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Creativity beyond innovation: Musical performance and craft

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Abstract

While creativity has been defined in a multiplicity of ways across disciplines, scholars generally agree that it involves the generation of ideas or products that are novel, of value, and appropriate to the field. Yet by too readily connecting creativity in musical performance to innovation, does this model neglect the more inconspicuous and unrecognised, but no less valuable, dimensions of creativity in score-based performance? This paper offers a characterisation of musical performance situated within a framework of craft, by tracing rehearsal strategies employed in two new performance projects: the rehearsals for, and first performance of *Four Duets* for clarinet and piano (2012) by Edmund Finnis, written for Mark Simpson and Víkingur Ólafsson; and a recording made by Antony Pay of Alexander Goehr's *Paraphrase* for solo clarinet Op. 28 (1969). My argument draws attention to "everyday" aspects of music-making, in which musicians make decisions in engaging with their work which are less explicit than the conventional "moments of revelation" that are prevalent in the literature, but which are nonetheless significant. Acknowledging these attributes of musicians' performance practices can serve to develop a more nuanced understanding of creativity based on processes rather than outcomes, in order to move beyond a paradigm that opposes notated permanence to improvised transience.

Keywords: craft, creativity, improvisation, notation, performance, rehearsal

Creativity beyond innovation: Musical performance and craft

> The concept of creativity as "doing something different": it's not that I think it's wrong, but that I think it's not useful. As a starting point, it doesn't get you anywhere….What I like to do is hijack the word and say that we are being creative, but we're being creative in a different sort of way. What we're doing is bringing something which is dead – just marks on a piece of paper – and we're giving it life; we're finding out how it wants to be alive. That's as creative as you can get. (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 10, 2012)

Although creativity has been defined in a multiplicity of ways across disciplines, scholars generally agree that it involves the generation of ideas or products that are novel, of value, and appropriate to the field (Amabile, 1996; Boden, 2004; Csikszentmihályi, 1996). Yet, by too readily connecting creativity in musical performance to innovation, does this model neglect the more inconspicuous and unrecognised, but no less valuable, dimensions of creativity when working with a score? This paper offers a characterisation of musical performance situated within a framework of craft, by tracing rehearsal strategies employed by performers working with notations at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of complexity. The first is a fairly sparsely notated suite of duets for clarinet and piano; and the second is a more complex work for solo clarinet. What is striking in both these cases is the intimate relationship between the performer and notation, which is indicative of the score's importance in performance without reducing the performer's role to one of subservience. It is clear that the notation functions beyond a set of instructions or a

specification of sound content. Rather than suggesting a total remodelling of creativity, the paper presents a widening and nuancing of understandings of what it means to be creative in musical performance. My argument draws attention to "everyday" aspects of music-making, in which musicians through their engagement with their work make decisions which are less explicit than the conventional "moments of revelation" that are prevalent in the literature, but which are nonetheless significant. Acknowledging these attributes of musicians' performance practices can serve to develop a more forward-looking understanding of creativity based on processes rather than outcomes, in order to move beyond a paradigm that opposes notated permanence to improvised transience.

Musical Performance Studies: A Move to the "Real World"

Developments in musicology over the last thirty years have provoked a shift from the analysis of music as text to music as performance, elicited concern with understanding musical workings rather than the musical work, and encouraged a view of music(king) as action rather than object (see Cook, 2013; Rink, 1995, 2002; Small, 1998). More recent work has been directed towards investigating the processes of live music-making, an orientation reflected in the research programme of the AHRC Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk) and the ongoing series of Tracking the Creative Processes in Music international conferences (most recently in Paris; see http://tcpm2015.ircam.fr). These programmes bring together academics from

a variety of musicological disciplines and whose work shows a growing recognition that musical creativity is not an isolated and self-sufficient activity undertaken solely by the composer, but rather is a complex process that is socially and culturally situated. Moreover, such work acknowledges the contingency of performance on a variety of factors and demonstrates the importance of situating research in "real-world" contexts.

This epistemological shift and broadening of the field has necessitated the employment of diverse methodologies that allow for a richer analysis of the attributes of live music-making – what Nicholas Cook terms the "ethnographic turn" (2013, p. 255) in musical performance studies. This growing attention to the subjective experience of the performer has led musicians to become increasingly involved in the research process, whether as participants or as researchers themselves. A recent but rapidly expanding body of literature seeks to document the creative process from "within," with performer-researchers investigating their own professional practice (Barrett et al., 2014; Dogantan-Dack, 2012; Fitch & Heyde, 2007; Gyger, 2014; Hayden & Windsor, 2007; Kanga, 2013; Roche, 2011; Roe, 2007). Following investigations into expert pianists' rehearsal and performance practices led by Roger Chaffin (Chaffin, Imreh, & Crawford, 2002; Chaffin, Imreh, Lemieux, & Chen, 2003), a study by Eric Clarke, Nicholas Cook, Bryn Harrison, and Philip Thomas (2005) was one of the first of its kind to incorporate the perspectives of the composer, performer, and analyst, synthesising qualitative and quantitative methods in order to investigate the preparation and performance of a

complexly notated piano work. Building on this approach, Amanda Bayley's sustained research with the Kreutzer String Quartet and composer Michael Finnissy (Bayley, 2010, 2011; Bayley & Clarke, 2009, 2011) illustrates the kinds of rich detail that audio-visual recordings and interviews can provide the researcher in tracing creative processes and drawing out the "space" between notation and performance (Bayley, 2010, p. 209). Nicolas Donin has undertaken several investigations of artistic decision-making in composition (Donin & Féron, 2012; Donin & Theureau, 2007). Within this area of research, audio-visual material has been shown to be a valuable resource, whether as a documenting medium (Archbold, 2011) or as a tool to prompt further reflection from research participants (Bayley, 2011; Clarke, Doffman, & Lim 2013; Donin & Theureau, 2007; Seddon, 2004; Seddon & Biasutti, 2009). This body of work demonstrates the advantages of employing a qualitative approach to explore the many facets of musicians' experiences.

Creativity in Performance

In tandem with the epistemological and ontological developments in musicology, creativity research has undergone a complementary turn towards the sociocultural, and away from the romanticised notion of creativity as a personal attribute residing within the artist's psyche (see Abra, 1994; Amabile, 1996; and, specifically to the sphere of music, Clarke, 2012; Toynbee, 2012). Although definitions of creativity are numerous

and multi-faceted, it is now generally acknowledged that creativity is a collective phenomenon (Sawyer, 2003; Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009) that must be considered in relation to the field in which it is situated (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihályi, 1996; Gardner, 1993). Models of creativity have emphasised the innovative and revelatory qualities of creative process. Margaret Boden, for instance, characterises creativity as "the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are *new, surprising and valuable*" (2004, p. 1, original emphasis), and Mihályi Csikszentmihályi's seminal work, *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (1996) asserts that an integral component of creativity is "a person who brings novelty into [a] symbolic domain" (1996, p. 6). Similarly, Keith Sawyer, who has published extensively on creativity, describes creativity studies as "a science of human innovation" (2006, p. 33). Models of creative magnitude – for example, Csikszentmihályi's "Big C and little c" paradigm (1996), and more recently, James C. Kaufman's and Ronald A. Beghetto's (2009) more comprehensive "Four Cs" taxonomy – have identified a distinction between "high," or significant, creativity and "ordinary," everyday, creativity, and have posed questions that shed light on different aspects of creativity, for example, what makes an individual creative, and perhaps more significantly, what conditions are conducive to creativity? Yet, although departing from an individualized and person-centred understanding of creativity, these categorisations retain a focus on the *outputs* of individuals as indicators of creativity, rather than the actions that give rise to them.

In light of the importance placed on novelty and innovation as defining attributes of creativity, it is perhaps inevitable that improvised music has been identified as a locus of creative activity. Indeed, the opposition between improvisation – identified by Clarke as "the most conspicuous illustration of creativity in performance" (2012, p. 23) – and the performance of notated music seems self-evident, with clearly defined differences between the two practices. The stereotypical improviser is spontaneous and inventive, appearing to undertake, as Derek Bailey defines it, "in the moment" composition (1992, p. 208). By contrast, performing with a score seems to offer fewer creative opportunities and is widely represented as an *interpretative* practice, involving close adherence to notation to realise a composition that has been "created" beforehand. Thus improvisation (equated with orality and novelty) is seen as more creatively authentic than score-based performance. In discussing group creativity, Sawyer describes collective improvisation as the "purest form of group creativity, a Weberian ideal type" (2003, p. 18). Aside from his employment of the ideologically loaded term "pure", the implication of Sawyer's statement seems to be that notation contaminates ensemble performance by impeding social interaction, the agency of the performers, and hence the possibility of creativity itself. Such assertions rely on an assumption that creativity in performance is predominantly associated with deviation from a fixed object: the score. Central to this discourse is the disjunction between notation's dual functions of description and prescription, both representing musical works and

providing instructions for their performance (Kanno, 2007, p. 231). On the surface, the score seems to serve a contradictory function: on the one hand, exerting a constraining force on the performer by presenting a model or a set of rules that should be adhered to, and, on the other, triggering creative decisions and actions. Yet, it is the former function – what Cook has described as the "ocularcentric identification of the score with what the music is" ([2004] 2007, p. 21) – that has dominated discourse and practice. Lydia Goehr (2014) identifies the dangers of this crude yet persistent opposition, where improvisation is held up as "utopian in intent: to pave the way for a free music or a free future in a society of constraint" (2014, p. 2). Performance is surely a much more mixed economy, and indeed, Goehr shows how performance involves the distinct but overlapping phenomena of *improvisation impromptu*, where a performer reacts in the moment to unexpected obstacles or grapples with resistances, in contrast to what she calls *improvisation extempore*, the kind of overt improvisation in response to a creative stimulus. Cook ([2004] 2007) similarly unravels the false distinction between improvisation and score-based performance, claiming that at the heart of the issue lies a misapprehension of the relationship between improvisation, composition, and performance. Drawing on Alfred Schütz's (1964) concept of "inner time," Cook proposes that in both jazz and classical music, performance is a matter of social interaction, a "mutual tuning-in" (Schütz, 1964, p. 161) of performers that "giv[es] rise to a shared, communal temporality" (Cook, [2004] 2007, p. 15).

This preoccupation with creative innovation has been described by some commentators as a sort of ideology (Osborne, 2003; Rehn & de Cock, 2009), and has provoked a number of dissenting voices, of which perhaps the loudest belongs to Thomas Osborne (2003), who is highly sceptical of the value placed on "compulsory individualism, compulsory 'innovation,' compulsory performativity and productiveness, the compulsory valorization of the putatively new" (2003, p. 509). Alf Rehn and Christian de Cock (2009) take a similarly critical stance, expressing concern that a focus on innovation reflects neo-liberal, market-focused doctrine, where "The emphasis on novelty is needed to ideologically position creativity as part of an economic movement and to connect it to the modernist ideology of progress" (2009, p. 225).

Musical Performance and Craft[1]

In light of such criticism, this paper puts forward a theoretical refinement of current views on creativity by situating musical performance within a framework of craft, where musical notation is not understood primarily as a formal model but as one of the materials with which musicians work. The concept of craft has been approached from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and design theory. Craft resonates with musical performance on a number of levels. Richard Sennett (2008), for example, seeks to elevate the role of the craftsperson beyond a concern with the manual and the technical to one that is founded

on “the ability to localize, to question, and to open up” (2008, p. 277). For Sennett, the craftsperson is epitomised by the conductor, whose commitment to refining a passage of music eclipses the economic considerations of an orchestra rehearsal running into overtime. Although this is a somewhat mythologised view of the creative relationship between the conductor and the orchestra, it serves to illustrate certain similarities between music-making and craft. Stan Godlovitch (1998) also draws institutional parallels between professional music-making and the craft tradition. Performance, he argues, represents the coming together of “practice, method, and skill” (1998, p. 56). The specific activities of rehearsing and preparing music for performance, however, have not been examined in any detail within the context of craft.

A significant connecting point between musical performance and craft lies in performers’ engagement with their materials. Tim Ingold suggests that “it is characteristic of craft that both the practitioner’s knowledge *of* things, and what he does *to* them, are grounded in intensive, respectful and intimate relations *with* the tools and materials of his trade” (2011, p. 239, original emphasis). A central component of this kind of engagement is skill and expertise, developed over time and embedded through routine. Performance involves both technical and interpretative skills, which are rooted in the physical (Godlovitch, 1998, p. 54). The development of expertise by applying domain specific knowledge in order to find innovative solutions, or creative problem-solving (Ericsson, 1999; Kozbelt, Beghetto, & Runco, 2010, p. 33; Sawyer, 2003, pp.

104–106), has been a prevalent paradigm within creativity research. This category of creativity theory has attempted to account for the processes that demystify the "eureka" moments of discovery and revelation, for example, by demonstrating that expert knowledge is developed over an extended period of time (Weisberg, 2006). Drawing on a study by Jacob W. Getzels and Csikszentmihályi (1976), Sawyer (2003) identifies problem-finding as a collective and emergent process in group improvisation, in opposition to the problem-solving that is required when working with the "well-specified" problem of a script (2003, p. 105) or a score: "to perform the piece accurately and with an appropriate interpretation" (p. 176). For Sawyer, this dichotomy is indicative of the distinction between art (problem-finding, and thus an act of creation) and craft (problem-solving, and thus an act of making). Yet, craft should not be equated solely with technique; it is grounded in the practitioner's proactive engagement with material, the ability to problem-find *and* to problem-solve through, as Sennett argues, a "dialogue between concrete practices and thinking" (2008, p. 9). For Sennett, solving and finding are two sides of the same coin. Sometimes on encountering a problem, a practitioner might explore her materials, getting to know all of their details in order to solve it; but sometimes a practitioner pursues *problems* in order to develop a closer relationship to her materials (pp. 214–231). In this way, the challenges offered by musical materials can be a valuable source of creative engagement.

Performers must have the capacity to seek out both solutions and problems in the conceptual and/or technical challenges presented by the score – a process facilitated by repetitive practice. Instrumental training and rehearsals are often grounded in the organised repetition of technical movements such that, through repeated performance actions, ways of playing are incorporated into the performer's own bodily sensibilities. Repetition seems on the surface to be an elementary activity, largely due to the value placed on originality in the Western art tradition, yet it need not be mindlessly mechanical. Indeed, it is crucial to, and highly valued in, practices such as Japanese calligraphy, in which imitation and reproduction are central to training (Nakamura, 2007). Repetition's devalued status rests on an emphasis on products and outcomes over actions and processes. "Work involves repetition," Osborne writes, "Not repetition of the same object or specific theme necessarily, but repetition of the same activity, repetition in the name not just of seeking an answer to something but of locating, deepening, embellishing a *problem*" (2003, p. 520, original emphasis). Rehn and de Cock similarly stress that creativity could indeed be dependent on carrying out routine actions over and over again, since "It might be that it is the very process of working that shows us creativity, rather than it being revealed in the final product" (2009, p. 227). Ingold adopts precisely this perspective in his detailed account of the seemingly mundane activity of sawing a plank of wood.

> Although a confident, regular movement ensures an even cut, no two strokes are ever precisely the same. With each stroke I have to adjust my

> posture ever so slightly to allow for the advancing groove, and for possible irregularities in the grain of the wood. Moreover I still have to watch to make sure I keep to the line, since even though the saw is constrained to slide within the existing groove, the groove itself is slightly wider than the blade, allowing for some slight axial torque. This is where the index finger of my right hand, stretched along the handle of the saw, comes into play …. In effect I use it to steer within the tight margins afforded by the groove. The actual width of the groove is determined by the setting of the saw's teeth, which are bent outwards, alternately to one side and the other of the blade. The point of this is that it allows clearance for the blade to slide within the groove. It would otherwise become jammed. (Ingold, 2011, pp. 52–53)

Ingold shows that going over the same gesture is in itself a fresh movement even if it follows paths already traced, because attempting to repeat an action involves micro-adjustments in every instance. The outcome is never guaranteed and might vary each time. Consequently, no work is ever finished – performance is *itinerative* (i.e., involved in a journey) rather than iterative (simply repetitious; see Ingold, 2011, p. 216). "Going over things" is thus central to craft, and more broadly contributes to the practice of performance.

Following on from this theoretical discussion, I now use two case studies to explore a craft-based understanding of the creative process in the practical context of the rehearsal room, in order to uncover the creative possibilities of intensive engagement with notations of varying "specificity." The research was guided by questions such as what it might mean to be creative in the performance of notated music, how performers might experience opportunities for creativity across different

contexts, and what kinds of creative practices are encompassed in performers' responses to the score. The paper documents the experiences and practices of professional musicians to examine more closely the relationship between notation and performance, and thereby shed light on the latent freedoms and constraints in performing notated music.

Research Approach

The paper presents material from a larger study (Payne, 2015) that employed an ethnographic approach to investigate creativity in performance, drawing on qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews with musicians, and audio-visual footage of workshops, rehearsals, and performances. Data collection took place over two stages: during the first year of research I identified fourteen professional clarinettists who are largely UK-based and have experience in a range of musical genres, having played in ensembles including, among others, the London Sinfonietta, Lontano, Michael Nyman Band, musikFabrik, Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the free improvisation ensemble AMM. Having received their informed consent to participate in the study, semi-structured interviews were carried out and audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) undertaken with the software nVivo (see Bayley, 2011; Doffman, 2008) in order

to draw out themes for further investigation and to establish case studies for the second stage of the project based on the participants' current professional engagements. Interviews lasted an average of 90 minutes, and were structured around a series of questions aimed at gathering information about the musicians' backgrounds, musical formation, current performance engagements, and the ways in which they characterised creativity in relation to these activities. For example, I asked performers what the word "creativity" meant to them, what it might mean to be creative in performance, and how they might experience opportunities for creativity across different contexts. While the primary material presented in this paper comes from clarinettists, citations from composers and other musicians with whom they have worked are also included.

After the initial interviews, four professional performance projects were chosen as case studies, two of which are discussed this paper: the rehearsals for, and first performance of a work for clarinet and piano; and a project to record a solo clarinet piece. The case studies involved three performers and two composers as participants, and consisted of around 17.5 hours of interviews, and 7 hours of video footage documenting rehearsals, a recording session, an editing session, and a performance. (See Tables 1 and 3 for a summary of the audio-visual data collected during fieldwork for each case study.) The following section begins by presenting selected performers' perspectives on the creative processes of performance drawn from my interviews, before moving on to the two case studies.

Findings and Discussion

Performers' characterisations of creativity

What might it mean to be creative beyond innovation? This section provides examples from my interview material to illustrate some of the inherent tensions in a model of creativity that prioritises innovation or novelty. This brief discussion is not intended to be exhaustive by any means, but seeks to prompt questions about alternative understandings of the creative processes of performance.[2] It was striking how disinclined some performers were to describe their practice as necessarily creative in an innovative sense. This reluctance is summed up in the following statement from the clarinettist Antony Pay, which opened this article:

> The concept of creativity as "doing something different": it's not that I think it's wrong, but that I think it's not useful. As a starting point, it doesn't get you anywhere….What I like to do is hijack the word and say that we are being creative, but we're being creative in a different sort of way. What we're doing is bringing something which is dead – just marks on a piece of paper – and we're giving it life; we're finding out how it wants to be alive. That's as creative as you can get. (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 10, 2012)

Pay understands the performer's role to be highly proactive, and not in any way subservient to the score or the composer. Indeed, he has firmly stated that he "certainly would not want to reduce a player's role to that of 'reproducing the text'" (Pay, 2013). For Pay, then, creativity can be characterised as bringing to life a dead score, but he

rejects the idea of creativity as necessarily innovative. Similarly, the clarinettist Andrew Sparling sees his role as facilitating rather than intentionally creative:

> I've always thought that it's an interpretative skill rather than a creative skill, which I suppose puts you into the role of a facilitator. I don't think of myself as a baseline creator…. We are the composer's voice … because the composer doesn't have a voice. They only have their … notation. (A. Sparling, unpublished interview, April 2, 2012)

While Sparling's use of the term "facilitator" suggests that he understands his position to be separate from, and subordinate to that of the composer, the metaphor of being the "composer's voice" conveys a sense of the performer's empowerment, because the composer's voice is the crucial means through which the music is communicated. His comment also suggests that the separation of the roles of performer and composer need not be problematic. Both performers make reference to the role of the score in performance, while also emphasising the primacy of the performer's role, which is highly active and productive. In a similar vein, the cellist Neil Heyde, a co-performer in one of the project case studies, has challenged the assumption that a densely notated score exerts a constraining force on his opportunities for creativity; for him, in fact the reverse was true: "In general (and it really is in general) I like reasonably heavily notated scores, because although it looks like the composer's occupying more of the performer's creative space, you've actually got more to interact with" (N. Heyde, unpublished interview, November 1, 2012). These performers approach the score as a stimulus for creativity through interpretation and engagement, but without the intention

of necessarily creating something new in performance. This is not to suggest that every performance will be the same, as Pay expresses in his disavowal of trying to "do something different" in performance:

> What I think my job is, as a performer, it's not that it can't be different and it probably often is different every night, but that's not because I'm trying to make it different…. It's somehow looking at the thing in the wrong way to say that what I'm doing is trying to make something different. (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 10, 2012)

Pay's statement identifies a fundamental issue at the core of this debate that has been observed by Cook: that while a musician's responses to a score might prioritise accuracy, this should be understood as a "*means* rather than an *end*" (2013, p. 284, my emphasis). A provocative final comment from Pay presents the performer as an engineer, whose function is highly skilful yet practical. This resonates with the problem-solving attribute of performance discussed above. He talks about how a central part of preparing a piece for performance is what he calls "workability"; music can be "sorted out and made to work" by engineering: "You need to have an engineering vision of performance if you're going to play music with any sophistication…. The thing about engineering is, it doesn't sound terribly creative does it?" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 10, 2012). According to Pay, engineering involves careful contemplation of the effect of notational details and how they affect the workability of the piece, achieved through repetition and rehearsal. The term engineering also suggests

a kind of ingenuity, a dexterity and resourcefulness in applying knowledge to develop solutions that best match the practical requirements of the performance situation.

The statements above offer alternative perspectives on the nature of the performer's role, challenging the idea of score-based performance as being limited to reproduction, and provoking a re-evaluation of how creativity might be understood beyond innovation. The important point, as argued by Cook (2013), is to shift attention from ends to means, or from outcomes to processes.

Case study 1: *Four Duets* for clarinet and piano (2012)

Having offered some brief characterisations of the creative process from performers, I now turn my attention to two case studies in order to pursue some of the attributes of a craft-based understanding of creativity in closer detail, and ultimately to consider the relationship between creativity and craft. The first case study examines a work by Edmund Finnis, *Four Duets* for clarinet and piano, written for Mark Simpson and Víkingur Ólafsson. *Four Duets* is a series of short pieces commissioned by Simpson for his Martin Musical Scholarship Fund recital at the Royal Festival Hall on December 8, 2012. Table 1 gives a summary of the audio-visual data collected during fieldwork.

[Insert Table 1.]

At first glance, the score (see Figure 1) appears to present few technical challenges to the performers. During their first rehearsal, Simpson described the notation as being "deceptively simple," and Ólafsson agreed: "It's a pretty sparse score" (V. Ólafsson, unpublished interview, February 4, 2014). Finnis suggested that the music looks "pretty simple on the page but to get the right atmosphere is really difficult … it takes a bit more time than it looks like it will" (E. Finnis, unpublished interview, April 10, 2013). Although the score might appear outwardly spare, the apparent simplicity of the musical outcome was not reflected in the processes involved to reach that goal. Each of the four pieces focuses on the rhythmic and timbral relationship between the two instruments. Finnis creates subtle tensions and resolutions of texture through his use of counterpoint and a close pitch range between the two instruments. His concern with "treat[ing] a sound" rather than necessarily producing an "expressive melody" (E. Finnis, unpublished interview, April 10, 2013) is evident in his approach to notation: the dynamic indications are abundant and carefully specified, but he is relatively sparing with expressive instructions.

For Ólafsson, part of the creative potential of the music arose from Finnis's approach to notation and his precise yet subtle performance instructions. He felt that working closely with a relatively fixed notation was a way to release a carefully considered and creative performance.

> I like very much a very strict and strong framework within which you can actually be quite free. What I like about it is how highly defined all the

> decisions were, and to me that ultimately can lead to, paradoxically as it may sound, more freedom. So if you actually have to work within a range of *pianississimo* or something and then you go to *pianissimo* or *mezzo forte* at most, that kind of framework can lead to some very specific details that in the end to me are very rewarding. (V. Ólafsson, unpublished interview, February 4, 2014)

This precise yet understated notation sparked Ólafsson's curiosity, and also had a psychological effect by focussing his awareness on his playing: "You feel you can't do an unnecessary gesture, [because] it'll be heard" (V. Ólafsson, unpublished interview, February 4, 2014).

Simpson and Ólafsson's first rehearsal presents an opportunity to observe the processes that were involved in working towards an apparently simple and fixed musical outcome at a localised level. Much of this rehearsal was spent cultivating a mutually agreed shaping of rhythms in the third movement, the first page of which is shown in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1.]

This is the slowest and most restrained movement of the work, and certainly the most exposed, with the clarinet instructed to play "*ppp* delicate, yet quietly expressive echo tones" and the piano "*pppp possibile sempre*, 'shadowing' clarinet" (Finnis, 2012, p. 8). The dynamic remains in this range throughout the piece. The rhythm of the melody continually shifts between different combinations of tied dotted quavers, triplet quavers, and crotchets, duplet quavers, and quintuplet quavers, which are often tied (see

for instance, bars 117–119), and thus result in a displaced sense of pulse. Following two movements that are canonic in texture, the sense of synchrony becomes all the more perceptible. This was the first piece that the performers rehearsed together, and after an initial run-through of the complete movement it became clear that they were both dissatisfied with their rhythmic shaping. Having identified that the problematic element was coordinating the quintuplet rhythm, they repeated the entire piece again but were still dissatisfied. Their exchange is transcribed in Table 2.

[Insert Table 2.]

Various strategies were employed during this episode, including speaking the figure using numbers and different configurations of syllables, using a metronome, whistling, clicking, subdividing the quintuplet figure into its quaver components, and speaking over the piano and clarinet parts. This sustained period of negotiation enabled the musicians to reach an agreed rhythm, approaching it in different ways repeatedly to refine and embed it. At one point during the rehearsal, Ólafsson commented half jokingly that "quintuplets are always a little bit dangerous," acknowledging the challenge that the ambiguity of the rhythms presented when the performers were attempting to achieve synchrony. In a later interview, he elaborated further on this comment: "[I]t looks rather simple when you're actually looking at the page, but to play together as if you're one person, it's extraordinarily difficult," but he placed little emphasis on the strategies they employed, stating simply "I think we did metronome

stuff' (V. Ólafsson, unpublished interview, February 4, 2014). The performers assumed this way of working was a fairly obvious and unproblematic aspect of the rehearsal process.

This episode illustrates the point that even the most ostensibly straightforward music can generate highly detailed responses from the musicians. Indeed, notation can often be highly complex in its *omission* rather than description of musical details. On one level, this exchange might be understood simply as a matter of competence: with more experience of playing together, this kind of rehearsal practice would become redundant. This would be doing the musicians a disservice, however, as once they had found a way of playing with which they were satisfied – signalled by Ólafsson stating "That was it" – it was not revisited. On another level, we might view the musicians as having conflicting understandings of the nature of a quintuplet, with Ólafsson's literal "correctness" conflicting with Simpson's somewhat more fluid and questioning approach. Nevertheless, at this stage of the rehearsal process achieving and refining a mutually agreed rendering of the rhythmic nuances required sustained working and reworking of the material. Rhythmic accuracy was an area of focus, not as a means of restricting their performance, but as a way of fitting the parts together to achieve, in Simpson's words: "The little interplays Finnis has with these motives which are what gives the piece this alluring sophisticated texture on the top" (M. Simpson, unpublished interview, January 16, 2013).

Case study 2: *Paraphrase* for solo clarinet (1969)

The second case study addresses a more complexly notated work: Alexander Goehr's *Paraphrase on "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda" by Claudio Monteverdi* for solo clarinet Op. 28, recorded by Antony Pay.[3] See Table 3 for a summary of the audio-visual data collected during fieldwork.

[Insert Table 3.]

This piece contains a number of metric modulations and irrational rhythms, large leaps in pitch, and extreme changes in dynamics. Part of Pay's motivation for making a new recording was his dissatisfaction with performers' deviations from the score in existing recordings: he declared "I don't think I've heard a recording that does what's on the page, so that's what we'll do" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 4, 2013).

The piece is inspired by the storyline of Monteverdi's dramatic madrigal, which narrates a battle between ill-fated lovers, Tancredi and Clorinda, during the first Crusade. A particularly striking moment occurs in the most highly charged section of the piece marked "Guerra" (bars 68–91), during which the music divides into two quaver lines superimposed over each other, one at *subito fortissimo* and the other *pianissimo* (bar 81; see Figure 2).

[Insert Figure 2.]

In contrast to the previous case study, where the aim of achieving rhythmic coordination encouraged the musicians to play almost as if they were one person, here the performer must find a way to be, in Pay's words, "two people at the same time" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, January 10, 2013), by achieving a polyphony that is impossible to realise literally on a monophonic instrument. Pay views the two quaver lines as explicit representations of the eponymous characters: "one of them making violent gestures that I think of as sword-slashes, whilst the other rises gently" (Pay, 2009), a characterisation suggested by the contrasting dynamics. In a similar manner to Steven Schick's approach to the complex rhythms of Brian Ferneyhough's *Bone Alphabet* for percussion solo (1991) (1994, pp. 136–45), Pay devised a rhythmic device in order to deduce the precise 7:4 relationship and to pace the two passages against each other effectively. Rather than fit the seven quavers into the four crotchets as Goehr suggests, a process that Pay views as "tricky to get right [because] we're not used to thinking in sevens, [his approach was to] do it the other way around: namely, to fit four crotchets into seven quavers" (A. Pay, unpublished personal communication, May 22, 2014) by subdividing each quaver into seven demisemiquavers. He then calculated the relative tempos of each line so that he could effectively ascertain the cross-rhythm of seven against four. By subdividing the rhythm in this way, Pay could devise corresponding tempos for the two lines. He explained this process further in interview:

> If you want the top line to be ♩ = 83, then the bottom line has to be at ♩ = 146…. It sort of seems a bit complicated but all that you do is you write

> this rhythm….When you do that, it does sound as though the "cha" [downbeat] is occurring at equal intervals you see. Whereas otherwise it's quite difficult to fit this in properly. (A. Pay, unpublished interview, January 10, 2013)

The rhythmic figure that Pay describes is transcribed in Figure 3.

[Insert Figure 3.]

Pay's comment "all that you do is…" reveals his high degree of familiarity and intimacy with his material, and his copy of the manuscript bears the traces of his calculations. His annotations in Figure 2 serve three functions: the heavier black lines "box in" the crotchet pulse that continues at the same tempo throughout the bar; the vertical arrows occur at the points where the seven and the four intersect; and the smaller rhythmic indications along the top of the line (horizontally aligned with the upper arrows) relate to Pay's subdivision of the four quavers into seven demisemiquavers. These sorts of calculations show a close engagement with the score in order to seek out practical solutions to notational "problems," but they are also tightly bound up with Pay's conception of the extra-musical narrative that he ascribes to the music at this moment. The points of intersection between the two lines signify the blows of battle between the two protagonists, in Pay's words, the "Fast sword stokes … 'Wha! Wha! Wha!'" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, January 10, 2013). Goehr's indications create a metric modulation into an accelerated tempo at bar 82, where the battle reaches its climax. When the "Guerra" episode returns later in the piece (bars

116–130) the metric modulation is omitted and the passage lacks the sense of momentum of its earlier iteration. For Pay, this more lethargic tempo also corresponds with the plot, where the protagonists are growing tired and using their "last resources" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, January 10, 2013).

Pay's attitude towards performance appears to be something of a paradox. He expresses a strong adherence to the score, yet in striving to render the notation effectively he develops a highly personal interpretation of the music that he finds convincing, while in his view remaining faithful to what has been written.

> I think that the most crucial thing about the business of playing is that you use yourself in the process of finding solutions. You get presented with the composer's text, and then you have, as it were, to find a territory that corresponds to the map that is that text. There are many possible territories; but your job – in real time – is to find the one that is the most convincing. Your job is not to change the map, or express your "self." You express "it." Your "self" is what you can never avoid. (A. Pay, unpublished interview, April 10, 2012)

Here, and in another interview, Pay's description of the score as "a map but not a complete realisation" (A. Pay, unpublished interview, January 10, 2013), is revealing, and echoes Gregory Bateson's argument that a map can only ever be an imperfect representation of the territory it attempts to depict ([1972] 2000, pp. 460–461). A map, as Pay asserts, is a tool which is used to navigate a territory. Although the coordinates of a map might seem fixed, the map-holder might choose any number of pathways, depending on the lay of the land. Routes might be suggested by the map, but the journey

is not predetermined. In this way, the score is ascribed the role of a tool within the performance process. Pay's attention to the "map" afforded him the opportunity to realise his own representation of the music; not to achieve a literal "reproduction" of a text, but a performance as an emergent and changeable event. Furthermore, Pay's calculations are not in pursuit of accuracy for its own sake. In fact, since making the recording, he has expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with this passage, stating,

> It seems to me that though the strict instructions of the score are obeyed, I didn't fully "inhabit" the character of the pianissimo participant (who I assume to be Clorinda). I think I've done it better in previous live performances; and given another shot, I'd make the sound of that line more focussed, and therefore more representative of an almost equal combatant. (A. Pay, unpublished personal communication, May 22, 2014)

For Pay then, careful attention to a score can be a powerful means through which to release a free and "creative" performance: the two activities are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Conclusions

This article has set out to consider issues of craft in connection with the rehearsal processes during two episodes of music-making. A theme that emerged from my interviews was performers' disavowal of innovation in their practice. Reframing creativity within the context of craft allows for a close examination of the social and material engagement involved in preparing a work for performance. Indeed, the

metaphor of the performer as craftsperson rather than creative agent might offer a richer representation. The ways in which performance choices were reached and implemented reveal the sometimes mundane nature of musical creativity, and illustrate the close relationship between the conceptual and the practical. At first glance, the performers might be regarded as simply trying "to get a job done" within a limited time frame, a way of working that could characterise all manner of rehearsals and artistic work. Yet the everyday nature of their exchanges and interactions belies an intimate relationship with their materials and fellow collaborators.

Applications of skill in pursuit of discrete details are common attributes of a musician's performance practice that often go unacknowledged and are one of the many aspects of performance that are not represented in the score. Yet, in considering musical performance within the framework of craft, is there a risk of overlooking creativity? David Pye (1995), for instance, draws an analogy between musical performance and workmanship, but makes a firm distinction between design and execution. Pye asserts "the quality of the workmanship is judged … by reference to the designer's intention, just as the quality of an instrumentalist's playing is judged by reference to the composer's" (1995, p. 30). In this reading, the performer's role is reduced to that of the uncreative labourer who merely realises instructions. Pye's views should be situated within the historical context of a period of great technological development and industrial production, and understood in part as a reaction against the moralising

rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts movement; however, they resonate with some of the stubborn preconceptions in the study of music – that the essence of a musical work or even the composer's "intentions" are somehow hidden in the score and must be brought forth by the performer, translated from score to sound. Howard Risatti (2007) has countered Pye's view by proposing that craft involves both conception *and* execution. Craft, Risatti argues, "is not limited solely to the execution of sophisticated technical manual skill …; it also involves the creative imagination in the employment and guidance of sophisticated technical manual skill through the hand" (2007, p. 168). Following this line of thinking, the quality of a musician's thought and engagement is essential to the process of performance. The relationship between conception and enactment is reciprocal; in this way, aesthetic and technical decisions and actions are intimately connected. Thus, Pay's characterisation of the performer as engineer is not as incongruous as it might initially appear.

Does this characterisation risk devaluing creativity? Indeed, a sceptical reader might question whether this understanding is over-inclusive. Does this mean that *every* decision and action a performer makes is creative? It is tempting to argue the affirmative, if only to subject creativity to critique, to provoke a reassessment of how it might be understood beyond a binary of innovation versus conformity, or freedom versus constraint. Such binaries fall into the trap of accepting rather than challenging the idea of notation determining performance. Close attention to a score need not

necessarily result in the performer being a slave to accuracy; performers can have extraordinarily intimate, fruitful, and, perhaps most importantly, as Ingold (2011) has suggested, *reciprocal* relationships with their materials. Performing can thus be understood as akin to the process of weaving, with the performer situated "in amongst a world of materials, which he literally draws out in bringing forth the work" (2011, p. 10). Using craft as a lens arguably affords a broader and deeper analysis of creativity. The practices outlined in this paper are certainly not immediately striking moments of creativity in an innovative sense. Indeed, while they might seem somewhat quotidian and might even be taken for granted by the performers themselves, a subtler and more pragmatic kind of creativity is very much in evidence. Such an orientation is useful for teasing out the dimensions of performance that might otherwise be overlooked. More broadly, it makes room for a more nuanced understanding of creativity based on processes rather than outcomes, and one that better appreciates the fluid pathways between performer and score.

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Footnotes

[1] In light of the problematic associations of the words “craftsman” and “craftsmanship,” which seem to be regarded as universal terms, but which evoke distinctly gendered images, in this paper I employ the terms “craftsperson” and “craft.”

[2] For a wider and more comprehensive discussion of performers’ characterisations of the creative process, see Payne (2015, pp. 51–85).

[3] The final recording of *Paraphrase* can be accessed here: https://soundcloud.com/tony-pay/alexander-goehr-paraphrase-on. I am grateful to Nick Parker for his generosity in editing the recording.

Table captions

Table 1. Summary of the audio-visual data collected during fieldwork for case study 1.

Table 2. Transcription of first rehearsal (16:40–19:46), December 5, 2012.

Table 3. Summary of the audio-visual data collected during fieldwork for case study 2.

Figure captions

Figure 1. Third movement of *Four Duets* for clarinet and piano, bars 110–128 (Finnis, 2012, p. 8). Used with permission from Edmund Finnis.

Figure 2. *Paraphrase*, bars 78–82 (Goehr, n.d., p. 5). Used with permission from Alexander Goehr and Antony Pay. Note that Pay's manuscript of *Paraphrase* (Goehr, n.d.) predates the 1973 Schott edition, and is written in what Goehr and Pay assert is a copyist's hand. The manuscript includes Goehr's performance directions relating to the two-part notation that is omitted in the Schott edition, as in this example:

> A "graphic" representation: in the upper system the semiquavers at quaver intervals occur every 4 quintuplets of the previous tempo. The lower system is in fact 7 quavers in the time of 4 crotchets. However, fit these into the upper system as smoothly as possible. (Goehr, n.d., p. 5)

According to Goehr, the autograph score has been lost.

Figure 3. Pay's transcription of the rhythmic figure to calculate the relative cross rhythm in bar 81.

Tables

Location and Date	Event	Participant	Data	Duration (hh:mm)
London, November 2, 2012	Semi-structured interview	Mark Simpson	Audio only	01:20
London, December 5, 2012	First rehearsal	Mark Simpson, Víkingur Ólafsson	Audio-visual	01:24
London, December 6, 2012	Second rehearsal	Mark Simpson, Víkingur Ólafsson, Edmund Finnis	Audio-visual	01:23
Royal Festival Hall, London, December 8, 2012	Third rehearsal	Mark Simpson, Víkingur Ólafsson, Edmund Finnis	Audio-visual	00:37
Royal Festival Hall, London, December 8, 2012	Performance	Mark Simpson, Víkingur Ólafsson	Audio-visual	00:55
London, January 16, 2013	Semi-structured interview	Mark Simpson	Audio only	01:07
London, April 10, 2013	Semi-structured interview	Edmund Finnis	Audio only	01:02
Skype, February 4, 2014	Semi-structured interview	Vikingur Ólafsson	Audio only	00:54

Table 1.

Participant	Dialogue	Action
MS	Would it be worth doing it without us playing once, just to get the rhythm? No pitches, just going bah bah bah bah.	
VO	Tap it to me, or say it to me?	
MS	We can click the beat. We'll just go bah bah bee bah [clicks crotchet pulse underneath], because I don't think we're agreed. Or have a metronome, because I don't think the notes are the problem. It's just the actual rhythm.	
VO	[Starts metronome] OK.	
MS and VO		They start from figure E, just speaking 'bah bah bah…'
MS	I feel as though I wait for you on the fives.	
MS and VO		They both speak parts: 'bah bah bah'; [Laughter] VO plays the piano line underneath and MS clicks along with the metronome. MS then whistles the clarinet line over the metronome.
VO	It's so hard. Bah bah bah bah bah. One two three four five;	
MS	The way I'm trying to do it is feel those two crotchet quintuplets as separate from the first quaver. So if you go like this: buh bah buh buh buh.	
MS		Beats crotchet pulse with right hand and gestures heavily on the final beat.
VO	That was not good. Bah bah bah bah bah…	
VO		Shakes head and pauses.

MS	[Over the top of VO] Tee tee…	
VO	One two three four five one.	
VO		Gestures each quaver beat with his right hand.
MS	Because the downbeat changes.	
MS and VO		MS sings the line; VO plays quintuplet.
VO	But you're always too early with the 'Bee'. One two three four five one. [MS plays quintuplet underneath]	
VO		Plays piano line, subdividing the quintuplet figure into separate quavers.
MS and VO		Plays quintuplet twice alone, and then with VO.
MS	Dee dah dee dah dee dah dee dah dee dah …	
VO	[Interrupts] I know. But it's the context of it that's difficult. Like the E flat at the end, it has a tendency to be a second sixteenth note you know.	
MS and VO		They both play the quintuplet.
VO	You are too early with it.	
VO		Plays and sings quintuplet: 'yum bah yum bah bah bah'.
MS		Plays quintuplet.
VO	You sound like a second sixteenth note. Dah dah dah!	
MS and VO		MS plays quintuplet, with VO tapping

		quintuplet quavers underneath.
VO	That was it.	

Table 2.

Location and Date	Event	Participant	Data	Duration (hh:mm)
Oxford, April 10, 2012	Semi-structured interview	Antony Pay	Audio only	01:59
Cambridge, November 12, 2012	Semi-structured interview	Alexander Goehr	Audio only	02:14
Oxford, January 10, 2013	Semi-structured interview	Antony Pay	Audio only	02:02
Oxford, January 15, 2013	Recording session	Antony Pay	Audio-visual	02:43
Oxford, February 12, 2013	Semi-structured interview	Antony Pay	Audio only	01:34
Charlbury, Oxfordshire, February 21, 2013	Editing session	Antony Pay, Nick Parker	Audio only	02:31
Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire, April 4, 2013	Discussion	Antony Pay, Alexander Goehr	Audio only	02:50

Table 3.