



Performance and Analysis Today: New Horizons

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[1] At the 2004 joint AMS/SMT national meeting in Seattle, twenty-some theorists and musicologists from around the world convened the inaugural meeting of the SMT's Performance and Analysis Interest Group (PAIG), founded by Daphne Leong "to promote research into relations between performance and analysis, to support and further interests in all topics at the intersection of music theory and performance, to facilitate dialogue between performers and theorists, and to open new avenues for such interaction."⁽¹⁾ The founding of PAIG marked a period of rising interest in the study of musical performance within SMT. The very same conference included a special session (also organized by Daphne Leong) entitled "Performance and Analysis: Views from Theory, Musicology, and Performance," the proceedings of which were subsequently published in *Music Theory Online* 11.2 (March 2005).⁽²⁾

[2] The present collection originated under similar circumstances at a gathering commemorating the tenth anniversary of PAIG's founding at the 2014 joint SMT/AMS meeting. Entitled "Performance and Analysis Today: New Horizons," the meeting comprised six short position papers by theorists and musicologists—most of them highly accomplished performers—along with responses by John Rink and Janet Schmalfeldt and a lively discussion period with the nearly one hundred attendees.⁽³⁾ In an effort to assess the current state of studies in performance and analysis, and in the spirit of suggesting new avenues for future research, the invited panelists were selected to represent a broad cross-section of perspectives and backgrounds. This collection's eclecticism is therefore by design and pushes against conventional disciplinary boundaries—indeed, even against conventional understandings of "musical analysis."

[3] At the time of PAIG's founding, studies of analysis and performance already had a long tradition within Anglo-American music theory.⁽⁴⁾ The history of this loosely defined sub-discipline is in some ways problematic, in that the seeds that proved to be foundational are varied and the resulting growth complicated (delightfully) by the intersections of multiple perspectives. In [Schmalfeldt 1985](#) and [Wallace Berry 1989](#)—two influential studies that continue to stimulate discussion and debate—along with responses to both by Rink (1990), Jonathan Dunsby (1996), Joel Lester (1995 and 1998), and Nicholas Cook (2001), among many others, we see the framing of the primary issue: How do we make sense of the relationship between, and the priorities of, performers and analysts?

[4] These simple questions resist straightforward answers, and the issues have only grown more nebulous over the ensuing decades, with shifting attitudes concerning the concept of the musical work and the performer's or theorist's obligations toward it. Nor has a consensus been reached about a unifying thing called "structure" and its relationship to a composer's or performer's creative enterprises. Further complexities arise as new, co-creative voices are introduced, such as the fickle and constantly changing perceptions of listeners (explored, in different ways, by both cognitive and ethnographic studies) and the independently interpretive voices of performers, which were said to be "strikingly absent" ([Lester 1995, 197](#)) in early

publications on performance/analysis relations. Technology, of course, cannot be ignored and plays a prominent role not only in the composition of some new music but also in the re-creation and consumption of older music.

[5] Related to the last point about technology is the path-breaking research that came out of two large-scale projects based in the UK: the (most charming) Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) and the Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (CMPCP). This work has directed much of the analytical emphasis away from scores and toward recordings, rehearsals, and performances.⁽⁵⁾ These efforts stimulated an unprecedented proliferation of approaches to studying musical performances—many innovatively inter-disciplinary and, happily, involving collaborations on equal terms between scholars and performers. Broadly speaking, these projects have significantly raised the profile of performance as a research area within British musicology, but their priorities may sit uneasily with the many North American music theorists for whom the analyses of scores continues to be a central occupation, including in scholarship pertaining to performance.⁽⁶⁾

[6] This apparent lack of consensus about the important questions—setting aside their answers—is not a state to be lamented but a demonstration that our field is fertile and that there is room for many approaches. Within this collection are papers that navigate the treacherous dialectic between performative and analytical approaches to musical works, some testing the utility of the binary performance vs. analysis (since many of us do both to some degree, and each act seems to entail some aspects of the other). Other papers largely abandon a focus on musical “works,” presenting as analytical such musical activities as (1) *improvisation*, fusing performance, composition, and analysis into one integrated process; (2) *rehearsal*, interpreting the players’ marked parts as worthy objects of analysis; and (3) *play*, an impulse that is fundamental to nearly all forms of musical participation. And it is to that spirit of “play” that this volume is devoted. We are grateful to all the authors and editors who contributed to this special issue, and we hope the range of diverse questions and perspectives contained within its (virtual) pages will stimulate much productive conversation at least until PAIG’s twentieth anniversary, if not well beyond.

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Footnotes

1. This mission statement and other information about the group is available on the PAIG website at <https://societymusictheory.org/societies/interest/performanceanalysis>.

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2. The session was chaired by Robert S. Hatten and included performances and presentations by Nicholas Cook, William Rothstein, and Daphne Leong and Elizabeth McNutt, along with a response from Janet Schmalfeldt (see Works Cited for details). Information about other PAIG special sessions at subsequent SMT meetings is available at <https://smtpaig.wordpress.com/smt-meetings>. Such events (organized at the initiative of past-PAIG chairs Leong and David Kopp) have been the primary venue for professional performers to participate in SMT conferences and, in turn, for performer-theorists to integrate their own performances into scholarly presentations.

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3. Only four of the six papers presented during the session appear in this collection; those by Elisabeth Le Guin and Roger Moseley are not included. Material from the latter presentation has been incorporated into [Moseley 2016](#).

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4. An exhaustive history of analysis/performance studies is beyond the purview of this introduction. However, informative summaries of literature up through the early 2000s appear in [McClelland 2003](#) and [Latham 2005](#).

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5. Whereas CHARM (founded in 2004) emphasized recorded music, its successor, CMPCP (founded in 2009) focused on live performance. Detailed information about each project is available, respectively, at <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html> and <http://www.cmpep.ac.uk>. See also Barolsky’s (2013) report on the second of three international conferences sponsored by CMPCP.

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6. The references to “British” and “North American” approaches to musical-performance studies reflect, to some extent, certain disciplinary differences that have emerged over the past decade (see Cook’s remarks, quoted in the introduction to Daphne Leong’s contribution to this volume). But they should not be taken to suggest two hermetically sealed, unaffiliated scholarly communities. Indeed, a number of North American scholars—including all current and former PAIG chairs—presented in 2014 at the third international conference sponsored by CMPCP, and the participation of John Rink (CMPCP’s director) as respondent to this collection is intended as a catalyst for further trans-Atlantic scholarly interchange. John Rink’s attendance at the 2014 SMT/AMS meeting was made possible by a generous International Travel grant from

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