

The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century. By Bruce Haynes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [xix, 284 p. ISBN-10 0195189876; ISBN-13 9780195189872. \$35.] Music examples, illustrations, bibliography, index.

Do we ever stop to consider the philosophy behind our approach to performance other than acknowledging that we belong to a particular pedagogical tradition? My teacher studied with Segovia, your teacher's teacher studied with Galamian, and she can trace her pedagogical lineage back to Beethoven or even farther. More significantly though, we are products of our age, captives of the current performance style that rules our conservatories, stages, and recording studios. Or are we?

Recent years have witnessed an increasing number of superb books devoted to historical performance practice, some very specific such as Ross Duffin's *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (and Why You Should Care)* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007) that examine the tree, whereas books such as Peter Walls' *History, Imagination, and the Performance of Music* (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2003) survey the entire forest. In the cleverly and intriguingly titled *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century*, oboist Bruce Haynes views the entire landscape.

Bruce Haynes has made his mark as one of the world's finest baroque oboists, as an instrument builder, and as the author of several important essays on the recorder and oboe. His pivotal article, "Beyond Temperament: Non-keyboard Intonation in the 17th and 18th centuries" (*Early Music* 19, no. 3 [August 1991]: 357-81) demonstrated that woodwind players did and still can accommodate themselves to unequal temperaments. His other two books, *The Eloquent Oboe: A History of the Hautboy, 1640-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), and *History of Performing Pitch: The Story of "A"* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), firmly established Haynes's credentials as a performer/scholar with the experience, perspective, and authority to assess where we have been, where we are now, and to suggest where to

go from here. He writes with the joyful abandon of a pleasingly crusty warrior who is well beyond caring whether his strong opinions might offend some, and his direct conversational style is designed to communicate rather than impress. It entertains as well. Witty quips leap from the pages, and puns abound. For instance, Haynes quotes a colleague's rant lampooning performances that disregard HIP (Historically Informed Performance):

Historically Clueless Performance? Wild Guesswork Performance? Whatever Feels Right Performance? Whatever My Personal Hero Did Must Be Right Performance? Didn't Do My Homework So I'll Wing It Performance? Anything Goes Performance? History is Irrelevant Performance? Whatever They Did On My Favorite Recording That's What I Must Imitate Performance? (p. 11)

Humor aside, Haynes provides an invaluable service by framing the issue of performance style in clearly defined terms that set the parameters for the broader discussion that must occur if classical music is to maintain, or as some would say, regain its stature as a relevant artistic force. Although Haynes covers a vast territory during the course of thirteen chapters, four main topics emerge: the condescension of chronocentrism; the designation of performance approach into romantic, mainstream, and period styles; the historical aberration of canonism; and finally, text fetishism, its stiff and inflexible trail buddy.

Chronocentrism, we learn, is "the attitude that one's own time or period is superior; the equivalent in time of the spatial concept of ethnocentrism" (p. 14). In musical terms, this is manifested by applying our modern performance philosophy to the music of all other eras rather than matching the music of a particular era with the performing style that goes with it. This "attitude" is now largely abhorred in progressive society, but still permeates music. We are asked to be sensitive to the contemporary "Other," but not the past "Other."

The heart and soul of *The End of Early Music* is the notion that there are three very distinctive performance styles: romantic, mainstream, and period. In chapter 2, "Mind the Gap: Current Styles" (pp. 32-47) and throughout the book, Haynes exposes

the misperception that at the beginning of the twenty-first century we are still steeped in romanticism as if we were the proud standard bearers of a noble and unbroken tradition. As Haynes clearly demonstrates, romantic expression gave way to the currently prevailing mainstream style in the first half of the twentieth century. Our modern approach features “‘seamless’ legato, continuous and strong vibrato, long-line-phrasing, lack of beat hierarchy, unyielding tempos, unstressed dissonances, and rigidly equal 16th notes” (p. 48). Haynes characterizes it as “chops, but no soul” (p. 48), a corporate mentality that plays it safe—accurate but dull. Period style on the other hand favors “phrasing by gesture, dynamic nuance, inflection (individual note-shaping), tempo rubato, agogic accents and note placing, pauses, and beat hierarchy” all of which “tend to run counter to the predictable, the automatic, the machine-like regularity of Modern style” (p. 59). In fact, according to Haynes, period style is much closer to the romantic mind-set than is mainstream. He portrays the romantic perspective in the same exacting detail as well.

Haynes supports his assertions with seventy-two well-chosen audio files that can be accessed at the Oxford University Press Companion Web site (<http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195189872/?view=usa> [accessed 20 February 2008], a feature that capitalizes on one of contemporary online publishing’s advantages over traditional hard copy publishing. An audio example is worth a thousand words. For instance, words cannot convey the riveting effect of the sheer power of the driven oratory of Aretha Franklin’s father, the Reverend C. L. Franklin, in his 1955 fire and brimstone sermon “Pressing on” where he shouts, sings, and interacts with his congregation in a dynamic give and take that would move the most hardened soul—this in a chapter on rhetorical music. We are treated to Joshua Bell’s lovely rendition of Kreisler’s *Liebestied*, and Glenn Gould’s rhapsodic experiment with harpsichord articulation in Handel’s HWV 426 is absolutely divine, as if we were eavesdropping on an angel’s innermost thoughts. Susie Naper’s thrilling recording of the third movement from the Sonata in D Minor from *Les délices de la solitude* by Michel

Corrette bears special mention. To highlight differences in approach, Haynes often compares several versions of the same passage. At the time of writing, audio samples 50–54 and 63–67 did not correspond to the correct tracks on the Web site. For instance on p. 155, the author writes “Here, for example, is music that is “harpsichord-specific,” and instead of Skip Sempé’s thoughtful rendering of Louis Couperin’s Pavane in F-sharp Minor, we are amusingly treated to Eddie South, Stéphane Grappelli, and Django Reinhardt’s spirited swing version of Bach’s Double Violin Concerto. One advantage of the online component, of course, is that such errors can be easily corrected.

With the differences among the performance styles clearly etched, we can see where chronocentrism enters into this conversation. Haynes contends that our worst offense is applying mainstream style to either period or romantic music. After all, “the play’s the thing,” or should I say, “the playing is the thing.” In some corners of the early music world there is an obsession with period instruments, gut strings, etc. to the exclusion of stylistic concerns. Using appropriate instruments is vitally important, but not more so than playing in style. The Achilles’ heel of period performance as Haynes refers to it, however, is that in their haste to distance themselves from the romantic style, many period performers often let the pendulum swing too far in the opposite direction, that is, into the mainstream. “Strike up the Bland: Strait Style Described” he writes (p. 62), deliberately repelling “straight” to conjure up images of a musical straitjacket.

The third main topic concerns the historical aberration of canonism, i.e., the repetition of the same limited set of romantic “hits” over and over at the expense of exploring new material. This “Cover Band Mentality” (p. 203) runs contrary to audience expectations in the past. Nineteenth-century audiences and those that preceded them wanted to know “What have you done for me lately?” The fourth theme that courses through *The End of Early Music* is a critique of the closely related, but equally anachronistic custom of text fetishism, the idea that the text is an immutable sacred document, a precise recipe for the reliable re-creation of the genius-composer’s idea, a

hang-up often mistakenly attributed to period musicians, but more appropriately located in the mainstream camp. It is ironic that mainstream musicians ascribe to romantic texts a sacrosanct mystical status that the romantics were unwilling to extend to works from previous eras that they themselves performed. To most of our musical forebears the score was an outline to be fleshed out by the performer, the final product a true collaboration between the composer and performer. Haynes quotes from the introduction to Domenico Corri's song collection of 1782: "either an air, or recitative, sung exactly as it is commonly noted, would be very inexpressive, nay, a very uncouth performance" (p. 93), and here from François Couperin's *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* of 1717: "Just as there is a great distance between grammar and Eloquence, there is the same infinity between notated music and music played well" (p. 102).

Steeped in the tradition that bestows their very authority, "Conservatories rarely encourage the kind of independent thinking that originally inspired HIP" (p. 76), Haynes tells us. This we must change. The incorporation of regular discussions of performance practice into music history classes can reduce the wholesale and unquestioning acceptance of mainstream style. Music history professors would do well to demonstrate how historical perspective can help their students become better, more efficient, and eloquent musicians right now, today.

My purpose in mentioning the following editorial quibbles is to facilitate their correction when this book goes to its next printing, a recognition I sincerely hope it receives. I found myself occasionally stumbling over a few obstacles on the way to the treasures that lie beyond. First, the authors of quotes frequently go unidentified, forcing the reader to root through the endnotes to divine the source. For instance, on p. 20 Haynes tells us that the baroque period has been called "a celebration of ephemera," but he doesn't tell us whom to thank for this pithy remark. Ultimately, the endnotes reveal that the author is Jay Bernfeld, one of the world's finest gamba players, lending the statement a power and credibility that was initially lacking. Elsewhere, Haynes refers to Brown, but until finding the citation in the endnotes, the reader does not know whether he is referring to Howard Mayer or Clive. Lastly, singular nouns are frequently paired with plural possessives, e.g., "as the conductor raises their baton" (p. 99). All of these blemishes can be easily corrected the second go around.

While *The End of Early Music* is subtitled *A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century*, it should be read by any and all interested in our musical past, present, or future. And if you want to know what Haynes means when he prophesizes "the end of early music"—buy the book.

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