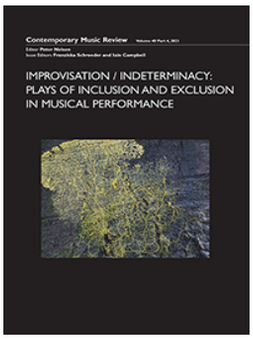

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Jonathan Ayerst

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Are Classical Musicians Excluded from Improvisation? Cultural Hegemony and the Effects of Ideology on Musicians' Attitudes Towards Improvisation

Jonathan Ayerst

Since the late eighteenth century and the flowering of Romanticism, western classical or 'art' music has adopted aesthetics which aim to express 'the great and sublime in nature' (Burke, Edmund. 1757. A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful. *New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company). However, though improvisation was a source of inspiration and motivation for creative expression, the rise of romantic aesthetics sacralised composers' creative processes and their works, ultimately producing the more restricted concept of Werktreue, or fidelity to the score (Goehr, Lydia. 1994.* The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music. *Oxford: Clarendon Press.). In this article, I turn to the writing of Louis Althusser (1971.* Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays. *Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press) to illustrate how implicit values and beliefs within the cultural institutions of classical music form an ideology which dominates the individual in a way described as 'hegemonic'. As a result, classically-trained musicians are excluded from improvisational practices, because: (i) they must act within a culture in which improvisation itself is misunderstood, misrepresented and suppressed, and (ii) the act of 'interpellation', in which ideology is interpreted by the individual, encourages musicians themselves to identify and seek fulfilment through non-creative, non-improvisatory practices. Lastly, I explore a way out from the determining tendency of ideology, explaining how the act of improvisation offers an alternative musical role which is genuinely creative and indeterminate; allowing the musician to become ideologically aware, and thus free to choose their own musical identity.*

Keywords: Improvisation; Hegemony; Exclusion; Ideology; Feedback; Attention

Introduction: Defining Improvisation and Exclusion

It is my intention in this article to account for a characteristic attitude of 'classical' musicians, those trained in the culture of western classical music, towards the practice of improvisation. By improvisation, I refer to the techniques of improvising upon the texts or scores (i.e. 'in the style of') of classical music itself. It is a type of improvising which has uniquely survived in the organ tradition and forms part of the pedagogy of this instrument, particularly in France and Germany. Historically, this way of improvising characterised the practice of classical musicians until the Baroque era, and can be compared to other musical genres (e.g. jazz or folk) in which musicians interact with templates or models in real time. Based as it is on the performance within certain styles, classical improvisation implies the assimilation of rules for tonality, forms and schemas etc., which must be adhered to for the style to be recognisable as classical music. Strict, or rule-based, this way of improvising can be contrasted with other genres, such as 'free' improvisation, which often consciously depart from this practice.[1]

The Cambridge online dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org) defines the word 'exclude' as 'to prevent … or intentionally not include something'. In the main part of the article I describe a musical culture which I believe excludes improvisation, because of certain beliefs and value judgements concerning musical creativity. Later, I describe how the same beliefs, in the form of ideology, dominate not only the practice and pedagogy of classical music, but also the minds and imaginations of individual musicians, persuading them to exclude improvisation from their own personal practice and musical experience.

A Culture Without Improvisation

The following statements are the starting point for many articles about improvisation; they describe a musical culture in which improvisation has been lost or forgotten: 'Generally speaking, extemporisation plays little part in the contemporary European classical music scene' (Dolan 2005, 4); ' … the gradual disappearance of improvisation from Western art music during the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' (Moore 1992, 61); and, worse still: 'The petrifying effect of European classical music on those things it touches … made the prospect of finding improvisation there pretty remote' (Bailey 1993, 19). Yet, even if we accept that classical music has lost touch with its improvisational heritage, this in no way explains why a certain style of musician might be *excluded* from a particular form of creativity. Can we really extend a cultural anomaly to the idea of general exclusion? Why would classical musicians especially be excluded? *Who* would exclude them?

Let us start with the observable fact that classical music programmes in most higher education institutions contain little, if any, improvisation, and when it occurs it is received as an extraordinary event: 'the wide-eyed celebration of surprise, shock, and awe … ' (Peters 2012, 7). Likewise, in educational contexts, improvisation

operates, if at all, only on the fringe of activities, in no way part of the core syllabus of classical music institutions (see Azzara 1999; Biasutti 2017; Dolan 2013). More telling still is the attitude of classically-trained musicians, who seem to exclude improvisation from their field of interest. When approximately eighty music students within the very institution which saw the creation of David Dolan's *Centre for Classical Improvisation and Creative Performance*, namely the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, UK, were asked the question, 'What makes an exciting musician?', none mentioned improvisation; interpretive performance, on the other hand, is explicitly and frequently mentioned. For example:

> Interesting interpretation
> Ability to change your interpretation over time
> Totally, technically accurate
> Honesty —honest interpretation, without being over sentimental
> Taking risks—not obeying the usual rules of interpretation (Rea 2015, 199)

From the foregoing statements it appears that classical musicians focus almost entirely on the skills of interpretation; that, while the literature of history is remembered, honoured and preserved, the improvisatory practices and pedagogy which accompanied the creation of this literature is erased (Rubinoff 2009). In this respect, Assman talks of a collective or social memory in which a cultural identity is formed by reflection on the past. He interprets social memory as bringing the individuals of the present into contact with the past; social memory explains the past, interprets and selects from the past, and thus gives 'meaning and orientation' (2015, 326) to the living participants of a culture which extends beyond the life span of the individual. Regelski also observes that 'what curriculum includes has the endorsement of social acceptance, whereas what is excluded … tacitly signifies lack of acceptance value' (2014, 78). For some reason then, within the culture of classical music, improvisation has become devalued. Does this sufficiently explain my thesis that classical musicians are somehow *excluded* from improvisation?

To do this I will trace the rise of certain attitudes towards creativity which resulted in the work-concept or *Werktreue* ideal—a concept at the heart of classical music training and interpretive performance. I should say re-trace, for this is not a new proposal: Goehr's (1994) insightful analysis of musical practice in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* has the establishment of the work-concept as its core thesis. Yet my interest is to observe the regulating force of the *Werktreue* concept on the specific emotional and cognitive processes of improvisation, and to show how, ultimately, this functions as exclusion. To describe this, I turn to the field of ideology as interpreted by the Marxist social philosopher Louis Althusser (1918–1990). For it is only through the operations of ideology that I believe it is possible to (i) convincingly describe *general* attitudes towards improvisation which dominate the culture of classical music; (ii) identify the particular type of domination—mental, moral and emotional—which is known as hegemony; and (iii) explain how individuals align

their own musical ambitions with the concept of *Werktreue*, and, in so doing, effectively exclude themselves from improvising.

The Content of Musical Ideology

It is well known that historically, at least until the early nineteenth century, it was common for musicians in Western Europe to improvise; that improvisation was integral to the compositional process, often providing the missing details from the sketchy scores used in live performance. Prolific improvising can also be associated with the employment conditions of such musicians, whose function was to provide music for the day-to-day events of their employers—be it the nobility of the court or the church (see Goehr 1994, 149–75). The need to produce music quickly for a variety of situations meant that musicians were focused on acquiring skills of rapid, craftsman-like musical production. The *partimenti* schools of Italy typify this approach in that they taught students to realise, through improvisation, the upper voices of a given bass line (Sanguinetti 2007), in effect reducing the task of composition to one line. This highly practical artistic existence naturally fostered similarly practical expectation about music, for 'to have mastered a craft was to have mastered the rules of a particular form of material production and to have produced a good or useful work of art' (Goehr 1994, 150).

Throughout the eighteenth century, however, the decline of religion and also courtly life with its associated patronage forced independence upon artists and brought about a significant change in outlook. First artists, and then musicians, searched for a new rationale to justify and provide (market) value for their work, as Belting and Atkins explain: 'now art, remaining alone in the place once occupied by religion, had to be written about in a radically new way. Amid the turbulent beginnings of bourgeois culture, absolute art was the reverse side of an art that had been relieved of all its previous functions' (2001, 60). Such a rationale crucially involved new aesthetics which delineated serious art or music—'absolute art' or 'Art with a capital A' (Gombrich 1964, 377)—from mere craft. Craft, on the one hand, was associated with the everyday, while 'Art was beautiful because, among other things, and as it would soon be expressed by romantic theorists, it could transport us to higher, aesthetic realms' (Goehr 1994, 52). As a result, both consumers and creators of art and music became conscious of the consequences of art, that is, the aesthetic experience described by Burke as: 'astonishment … the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully' (1757, 41); and it is upon this experience that artistic products would come to be increasingly valued.

As Immanuel Kant remarked in 1790, '[i]n a product of beautiful art we must become conscious that it is Art and not Nature; but yet the purposiveness in its form must seem to be free from all constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature' (1914, 187). Kant's remarks associate human creativity with that of the natural world, and consequently the creative act grows in stature and significance. For artistic creativity, it was perceived, leads to *original* works,

similar to natural phenomena: 'Genius is the talent (or natural gift) which gives the rule to Art' (1914, 188). In contrast with the usually incomplete and codified scores of the Baroque period (e.g. figured bass notation), from which performers could perform *a* version for a particular event, compositions now appeared as finished scores and were soon valued for being timeless utterances in which *the* version of a unique creative vision was encapsulated.

Creativity is Delineated from the Performer's Role

Accompanying these shifts in attitude towards the creative process and its products, a division of labour occurred to safeguard and maximise the artistic experience. Essentially, the responsibility of creativity was assigned to the composer, while the realisation of the composer's vision was assigned to a specialist performer possessing the necessary technical and interpretive skills (Goehr 1994, 176–204). Such a division impacts directly on the improvisatory practices of the preceding centuries. It removes the rationale for improvisation: after all, if the creative work is completed by the composer, there is no need for improvisation. Rather, an attitude of preciousness regarding the composer's work emerges; far from improvising or improving on the composer's model, the interpretive performer understands that 'the music doesn't belong to him. He's allowed to handle it but then only under the strictest supervision' (Bailey 1993, 66). Instead, the performer's role is to realise as faithfully and accurately as possible the composer's vision, as received in the score. Such are then the ideals of *Werktreue* in which the performer strives to efface his or her own artistic personality in the service of the idealised presentation of others' works.

Western Classical Music as an Ideological Institution

It was the contention of Althusser that ideology—'the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group' (Althusser 1971, 158)—is present in all the numerous institutions of society. In effect, within an institution (or 'Ideological State Apparatus'), whether it be the church, the family, institutions of media, communications, culture, schools and colleges etc., there are rules, assertions, goals and values which motivate and organise the behaviour within the group, and which are implicitly reinforced through the behaviour of participants within the institution.

> What do children learn at school? … they learn to read, to write, and to add … Thus they learn 'know-how'. But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for … (1971, 132)

Translated to the domain of western classical music, Althusser's thesis implies that, alongside the actual nuts and bolts of musical knowledge (such as could be impartially

communicated: rules of notation, techniques of musical construction such as harmony, counterpoint and form, instrumental techniques etc.) is also communicated the aesthetic beliefs and values which have come to dominate the minds of classical musicians, culminating in attitudes of *Werktreue*. The word 'dominate' is the crucial component of ideology, for not only is ideology an organising principle, but also a regulative force, providing the grounds and the moral justification for inclusion (or exclusion) within the institution. Gramsci's (1971) original concept of hegemony proposes that 'the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as "domination" and as "intellectual and moral leadership"' (Gramsci cited in Riley 2011, Chap.1, para.1). Furthermore, social philosophers such as Althusser (1971), Lash (2007), and Riley (2011) situate hegemony as central to social experience, illustrating the influence of implicit political and social ideals in all social interaction and organisation. It is not surprising then that the cultural and educational institutions of classical music are ideological; rather, it remains to show how ideology operates hegemonically to exclude classical musicians from the practice of improvisation.

Ideology and Hegemony in Musical Education

To learn classical music is, by definition, a training in interpretive performance. That is, a person chooses an instrument, and an expert instructor teaches them to play the composed repertoire for that instrument. The implicit goal of instrumental lessons is thus to attain expertise in interpretive performance as described for example by Hallam: 'The expert performer needs to consider the musical interpretation of the composition, develop technical perfection, may have to play from memory, perform in cooperation with other musicians and contend with stage fright' (1995, 111).

The skills of creative music-making are clearly delineated from this type of training, which prepares the musician solely for the work of performing others' music. Even within the areas of technical development and instrumental warm-up, a routine of abstract scales and exercises substitutes for opportunities for improvisation, and this agenda is pursued even though it may prove demotivating to the student: 'Why do I have to do this stupid stuff?' is one child's reaction in Pitts and Davidson's (2000, 50) study of home practice. At the same time studies of classical musical education reveal that there is often little flexibility or discussion surrounding this curriculum. As Nielsen (1996) describes: 'First, a level of taking over the music tradition, where the learner is placed in a peripheral position. Critical questions are not welcomed. The teacher's way of playing is dominating, and has to be internalised by the student' (cited in Jørgensen 2000, 71). The seriousness of the work of interpretation is often stressed in education, as shown in the language of criticism adopted by teachers and other dominant voices: for example, Widor: 'Every illogical alteration in the intensity of sound … constitutes an outrage upon art, a crime of high treason' (1901, 60), or Lhevinne: 'if you are tonally deaf to lovely sound qualities there is very little hope for you' (1972, 17).

Thus, the student learns to reproduce attitudes of reverence to the score in their own performance, and it is on this ideological foundation that the criteria for assessments in classical music is based (see Gould 1987; also Eatock 2006 for an insightful review of international music competitions). It can be noted that classical musicians *must* pass through a number of assessments in order to achieve professional status; it is not surprising therefore that the focus of pedagogy is upon examinations. As for improvisation, it is implicitly understood in all assessment contexts[2] that to consciously or willingly depart from the letter of the score (even, for example, to ornament a repeat, or to adjust the voicing of chords to suit the acoustic of the hall) would almost certainly result in penalties, if not outright disqualification (certainly, the inclusion of entire improvised passages or movements would result in disqualification). And this disqualification, I believe, would occur on ideological grounds, for, by improvising, the performer asserts that their own creativity is equal to that of the composer, an idea which is abhorent to the institutions of assessment in classical music.[3]

Cultural Values Given to Improvisation

While Romantic composers sought to achieve a kind of perfection, or originality, of utterance in which 'everything … is put there for a reason' (Goehr 1994, 172), in which transcendent and eternal values were communicated—'a perfect work of art carries eternity within itself' (Belting and Atkins 2001, 62)—improvisation naturally suffered devaluation by comparison: for through necessity improvisation occurs in real time and thus (it was perceived) could not attain the perfection of form of composed works (Goehr 1994). Over a century later, Ságiand Vitányi continue to divide creativity into two main types: (i) 'constructive creative ability … where the composer gives a final form to an original opus by means of conscious work', and (ii) 'generative composing', for example improvisation, 'which does not result in a final opus of unchangeable form but *merely in a new variant* [emphasis added]' (1988, 180).

The Contemporary Role of the Expert Improviser

Because of this unfavourable comparison, when improvisation occurs, it is usually defended against the compositional process (e.g. Foss 1962). During the nineteenth century, the need to forge a new identity for improvisation, one which avoided unfavourable comparison with composition, gave rise to a new type of improvised performance, as Goehr explains: 'The practice was based on the idea that performers could produce "free and spontaneous" extemporised performances … defended on the grounds that it was inspirational and gave musicians immediate access to the world of transcendent truth' (1994, 233). The role of the *inspired* improviser provides the basis for the display of extraordinary abilities which characterises contemporary improvisers who astound their audience with much-heralded risk-taking (see Peters 2012 for a full critique).

Interpellation or the Internalisation of Ideology

So far my thesis has omitted the most crucial function of ideology, the act of 'interpellation' through which ideology 'recruits subjects among the individuals … or transforms the individuals into subjects' (Althusser 1971, 174). This particular facet of ideology reflects the fact that hegemony is mental domination rather than physical, and occurs implicitly rather than explicitly, as Althusser describes:

> It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognise* and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'still, small voice of conscience') 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!' (1971, 172)

Thus, hegemony requires more than acquiescence on behalf of the individual; rather, the individual must actively identify and align their personal goals (values, hopes and desires) with that of the dominant (often institutional) ideology. Indeed, the desire *to be* a classical musician, in the social-cultural sense of the term, is to identify to a greater or lesser extent with the ideology of classical music,[4] for the ideology and the cultural practice of music precede the individual in every sense. As Althusser insists, 'the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals are one and the same thing' (1971, 175), that, ultimately, to identify an ideology of classical music is not to recognise something outside of individual musicians (e.g. dominant voices permitting or repressing improvising, performing or composing under certain conditions), but to identify something within the imaginings of musicians who think of themselves *as* 'classical' musicians, and who naturally (and as a result of rooted and habitual beliefs) exclude improvisation from their musical activities.

Reflections: Cognitive and Emotional Barriers to Improvising as a Result of Interpellation[5]

Here I outline four cognitive and emotional barriers to improvising as a result of interpellation.

(1) Self-beliefs. The presence of beliefs about oneself, one's abilities and the expectations one has of oneself has long been noted by researchers (e.g. Aragão 2011 in relation to learning); and certainly the statement 'I am not an improviser' is a common act of identification among classically-trained musicians (Dolan 2005), possibly stemming from the common perception that improvisation as an activity has no place in classical music practice. On the rare occasions when classical musicians do improvise, this performance is usually seen as a demonstration of extreme skills, virtuosity and risk-taking (Després 2016; Peters 2012). Thus, between believing oneself to be unable to improvise and the perception of improvisation itself as out of

reach, reserved for those with specialist skills or talent, there is no role or context which supports the novice classical musician: they doubt whether they should improvise at all (as a departure from their training and the role of performer), and should they go ahead and try, the experience of novice-improvising is so at odds with their idea of what improvisers 'do' as to confirm the conviction 'I am not an improviser'.

(2) Beliefs about improvisation. It is now common for classical musicians to perceive their music not as something created in the moment, but as a body of repertoire, canonic works and historical masterpieces (Goehr 1994). These works are valued for their originality as a work of genius, and the coherence of all elements contributing to a perfect musical form. The interpretive musician's role is usually to present the score intact (without errors) so that the perfection of formal elements and the encoded emotional-spiritual message can be communicated to the listener. Improvisation, which is necessarily constructed in the moment, can never compete with these ideals of the composition process. The conviction that improvising thus results in a lesser kind of music again discourages individuals from attempting the task, and might be assumed to result in highly self-critical feedback while improvising.

(3) Negative emotions: the prevalence of negative emotions such as embarrassment and fear amongst classical musicians while improvising (see Rubinoff 2009; Woosley 2012; Thackray 1965, 15 for individual accounts and discussion) can be traced to the beliefs and self-beliefs already described. On the principle of operant conditioning (e.g. Bloom and Lazerson 1988), negative emotions make it unlikely that the individual will engage in and/or repeat the experience of improvising.

(4) Attention and conscious control: the transition from *Werktreue* interpretive performance to improvising can be dramatic and even traumatic for the classically-trained musician, steeped in 'the contemporary culture of "perfect performance" where wrong notes are not tolerated' (Dolan 2005, 111). Because the interpretive musician is habitually trying to organise the music in the same way as (they imagine) a composed piece is organised, attentional processes are pushed to the limit. It is clearly impossible to improvise according to the ideals of composition in which every note is determined; to try to improvise in this way is a miserable experience and interferes with the activation of automatic processes on which improvisers rely for fluency and cognitive freedom (see Schneider and Fisk 1983 in relation to skill learning).

A Summary of Exclusion in Relation to Determinacy

Let us return to the question: *are* classical musicians excluded from improvisation? It is the assertion of this article that exclusion would occur whenever individuals are *prevented* from improvising, either from *without*: by dominant voices (e.g. teachers,

experts, composers) and socio-cultural contexts (in which it is forbidden); but also from *within*: that is, whenever individuals, because of similar reasons and beliefs, *intentionally exclude* improvisation from their musical practice. It would seem then that the classical musician's role is determined through ideology and the unfailing act of interpellation through which, by learning about music, they also learn what a musician is, what they aim for, aspire to, think about music, etc. If this is the case, what is the solution? Can a contemporary classical musician be once more included in creative practices inherent to all other musical cultures the world over?

I believe there is a solution, but to identify this I need to draw on my own experience as a classically-trained interpretive performer who has learnt to improvise in classical styles. Although my fascination with improvising was long-standing, the steps towards learning and doing were not simple. I first felt it necessary to step outside of the performing culture of classical music into the parallel culture of classical dance, learning the basic skills of improvisation as a dance pianist. I then changed instrument, from piano to organ, studying how to improvise on Baroque organ models of composition. Neither step was easy, and involved confronting the problems I have outlined in the article: habitual self-beliefs (that I was unable to improvise), beliefs about my role as a musician (that my improvising would be rejected by listeners), critical feedback and negative emotions (particularly as a novice improviser) and rooted ideas about how music was constructed (from a *Werktreue* perception of musical structure as perfected in every detail I had to acquire a more fluid, conceptual impression of musical structure which was capable of variation). The act of improvisation, even as a novice, immediately challenged these habitual beliefs about music; I gained a new perspective of the creative decision making behind the music I knew, and a new position outside of the dominant ideology. Interestingly, my perception of ideology as a governing principle over my training and former experience saved me from further interpellation. If I gave up one role (determined through the ideals of the interpretive musician) I did not necessarily fall into another equally determined role (that of the super-virtuoso) as Balibar warns: 'there is "freedom" of course, but only in the sense of *shifting from one identification, one interpellation* to another' (2015, 13). On the contrary, I discovered the insights provided by improvising on classical models helped me to 'see' how music was constructed in ways which provided a flexible identity: I felt (and still feel) able to create my own music in different ways, according to different models.

I propose then, that it is through the act of improvisation that ideology is revealed and changed. The insights gained through improvisation redefine the individual, offering a flexible musical role, indeterminate creative actions based on new (or rather old, in the historic sense) perceptions of musical creativity. As Schiaffini describes: 'even in its more radical strayings, the improviser follows an inner logic, as in a Joycean stream, that is based on an ideal [i.e. determined] structure but is continuously and actively changing it' (2006, 576). The improviser has to accept that no version of music is *the* one; however successful (or 'ideal') an improvisation might seem to be, he or she knows that every act could have been done differently.

Besides which, the improviser has no taste for preservation and determinacy: to repeat an improvisation would be senseless, a wasted opportunity for exploring new possibilities; repetition is unsuitable for different instruments, acoustics and communicative contexts. As Peters says: 'a whole life might be seen as an improvisation, whereas individual works or groups of works (improvised or not) are but components in the much greater aesthetic and existential enterprise of integrating thought and form or meaning and configuration' (2012, 4).

If classical music suffers from the grip of determinacy, it is to improvisation that we must return to regain game-like perspectives which are only lightly determined (to the extent that the individual improviser wills) and infinitely more creative. If ideology is the disease, it is improvisation which heals, and offers a road to recovery.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on Contributor

Jonathan Ayerst is a professional pianist, organist and choral conductor. Since 2001 he has been principal pianist with Remix Ensemble, who are resident in the Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal. He has recently completed a PhD at the University of Sheffield, the subject of his thesis being: Learning to improvise as a Western classical musician: a psychological self-study, for which he has been awarded the Charles Alan Bryars scholarship for research related to the organ. As part of his PhD study he has also studied classical improvisation (2017–18) with Jürgen Essl at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart. He performs recitals of classical improvisation throughout Europe.

Notes

[1] I do not mean to delineate 'free' improvisation from classical music as a genre; only to remark that free improvisation usually arises from a desire to escape the restrictions of ideology, whereas improvisation upon the stylistic rules of classical models directly confronts the ideology of classical institutions (Schuiling 2016).

[2] A rare attempt to introduce improvisation occurs tri-annually in the Montreal Piano Competition, though it should also be noted that assessment of improvisation skills regularly takes place in organ pedagogy.

[3] Although ideology appears more strongly in assessment contexts, regular performance practice reflects the same dominant beliefs. Even in historically-informed circles Bailey reports that the Baroque musician Lionel Salter, asked whether a live performance could 'ever be remarkable because of a performer's contribution rather than for the composer's music', replied, '[t]hat would be an absolute artistic crime'. Bailey judged this attitude to be 'the general view held in this music' (1993, 28).

[4] Of course, many classical musicians recognise a discrepancy between their own ideals and those of the culture to which they 'belong'. My point is not that people are incapable of deciding for themselves, or pursuing their own freedom within a culture, only that, it is often peculiarly difficult to recognise ideology - not only operating in cultural contexts, but even more so within oneself.

[5] The following observations result from (i) my experience in learning to improvise upon classical models as a pianist and organist, (ii) my experience in teaching improvisation to adult classically-trained musicians, (iii) interviews with student and professional classical improvisers.

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