



¿Quién escribe la historia de la música antigua (y sobre qué)?

Who Writes the History of Early Music (and about What)?

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Abstract

Few philosophical subjects raise such a controversial issue than the history of Western music. Is there a history of music? Does Western music have a history? What kind of story or stories has been written? It is hoped that the multi-faceted approach proposed here will contribute to a greater understanding of the ontologic paradigms of Early Music and the philosophical understanding of the history of Western music.

Keywords: Early Music, History of Music, Musical Work, Philosophy, Historiography.

Resumen

Pocos temas filosóficos plantean un tema tan controvertido como la historia de la música occidental. ¿Existe una historia de la música? ¿Tiene historia la música occidental? ¿Qué tipo de historia o relatos se ha escrito? Se espera que el enfoque multifacético propuesto aquí contribuya a una mayor comprensión de los paradigmas ontológicos de la música antigua y la comprensión filosófica de la historia de la música occidental.

Palabras clave: Musicología, Música Antigua, Historia de la Música, Obra Musical, Filosofía, Historiografía.

DURING the last two centuries, the historical fact became the centre of discussion between historians. Leopoldo von Ranke was one of the greatest German historians of the 19th century due to his passion for reconstructing an exact form of the past: utilising methods that we normally associate with the studies of science. This kind of scientism, which aspired to neutrality and objectivity, occurred in the middle of the first Romanticism (*Frühromantik*) along with the simultaneous birth of German nationalism and the first philosophies of history linked to that movement, mainly through the work of Johann Gottfried von Herder (Manfred 1997; Berlin 2013). The knowledge of Ranke was based on reproducing the past “as it really was (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), the rallying-cry of positivistic historians” (Tomlinson 1984, 353). Illustrative examples of the practical application of Ranke’s positivist scientific thinking throughout the 19th century have been the massive projects dedicated to the publication of carefully edited sources for the study of history and which have largely continued during the 20th century. These projects are an objective example of the rampant decimonic encyclopedism that, despite trying to link it to the illustrated ideal, had little to do with encyclopédie. It is worth noting titanic works such as the *Monumentae Germaniae Historiae*, *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina* by Jacques-Paul Migne¹, *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (currently in process) and all historical, biographical and linguistic dictionaries written in the main European languages. But most significantly, some positivist state policy can be detected on the European and American continents around the massive creation of state institutional facilities such as museums, archives and large national libraries that began to develop during the 19th century², although it is true that some important projects began already from the 18th century such as the celebrated and grandiose collective work of French intellectuals and artists that is the *Description de l’Égypte* (1798), the mirror of Napoleon’s megalomaniacal cultural mindset. Now, this is where a specific difficulty arises that is the origin of this research and is related to the fact that the flourishing of musicology also produced

¹ The traps that the protopositivism have no better paradigm than the case study of the work of Jacques Paul Migne. On the darkness of his work and his traps see (Bloch 1994).

² For example, Portrait Gallery, Natural History Museum, British Museum, Musée Nationales, National Italian Museums, National Archaeological Museums (MAN in Spain or the National Library) and so on. In Latin America, positivist doctrine was official, especially in Mexico and Brazil.

a period of extraordinary dynamism towards the 1850s with the mass edition of the complete works of the great European canonical composers like Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven (through the study of musical sources and the search for an Urtext edition), as well as other earlier authors such as Josquin, Victoria, Schultz, Monteverdi or Lully, among some of the most prominent (Robinson 2001). For all these reasons, it can affirm itself that Ranke is considered the founder of scientific history, although it is also worth noting the important contributions of the British historians Edward Gibbon, who occupies a privileged position in the canon of Western historiography and George Grote, an author not very much influenced by German romanticism, being closer to the framework of liberal historiography and certain utilitarian positivism (Porter 1988).

What is interesting is that the Anglo-American historiographic tradition showed from its origins – *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1737-1794) and *History of Greece* (1846-1856) – a tendency determined to cultivate historical narrative rather than make scientific history, although it should be noted that Ranke also considered that history should be narrative, despite the historical scientificism attributed to him by the enormous influence he exerted on his contemporaries such as Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903) whose works *Inscriptiones Helveticae Latinae* (1854) and *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (1872) are a good example of positivist history and the compilation excess of sources of such positivism or Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who understood that there were laws of history that could explain it, as some laws of physics had already been discovered, only needed to be applied (Comte 1865). Nonetheless, the Ranke school unbounded an effort for obtaining the historical and scientific accuracy of a fact that other scholars did from the 20th century (like Pedro Salinas with his *critic hydraulic*) who distrusted the writings of these types of histories and they did not admit their commendable works due to the historical accuracy that is always replaced for another truth more precise. This is the destiny of any science.

The birth of historicalism with the work of Wilhelm Dilthey was also presented from its origins as contrary to the scientific approaches of positivism for the study of history (Dilthey 1910). For this philosopher, the sciences of the spirit (or human sciences), unlike the sciences of nature, do not have the same content and so they do not have to use the mathematical science method. According to Dilthey, the human sciences need hermeneutic understanding, but not in the form of the Gadamer's program, but in accordance with the theories of understanding (*Verstehen*) and the interpretation (*Auslegen*) of Friedrich Schleiermacher with projection on the methodological basis of all humanistic disciplines (Schleiermacher 2019). Therefore, the historical discipline should not focus its objectives on the search for

physical constants or universal laws in the strict sense (Meinecke 1936). It should be noted here that the impact of historicalism had some relevance in the field of modern musicology that sought the ideal of performing the music of the past as it was in its time. The study of Early Music consists of a glance backward with the eyes of the present. In this, scholars have the hard task of evaluating, analysing, and re-enacting a past repertoire where the idea is to be able to recreate the music of the previous centuries as it was originally intended. But the problem lies that the historical evidence is quicksand in which theoretical treatises, manuscripts, literary sources, iconographic, archival material, and scores among others offer only a partial vision of how it happened. In consequence, the authenticity of the historical performance of Early Music is a weak certainty in where “the gaps between the facts can only be filled by new facts. Gaps will ever remain” (Taruskin 1988, 101). Therefore, one may never be able to reconstruct precisely how the music was in the past; one can at least give it a meaning.

There are many factors that must be considered when deeply examining Early Music such as an understanding the historical period. Style, techniques, theory, notation, selection of ensemble and instrumentation, determining the tempo, rhythmic flow, dynamics, and establishing what their skills of ornamentation, articulation, and improvisation were and finally, researching the composer’s intention and purpose of that repertoire and their musicians. Furthermore, it is necessary to take into consideration the importance of the text and pronunciation; as well as deciding the pitch level, tuning, and transposition of instruments and voices, and also realising a critical edition. When approaching Early Music, one might be surprised by the amount of work required. Nevertheless, with contemporary repertoires, the same thing happens. In summary, the main issue lies in resolving how modern performers with historical background may perform a past repertoire. Do we have enough information to believe that we are able to approach the historical performance practices with a degree of authenticity? From a theoretical point of view, it is impossible to imitate how the music of the early centuries was originally intended because there is not a sufficient amount of historical evidence (Kenyon 1988).

Another important milestone in this intrahistory would be the contribution of Max Weber (1864-1920) on value judgments in the social sciences and consideration of the concept of truth in the human sciences. While contemporary hermeneutics understand that the concept of truth cannot be left or abandoned to the sciences of nature and the exact sciences (Ricoeur 1983; Gadamer 2010), Weber noted that the social sciences must depart from the concept of truth of the sciences of the spirit for those same natural sciences. Hence, historical facts –which for positivists are only expressed in documents or material culture– do not in themselves

constitute a truth (Weber 1917). So, what is the epistemological basis for working on universal history (and the history of music)? This is the central problem of the approach of history as historiography and musicology as a historical discipline.

Ranké's thoughts tried to tell merely how the historical fact really was. Rapidly, the positivism and adherence to historical fact that supported this species of historical thought seemed to equate history with science. For them, history was a set of facts that there are in disposal of historians such as documents, parchments, manuscripts, treatises, books and so on. Then, the historian collects and analyses this information for organizing from the historical interpretation. But unfortunately, this procedure is not exempt from mistakes and risks because all the facts cannot always be catalogued as historic. For example, there were many explorers throughout the world. But it was Dr. Livingstone who made his way into historical accounts because he discovered the spectacular waterfalls of the Zambeze River in the centre of Africa, and he decided to name it Victoria waterfalls in honour to the queen of England. This case shows that historians are selective, hence, the historian is the one who decides, selects, and chooses what facts are historical or not. The biographical methods were a kind of musical narrative, paying too much attention to the greatest names of history as Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. Yet this sort of historiography delegated to the second level of the musical production of other contemporary composers as Telemann, Hasse, and Spohr, among others. For all these reasons, the biographical method developed during the 19th century is an example of a selection of musicians inside of a historical canon.

There is no history without the historian. The quality of the historian depends on his or her intelligence and honest objectivity. It is common knowledge that Isabel the Catholic sold her jewels to defray the expenditure of Columbus' expedition. But this is one of the most popular historical lies that had been propagated in universal history. There are many examples where we may comment on the unfortunate point of view of historians in general and also historians of music in particular. The dangerous way of the interpretations of historical facts must be examined because there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration for the history of music's sake. The heart of positivism: the creed in an absolute objective apprehension of reality has its difficulties.

Carl Dahlhaus and Leo Treitler share the idea that: "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy" (Tomlinson 1984, 354). In general, the documents, *per se*, do not constitute history. The data in itself, in the end, is an isolated sign. It is the historian who converts the data into historical facts after putting it through severe historical analysis. For writing, historical narratives are fundamen-

tally important for distinguishing between the data that the historian has at his disposal and the facts that the historian re-enacts due to the sources. This does not represent a historical fact; it is the event in which constitutes a historical fact. In summary, data, from the positivist point of view, is the source that the historian possesses, and that information is completely objective because it exists; these are our legacy and historical heritage. Nevertheless, historians do not have to think that they can know the reality of a past fact as it really was due to the interpretation of the historian. This is always an eternal company of his or her thoughts. For Dahlhaus, in this sense, the historical facts are hypothesis; hence, the historical facts are always based on interpretations. The most serious challenge against the ideas of Ranke at the beginning of the 20th century was the reasoning of the Italian historian Benedetto Croce (1941). The task of the historian is not only to register the facts unless to evaluate as well. Croce's arguments are a compromise of honesty and objectivity with ourselves because to judge a fact is necessary to think about it; it is not enough with collecting and to analyse the information or documents, we have to substantiate the historical narratives. In any case, the past history possesses a distance between the fact and the historian, who studies the fact. Resolving this separation is a controversial issue, hence, the historical past should be treated with trustworthiness towards the present: eliminating manipulations, misunderstandings, and false interpretations to explain the facts. The historical documents are important, though we must avoid venerating the historical documents in excess. Sometimes documents transport some false reasoning and for this, the appreciation of Dahlhaus, concerning the negative purpose of revealing flaws of previous historians is correctly legitimate.

One of the names that it is often linked with Croce was the British philosopher and historian Robin George Collingwood, who also developed his theories during the 20th century. History, in his opinion, must be understood neither with the past nor with the ideas that the historian thinks about it, unless both elements are together. For Collingwood, the past-as-researched by the historian "is not past at all" (1946, 154); rather, it still lives in the present. This historical perspective suggests that all true history is contemporary history (Gardiner 1959, 227). A past fact exists without a need for the historian unless the historian understands the ideas that formed this fact. Therefore, "all history is a history of thought, re-enacted in the mind of the historian" (Treitler 1989, 42). This reconstruction of the past is based on ideas and it cannot consist of a mere recitation of historical facts. We do not deny, hence, the narrow relation between the past and the present in history. Due to the previous statement, we could probably say that Collingwood had shown an excessive amount of importance to the historical interpretation and then, in some

sense, he refused the existence of historical objective truth. This truth exists only in the mind of the historian. Nevertheless, the interpretation holds an important role in the establishment and location in the historical facts and also that any interpretation is totally objective; for in this thesis it should admit that the interpretation made for a historian is as good as any other interpretation and that the facts of history, in principle, does not remain united to objective interpretations. Here is another indication of the danger that is to navigate in the historical waters, even for excellent historians such as Collingwood.

It is evident and noticeable that the target of all historians must be to find a balance between (1) the theories that declare that the task of the historian should solely be to realize an objective compilation of facts since the fact is infinitely more important than the interpretation and (2) other theories that consider to the history as the subjective product of the mind of a historian, who establishes the historical facts and submerges in the interpretative process. In addition, we could add the discrepancy points of views between some historians who maintain that the history must have its centre of gravity in the past, and others that plead for the present. Yet, as any historian discovers, at the moment that he starts to dominate his discipline, it is impossible to establish the primacy between fact and interpretation, since one should constantly exit correlation between both elements. This also occurs between the past and the present.

Both Croce and Collingwood have influenced in some sense the thought of important 20th-century musicologist such as Dahlhaus. However, this German scholar was further on saying that “any historical interpretation is almost invariably an interpretation of other interpretations” (Dahlhaus 1983, 36). This statement is a critic for history in the sense that the lack of a historical objective truth could lead to the interpretations of the reign of the relativism because any interpretation could be objective or not. Thus, subjectivism appears in a spontaneous manner inside of the historical fact and in conclusion, should be accepted that music has not objective history. According to this thought, if history is not objective, there is no history or history of music. Consequently, to understand a historical fact we need to put it into perspective to clarify what is the meaning of the object of study in history. In fact, we must go beyond our thought until we can ask ourselves: what is the meaning of the history of music?

This is precisely one of the most important themes because almost none of the great founders of the historical movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had an interest in applying or relating their ideas to the history of music and dance (more generally interested in the reconstruction of economic or political history). This has been a constant in contemporary thought to this day, although

a small group of prominent historians from the mid-20th century must be valued who have developed interesting contributions to the history of art, especially in the field of visual arts (Warburg 1932; Gombrich 1950; Panofsky 1960) and so the scant attention shown to the musical arts is very striking: neither dance nor music proper and even philosophical contribution to aesthetics has been quite exceptional in recent centuries. In short, none of the theorists of 19th-century history (Ranke, Mommsen, Gibbon or Niebhur) or the founders of the main historiographic currents of the 20th century (Fernand Braudel, Marc Bloch by *Annales*, or Lucien Febvre for the *History of Mindsets* or Carlo Ginzburg on the part of microhistory) have addressed the historiographical problems of music history and dance.

If we attend exclusively to the figures of modern thought it should be noted that in the two great branches of philosophy (continental and analytical) none of its greatest exponents demonstrated any interest in music and dance from the theoretical plane. In relation to continental philosophy, the initiator of phenomenology Edmund Husserl or his main disciple Martin Heidegger wrote nothing about music; nor was music or dance particularly relevant in the stream of hermeneutics initiated by Gadamer (or his 19-century precursors such as Schleiermacher and Dilthey) and then continued by Paul Ricoeur; existentialism and its related currents (something more to the literary line especially in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus) were perhaps especially politicized and little given to musical aesthetics. The so-called postmodernity led by Jean-Francois, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Feliz Guattari, among others, is almost non-existent in relation to musical aspects. With regard to analytical philosophy, initiators of the philosophy of language and logic paid no attention to the implications of their thinking in the history of music and dance (such as Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege or Ludwig Wittgenstein who, despite being a recognized melomaniac, has virtually nothing written about music; the logical positivism of Rudolf Carnap and Karl Popper or the great figures of the Vienna Circle also had no interest in music or dance; and equally true has the pragmatism of founder William James or his pre-eminent successors (Charles Peirce, John Dewey or Richard Rorty) who did not devote anything of their writings to the history of music.

There are some exceptions to this widespread trend, especially linked to the musical idea of the sublime. Very illustrative examples were Kant, Schiller, German idealism, and then Schopenhauer, Hegel and Nietzsche, but none of them made historiographic observations, rather they are only aesthetic contributions. Another more recent exception of the 20th century has been the contribution of Max Weber, although his writings on music as well as little known, have had relatively little influence on the field of philosophy and contemporary historiography. The most

important contribution to the discipline of musicology is centralized almost exclusively in Adorno's works who should be considered a *rare avis* because none of the three generations of Frankfurt School wrote about music: neither the Freudo-Marxists (Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Wilhelm Reich), nor Jürgen Habermas or Axel Honneth. Except for these few exceptions, it can be concluded that there are no examples of thinkers or even historians who have written texts on music as Charles Burney (1726-1814) did very exceptionally in the 18th century.

A very instructive example of how history works in its most recent central movement is the emergence of microhistory (Ginzburg 1976). It is difficult to find a general work of the history of music that has been done from social or cultural microhistory even though the new musicology is widely dominated in our time,³ even unknowingly, under the strong influence of microhistory narratives of particular themes (Staneviciute and Povilioniene 2015). It is not far-fetched to think that most publications of historical musicology and their related disciplines today convey at their methodological basis the reflection of a renewed reality of history disguised as microhistory that hide in the depths of their thought a hegelian idealism nuanced in the postmodernity that is reproduced under the premise of a seductive scale reduction or examination with magnifying glass of the past. It is possible that the impact of micro historians of cultural history may have favored greater attention to not-so-fundamental composers (such as Telemann, Spohr, and Hasse), although the study of the margins of music history is not unique merit of the trending micro historians who come from so-called cultural history. However, it must be remembered that social history already contemplated a history of the forgotten; that is, those who in the philosophy of Walter Benjamin's history are the victims of the progress and even the historiographic progress of the canon (1940).

The theories of the canon and its effects have always been very present in the great accounts of the history of Western music and so it should come as no surprise that, in the last few decades, the history of literature and in part the history of the visual arts began to generate a perfect storm to recover with greater strength the re-creation of an artistic-cultural canon that always faces minorities and specific ideological sectors (Bloom 1994; Sullà 1998). This could also be applied to the canon of Western music knowing that it is usually an always incomplete, partial and fragmentary model, full of voids and preferences of the historian, where some authors are caught up in fame and others in the most absolute oblivion as well as in those universal stories built on the great characters, events, battles, invasions, discoveries and so on. Paradigmatic examples related to this canonical theme are the way

³ See, for example, the influence in musicology of Ratner's *Topic Theory* (1980).

and manner in which the “great” composers and masterpieces of music or dance were introduced. However, it is essential to ask what object of study has defined the history or stories of the music.

Dahlhaus already expounded convincingly in his structuralist thinking that the musical work is the base of the study of music history and considered that the work, the musical product, may be studied as an autonomous object. In fact, the musical work has been widely considered the point of departure for musicological historiography. This defence of the autonomy of musical work is based on one kind of historical narrative denominated structural history (*Strukturgeschichte*), which considers musical works the basis of the study of music’s history.⁴ For Dahlhaus, the autonomy of musical work defends its historical identity of itself and therefore it is possible to study any musical work, isolated without any reference to the composer’s life. Naturally, the life of composers are important but his or her biographies are not necessarily revealing to understand the cultural context of a musical work. On the one hand, the life of Carlo Gesualdo is hardly ever considered when contemplating the reasons for his use of chromaticism in various voices simultaneously, or for the unprepared and unresolved dissonance on strong beats, the extreme expressive effective contrast, or the new tonal activity of his works. On the other hand, the political thought in several operas by Verdi could constitute a point biographically, but it will surely be a poor connection in its meaning. In any case, whether this hypothesis is true or not, there is no doubt that biographism carries from the first German romanticism a distorted influence of the theories of the cult of genius, by provoking an excessive interest in the lives of artists, musicians and painters by presenting them as models of a full, intense and authentic existence (Boswell 1791; Wackenroder; Tieck 1796) A very revealing example of the hyper valuation of genius applied to musicology are the enthusiastic 19th-century biographies dedicated to Beethoven in front of the most recent critical monographs (Schlosser 1828; Schindler 1840; Massin 1967; Swafford 2014).

There is no doubt that, when elaborating his findings, the historian is influenced by current thoughts and by the forces of the present. Although one wishes to be objective, it is inevitable to annul the influence of other trends over our thoughts or theories. There are many examples where the environment is determined by the historian. Therefore, the historians must be careful with their interpretations to avoid two false extremes: “naive objectivism and destructive radical skepticism” (Treitler 1989, 174). The historian in general and the historian of music, in parti-

⁴ It should be pointed out that if this sort of history is lead to the extreme, could exclusively become in history of musical works grouped either according to genres as the symphony, madrigal, opera, mass, and so on or some kind of national organization or nationalistic ideal.

cular, do not deny the narrow relation between the past and the present in history and they should seek to understand the evidence and the real truth of the historical fact for writing historical and objective narratives. Thinking that the target of the “historical facts have no other reasons for being than to substantiate historical narratives or descriptions of historical systems” (Dahlhaus 1983, 43) has their limitations because of an implicit manner insure that the historical facts do not transport the dimension of man, his history and the humanity neither. However, the musical works are a great instrument to understand events and also varied aspects of man in history due to “the artworks we experience are signs (or rather complexes of signs), communications to our culture” (Tomlinson 1984, 358). The historical facts are not isolated events that the historian extracts for writing narratives. Music, just as is the case for all arts, makes present its narratives through its musical works (that could be considered as historical testimonies of both a determined temporal and a geographical moment). Therefore, the musical creations transmit the intention of communicating a cultural idea created or reinterpreted as occurs in music.

Eliminating the dimension and contribution of an artist in the historical facts, it is to think that the man has no history and that the real fact does not exist because of leaving outside the essence of any artistic work (and his or her creator). This essence consists of communicating a human and cultural intention through a creative form. The works of art could lay the foundation of historical facts because they are a sign of expression and representation of humankind. But to establish some universal conclusions about the history of music is an intellectually difficult task and at times, a very attractive issue because we can suggest, at least like the history of all arts, a meaning of music in history. Therefore, which is the method or way of studying music’s history? The point of our departure is an attitude of doubt and distrust from all the philosophical systems and thought trends previously, which involves the effort of starting again.

This central theme of the autonomy of the musical work has also been questioned with the so-called *New Musicology* or *New Criticism* (Kramer 1992). This author applied for the first time in recent musicology the relativity of knowledge and therefore claimed the idea of cultural relativism based on the influence of Lyotard’s postmodernist thinking applied to music, where there should be as many truths as glances. However, this position of extreme relativity has hard been criticized by other musicologists (Tomlinson 1993; Treitler 1999). This intellectual relativism of all the objects or facts does not mean that we may not discover the meaning of reality as applicable to both past and present. It is a serious misconception to think that everything is relative; each perspective must be taken within its context. For this, the history of music should define its object of study with the purpose of

identifying and differentiating it from the object of study, cooperate to discover their implications both musical and extramusical, and analyses the necessity of rethinking the historiography of music.

The primacy of musical autonomy might have had its philosophical roots in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* to the aesthetics of Kantian's origin (Kant 1781). This defense of the autonomy of the work of art is already at least developed since the early work of Schiller, especially in his letters about *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795), where an uninterrupted historical debate began in which some of the greatest figures of German philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries have intervened from Hegel (heavily influenced by Schiller) to Schopenhauer, Adorno or Marcuse, among others. More recently, this long tradition of German philosophical thinking has also had its impact on musicology by musicologist Dahlhaus, who expounded that the musical work is the base of the study of music history and considered that the work may be studied as an autonomous object and therefore the musical work in its autonomy must be the point of departure of musical historiography (1983).

The concept work is the central category of music, and hence of music historiography as well. [...] The *waning of interest in history* is coupled to the loss of authority of the work concept. Without it, there can be no music history. The alternative is the conception of music as *process*, as basic of a sociological, anthropological or functional study of music systems (Treitler 1984, 371).

Dahlhaus's conclusions have received new approaches in postmodern musicology's period for dealing with the controversial debate of music's integration within socio-cultural practices (Tomlinson 1984; Cook 2003). In fact, this point is extraordinarily relevant to broaden and deepen our understanding of musical autonomy and the concept of musical work. Regarding culture, the musical works such as a Gregorian plainchant, a mass of Palestrina, the concertos of Vivaldi, *La favola d'Orfeo* of Monteverdi or *Jubilate Deo omnis terra* of Morales for the celebration of peace in Nice between Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France in 1538, among others, might be considered as a remarkable part of the foundations of the historical facts and no mere historical narratives or descriptions of a past moment as Dahlhaus had thought. The musical works carry a precise cultural context throughout time from the past to the present. Therefore, according to this hypothesis, music's history lies in the musical work because it makes reference to historical facts or events of which these historical facts reflect a cultural context in the past as well as in our present. In relation to social practices, the creation of a musical work constitutes historical contexts and gives reasons for social, cultural and aesthetic behaviours because it is pervaded itself by as historical consciousness. Music, in other words,

becomes a resource for understanding society and therefore the work of visual arts in general and the musical works in particular reflect one significant transmission of the cultural activity of society at a place and given time. For example, social history offers the possibility for understanding the social function of music; though to grasp it fully, the analytical process cannot merely include the musical work, as it necessitates interpretation and an understanding of its reception history. As a result, the musical work is a remarkable instrument to understand happenings, events and therefore also man's dimension in history. However, it must be said clearly: the musical work is dependent upon performance to express itself.

Comparing the musical works with the creations of other arts, the musical works have one characteristic that it is unique; music needs to be recreated while the work of other arts need not because they are visual works. A musical source is able to maintain the musical data by itself but if we do not perform these data it is equivalent to a beautiful painting hidden in a dark room. It is ridiculous to sculpt a sculpture or build a building to cover it with a cloth. For this reason, the musical work must be executed to demonstrate its art. The endpoint, musical work has two parts: (1) Intrinsic where it represents its information (notation) and another (2) extrinsic that appears when it is executed (performance). In this musical process, we may rapidly ask ourselves, where may be the power of that nature? The answer is undoubtedly the huge energy that resides inside it and hence the capacity of outward expression. Finally, we have a tangible object of study: the musical work. But, does the musical work need other disciplines to understand it?

The historical method in musicology falls into two basic categories. The first is an empirical positivistic one, with an emphasis on locating and studying documents and establishing objective facts about and from them. The second, a theoretical-philosophical one, itself has two aspects: one that addresses general historiographical problems such as change and causality, periodization and biography; and one that considers issues specific to the histories of the arts and literature, such as the forms and style, or the historical meaning or content of individual artworks or repertoires, whether from the perspective of style, aesthetics or socio-cultural contexts and functions [...] It has always been a semiautonomous field, in part because the materials of music are non-semantic and its forms and images are less tied to representations of material reality than those of the visual arts (Stanley 2001a).

Throughout its history, musicology has not always relied upon neighbouring disciplines. In fact, this nature of postmodern musicology has called into question the autonomy of the musical work because the unshakable dogma that has been widely disseminated since the traditional philosophical German thought has already been overcome. In response to Tomlinson's criticism of Kramer, the first agree with Kramer's call for musicologists to abandon "the myth of music's autonomy" while

the new musicology is open to “welcoming the complex situatedness of musical utterances in webs of extramusical forces” (Kramer 1993; Tomlinson 1993). In this way, it can be understood that the reflections of musical concepts are founded on the sociological, anthropological, or functional study of music systems underlying the historical method. Musicology might be supported by methods of philosophy, philology, anthropology, and social sciences with the desire of studying in-depth the truth of the object, treating of formulating objective criteria of veracity and meaning. In addition, these methods are not enemies for the concept of the musical work because they cannot supplant music history. But how is the historiography of music? *New Grove’s* definition of “music historiography” is the writing of music history (Stanley 2001b). Its study reveals the changing attitudes to the music of the past as shown in writings about music. The definition offers clear evidence of the need for literature to relate facts and musical narratives. However, it is necessary to study in-depth the musical narratives because they could be knowledgeable in different forms: (1) as an evolutionist process of creativity and (2) a history of musical style. If we consider the history of music as a continuous process, we can understand it through a linear and teleological approach, which defends the development of creative acts throughout history. It is largely a writing system based on an evolutionist mark of continuity and change. On paper, they seem to be two well-founded and convincing methodological proposals; however, both are very problematic narratives when applied to the praxis of music throughout centuries.

These considerations show a kind of linear history, which connects ideas, facts, and events to put in order between them to obtain a chronological musical timeline. But at the same time, we are enunciating that in the logical evolution of the continuity of the musical works, roughly speaking, musical works are bridges between themselves. For the analysis of musical works, the contributions of Adolf Bernhard Marx (to the musical form), Hugo Riemann (to the harmonic function) and especially Guido Adler (to the musical styles) have added to the creation of the most influential music narratives of the 20th and 21st centuries because the analytical approach to the history of music is based on an evolutionary reconstruction of musical styles, although interdisciplinary nuanced with the transformation of data extracted from the social sciences, arts, and humanities, as well as other auxiliary sciences of the musicology such as liturgical history, palaeography, bibliography, diplomacy, archival, etc. According to Adler (1919), musicology was a historical discipline and, therefore, within this perspective, the analysis should play a prominent role in the critical reconstruction of the ancient musical heritage, understood as a global history of musical styles. Therefore, the identity characteristics of a period, school, composer, or repertoire do not respond to an arbitrary fact in the history of

music but they are the result of a periodic organic evolution that follows the theory of the birth, splendour, and decay (from a style to another). However, this application of an evolutionist theory in musicology raises a confrontational debate with regards to the concept of musical work. This linear evolution considers, in the end, that any musical work is out-dated for another posterior because the latter one is a carrier of a new process of creative style. Therefore, musical narratives are temporal successions of chronological musical works, composers, styles, genres and musical periods. Despite that, this sort of history has its purpose and function; unfortunately for the musical historians, these linear narratives incorporate an important dilemma because deciding on whether we must build a progressive music history is a very controversial issue. For example, if we analyse two composers of the Baroque such as Bach and Handel, we observe great difficulties in connecting their styles, techniques, professional careers, repercussions, and reception of their music. In the evolutionist system of continuity and progress of the musical works it is impossible to distinguish and differ chronologically what works were more advanced.

The most devastating criticism about the model of a historical periodization of musical styles came from Dahlhaus (1983), who warned about the dilemma of accepting the dubious metaphysics of the organic model of progress and their normative implications (or deciding to describe the styles of different times in isolation), which would mean suppressing history. On the one hand, this weakness pointed out by Dahlhaus refers to many of the stories of the style that explain the stylistic change through an evolutionary theory (birth-development-decay) that has been introduced on many occasions in a forced and distorted way (classic-modern-mannerist), helping more to distort than to illuminate the reality of the musical facts studied. Nowadays, the application of evolutionary change and the acceptance of its norms might be defined as a controversial methodology in the history of music because the cultural change in art is also manifested parallel through different types of extramusical changes (trends or mutations, among others) that suggests that the impact of external influences outside of the postmodern musical fact had been ignored. On the other hand, Dahlhaus also valued that the stories of the musical styles described only static periods in isolation, and, in general, this way of writing the story is not able to demonstrate precisely how the internal processes of transition were from one style to another. For example, there is still a lack of academic consensus to determine the beginning of the Renaissance or the Baroque in the history of Western music or the general rejection of the introduction of a Mannerist period of transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque (Maniakes 1979).

The theory and analysis of works contribute to establishing an opinion about this issue, but it is not a decisive and definitive criterion because there are subjecti-

ve elements in the analysis of the musical works. Normally, in this kind of history, when we study the Renaissance, we jump from the last generation of Franco-Flemish school in the 16th century with the *frottola* in Italy. How may the historians of music fill these gaps? Are we going to realize a few disjointed narratives to fill up historical and musical gaps that we cannot resolve? These random ideas have been historically replaced by the musicological historiography through a narrative based on musical artificialisms created around certain composers, works, and historical relationships. For this reason, the history of music is primarily the history of musical style where the historian select (under his or her interpretation) titles or delimited topics to develop the narrative of musical history such as “The nature of Franco-Roman chant”, “The Leonin Style”, “English Madrigal School”, “Music Printing” or “Domestic Music”. Thus, the challenge for musical historians is to be able to write a diachronic history of music that explains the aim and position of the musical works throughout time.

Here, it should be highlighted the methodological contribution of the American musicologist Leonard Meyer. This scholar not only directly discarded the evolutionary model because of the lack of methodological tools to resolve the musicological transition from one style to another throughout time, but also proposed an alternative analytical theory based on the thesis that the history of music can order as a gradual sequence of different musical styles. But it is essential to accept that, ultimately, the history of music is not an immanent reality (Meyer 1956). Stylistic changes do not always respond to musical issues but can also have a psychological or historical origin (cultural, political, and ideological). Today, Meyer’s thinking is one of the most widespread and influential methodologies of musical analysis because his discourse articulates quite convincingly the complex relationships between music (its composition and performance) and its non-musical historical context within the complex periodization of Western music history. However, one of the most important consequences is related to the creation of ontology of musical work different since the current frames of reference (Cook and Everist 1999).

Lydia Goehr’s *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1992) prompted scholarly discussions about how far the term and concept of the “musical work” are appropriate for musical cultures of the 16th and 17th centuries (see also Butt 2005; Lütteken 2015). Whereas these earlier discussions focused on ontological issues and theoretical treatises of the period, the notion of “work” is ripe for exploration from a much broader range of disciplinary perspectives including book history, performance studies, the study of historical improvisation, and economic ethnomusicology. Attributes usually associated with a musical work (such as notational fixity or durability in the repertory) need to be revised in light of the increasing awareness

of the importance of oral and memorized cultures in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as an increasingly nuanced understanding of the symbolic functions of notated sources and performances practices throughout history. It is necessary to discuss urgently the application of the classical model of 19th-century musical work, which separates the original (or authentic) Urtext from its posterior manuscript or printed testimonies (considered historically to be corrupted copies).

The principal problem of this anachronistic vision is precisely ingrained in that unless a determined author had made another version (equally original), the Urtext variants have been explained as the result of errors introduced in the historical transmission of early sources to posterior ones, often augmenting the degree of corruption with each degree of temporal separation between the “authentic” Urtext and the “corrupt” subsequent testimonies. It may be extrapolated that the historical survival of a Early Music work suggests that the diverse modifications realized over the course of history ought not to be considered corrupted versions of the original source, but rather that the conserved testimonies reflect a thriving activity of distinct musical practices throughout time (Aguirre and Griffiths 2023). This is exactly what happens to repertoires composed before 1800 and therefore the traditional model of an original and authentic Urtext must not be applied to Early Music. The performance practice of musical works through different centuries shows music and lyrics were used as a “script” rather than a “text” (as representations of historical performances), without modifying its identity through history (Cook 2013). There is no doubt that the model of the philological-textual criticism in the musicological discipline, along with the platonic idea of text as an “authentic” reflection of the composer’s original work, has overshadowed more than illuminated the interpretive perception and construction of musical text as performance in progress, which may be susceptible to being improvised and modified without exhausting its own identity, adapting to aesthetics, historical contexts, and to diverse geographies, for the sake of its survival in the repertory of a determined institution or within the historical canon of Western music history. We must thus rethink the concept of musical work in the history of music, which is much more related to the practical development of multiple musical performances than with the philosophical conceptualization of an original Urtext that never has existed before the Romantic music.

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