

Trills and Trilling: Masks, dandyism, historical performance, and the self

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ABSTRACT: This paper offers an interpretation of historically-informed performance (HIP) in terms of the creation and presentation of a performing persona to facilitate a particular kind of social exchange. Focussing on Arnold Dolmetsch, I situate the self-presentation of the HIP musician in a sociological and literary context. I refer to work by Lionel Trilling, Ephret Tseëlon, Rhonda Garelick, and Erwin Goffmann, and the writings of Oscar Wilde and the novelist George Moore. HIP musicians have adopted specific performance protocols which invert those of 'mainstream' performers. The early concerts given by Arnold Dolmetsch at the end of the 19th century show this very clearly. In many respects Dolmetsch's concerts were also 'modern'. 'Early music' performers presented themselves in a persona which concealed their 'real' selves – although the self that any classical performer offers the audiences is already a constructed identity in the first place. Trilling's distinction of sincerity and authenticity in a literary context is used here to show that musical authenticity is diametrically opposed to literary authenticity: the musician pretends to another persona, whereas the writer explores darker psychological depths. The work of Tseëlon and Castle is adduced to show that performing identities can be used to distance the performer from power relations, and to create a non-specific sense of 'pastness' in performance. Oscar Wilde's view of historical Shakespearean production shows strong similarities to Dolmetsch's. Goffmann's analysis of social 'performance' clarifies Dolmetsch's method of self-presentation, and his analysis is borne out by contemporaneous responses. Garelick's account of 19th-century dandyism suggests further parallels and divergences: the self-created dandy and the HIP musician erase their 'true' identities, but the musician invites the audience's collaboration whereas the dandy disdains it. Mainstream and HIP musicians offer different versions of the autochthonous performer, the former offering themselves as created in the here and now, the latter in terms of a literal return to roots.

KEY WORDS: Dolmetsch, Goffmann, dandy, historical performance, self-presentation

The musical performance movement named variously ‘historically-informed performance’, ‘early music’, ‘authentic’ (disparagingly, ‘authenticist’), or *Aufführungspraxis*, is something over a century old.¹ Its attempt to gain additional intellectual rigour in the last decades of the twentieth century provoked lively discussion in the 1980s and 1990s, followed by a lull. It is hard to think of any other type of art-music performance, as opposed to, say composition, that has attracted this particular kind of attention. The performance of music composed by the long-dead, for performance by the long-dead, for the enjoyment of long-dead audiences, in a manner that might be recognized as familiar/preferable/definitive/ideal by the long-dead, is still extremely provocative to some, and the subject of philosophical speculation by others.² Somewhere between these extremes, research continues to suggest how gaps in our historical knowledge of performance and repertoires might be filled. But, setting aside this positivist work, it remains the case that wider theoretical aspects of HIP have barely been explored since the work of Butt (2002) or Kivy (1998), even though – to take only one obvious example – the clear shift in recent times towards seeing the work-concept as primarily an historical trope has profound implications for any performance, HIP or otherwise, that attempts to recover ‘the work’.³ This paper represents an attempt to recuperate HIP in terms of what happens in a performance – but a performance in which the performer is in some sense adopting a persona in order to enable a very particular kind of social exchange. Focussing on the figure of Arnold Dolmetsch, I will explore aspects of the presentation of the HIP musician in the context of sociology and literary history, referring to work by Lionel Trilling, Ephret Tseïlon, Rhonda Garelick, and Erwin Goffmann, as well as the writings of Oscar Wilde and George Moore. This will suggest a different context for aspects of HIP, which has a bearing on its more recent manifestations.

‘Early musicians’ have often distinguished themselves from their ‘mainstream’ colleagues by adopting different modes of dress and behaviour. Resisting the conventional white tie and tails of the symphony orchestra, its notably hierarchical power structures, its preference for pragmatism over principle, its institutional status, its professionalism, its worship of tradition, its location outside academic discourse, and its circumscribed concept of a ‘musical’ sound, early musicians practised democracy, adopted a relaxed dress code, cherished their principles, resisted institutionalization, embraced the amateur, circumvented received tradition, enthusiastically participated in academic discourse, and embraced unconventional sounds. This was not a secret – quite the reverse. Audiences knew what they were coming to hear and see, and in doing so shared the counter-cultural *frisson*. This account, in essence, is basically as valid for early music pioneers of the late

¹ Hereafter, for no reason other than brevity, all such expressions will be subsumed under ‘historically-informed performance’, or HIP. A version of this article was given as a research seminar paper in the University of Leeds School of Music in November 2013, and some ideas from it were presented as part of my Newland Lecture at the University of Hull in 2014; I am most grateful to all the participants in the ensuing discussions. My thanks to Dr Karen McAulay (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) for her assistance with the bibliographical reference to Oscar Wilde.

² Pinchas Zukerman (Green, 2013) completely rejects HIP, repeating in essence remarks he made more than 20 years ago (Sherman, 1997, p. 7, citing Nelson, 1990, p. 38).

³ It should be noted that this paper is concerned with ‘art music’. In the field of popular music, the notion of ‘authenticity’ is seen primarily in terms of the truth to the performer’s personal experience. Likewise, the work-concept as a regulative criterion has little place in popular music.

nineteenth century as it is for the modern wave of historically informed performance that began in the 1970s.

We know that musicians specialising in early music wanted to be what we until recently called 'authentic' (the scare quotation marks are taken for granted now). But were they sincere? This question has teased me ever since first reading the poet and critic Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity*. This slim volume, consisting of Trilling's 1970 Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard became a seminal work in literary studies, cited in all subsequent treatments of a topic which Trilling may be said to have initiated – most obviously, here. However, at the time of writing, the only citation known to me of Trilling's work in the context of current musical authenticity occurs in the course of Stephen Johnson's general overview of HIP (2013) where he appears to blame Trilling for something clearly not his fault:

When the movement began to gather momentum on the continent, [...] the buzz-word – at least, among commentators – was "authenticity". The echo of American literary critic Lionel Trilling's influential *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1970) gave the term a probably spurious aura of philosophical respectability. (Johnson, 2013, p. 43)

Tim Carter (2013, p. 81) recently referred to a widespread conservatoire view that all a performer needed was to approach the notes with sincerity, as opposed to the authenticity linked to musicological exactness, but he did not refer to Trilling's work.

Indeed, I cannot recall any reference to Trilling, as opposed to trilling, by HIP musicians. The opposition posed in its title – Trilling makes it quite clear that these terms are *opposed* – is quite alien to performing musicians, or to any discussion of performances themselves. Performances can be described as convincing, authoritative, definitive, passionate, or committed, but 'sincere'? I perform as well as I can, but I am not aware of how sincere my performance might be. I do not set out with the intention of appearing sincere; I do not reflect on my performance in hindsight and evaluate its sincerity. Rostropovich's historic 1968 performance of the Dvořák Cello Concerto at the London Promenade Concerts as the tanks rolled into Prague would be embarrassingly diminished were it hailed as 'sincere'. Perhaps if the word has any meaning in a musical context it indicates how far the performer has supposedly performed without personal idiosyncrasy, giving the audience the illusion of direct unmediated contact with the composer. But this would be tantamount to reversing the normal use of the word. Trilling argues that the concept of sincerity is a recent one, and is culturally determined.

[T]he word [sincerity] cannot be applied to a person without regard to his cultural circumstances. For example, we cannot say of the patriarch Abraham that he was a sincere man. That statement must seem only comical. The sincerity of Achilles or Beowulf cannot be discussed: they neither have nor lack sincerity. But if we ask whether young Werther is really as sincere as he intends to be, or which of the two Dashwood sisters, Elinor or Marianne, is thought by Jane Austen to be the more truly sincere, we can confidently expect a serious response in the form of opinions on both sides of the question (Trilling, 1970, p.2).

Trilling sees this kind of sincerity as connected with the emergence of the thriving Elizabethan theatre:

It is surely no accident that the idea of sincerity, of the own self and the difficulty of know-ing and showing it, should have arisen to vex men's minds in the epoch that saw

the sudden efflorescence of theatre. A well-known contemporary work of sociology bears the title *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* – we can suppose that the Hamlet of our days says: “I have that within which passeth presentation.” In this enterprise of presenting the self, of putting ourselves on the social stage, sincerity itself plays a curiously compromised part. Society requires of us that we present ourselves as being sincere, and the most efficacious way of satisfying this demand is to see to it that we really are sincere, that we actually are what we want our community to know we are. In short, we play the role of being ourselves, we sincerely act the part of the sincere person, with the result that a judgment may be passed upon our sincerity that it is not authentic (Trilling, 1970, pp. 10-11 – Trilling is referring to Erwin Goffmann’s *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* [1959]).

For Trilling, sincerity and authenticity constitute opposing poles of the self, with an increasing tension between the two from Shakespeare’s day onwards to the twentieth century. His authenticity is altogether darker than anything in the world of early music, based as it is on “a more exigent conception of the self and of what being true to it consists in, a wider reference to the universe and man’s place in it, and a less acceptant and genial view of the social circumstances of life” (Trilling, 1970, p. 11). He cites the final stanza of Yeats’s “The Circus Animals’ Desertion” (1939). In this late poem Yeats rejects his earlier Irish mythic poetic sources, represented by Oisín, Cúchulainn, myth, folk tales, and dreams, and he also rejects his early play *The Countess Kathleen* (1892), first performed in 1899. Instead, Yeats turns inwards, concluding: “I must lie down where all the ladders start / In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart” (Yeats, 1939). This authenticity, for Trilling, embraces “disorder, violence, unreason” (Trilling, 1970, p. 11). These destructive forces are present in the word’s very etymology:

Authenteo: to have full power over; also, to commit a murder. *Authentes*: not only a master and a doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide. These ancient and forgotten denotations bear upon the nature and intention of the artistic culture of the period we call Modern (Trilling, 1970, p. 131).

At first sight, this existentialist authenticity has little to do with performing music – until we remember Richard Taruskin’s reading of that tired cliché of authentic performance, “cleaning the dirt from a painting”:

What is thought of as the “dirt” [...] is what people, acting out of a variety of motives [...] have done with it. What is thought of as the “painting” by such musicians is an imaginary rendering in which “personal choices” have been [...] eliminated. What this syllogism reduces to is: *people are dirt*. [...] this is another, less attractive way of stating the premise that underlies the whole modern movement. It is the dark side of dehumanization, the side that does evoke robots and concentration camps (Taruskin, 1995, p.150; his emphasis).

That provocatively polemical summing-up should be read carefully in terms of the early music scene of the 1980s and 90s. Taruskin’s original chapter was first published seven years earlier (Taruskin, 1988), and although he noted that things had moved on in the postscript added for the 1995 reprint, he did not substantially withdraw his basic point. But although its interest is itself becoming increasingly historical, that need not invalidate a reading aligning Taruskin’s ‘authenticity’ with Trilling’s. Authenticity can be so bad that it’s good.

Trilling’s authenticity is a personal authenticity, not a search for someone else’s.

Polonius, quoted early on by Trilling, says “to thy own self be true”, but HIP musicians say ‘to the composer (or the composer’s contemporary performers) be true’. Of course, put in those terms, all art musicians would aspire to the part of this credo outside my parentheses. (Indeed, there are those who would rather be called historically uninformed than untrue to the composer. The paradox is only superficial, and is suppressed by appeal to ‘instinctive’ musicianship that can perceive the eternal truths of the music behind the local circumstances of its production.) But HIP seeks, or at least until recent years, sought, an additionally stringent requirement. Musical authenticity is not concerned with the personal authenticity of the modern performer. It requires the evasion of the performer’s authenticity in order to encounter the composer and the work authentically, through the performing modes of those dead performers. In a way, it is closer to Trilling’s sincerity. If the performer presents as ‘sincere’, this is in the sense of sincerely recreating the original work through its original performances – sincerely motivated, perhaps. When older music was performed without any particular attempt to recreate the original conditions of its performance, the performer’s ‘sincerity’ was taken for granted. With these thoughts in mind, let us look at Arnold Dolmetsch.

Dolmetsch is a very familiar figure to all students of early music, and indeed can fairly be said to have initiated the rehabilitation of old music through its performance on instruments of the period in line with surviving evidence of performance practice. I wish to emphasise certain aspects of his background and milieu here. He was, of course, encouraged by William Morris to build a harpsichord – he played the virginals to Morris in late September 1896, about a week before Morris’s death on 3rd October (Campbell, 1975, pp. 103-104; ‘Autolykus’, 1896, p. 220). He worked for Chickering in Boston and then Gaveau in Paris as a builder of clavichords and harpsichords, and founded the Haslemere Festival in 1925. But this should be seen in the context of the 1890s avant-garde, rather than as an affected nostalgia for the past like the sort of Merrie England-ness satirized later in Chapters 4 and 20 of Kingley Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954). Dolmetsch’s friends, colleagues, and customers included William Morris, Roger Fry, Gabriele d’Annunzio, George Bernard Shaw, Ezra Pound, and W. B. Yeats. James Joyce wanted to buy a Dolmetsch lute in 1904 (he was offered a harpsichord instead), and Joyce’s *alter ego* Stephen Daedalus announces his intention to buy a Dolmetsch lute in *Ulysses*, referring to the maker by name (Ellman, 1975, p. 20; Joyce, 1922/1968, p. 480). Dolmetsch also appears as the musician Villona in Joyce’s *Dubliners* (Joyce, 1914; first published in *The Irish Homestead*, 17th December 1904); for these and more references to Dolmetsch in literature, see Abbott (n. d.). The novelist and painter George Moore described Arnold Dolmetsch in detail in his fascinating novel *Evelyn Innes* (1898). This novel has received some attention from a musicological perspective in recent years, beginning with Elizabeth Roche’s short article in 1983 (see Kehler, 2012; Heilman and Llewelyn, 2014; Holman, 2010). The novel opens with a description of Dolmetsch that uncannily anticipates his 1925 appearance in the famous photograph by Herbert Lambert in the National Portrait Gallery.

Iron-grey hair hung in thick locks over his forehead, and, shining through their shadows, his eyes drew attention from the rest of his face, so that none noticed at first the small and firmly cut nose, nor the scanty growth of beard twisted to a point by a movement habitual to the weak, white hand. His face was in his eyes: they reflected the flame of faith and of mission; they were the eyes of one whom fate had thrown on an obscure

wayside of dreams, the face of a dreamer and propagandist of old-time music and its instruments. He sat at the virginal, like one who loved its old design and sweet tone, in such strict keeping with the music he was playing [...] His hands moved over the keyboard softly, as if they loved it, and his thoughts, though deep in the gentle music, entertained casual admiration of the sixteenth century organ [...] which he could see at the end of the room on a slightly raised platform. Its beautiful shape, and the shape of the old instruments, vaguely perceived, lent an enchantment to the darkness (Moore, 1898, p.1).

Evelyn Innes contains a considerable amount of musical detail, acquired by Moore through many conversations with Dolmetsch. But this largely constitutes corroborative detail in a psychological novel that owes much to Balzac and is strongly influenced by Wagner, containing a character based on Yeats in the person of the heroine's second lover, the composer Ulick Dean. Moore himself described it in the preface to its second part, *Sister Teresa*, as "a love story, the first written in English for three hundred years, and the only one in prose" (Moore, 1929, p. vi). Just like the real Dolmetsch, his fictional representation, 'Mr. Innes', is closely associated with the *fin-de-siècle* avant-garde. An interview with Dolmetsch opens "We, in these *fin-de-siècle* times...", and the thrust of the article is to present Dolmetsch's ideas as a reproof to smart modern people who think they know everything, "show[ing] us more things than our feeble philosophy dreams of" (Anon., 1895, p. 34). Moore (1898, p. 11) noted of the fictitious Dolmetsch's concerts that

Painters and men of letters were attracted by them; musicians seldom. Nor did Mr. Innes encourage their presence. Musicians were of no use to him. They were, he said, divided into two classes—those who came to scoff, and those who came to steal.

Moore was not musical and appears to have treated Wagnerism very much as a literary idea. He seems to have annoyed Dolmetsch by not acknowledging his help, and by dedicating the novel to Yeats and Arthur Symonds, "two contemporary writers with whom I am in sympathy." Some early reviews failed to spot the resemblance between Evelyn's father and Dolmetsch. The *Saturday Review* (Anon., 1898a, p. 781) simply described Mr. Innes as "a somewhat pedantic Catholic musician, with a craze for old Italian church-music" and complained of there being too much technical musical discussion. *The Bookman* (A. M., 1898, p. 103) disagreed, commending the novel as a "mine of interest" for students of early music, and for its portrait of Dolmetsch, but also praising its treatment of Wagner. The *Athenaeum* (Anon., 1898b, p. 31) praised Moore's musical diligence as "a great achievement", without referring to Dolmetsch at all.

Dolmetsch presented himself in the carefully constructed and highly consistent persona of craftsman, unconcerned with outward appearance, standing for the expressive artisan against the industrial machine. His own appearance, coupled with his unconventional background, helped create his performed identity, aptly described by Margaret Campbell:

on the night of the concert (19 December 1891) the studio was packed. The best-known progressives in London had turned out for the occasion – artists, poets, writers: they were fascinated by this little Frenchman whose very appearance was more pre-Raphaelite than the pre-Raphaelites themselves with velvet suit, lace ruffles and silver buckles on his shoes. His music recaptured for them the delights of a lost enchantment: the embodiment of all their aspirations (Campbell, 1975, p. 41).

Margaret Campbell's "embodiment" is apposite. For this occasion Dolmetsch's body is literally inscribed with pre-Raphaelite signification, in a performance that began well before the first notes sounded in the room.

Those attending his events at the so-called Fitzroy Settlement, an Adam-designed building bought by the architect Mackmurdo in 1889 – also the home of the Century Guild of Artists, where in 1891 Yeats met Oscar Wilde, of whom more later (Sloan, 1995, p. 59) – were in no doubt that they were not attending a conventional concert.

Mackmurdo [had] enlivened its face by white paint on the woodwork of windows, door and fanlight, and a number and knocker in brass... An entrant was greeted by a circular warm Della Robbia [sic] relief let into a wall of the white tinted vestibule. An imposing Italian painting in fine colouring in [the] original frame overspread the width of the projecting breast above the mantel in the drawing office... Two large rooms which could be thrown into one [were] on the first floor... Dullness was absent, disposal of furniture was discriminating and airiness prevailed (Campbell, 1975, p. 41, citing a letter from Henry Sirr to Miss E. M. Pugh, 6 May 1942. Ellipses as in Campbell, who gives no location for this letter).

A clear suggestion that this old music needed different performing conditions had been included in the programme for Dolmetsch's first concert in London on 27 April earlier the same year:

N.B. Owing to the delicate nature of the tone of the instruments, and the style of the Music, which requires concentration of mind to be thoroughly understood, the doors of the room will be kept closed during the performance of the pieces (Campbell, 1975, p. 36, citing a programme for the concert on 27 April 1891 at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly).

While Dolmetsch's pre-Raphaelite audience may have felt at home at these events, others simply found the venue strange, the occasion lacking in social decorum, and the music itself decidedly odd:

The men achieve a ladies' cloakroom, but no adequate reception, the guests wander ... at last we find room where the harpsichord stands – the studio. A man with large hair and panther eyes moves about—it must be Dolmetsch. The discord, the untidy business of tuning up distresses the ear peculiarly and seems to take longer than usual. At last the six viols make the ancient novel music. How strange the tone of these old instruments—what a far-off tinkling of youthfulness. They cannot express the subtlety nor the volume of our modern emotion... they have a sunny gala thinness, or a quaint sorrow that scarcely swells into passion. Men must have been half crickets when this music satisfied them (Campbell, 1975, p. 44, citing Field, 1933, p. 238).

On December 14th 1899 Dolmetsch presented a programme at the house of the harpsichordist Violet Gordon Woodhouse. This included viol music by Locke, Telemann, and Bach, harpsichord works by Handel, Mozart, and Bach, an opera aria by Handel, and Mozart's *Abendempfindung* K. 523 with harpsichord accompaniment. Dolmetsch's host created a very particular atmosphere:

Although this was to be a public concert, Violet [Woodhouse] prepared as if for a private occasion. By letting down a thick green velvet curtain in front of the archway, Violet turned the library into a retiring chamber, from which the Dolmetsch family emerged in Elizabethan costume onto a raised dais where the harpsichords stood. There being no electricity in the house, the drawing-room was lit by two statues holding oil lamps in the niches on either side of the double doors, and by violet-coloured wax candles set on the green-striped walls in flat brass sconces. Since no paintings could compete with the

beautiful ceiling, Violet had hung the room with silhouettes on glass and engravings in low tones of brown, grey and black. The dark, polished boards of the uncarpeted floor gleamed in the candlelight, and high piles of cushions haphazardly filled the window seats (Douglas-Home, 1997, p. 46).

This closely resembles the concert presentation style of the Dolmetsch's concert given in their own home, as described by Arnold's daughter Mabel:

The concert room, tinted a soft diaphanous green, was entirely illuminated by wax candles, set round the walls in hand-beaten brass sconces, and interspersed with rare lutes and viols, suspended from hooks... There was a pleasantly informal atmosphere at these concerts; and the interludes, during which excellent coffee and petit fours were handed round, enabled one to appreciate the unusual nature of the audience (Dolmetsch, 1958, p. 17).

A later concert was also presented in a "diaphanous silver grey" (Dolmetsch, 1958, p. 79).

One kind of avant-garde performance has ended up looking rather like another one, for the 'diaphanous' light described by Mabel Dolmetsch is characteristic, not of the eighteenth century, and certainly not of the pre-Raphaelites, but of the symbolist movement. Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas et Mélisande* was first performed in Paris in 1893 under grey lighting behind a gauze, and its London première had taken place only the year before this concert (Lockspeiser, 1978, p. 190; Nichols & Langham-Smith, 1989, p. 5). In its heterogeneous assembly of instrumental and vocal pieces, this programme also shows a clear parallel with the mainstream orchestral concerts of the 1890s, albeit in miniature. Even Dolmetsch's posture is recognizably of his own time. Compare Dolmetsch's posture with that shown in the photograph (Figure 1) of the violinist Heinrich Dessauer (1863-1917) (Dessauer, ca. 1900, facing p. 4; Brown, 2012). A version of this posture, which was widely recommended by later nineteenth-century violinists, appears in a drawing (Rothenstein, 1897) of Dolmetsch himself playing a viola d'amore with a posture almost identical to Dessauer's. Dolmetsch leans back slightly, perhaps to counterbalance the larger, heavier instrument. For all its apparent difference, presenting the public in a private format, the counter-cultural still literally positions itself, to a significant degree, within the prevailing discourse.

Dolmetsch was, we have no reason to doubt, sincere. But his performances were offered not as sincere, but as what would be now termed authentic, a more authoritative claim than 'historically-informed'. He did not use the word himself, but in an article on the forthcoming 1925 Haslemere Festival, "more aptly entitled the Festival of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch", Gerald Hayes came very close:

[...] not only will the magnificent instrumental compositions of the 16th and 17th centuries be *faithfully interpreted* on the viols, lute, recorder, &c., *for which they were written*, but a section of the festival will be devoted to the 18th-century composers, including Haydn and Mozart, whose works will be given *with all the accuracy that Mr. Dolmetsch's researches make possible* (Hayes, 1925, p. 526. Emphases added).

His case raises a philosophical problem outlined by Efrat Tseëlon:

[T]he philosophy of the mask represents two approaches to identity. One assumes the existence of an authentic self. This approach views the mask – real or metaphoric – as covering, on certain occasions, and even deceiving by pretending to be the real self. The other approach maintains that every manifestation is authentic, that the mask reveals the multiplicity of our identity (Tseëlon, 2001, p. 4);

Masking is an extension of the notion of performance. Like performance it evokes the idea of an authentic identity (“behind the mask” or “behind the performance”) only to dismantle the illusion of such identity. It is often used in the Bakhtinian carnivalesque sense of a possibility of being something other than what one is; as a dissimulation of authentic identities or a disarray of accepted roles (Tseëlon, 2001, p. 9).



Figure 1. Heinrich Dessauer, posture demonstration.

Tseëlon takes this considerably further, suggesting that the wearing of a (literal, physical) mask can represent a “feminine strategy of disarmament” which deflects attention from a desire for power. She contrasts this disingenuous masking with the Lacanian view that the mask conceals a lack: “It is for what she is not that she expects to be desired as well as loved” (Tseëlon, 2001, p. 11, citing Lacan, 1982, p. 84). The empty space behind the mask is a Lacanian void, concealed by an artifice which may be a way of evading an objectifying gaze, provoking a fantasy in the onlooker (Žižek, 2007). Tseëlon (2001, p. 12) steers a middle course between the two, maintaining that identity is an embodied rhetorical strategy, and that such strategies are embedded in power relations. The appearance and demeanour of the early musician can be read in both these ways: as deflecting attention from the assertion of power in performance, and as inviting us to admire the music for what is not being expressed there, for not being, in a word, modern. By not dressing in conventional concert dress, the performer distances him or herself from the established institution of the concert and from its power relations. By assuming the dress of the historical period of the

music (what professional musicians now call ‘wigs and tights’ concerts), the performer is distanced from the present. Both consequences suggest *ressentiment*, through which a system of values is adopted which has significance precisely in what it is not – a group identity can be created whose elements are important insofar as they are not the values of the ruling elite. These values themselves may or may not be intrinsically important, but they reflect (and thus reveal) the hegemonic value system. The ‘presentation’ of the performer, to use Goffmann’s term, partly through an assumed visual identity, works like a mask. It conceals one identity by suggesting another, clearly artificial, one. In the case of the musical performer, it suggests a potential multiplicity of identities that can be adopted at will (16th century-, 13th century-, 19th century-...), and hints at something like Tseïlon’s disarmament strategy. However, in the case of the historical performer, there are really two simultaneous masks in use: the ‘historical’ mask, signifying the past, and the ‘present’ mask, signifying the performer as he or she is now. The layers of fiction are analogous to the case of the actor who in the course of the play assumes a further disguise. In the context of Trilling, this is almost a cliché of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, but in the case of musical performances of this type the audience members willingly participate in the fictional play(ing) – I will return to this point later.

The question of how far the dramatic actor should go in the direction of period costume was raised in the same year of Dolmetsch’s first Fitzroy Street concert by Oscar Wilde in “The Truth of Masks”, written in 1885 as “Shakespeare and stage costume” (Wilde, 1885) but published under its later title in 1891 (from which all quotations are taken). Wilde objected to Shakespearean productions which disregarded the details of costume which Shakespeare frequently specified. The argument takes a similar form to that found in historical performance. Wilde asserts that some producers think that Shakespeare was simply indifferent to costume, and that others see accuracy in this respect as irrelevant:

... as regards any historical accuracy in dress, Lord Lytton, in an article in the Nineteenth Century, has laid it down as a dogma of art that archaeology is entirely out of place in the presentation of any of Shakespeare’s plays, and the attempt to introduce it one of the stupidest pedantries of an age of prigs (Wilde, 1891, p. 179).

He then goes to great lengths to show how Shakespeare provides copious details of costume, and how these have an essential dramatic function beyond the merely picturesque or exotic: “Of Shakespeare it may be said he was the first to see the dramatic value of doublets, and that a climax may depend on a crinoline” (Wilde, 1891, p. 181). But he goes further, asserting that Shakespeare was specifically interested in what he calls “archaeology”, and that in this he was by no means unusual for his time. Wilde goes on to develop his own interpretation of Shakespearean drama as something which literally brings archaeology to life.

Archaeology to them was not a mere science for the antiquarian; it was a means by which they could touch the dry dust of antiquity into the very breath and beauty of life, and fill with the new wine of romanticism forms that else had been old and outworn. [...] And this use of archaeology in shows, so far from being a bit of priggish pedantry, is in every way legitimate and beautiful. For the stage is not merely the meeting-place of all the arts, but is also the return of art to life. Sometimes in an archaeological novel the use of strange and obsolete terms seems to hide the reality beneath the learning [...] but with the stage how different it is! The ancient world wakes from its sleep, and history moves as a pageant before our eyes [...] (Wilde, 1891, p. 191).

He makes a strong case for what we might now call authentic Shakespearean production, at least concerning costume, noting that Shakespeare himself appears to mock those who combine different national styles of dress, and that he appears to have taken an interest in archaeological precision. The musical parallels are fairly clear, suggesting an analogy with, for example, those modern performances of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* informed by a knowledge of Brahms's interest in early music and which explicitly make a connection with Heinrich Schütz (Gardiner, 2007-2008).

But Wilde goes yet further.

Whenever in our own day historical accuracy has been disregarded, and the various dresses in a play taken from different ages, the result has been that the stage has been turned into that chaos of costume, that caricature of the centuries, the Fancy Dress Ball, to the entire ruin of all dramatic and picturesque effect. (Wilde, 1891, p. 204)

Wilde suggests that when historical accuracy (both in the letter and the spirit) is lacking, we are left with something more like masquerade, with its scrambling of historical chronology, combining costumes from any and all historical periods. For Wilde, this is evidently a bad thing. But if we set aside his distaste for masquerade, some interesting parallels with historical performance emerge. Terry Castle's discussion of eighteenth-century English masquerades describes the phenomenon thus:

[T]he masquerade resists containment in discourse. It follows no plot; its spirit is profoundly antitemporal, and its exemplary liberties a spectacular rebuff to all ordering forces, including those of historical encapsulation. The masquerade evokes a world of *temps perdu*; it tends to elude all but the most nostalgic and distorting forms of recuperation (Castle, 1986, pp. 6-7).

Masquerade evokes lost time, literally so in Dolmetsch's case. But in so doing, it also raises other, deeper, questions.

[...] the pleasures (and dangers) of the masquerade were of a particularly revelatory kind. And indeed, the masquerade broached in a peculiarly stylized way certain issues we have come to locate at the heart of eighteenth-century culture. The notion of the self [...] must be invoked in any discussion of the masquerade. The masked assemblies [...] were in the deepest sense a kind of collective meditation on self and other [...] masqueraders developed scenes of vertiginous existential recombination. New bodies were superimposed over old; anarchic, theatrical selves displaced supposedly essential ones; masks, or personae, obscured persons. [...] One became the other in an act of ecstatic impersonation (Castle, 1986, p. 4).

Wilde rejected a masquerade that created an aporic confusion of ahistorical or anti-historical signifiers, evoking pastness in general rather than any specific past. But masquerade is also a way of presenting the self, or at least overtly presenting a persona which is *not* the self, which invites us to speculate about the real person. Considered in this context, to appear in public as a musical performer dressed in historical costume is, rather obviously, to present two selves at once (normally, musicians are not literally masked). Taruskin famously mapped aspects of 1980s 'faster, cleaner, lighter' early music performance style onto an ideology of Stravinskian modernism. Wilde's costume masquerade put a range of historically inaccurate costumes on a fixed *dramatis personae*, while the HIP masquerade put the same costume on a disparate and changing group of 'characters' – that is, composers and repertoires from the distant past. The net result is the

same: instead of historical precision, the atemporal masquerade foregrounds the otherness of the repertoire and its performance practice, surrounding it with a non-specific aura of *temps perdu*.

So: how many selves does the performer present – one, two, or even none at all? To consider this question it is necessary to consider not only the performer, but the audience. In this, the work of Ervin Goffmann, cited in passing by Trilling, provides a good starting point. Although *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1990 – first published in 1959) uses the terms ‘performance’ and ‘audience’ throughout, Goffmann himself makes only few references to social interactions of this type at concerts. Nonetheless, his treatment of the tendency for the “audience” to collaborate with the “performer” in social situations generally is strikingly relevant to the reception of early music performance.

In the context of the discussion of Trilling, it is important to note that Goffman opposes sincerity, not to authenticity, but to cynicism. For Goffmann, the cynical social performer is one who does not believe in the truth of the performance. This need not be a bad thing. Goffmann (1990, p. 29) cites the case of a doctor who prescribes a placebo, at the patient’s insistence, and notes:

It is not assumed, of course, that all cynical performers are interested in deluding their audiences for purposes of what is called “self-interest” or private gain. A cynical performer may delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good [...] in service occupations practitioners who may otherwise be sincere are sometimes forced to delude their customers because their customers show such a heartfelt demand for it. [...] these are cynical performers whose audience will not allow them to be sincere.

A central means of presenting the self employs what Goffmann calls “front”:

the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance. [...] First, there is the “setting”, involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it. A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, [...] one may take the term “personal front” to refer to the other items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he or she goes. As part of personal front we may include: insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; bodily gestures; and the like. Some of these vehicles for conveying signs, such as racial characteristics, are relatively fixed [...] some of these sign vehicles are relatively mobile or transitory, such as facial expression, and can vary during a performance from one moment to the next (Goffmann, 1990, pp. 32-34).

A pared-down version of “front” applies in the case of the identification of saints or classical deities in mediaeval and renaissance art – a saint’s or a god’s attribute, such as a plague scar or a lyre, will be sufficient to identify St. Roche or Orpheus. These objects can even imply the presence of the figure by simple synecdoche. The viols and other impedimenta hung on the walls for Dolmetsch’s concerts have precisely this function. Together with period costume and other distinctive concert behaviours, they constitute Dolmetsch’s *fin-de-siècle* early music setting and front. The audience, mostly, goes along with this front. Those who dissent, as some of Dolmetsch’s audience appear to have done, seize on apparently trivial issues:

When the audience is known to be secretly sceptical of the reality that is being impressed upon them, we have been ready to appreciate their tendency to pounce on trifling flaws as a sign that the whole show is false... (Goffmann, 1990, p. 59).

Thus the unconventional disposition of the rooms in the Fitzroy Settlement disapproved of by Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper above can lead seamlessly to a dismissal of the entire enterprise. Goffman's further subdivision of "front" into "appearance" and "manner" also clearly applies here. "Appearance" consists of the signs of the social performer's status, while "manner" comprises the signs by which the performer indicates how the audience is expected to participate in the interaction (Goffmann, 1990, p. 34). Bradley and Cooper's rejection of Dolmetsch's "front", and with it the entire performance, represents one extreme of a continuum of possible responses. For Goffmann, many social performances involve a level of tacit agreement or collusion on the part of the audience which he calls "a kind of interactional modus vivendi":

Together the participants contribute to a single over-all definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured. I will refer to this level of agreement as a "working consensus" (Goffmann, 1990, p. 21).

Thus, in the concert situation, audience members may silently choose to overlook things which in a different concert situation would undermine the validity of the experience. In the case of 1960s and 1970s HIP this would include wrong or out-of-tune notes, ragged ensemble, or less well maintained instruments. Indeed, in the earlier stages of the early music movement, such things were almost prized as proof of the counter-cultural status of the enterprise.

In some passages Goffmann comes very close to the concept of subject position familiar to students of film:

Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind [...] it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which they come to formulate, and he can influence this decision by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan (Goffmann, 1990, p. 15).

This can be seen very clearly in Dolmetsch's case. But a similar tactic is being employed in modern times when a performer speaks directly to the audience, or dresses informally, or generally appears to be subverting more traditional forms of concert decorum. It may be refreshingly unstuffy, but a subject position is still being established, and the discursive boundaries of the event remain in place – Nigel Kennedy's performances provide excellent examples of this. A different approach to establishing a subject position in order to delimit the audience response was used in a 2012 news broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Company television news given by Clive Brown (introduced by the news presenter as an "English professor") and Neal Peres da Costa, on the subject of 19th-century performance practice research and – Brown's term – its 'revolutionary' implications (Australian Broadcasting Company, 2012). Whereas Dolmetsch presented himself as a musician impersonating an Elizabethan, convincing the audience through an act of self-conscious artifice, Brown presented himself as himself, wearing his signature bow tie while performing a few bars of a Brahms violin sonata in a manner designed to convince the audience by its

apparent artlessness, in a room full of synecdochic signifiers of learning (books, a rosewood-cased piano).

In nineteenth-century terms, one of the most striking applications of ideas about the presentation of the self is in the phenomenon of the dandy, discussed here for the sake of the highly contrasting approach they embody. Rhonda Garelick has identified a fundamental contradiction in the dandified persona: it is at once reproducible and unique. The literature of the dandy generates copies – Balzac’s *Traité de la vie élégante*, first published in five articles in *La Mode*, 2 October–6 November 1830, is in part a homage to Beau Brummell, “ce prince de la mode”, and Baudelaire’s “Le dandy” is based on Balzac... : “At the root of such didacticism lies the dandyist obsession with aesthetic reproduction. To write a dandyist text is to produce more dandies” (Garelick, 1988, p. 15). To record Vivaldi’s *Le quattro stagioni* on original instruments is to produce more such recordings, each claiming originality and bright new colours. But when a much more original performer appears, reactions are mixed, provoking charges of eccentricity, extremism, bad taste, or historical ignorance. There is a sense in which the self-created dandy is permissible, but the self-created musical performer is not, at least not in the area of art music. There is also both in the dandy and the nineteenth-century teacher a tendency towards advocating both restraint and decoration simultaneously. It is almost too easy to see the *aphorismes* that punctuate Balzac’s 1830 essay – “a man becomes rich; he is born elegant”, “the man of taste must always know how to reduce his needs to the most simple”, “multiplicity of colours will be in bad taste” (1922, pp. 59, 94, and 95) – as directly paralleling the more austere end of the spectrum of 19th century performance occupied by Louis Spohr and later by Joseph Joachim:

The character of the first allegro is serious, but impassioned; that of the adagio, mild and serene; and that of the rondo, agitated and impetuous (Spohr, 1833/1843, p. 204);

Good divisions of the Bow are most requisite for a fine Performance, and although a great variety of musical phrases exist, yet no special directions can be given (Spohr, 1833/1852, p. 153);

Scratching noises and general slovenliness are to be strictly avoided (Joachim, 1905, p. 176).

Clearly, a pedagogical work will inevitably tend towards condensed pithy exhortation. But the similarity is worth pointing out.

If dandyism is “the performance of a highly stylized, painstakingly constructed self”, achieved by “artful manipulation of posture, social skill, manners, conversation, and dress” (Garelick, p. 3), this extreme aestheticization does not merely imply excessive ornament. (Garelick, p. 3) The dandy, unique yet reproducible, restrained yet highly contrived, maps disturbingly onto the HIP musical world. The dandy also creates a self which is ‘true’, in that it is his preferred – only – persona. The ‘real’ self behind the mask is of no interest. The dandy’s exterior is thus not so much a sincere mask as the only presentation of the self. His ‘real’ self is almost vestigial, simply a means whereby the dandy’s appearance is created. This parallels the presentation of the musician. We are not supposedly interested in the performer’s off-stage self (unless luridly sensational), only the self that is presented in the concert. In the case of the early music performer the presented self may be an overt disguise, as with Dolmetsch’s velvet breeches, or it may convey something a little more complex – the performing self may be overtly scholarly, or self-evidently not concerned with outward appearance, or strikingly informal.

I have tried to suggest parallels and divergences between aspects of historically informed performance on the one hand and other socio-cultural views of the presentation and performance of the self. From a performative aesthetic perspective, the musical 'work' itself exists primarily in the act of performance rather than in the printed score, or as the metaphysical concept held in the composer's head. There is a sense in which the 'performer' – or rather, the performing persona – also exists as a performative concept. Both 'music' and 'self' are performed, that is, presented in a way which delimits the range of audience responses, but which also requires that audience's assumed validation. The dandy, a highly aestheticized presentation not of 'the' but 'a' self, which denies the relevance of any 'real' self, offers a self entirely encompassed by solipsism: 'I am what I have created myself to appear.' The opposite extreme would be one of Trilling's examples: Abraham, Achilles, or Beowulf. There can be no distinction between what they appear to be and what they are. The musician who partly assumes the identity of a seeker after historical truth, offering the results of his/her research in a concert, is somewhere between the two. Goffmann assumed the scepticism of the audience in his model of social events, but the HIP audience takes a more collaborative stance, confirming the HIP performer's historicized identity and appreciating sounds which might be unacceptable in a non-HIP situation. In Trilling's terms, the HIP musician is more authentic than sincere, but not in the sense of musical authenticity. He or she is authentic in the sense of presenting an authentic self, but not one derived from Yeats's unmediated introspection (the "rag and bone shop of the heart"). Rather, it is mediated through an appeal to archival source material or third-party scholarship. The HIP musician therefore presents him or herself somewhat differently from other musical performers. The presentation may have something of the dandy, in that it is to a degree an aestheticized corollary of a musical performance, deracinated from 'tradition', self-created with highly specialised materials and technology. But it is not the performance of a dandy or of dandyism – quite the reverse. Whereas self-fashioned dandyism tends towards solipsistic paradox and disdains the willed credulity of the audience, historically informed performances pretend to autochthonous authenticity, a literal return to roots, partly sustained by the audience. It is in this that HIP and 'mainstream' performances may even converge. If HIP appears to have regrown itself from original historical sources, non-HIP performers assert nonetheless an equally autochthonous status in that they appear to grow from a 'tradition' present in the here and now.

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