. See also Kramer's review of Konrad's edition of Mozart's sketches for the *NMA*: "Review of *NMA X/30/3: Skizzen, vorgelegt von Ulrich Konrad*," *Notes* 57/1 (2000), 188-92, where Kramer writes, on pages 188-89, of Konrad's decision to separate "sketch" and "work": "... to suggest of such a document that this privacy constitutes a creative world distinct from the world of Mozart's 'public' music ... is to challenge our deepest instincts regarding the underlying tension, inherent in Enlightenment aesthetics, between the improvisatory impulse and the constraints of genre, rhetoric, and convention."

⁴⁹ See his letter to Leopold on the need for a clavier to be able to compose. *Briefe* 3, 144 [1 August 1781].

“nature of the challenge,” I would argue, Mozart sometimes needed to extend this process of *Ausführung* to include the acts of performance that followed, in a less private setting. Then – and only then – he was free to set the last details of the work’s execution. But even then there was a substantial price to pay. By fixing detail, he collapsed the dialectic between the power of expression and the necessity of its restraint, turning the expressive rhetoric of the compositional act to stone.

Performative Signs

In the balance of this chapter I will attempt to locate acts of performance within acts of composition. In order to do this, I will turn to written musical texts. To this end I have chosen three first movement expositions in string quartets by Luigi Boccherini, Paul Wranitzky, and Mozart; all three were in circulation in the “musical ecology” of Mozart’s Vienna.⁵⁰ The Boccherini quartet was published by Artaria in 1784. Wranitzky’s quartet, although published in 1790 by André in Offenbach, was written in Vienna in 1787 and originally dedicated to a member of the Artaria family. Mozart’s quartet, finally, was the first of the six “Haydn Quartets,” composed from 1783-1785, dedicated to Joseph Haydn, and published by Artaria in May of 1785. My goal will be to bring *Ausführung* in these quartets, in both senses of the definition, into better

⁵⁰ Cf. Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and my discussion of Samson’s use of the term “ecology” in chapter two, above.

focus. It goes without saying that each of these sources is a world unto itself, and that the diverse circumstances in which they were written and used make direct comparison difficult. Each movement will be examined in both the “private” form of the autograph or fair copy and the “public” form of the engraved edition. The similar function of the latter in all three cases – bringing the composer’s music to a wider playing public – will allow, in my opinion, for the formulation of general conclusions.

The signposts I will follow in my investigation will be the notated symbols I will call “performative signs.” These are indications of dynamic detail and tempo. I will not consider marks of articulation; this decision requires explanation. There is no doubt that slurs and staccato marks are as much a part of the musical fabric as dynamics and tempo markings; indeed, their “variability,” for example, as James Webster has shown, in the autographs of Joseph Haydn, can be a critical part of a work’s compositional whole.⁵¹ Anyone, however, who has scanned the critical report of a Haydn or Mozart quartet, has seen that there are often disagreements between sources about matters of articulation in every bar. There could be at least two explanations for this. The first is that composers intervened, or at least planned to intervene, in such matters of detail in the process of correcting their works for publication. The second is that there was a certain margin of error in the process of engraving and

⁵¹ James Webster, “The Triumph of Variability: Haydn's Articulation Markings in the Autograph of Sonata no. 49 in E-Flat” in *Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: Studies in the Music of the Classical Period – Essays in Honor of Alan Tyson*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 33-64. Another urgent plea for the importance of articulation is Malcolm Bilson, “Execution and Expression.” See also Stephanie Vail, *Take Pause: Musical Punctuation in the Eighteenth Century* (DMA Dissertation: Cornell University, 2000).

reproduction. Despite evidence that composers like Haydn did intervene, to a certain degree, in the process of publication, there is no reason to believe that the first scenario was always true, or that it was even a common practice.⁵² One could tabulate all of the discrepancies – conscientious critical reports do this – but it is impossible, I would argue, to construct a coherent argument from such tabulation. The acts of interpretation required to resolve such conflicts between sources are inevitable. In this light, the solution that Ludwig Finscher adopted for his edition of the “Haydn Quartets” seems the only sensible one. Articulation signs in his edition are for the most part the readings in the autograph; other performative signs are taken from the first edition.⁵³ If we consider, then, readings of such “accidentals” in the first edition to be less reliable, then we cannot in good conscience use them as signs of Mozart’s intervention in matters of performance.

⁵² James Webster, “The Significance of Haydn’s Quartet Autographs for Performance Practice” in *The String Quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: Studies of the Autograph Manuscripts*, ed. Christoph Wolff (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 62-98.

⁵³ This is a musical version of the Greg-Bowers “copy-text” method discussed in the previous chapter, and seems, for all of its faults, to be the best way to proceed. See chapter two above.

Luigi Boccherini: String Quartet in E-Flat, G. 201

Luigi Boccherini was a very public composer whose international reputation was on a par with those of his contemporaries Haydn and Mozart.⁵⁴ His string chamber music – the genre he cultivated most – was disseminated widely. Among his contemporaries only Haydn so successfully blended aristocratic patronage and participation in the wider European musical market.⁵⁵ The quartet we will consider here, for instance, was composed in Madrid, and, in spite of a contract that bound him exclusively to the Spanish court, sent both to the Prussian court in Berlin and to the Viennese publisher Artaria. That means that a comparison of the Berlin “autograph” with Artaria first edition is not the same a comparison between an autograph of one of the “Haydn Quartets” and its Artaria first edition – Mozart’s physical presence in Vienna is of course also a factor to consider.

Indeed, the Berlin “autograph” seems not to be really an autograph at all, as we will see in a moment. Therefore the compositional process, and the traces of performance that I seek in it will be somewhat harder to locate. But that is, in a way, beside the point, for the act of performance

⁵⁴ See the many passages on Boccherini in Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

⁵⁵ For a survey of Boccherini’s string quartets see Christian Speck, *Boccherini's Streichquartette: Studien zur Kompositionsweise und zur gattungsgeschichtlichen Stellung* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1987). For a detailed account of Boccherini’s relations with the Prussian court see Mara Parker, *Soloistic Chamber Music at the Court of Friedrich Wilhelm II: 1786-1797* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1994), 55-71.

in Boccherini is already a part of the compositional fabric. It has often been fashionable to say that the string quartets of the “Viennese Classical Period” were about “thematische Arbeit,” about the skilled manipulation of the smallest thematic building blocks. The string quartets of Luigi Boccherini have little of this to offer. What they have to offer are reflections of performance on the surface of the music itself.

Let us consider the first movement.⁵⁶ The first thing we notice about the piece is the unusual richness of its “performative markings” – nuances of dynamic and tempo. Indeed, as Christian Speck has observed, these nuances are hallmarks of Boccherini’s style. And as Elisabeth Le Guin has argued, Boccherini used “hyperattention” to detail, along with extreme repetitiveness, “bizarre timbres,” and “gestural enactments of rapidity and rigidity” to “distance and ironize the performer” to make a “sophisticated contribution to the tension between subjectivity and appearance.”⁵⁷ The movement is marked *Allegretto Lentarello, e*

⁵⁶ These observations are based on inspection of the manuscript in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and of a first edition in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. The manuscript of the Quartet in E-Flat G. 201 in Berlin is probably not an autograph. The Boccherini scholar and cataloguer Yves Gérard’s argument that it is a “fair copy” is confirmed by the copying mistake on f. 3v, where the copyist has inadvertently skipped a line in the *Vorlage*; the musical text underneath the corrections is the identical to that on the bottom system of f. 4r. And a cursory comparison of the hand in the manuscript with Boccherini’s hand as illustrated in the Gérard catalogue suggests strongly that the two hands are not the same. Access to Boccherini’s probable working manuscript is impossible, as it was most likely destroyed in the 1936 fire that consumed his heirs’ holdings of his estate. Nonetheless, Gérard argues that manuscripts like this one were prepared by copyists under his supervision. See Yves Gérard, *Thematic, Bibliographical, and Critical Catalogue of the Works of Luigi Boccherini* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 223-25 and *passim*. This manuscript is not discussed in Mara Parker’s dissertation; she begins her survey with Boccherini’s official appointment to the court in 1786.

⁵⁷ Elisabeth Le Guin, “‘One Says That One Weeps, but One Does Not Weep’: Sensible, Grotesque, and Mechanical Embodiments in Boccherini’s Chamber Music,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55/2 (2002), 254 and *passim*.

affetuoso; such fanciful, “hyperattentive” combinations are typical. The very specificity of this kind of marking, Le Guin argues, challenges the interpreter to reflect on the bodily motion required to do justice to such a complex set of directions, and thereby to reflect on the act of performance itself. If we see Boccherini’s music this way, as a kind of “meta-music,” then its eccentric obsession with performative detail and its oddly repetitive melodic and harmonic structures suddenly become more interesting. Le Guin’s argument, couched itself in a rather “performative” idiom (“to distance and ironize the performer”), does Boccherini’s music a service, I would argue, by bringing these qualities to the fore.

Let now examine how these markings are aligned with other musical structures in the exposition. In many ways, Boccherini’s music seems to defy both topical and harmonic analysis, as if it were for us a foreign idiom. Topics are not marked as “themes” and then “developed”; the harmonic architecture is not articulated by powerful, “structural,” cadences. The first paragraph (to measure eight) consists of two four-measure ideas that outline the tonic triad. Both end on appoggiaturas, the first on the third degree, the second, over a perfect authentic cadence, on the tonic. It is a conventional opening without much melodic interest; to use Le Guin’s words, there is more than a little of the mechanical about it. It is the performative markings – the instructions for the performers’ bodies – that add interest, from the (typically extreme) mix of *dolcissimo* in the first violin, to the pianissimo in the cello part, balanced by piano in the inner voices in measure one, to the sudden forte at the paragraph’s end.

The next paragraph arrives at V/V (in measure 16) after a period of stasis over a tonic pedal. Again we observe what seems like a refusal on Boccherini's part to move his music though tonal space; once more, however, it is the performative dimension, as revealed in markings like the *Schlangenlinien* in mm. 9 though 11 (these are not, by the way, in Artaria edition), and the move from piano in m. 9 to *poco forte* in m. 13 and then back to piano in m. 16. The next "performative event," the crescendo to forte in m. 18 heralds the arrival in m. 20 at the dominant – like all the *poco fortes*, this arrival is harmonically qualified by it being at V⁶ – and the beginning of a second tonal area.

This second area ("theme group" seems very much the wrong word to use) bears all the marks of the mechanistic compositional style, "the gestural enactments of rapidity and rigidity" Le Guin describes. A rhythmic cell of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, which starts off-balance after an eighth rest in m. 24, rotates between only two pitches above a typically Boccherinian bed of syncopations in the middle voices and a reiteration of a false cadence, over and over, in the bass. It is hard to imagine a tonal and melodic rhetoric, in an eighteenth century stylistic context, that denies any sense of forward motion more strongly than this one does. Again, only the bodily motions of the performers, steered most of all by rich dynamic indications and subtle rhythmic notation, bring life and interest to this music.

Allegretto Lentarello e affettuoso

The musical score consists of four systems, each with four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello). The tempo and mood are indicated as "Allegretto Lentarello e affettuoso".

- System 1 (Measures 1-9):** Features a delicate texture with markings such as *dolcis*, *pianis.*, *pia*, and *for.*
- System 2 (Measures 10-17):** Shows a slight increase in intensity with markings like *poco for.*, *tr*, and *cresc.*
- System 3 (Measures 18-24):** Continues the delicate style with markings such as *cresc.*, *for.*, and *dolcis*.
- System 4 (Measures 25-31):** Concludes with dynamic markings like *dolcis*, *rinfor.*, and *for.*

Musical Example 3.1:

Luigi Boccherini: String Quartet in E-Flat Major G. 201, mm. 1-31

With the exception of the *Schlangenlinien* (measure 9) all of the performative indications in the autograph appear in the first edition as well. This “textualization” of performative gestures is a paradox. Unmeasurable parameters are raised in Boccherini’s music to the status enjoyed in the music of other composers by pitch, motive, and rhythm. What we observe here, the hyperattentive markings and the invocations of the “mechanical sublime,” to use Le Guin’s terminology, contribute to what she calls the “tension between the actor and the enacted.”⁵⁸ For Boccherini more than other composers, it is the act of restraint that is made physical in the music through piano dynamics, repetitive rhythms, and, at times, a relentless refusal to sing.

The tension between the actor and what is being enacted that Le Guin makes out in Boccherini is not *quite* the same as the tension between controlled execution and liberating expression I traced earlier in this chapter. But neither need the two models face each other as opposites. For Boccherini more than other composers, it seems, it is the acts of *restraint* that are made physical in the music. It is a long way from Weimar to Madrid, so perhaps a comparison with Herder is out of place. Yet in some sense, in its constant awareness of performance—its constant reflection on itself—Boccherini’s music seems to project more than a little *Bessonenheit*.

⁵⁸ For more on the “mechanical sublime” see Annette Richards, “Automatic Genius: Mozart and the Mechanical Sublime,” *Music and Letters* 80 (1999), 366-89.

Paul Wranitzky: String Quartet in G, op. 4/op. 10

Paul Wranitzky (1756-1808), a Viennese violinist of Moravian origin, was Mozart's exact contemporary. During Mozart's years in Vienna, Wranitzky was making his way through the ranks of the Court Theater's musical hierarchy; he became its director in 1792. By the turn of the century he was an important fixture in Viennese musical life, a friend of Beethoven and Haydn and the respected composer of 51 symphonies and 56 string quartets. Many of the latter, but not all, were composed in the internationally popular style of Parisian *quatuor concertant*, in which the first violin dominates the texture.⁵⁹

The autograph of this early quartet is on oblong-format, 16-staff, manuscript paper, bound in light-blue cardboard.⁶⁰ Folio 1r contains the following text: "6 Quartetti/ per due Violini/ viola e violoncello/ Di Paolo Wranitzky/ Composti per il sig: Artaria/ Stampatore di Musica/ Op. IV Litt. A." To the side of the title we find the date, in the same hand: "22. November 787/ Wiene/ K...L." Just above the date there is a (perhaps Masonic?) symbol consisting of three overlapping triangles. An image of this page is found in figure 3.1.

⁵⁹ Roger Hickman, "The Flowering of the Viennese String Quartet in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Music Review* 1 (1989), 157-80.

⁶⁰ On the front cover there is a label with the text "Originale/ von/ Paul Wranitzky/ Tonkünstler in Wien/ 1756+1808/ Quartette in Partitur/ d.J. 1787"; then sideways "Für die Sammlung der Musikfreunde/ in Wien übernommen von/ Aloys Fuchs (15. April 842)." The manuscript paper inside has a watermark with a crown over the letter "W" inside a coat of arms. A similar paper was used by Mozart in 1783, 1784, the first part of 1787, and 1789. See Alan Tyson, *Wasserzeichen-Katalog* (=NMA X/33/2) (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), XXIV. The score, which contains six quartets in all, shows no sign of being used a *Vorlage* for engraving; there are none of the usual copyists' or engravers' markings.



Figure 3.1: P. Wranitzky String Quartet op. 4/10, autograph fol. 1r

The dedication to “Sig. Artaria, stampatore di musica” is a mystery. Paul Wranitzky and Domenico Artaria were lodge brothers – Wranitzky was the music master of Mozart’s lodge “Zur gekrönten Hoffnung” – but Domenico Artaria died in 1785. In fact, the Artaria firm never published any of Paul Wranitzky’s chamber music. This quartet was never published in Vienna; the André firm in Offenbach was the first to do so, in 1790. As was the case with the Boccherini score, there is hardly any difference between the final text of the autograph and this first published engraving.⁶¹

⁶¹ Rupert Ridgewell, personal communication.

In its conception, the Wranitzky quartet could hardly differ more from the Boccherini quartet. It is constructed in a manner Koch no doubt would have found sympathetic: indeed, traces of *Anlage* and *Ausführung* can be read clearly in the manuscript. The opening of the first quartet, in G Major, is on folio 3r (figure 3.2). This, however, soon reveals itself to be more like a continuity draft. Beginning at measure 12, Wranitzky shifts abruptly to E Major as he tries to rework the thematic material of the opening bars over a stormy tremolo in the lower strings. After 16 measures he abandons the attempt, unable, it seems, to find a convincing path to a strong cadence in the dominant, D Major. Another version of this passage, a more conventional transition from tonic to dominant, is found on folio 2r (figure 3.3); this is the version that then appears in the André engraving. Here one can actually see Wranitzky fighting with the power of this idea, trying to work into his larger conception of the movement, struggling, as it were, “in dem Feuer der Arbeit,” with the danger “durch Nebenideen auf Abwege geleitet zu werden.” In the end, he is forced to abandon the attempt. But the 16 measures of *Sturm-und-Drang* are not discarded permanently. They reappear later in the movement, after a false recapitulation, on folio 4r (figure 3.3). A score of the exposition of the quartet will be found in appendix two.

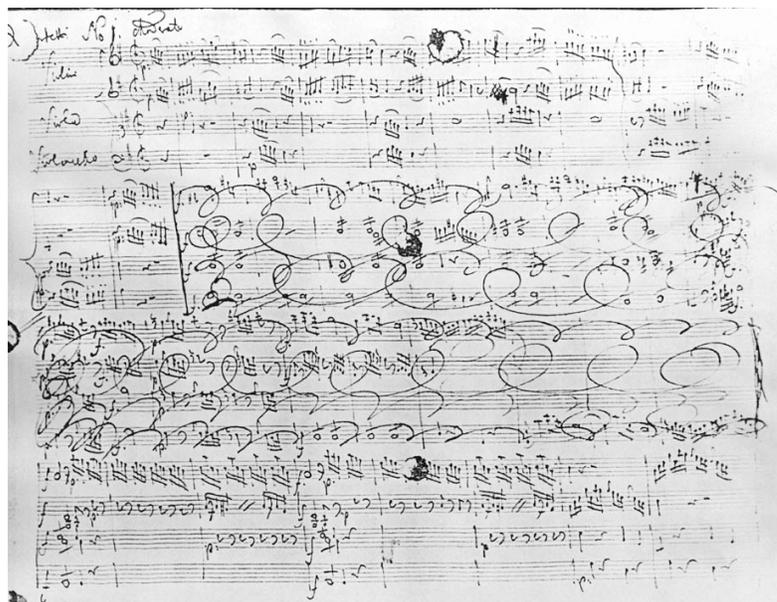


Figure 3.2:

P. Wranitzky, String Quartet op. 4/10: autograph fol. 3r

Figure 3.3:

P. Wranitzky, String Quartet op. 4/10: autograph fol. 2r



Figure 3.4:

P. Wranitzky, String Quartet op. 4/10: autograph folio 4r

In Wranitzky's quartet we can observe two levels of process. The one is the performance of the act of composition. We are in the lucky position to be able to follow this in the materials of the autograph; we can observe, for instance, how Wranitzky moves a passage, a tonal gambit, from a section of the exposition where it does not function to a section where it does. The second is the metaphorical performance of the conversation played out in the music; this quartet's texture is dominated by the give-and-take between instruments, the "motivisch-thematische

Arbeit” that is the hallmark of what is often called the “classical style.”⁶² What is missing are the bodily cues and performative markings so constitutive of Boccherini’s writing. The figurations, arpeggios, and scales seem more like the elaboration of tonal building blocks than the ironic gestures of the “mechanical sublime.” The tempo of the movement, a straightforward *Moderato*, does not seem to have given Wranitzky much occasion for reflection. And the dynamic markings are spare and uncomplicated. This third element of *Ausführung*, then, seems not to have been much on his mind. His performances are *disembodied* ones, on paper and in metaphorical conversation.

There is a fourth performance here as well: the presentation of this score as a gift to one of the most influential publishers of chamber music in Vienna. Was it a present to get the publisher’s attention, a job application of sorts? If it was, it didn’t lead to anything.⁶³ Or was it a gift to a fellow Freemason? The autograph here, not being a fair copy, seems hardly to be the kind of manuscript one would present to either a publisher or a respected friend. Perhaps it bears a sort of esoteric meaning. Its medium is a message about the contradictions of inspiration

⁶² Unlike most of Wranitzsky’s later quartets, this one is in a most Haydnesque idiom – it is what James Webster would call an “ideological” quartet. On the “quartet ideology” see James Webster, “Haydns op. 9 und 17. Zur Kritik der Ideologie des ‘klassischen’ Streichquartetts” in *Haydn und das Streichquartett*, eds. Georg Feder, and Walter Reicher (Tutzing: Schneider, 2003) and Nancy November, *Haydn’s Vocolity*, 7-15 and *passim*. On the “conversation metaphor” see Schwindt-Gross, *Drama und Diskurs* and Mara Parker, *The String Quartet, 1750-1797: Four Types of Musical Conversation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

⁶³ Rupert Ridgewell has suggested in a personal communication that Artaria may have been either unwilling or unable to publish music by composers directly associated with the court theater, as Wranitzky at this time was (he was a violinist in the orchestra of the Burgtheater.) Salieri, for instance, published only a few works with the firm in his many years in Vienna.

and rational control; giving this manuscript to a musical lodge brother would have been like giving him a pamphlet about the metaphysics of musical creativity.

Mozart: String Quartet in G, K. 387

Mozart's string quartet in G K. 387, the first of the six Haydn Quartets, had the longest pre-publication history of the six in the set.⁶⁴ As Wolf-Dieter Seiffert has shown, K. 387 was subject to extensive revisions and performed more than once before its publication in 1785.⁶⁵ Its musical text is unusually rich in performative signs; several of these, as Seiffert has shown, must have been added between completion of the autograph and publication of the engraved edition.

The movement begins with a gesture whose proper execution depends on dynamics.⁶⁶ In measures one through four the antecedent two-

⁶⁴ On the compositional history of the "Haydn" quartets see Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), particularly "Mozart's 'Haydn Quartets': The Contributions of Paper Studies," 82-93 and "The Origins of Mozart's 'Hunt' Quartet, K. 458," 94-105.

⁶⁵ Wolf-Dieter Seiffert, "Mozarts Haydn Quartette: Zum Quellenwert von Autograph und Erstaussage unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Finales aus KV 387" in *Studien zur Musikgeschichte: Eine Festschrift für Ludwig Finscher*, eds. Annagrit Laubenthal, and Kara Kusan-Windweh (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), 377-92.

⁶⁶ For an example of how Mozart added dynamics to the performing materials of other composers, for example Haydn's op. 17 quartets, see Cliff Eisen, "The Mozarts' Salzburg Music Library" in *Mozart Studies 2*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 85-138, here 94-95. On Mozart's use of dynamics in composition see Marianne Dankwardt, "'Muss accurat mit der Gusto, forte und piano, wie es steht, gespielt werden.' Funktionen der Dynamik bei Mozart," *Mozart-Jahrbuch 1997*, 293-316.

bar phrase is forte, its consequent piano. A first gesture to a conversational texture in the viola in measure five is followed by a similar second violin entry in measure six; a (perhaps surprising) piano serves to dampen the third iteration of this figure in first violin in measure seven. Measure eight's crescendo, however, ends in a false cadence, the tension this creates is resolved only after a two-measure closing figure over a crescendo that leads to the perfect authentic cadence in measure ten, ending the first paragraph.

The next paragraph (from measure 11) is a contrapuntal elaboration of the material from the opening, but the dynamic pattern (forte in the first, piano on the second measure) is retained and expanded into a two-measure forte, two measure piano phrase. The chromatic figures woven around an approach to D-Major dominant sonorities in 16-17 accompany a loss of forward motion. Just at a point of harmonic stasis, under a two-measure held b' in the first violin, however, the addition of a crescendo to a sudden piano in measure 19 (found in Artaria first edition and added presumably after the first performances of the quartet) adds some sense of forward motion. The rather un-melodic chromatic figures that follows, accompanied by almost mechanical repetition of a Phrygian half-cadence on V/V are accented only by sudden fortepianos, whose increasing frequency only underscores the insistent rotation of the chromatic sixteenth-note figurations over the dissonance-and-release, dissonance-and-release pattern of the half cadences. This passage has many of the same qualities as the equally mechanical section in the Boccherini quartet

I discuss above (in measures 22 and following).⁶⁷ The arrival on V/V in measure 24 works in this context like an afterthought.

The third paragraph (or second group) begins with a first violin anti-melody as well; the first measure hovers around f-sharp, the second measure is a repetition of a leap from f-sharp to a, the third like the first except around e, and so on.⁶⁸ The rhythm of the dynamic indications is suddenly much slower, until measure 37, where the pattern of dynamic indications on every beat returns suddenly, undermining the classic hierarchy of the bar by stressing beats two and four. The rest of the dynamic indications “direct” the motion of the music to the dominant. The sudden piano in measure 44, for instance, breaks up the feeling of a pedal on D Major by forcing the V/V, which as the more dissonant sonority ought to be loud, to be soft instead – one observes Mozart doing the same with harmony by re-introducing the dominant seventh g at the weakest point in the measure, on the second eighth-note of beat two. A sudden fortepiano on the diminished seventh chord in measure 51 is the last “loud” event in the exposition; the final cadence and its pianissimo echo bring it then to a close. The complete exposition is to be found in musical example 3.3.

⁶⁷ On mechanistic writing in Mozart see Annette Richards, “Automatic Genius.”

⁶⁸ How Reinhold Schlötterer could find this passage to be “melodious” is something of a mystery; see his “Ein Beispiel zu Mozarts ‘Compositionswissenschaft’ im Streichquartett G-Dur KV 387,” *Mozart-Jahrbuch* 1991, 650-54.

Allegro vivace assai

VI I

VI II

Va

Vc

8

15

22

28

Musical Example 3.3:

W.A. Mozart: String Quartet in G K. 387, mm. 1-55

There are many ways to read this exposition. Wolf-Dieter Seiffert, in a recent analysis, argues that the corrections in the autograph to the opening measures in the inner voices open an “authentic” analytical perspective.⁶⁹ Seiffert sees Mozart struggling with the realization of two related ideas that for him work to bind the entire movement together: the dissonance and resolution on beats three and four in mm. three and five, and what he calls a “fauxbourdon” texture created by the block-like stringing together of six-three chords in the same measures. Mozart’s interventions in the middle voices are a sign of his struggle to make these ideas work (the original version underneath the corrections contains “illegal” doublings of dissonances, the “corrected” version resolves the problem with an “unconventional” doubling.) “What kind of interpretation,” Seiffert asks, “could claim to come so near and directly to the secrets of the compositional process, as this one does, since it confirms that Mozart only had trouble with the secondarily important *Ausführung* (elaboratio) of the primary and fundamental idea of the work?”

The question Seiffert implies (what is *Ausführung*?) strikes at the heart of what I have been claiming here, and his answer reminds one strikingly of Koch. Genial inspiration (the fundamental idea of the piece) is disciplined by the rational procedures of *Ausführung*, through “labor.” Mozart has trouble with these. Seiffert’s analysis hones in on Koch’s first *Ausführung*, the cutting and pasting, revising and rethinking, of elements of pitch, harmony, and melody, much as we saw in Wranitzky’s

⁶⁹ Wolf-Dieter Seiffert, “Die Untersuchung autographischer Korrekturen als Chance ‘Authentischer’ Werkinterpretation dargestellt anhand von Mozarts ‘Haydn-Quartetten,’” *Mozart-Jahrbuch* 2001 306-343, here 337-343.

compositional practice. But the second kind of performance, the bodily gestures, and, most of all, their restraint through piano and pianissimo dynamic markings, are equally in evidence in Mozart's quartet. Seiffert's reading concentrates on the *textual* consequences of Mozart's revisions; in his reading *Ausführung* is "secondarily important."

It was no doubt of secondary importance for Koch as well, *in the first sense of his definition*. But by blurring the border between composition and performance, Koch opened the door to a reversal of priorities that seems typical for thinking about performance in his and Mozart's generation. Ulrich Konrad, in his reflections on the rhetoric of Mozart's compositional practice, asked, without presuming an answer, how Mozart was able to know when the process of composition was completed, what special quality was it, "that led to this and only this piece" ("daß er zu diesem und nur zu diesem Stück führte.") Clearly, in the case of K. 387, the compositional process as we traditionally understand it extended to a point beyond the completion of the autograph. As Seiffert himself has argued elsewhere, Mozart, together with his colleagues, had "played the works in proof" – we have seen how at least one important dynamic stage direction in the exposition of K. 387 was added only at this stage.⁷⁰ Mozart's extreme attention to this kind of detail demonstrates his concern that the transition from composition to performance to be as seamless as possible and his openness to a wider definition of *Ausführung*.

Like Boccherini, both by intervening in smaller details of *Vortrag* on such a massive scale and by invoking the mechanical in the

⁷⁰ See Seiffert, "Mozarts Haydn-Quartette."

construction of his music, Mozart calls attention to the paradox between the actor and the enacted. It is hard to imagine that he believed, as his father seems to have, that every piece of music has one “best” performance and that sufficient skill in reading musical notation is enough to attain it. Real expressive performance is not to be captured in text; as Herder reminded his zealously rational opponents, expression cannot be reified. To play any music strictly *com' è scritto* would be to replicate exactly the kind of thinking about expression (and music) that Herder – and Mozart? – had rejected. That does not preclude the composer’s seeking to encode expression, an aesthetic of infinite nuance, in a text as best he can. This increasing precision is not the same, however, as the “progress” in notational exactitude that is a trope in many tellings of Western music history.⁷¹ A paradox remains; the dialectic between performance and its texts cannot be collapsed.

⁷¹ See John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).