

# In Search of Ideologies and Ruling Conventions among Early Music Performers

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## Introduction

The term “early music movement” or “historically informed performers” (HIP) is commonly used to describe the large group of musicians who strive to perform early music repertoire in the “authentic” manner in which, historically, it was written and performed. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to reconstruct a multitude of performance parameters that were lost or underwent an extreme transformation, such as the original sound production, rhythmic interpretation or ornamentation.

The movement is connected to a wide variety of related disciplines, including the fields of music editing, instrument making and musicological research. However, most of those who are active in the historical reconstruction process—performers and researchers alike—have not affiliated themselves to a particular “movement.” In that respect, the term does not signify a movement with specific codes of action or unified characterizations, but merely indicates an overall group of music activists united by a common aspiration toward “authenticity” in performance. By this, they are commonly distinguished from their “mainstream” colleagues, namely, those performers who have been applying “modern” performance practice that seems incompatible with the original goals of the movement.

While challenging performance practice conventions common among their “mainstream” peers, prominent early music activists believed that thorough, direct acquaintance with past traditions was necessary for the proper performance of historical repertoire. This supported the assumption that empirical, scientific methods would bring about the reconstruction of performance traditions, or that the meaning of a musical piece would be directly derived from the exploration of the original intentions of its composer. Rejection of the model of historical progress, found in the writings of early activists such as Wanda Landowska and Arnold Dolmetsch, coincided with the preference for “historically oriented” instruments.<sup>1</sup> The theory that the composer serves as the highest authority over the performer was expanded in Landowska’s early writings to include performance elements traditionally based on individual decisions, such as ornamentation or rhythmic interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, the undermining of what could be regarded as the traditional, “positivistic” outlook can be traced back to the earliest writings examined, increasing toward the mid-nineteenth century and beyond. F.J. Fetis’s support of the historical progress model with regard to musical instruments and orchestration was clearly

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<sup>1</sup> See Thurston Dart, *The Interpretation of Music* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1954); Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969); Denis Restout and Robert Hawkins (eds.), *Landowska on Music* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969); Robert Donington, “Arnold Dolmetsch,” *Early Music* 3 (1975): 236-39; Elizabeth Goble, “Keyboard Lessons with Arnold Dolmetsch,” *Early Music* 5 (1977): 89-91; Marco Pallis, “The Rebirth of Early Music,” *Early Music* 6 (1978): 41-45; Margaret Campbell, “Jean Sinclair Buchanan-Memoirs,” *The Consort* 37 (1981): 412-18.

<sup>2</sup> See Restout and Hawkins, pp. 94-96.

expressed in his writings, dating back into the nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> and, together with Dolmetsch's legitimization of intuitive performance factors,<sup>4</sup> serve as the first signs of a constantly expanding tendency. Later allusions can be traced in Landowska's liberal attitude to transcriptions and to the performers' status, expressed in her later years.<sup>5</sup> A similar skepticism can be observed in Thurston Dart's call for caution in drawing practical deductions from historical treatises,<sup>6</sup> in Frederick Neumann's scathing criticism of performance habits relying on inadequate sources,<sup>7</sup> or in Robert Donington's pluralistic attitudes to interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting phenomenon can be observed, during the early 1970s, in the return to traditional attitudes in many of the articles written. Examples can be found in H.M. Brown's teachings on the composers' intentions and original meaning, in Frans Brueggen's appeal for full conformity with the composers' original sound perception through instrumental reconstruction, or in B.B. Mather's call for objectivism and pedantry in the reconstruction process.<sup>9</sup>

Yet skepticism has resumed since the mid-1970s: critical performers and scholars have increasingly turned to the invalidation of traditional research as a tool for the reconstruction of the composers' intentions and meanings; have presented performers' individual expressions as being equal in importance to those of the composer; have legitimized the use of "modern" instruments in early music repertoire; and have validated "mainstream" performances or presented musicology and performance as two totally separate disciplines.<sup>10</sup> In addition, an increasing

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<sup>3</sup> See Francis James Fetis, *Music Explained to the World* (Ireland: Boethius Press, 1985), pp. 234-52.

<sup>4</sup>Such a position can be found in Dolmetsch's criticism (p. 468) of "dry" musicological research, which is perceived as being remote from "music itself in its original form." Such could also be understood from his demand for the reconstruction of "natural expression" and the composers' inner feelings regarding their piece (ibid., p. 7), or his call for intelligent tempo decisions based on "sympathy with [the piece's] style" (ibid., p. 27). However, it should be noted that Dolmetsch refrains from directly tackling the issue of intuitive factors of performance, presenting his position in a rather vague and unclear manner.

<sup>5</sup> In her later years, one could clearly trace Landowska's shift toward "liberal," untraditional attitudes, manifested, for example, in her denial of composers' authoritative status and in her questioning the possibility of reconstructing their intentions; see Restout and Hawkins, pp. 355-56.

<sup>6</sup>Dart's criticism (p. 16) is focused on practical instructions and conventions based on what he observed to be "conflicting and confusing" historical sources, thus leading to conclusions based on meticulous comparative study.

<sup>7</sup>Neumann's criticism is revealed from his earliest writings, in which he consistently points to unreliable sources, researchers' bias, or a misunderstanding of the historical text as the main cause for false conclusions. He blames the performing community for acceding to musicologists' blunders, and assisting their assimilation into common conventions. See Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 9-15; *idem*, *Essays in Performance Practice* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982), pp. 1-9.

<sup>8</sup>In all his writings, Donington insisted on preserving the performers' individual tastes and intuition during the interpretation process. "Historical style" serves as a general term, within the flexible boundaries of which the performer conducts his personal interpretation. The diverse system of directions, propositions and aesthetic norms aimed toward a "historically informed" presentation of the text is considered an emancipating rather than a limiting factor. See Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p. 57; *idem*, *A Performers' Guide to Baroque Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), pp. 23-34.

<sup>9</sup> See Howard Mayer Brown, "On the Performance of Fifteenth-Century Chansons," *Early Music* 1 (1973): 3-10; Frans Brueggen, "On the Baroque Recorder," *Early Music* 2 (1974): 101-103; Betty Bang Mather, "Interpretation of French Music," *Early Music* 3 (1975): 293-95.

<sup>10</sup> See Michael Morrow, "Musical Performance and Authenticity," *Early Music* 6 (1978): 233-46; Laurence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended Against its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century," *The Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983): 297-322; Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music—Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Will Crutchfield,

amount of publications focusing on aspects of performance traditionally assumed to be associated with the movement's agenda, have largely pointed to the diversity of interpretations manifested in practice among a large body of "historically informed" recorded performances.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with such a compound mosaic of ideologies, an attempt was made to examine the influence of the attitudes presented throughout the years on the practice of "historically oriented" performers. Hence, a survey of a large group of currently active performers, with regard to the principal factors of their craft, has been conducted. Its purpose was to find the extent of correspondence between the various ideological approaches, in particular those representing critical, untraditional attitudes prevalent in more recent writings, and performers' attitudes and choices made in practice.

## Method

### Premise

As a preliminary step, a definition of the standpoints regarded as presenting the traditional, "positivistic" doctrine was made for each ideological issue examined. The following factors were observed:

1. *Notation and documentation*: the performers' attitude to such issues as the use of autograph score, transcriptions, critical editions, etc. The positivistic viewpoint requires the examination of the original score and the comparison between several sources, favoring performance based on a critical edition in cases where an original handwritten source is unavailable.

2. *Treatises and other textual sources*: the performers' attitude to such issues as composers' status, historical treatises, etc. The positivistic approach favors the examination of composers' views regarding the composition, and requires the reading of historical treatises as well as modern musicological sources regarding the piece.

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"Fashion, Conviction, and the Performance Style in an Age of Revivals," in *Authenticity and Early Music—A Symposium*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 19-26; Nicholaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech* (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988); *idem*, *The Musical Dialogue* (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1989); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act—Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); John Butt, *Playing with History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Peter Walls, "Historical Performance and the Modern Performer," in *Musical Performance—A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 17-35; Peter Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> See Dorottya Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945-1975* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Uri Golomb, *Expression and Meaning in Bach Performance and Reception—An Examination of the B Minor Mass on Record* (Ph.D. dissertation, Kings College, Cambridge, 2004); Eitan Ornoy, "Between Theory and Practice: Comparative Study of Early Music Performances," *Early Music* 24 (2006): 233-49.

3. *Sound production and orchestration:* performers' attitude to the use of "authentic" instruments, original orchestration, etc. The positivistic viewpoint requires the use of period instruments, supports the distinction between subgroups of instruments, necessitates performance of vocal music in its original language, and the observance of the original orchestration.

4. *Aspects of performance and interpretation:* performers' attitude to original pitch, tempo markings, ornamentation, dynamics markings and the like. This category includes performers' graded hierarchy of factors assimilated in the process of preparing a musical piece and in forming its interpretation.

The positivistic viewpoint necessitates the search for and application of the original pitch, intonation and temperament, and attaches a great deal of importance to the original tempo, dynamics markings and other unwritten compositional elements, such as ornamentation, rhythmic alterations, etc. The time spent on deciphering these elements during performance preparation is thus considered significant.

5. *Performer's role:* the participants' attitude toward their role as performers. The positivistic viewpoint considers the performer as being of secondary importance to the composer. The performers' task is to "objectively" mediate between the composer and his audience. The composer is regarded as the main authority, standing above all other musical agents. Hence, the purely positivistic doctrine rejects performance factors that stem from intuition and individual taste.

## Pilot Project

At the first stage, a pilot survey was conducted, based on personal interviews with twenty-five prominent early music performers, most of whom are world known soloists or teachers of the highest caliber. The subjects' instruments of specialization included harpsichord (N=8), bowed instruments (N=6), voice (N=6), plucked instruments (N=2), winds (N=1) and conducting (N=2). The historical era specialized in by the subjects included the Middle Ages (N=3), Renaissance and Baroque (N=21), and no specific era of specialization (N=1).

Table 1 displays the list of interviewed performers, their instrument of specialization and main affiliation while interviewed.

**Table 1 List of Interviewed Performers**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Alessandrini, Rinaldo	Harpsichord, Conductor	Concerto Italiano
Biondi, Fabio	Baroque Violin, Conductor	Europe Galante
Feldman, Jill	Vocal	/
Grant, Simon	Vocal	Consort of Music
Herzog, Mirna	Viol	/
Itai, Avner	Choir conductor	/

Jones, Sterling	Early stringed instruments	Studio Der Frühen Music
Kelber, Wolfgang	Conductor	Monteverdi- Orchester München
King, Andrew	Vocal	Consort of Music
Kirkby, Emma	Vocal	/
Kroll, Mark	Harpsichord	/
Leonhardt, Gustav	Harpsichord	/
Lieberman, Carol	Baroque Violin	/
Melzer, Michael	Recorder	/
Murgier, Michel	Baroque Cello	/
Ramm, Andrea von-	Vocal	Studio Der Frühen Music
Reiter, Walter	Baroque Violin	/
Roitman, Isidoro	Lute	/
Rooley, Anthony	Lute, Conductor	Consort of Music
Shemer, David	Harpsichord, Conductor	Jerusalem Baroque Orchestra
Tubb, Evelin	Vocal	/
Weimann, Alexander	Harpsichord	/
Weiss, Keneth	Harpsichord	/
Wilson, Alan	Harpsichord	Consort of Music
Zinger, Miri	Harpsichord	/

/ No affiliation indicated

Each participant was asked to address the questions freely, while indicating their relevance to his practice by choosing one of four possible answers (“very important”—“important”—“unimportant”—“unachievable”). It was made clear that the categorical selection was to indicate the status of each of the issues examined in actual practice, taking into consideration the time and effort spent on preparation for performance. The performers were asked, thus, to address the hierarchical structure of their activities, according to their degree of importance in the process of preparing a musical text.

## Main Survey

The pilot project was followed by a main survey, based on a mailed questionnaire, which received responses from 227 professional early music performers residing in Belgium, Canada, the Canary Islands, Colombia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, the U.K. and the United States. In the main survey’s questionnaire, each participant had to choose the most favorable answer out of a number of pre-written possibilities. Additional space was provided for each of the questions as an option for further discussion or a reply different to those provided.

A number of preliminary open questions, recording date of birth, instrument, professional training, current professional activity and historical period of specialization, enabled subgroup classification that was used for statistical analysis. The instruments of specialization category included keyboard (N=51), winds (N=58), bowed instruments (N=50), voice (N=31), plucked instruments (N=15), and specialization in more than one category of instruments (N=22).

The category relating to subjects’ historical era of specialization included Middle Ages (N=1), Renaissance (N=13), Baroque (N=44), Classical (N=2),

nineteenth century (N=1), specialization in more than one historical era (N=134) and no specific era of specialization (N=32).

An additional category related to subjects' professional status, including subjects of senior status (i.e. world known soloists or teachers of the highest caliber, N=16), high status (i.e. nationwide soloists or teachers in a higher education musical institute, N=64), average status (i.e. professional orchestra players or choir singers, professional keyboardists, active chamber music players, etc., N=126), low status (i.e. inactive artists or players in irregular ensembles, N=17), and subjects lacking information in that regard (N=4).

Subjects were additionally divided by age-group: subjects born between 1917-30 (N=8), 1931-40 (N=12), 1941-50 (N=48), 1951-60 (N=77), 1961-70 (N=58), 1971-80 (N=8), and subject lacking information in that regard (N=14).

## **Correlations**

Ideological attitudes presented in the main survey questionnaire were later examined for their correlation with the subjects' personal background, such as age, status, instrument of specialization and the like. Correlation was examined by means of a Fisher exact test, used to compare the proportion of deviation within each group to a random proportion of 50 percent ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). For clearer deductions, the different pre-written possibilities displayed for each of the survey's questions were combined to form two or three main categories. Similar combination was done regarding subjects' personal classifications.

## **Results & Discussion**

### **1. Notation and documentation**

Findings of both pilot and main surveys indicated the existence of a wide spectrum of attitudes in regard to the issue examined. However, most of the participants showed a clear tendency toward traditional, "positivistic" standpoints. Figure 1 plots the attitudes observed among the pilot survey group to the above issue. Table 2 summarizes the results found in the main survey regarding the type of musical edition being used.

The seemingly skeptical position observed in Figure 1 with regard to the use of critical editions is due to the preference of the original score during performance, as stated by most subjects who chose "unimportant" as their preferred answer. Similarly, about half the main survey group use original scores or facsimiles. Of the performers who chose other procedures, many noted that they would use a critical edition only when no facsimile was available. Others preferred the clarity and comfort of other types of editions, but stressed their use of facsimile in case of notational uncertainty. Some pointed to the importance of comparison between several editions, eventually choosing the most suitable one.

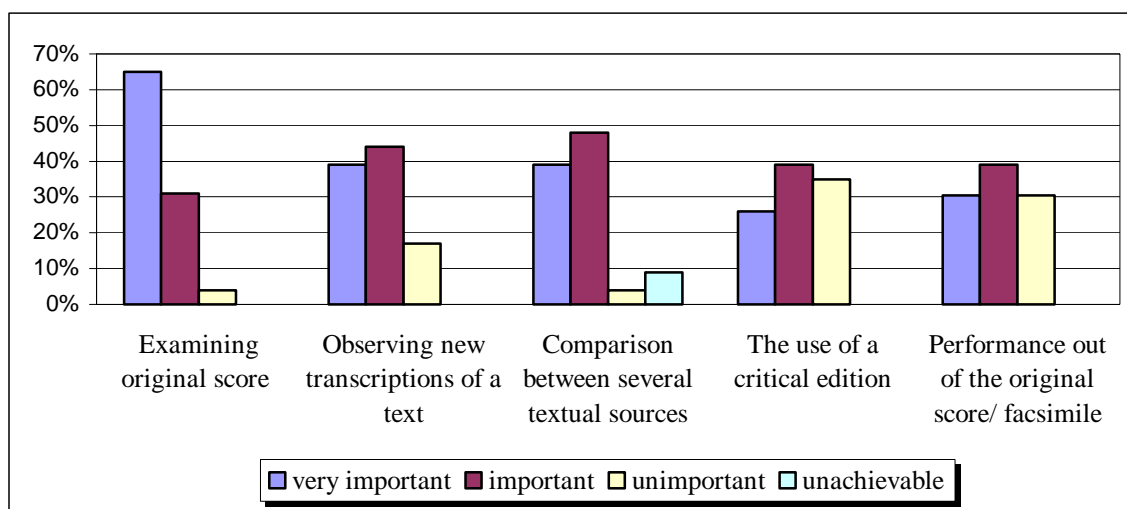
However, the data according to which approximately 9 percent of performers choose their edition according to price or availability, might indicate more than mere preference of practical considerations over ideal aspirations. Such a tendency might also demonstrate a notion emerging from critical theories, which give the performer

equal status to that of other musical agents, including the composer and editor. Once the individual creativity of performers is in the foreground, as proclaimed by so many of the movements' most prominent writers, the type of edition could very well be considered an almost irrelevant factor in the performance process.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> While addressing the authoritative status of composers' original text, traditional attitudes have pointed at the editor as having the most crucial role. Dart, for example, regarded the editor as the binding link between the original composer and the modern performer. The task of the editors would seem to rest on the considerable changes made in the original notational symbols through the course of time. However, the performer is warned against the conflicting information presented by incompetent editors, and is expected to form his own personal interpretative decisions based on a number of editorial suggestions; see Dart, pp. 13-19. Donington criticized the practice of performing from the original text or facsimile, recommending the use of a "combined purpose edition," where practical directives are presented together with important editorial information. See Robert Donington, *Baroque Music: Style and Performance* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 8; *idem*, "Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium," *Music & Letters* 70 (1989): 386-91. Neumann, while maintaining the traditional hierarchical order, whereby the composer holds the highest position, compares the researcher/editors' status to that of the performer, and promotes intuition and logical deduction as essential factors in the process of interpreting the musical text. Both require personal taste and reason, while editorial decisions are regarded as complementary and unnecessary in the interpretation process. See Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music*, pp. 9-15; *idem*, *Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 3-5. A similar position can be found in Tomlinson's view, whereby all musical agents, whether composers, researchers, editors, performers or audience, share equal status in defining and interpreting the latent messages found in the autonomous, transcendental musical text. See Gary Tomlinson, "Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer," *Current Musicology* 53 (1994): 18-24, 36-40; *idem*, "The Historian, The Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music," in *Authenticity and Early Music—A Symposium*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 122. Taruskin (pp. 187-91) criticizes the authoritative status of canonic editorial versions that lead to a disregard for oral tradition, i.e. stylistic, unwritten practice elements passing from one generation to the other. Performers are found to be over-occupied with the prevention of "mistakes" or "inappropriate" interpretive decisions, thus disregarding individual creativity. Butt (p. 94) has indicated the difficulty of defining the author's intentions, such as when various authors or versions of one single piece are available. "Intention" is divided into two categories: "active intention," i.e. specific notated instructions for such factors as instrumentation, dynamics, articulation and the like, and "passive intention," i.e. consciously or unconsciously assumed factors (such as performance conditions and considerations prevalent during the original, intended performance). Moreover, in many instances the collaboration between performer and composer is regarded as a dominant factor in creating these so-called "composers' intentions." While various printed versions of one piece may be regarded accordingly as the notation made by the composer for one particular performance, "our interest in pieces of music should be directed towards the human subjectivity involved in their creation and, particularly, in the intentionality towards (and occasioned by) performance." Walls (pp. 50-51), embracing the critical attitude at its most comprehensive, has additionally argued that performance practice research should serve merely as stimulation for the performers; the latter "have the freedom to do whatever they choose."

**Figure 1 Attitudes Regarding Notation and Documentation, Pilot Survey Group**



**Table 2 Attitudes Regarding the Type of Musical Edition Selected while Preparing a Musical Piece, Main Survey Group**

	Distribution	Frequency
“I choose the edition according to price and availability considerations”:	20	8.8%
“I choose the edition according to the name of its editor”:	23	10.1%
“I choose the edition according to the publishing house involved”:	34	15%
“I use the original score/ facsimile while preparing the piece”:	115	50.7%
Other considerations/ procedures:	35	15.4%
Total distribution (number of participants):	227	100%

## 2. Treatises and other Textual Sources

Findings have clearly shown the dominance of traditional attitudes in regard to this issue: most performers found acquaintance with historical sources an important factor during preparation for performance. With few exceptions, the epistemological dilemma of examining past traditions from the vantage point of the present was left aside. So were skeptical attitudes with regard to the status of historical treatises, some of which were criticized in earlier writings as being tendentious, generalizing, or over simplified.<sup>13</sup>

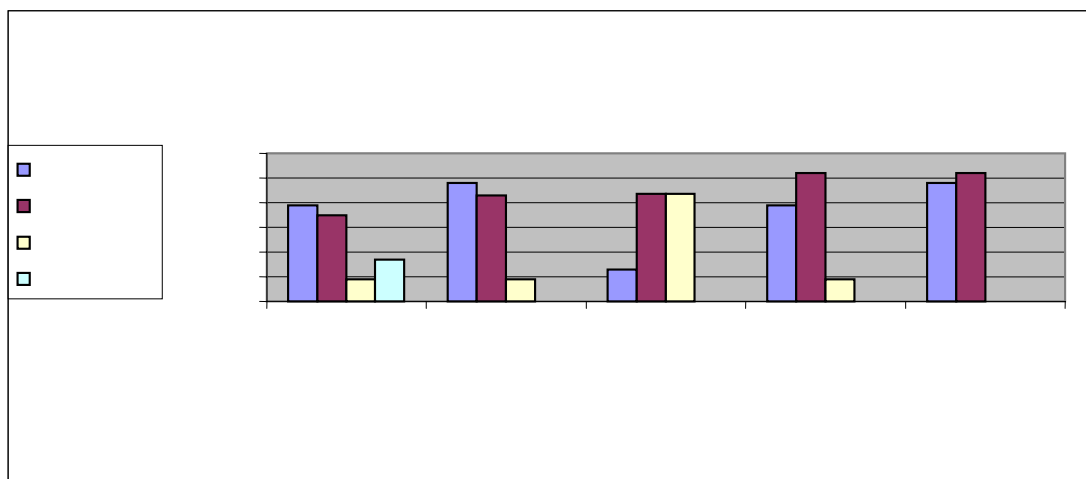
A different picture was revealed when the issue of mutual relations between musicological research and performance was raised. Most performers preferred to consult musical sources directly, without the intermediacy of musicological research as the ultimate way for “authentic” identification with the text.

Figure 2 presents pilot survey findings gathered in regard to the issue of treatises and other textual sources. Note that while historical sources are regarded as

<sup>13</sup> See Dart, p. 16; Frederick Neumann, *Essays in Performance Practice*, pp. 11-15; *idem*, *New Essays on Performance Practice* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1989), pp. 17-31; Nicholaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech*, pp. 32, 68.

quite important, performers are divided in their attitudes toward contemporary musicological studies.

**Figure 2 Attitudes Regarding Treatises and other Textual Sources, Pilot Survey Group**



### 3. Sound Production and Orchestration

Findings regarding sound production and orchestration reveal a more compound picture in the variety of opinions and standpoints.

Table 3 summarizes the main survey findings regarding the use of period instruments.

**Table 3. Attitudes Regarding the Use of Period (“Authentic”) Instruments, Main Survey Group**

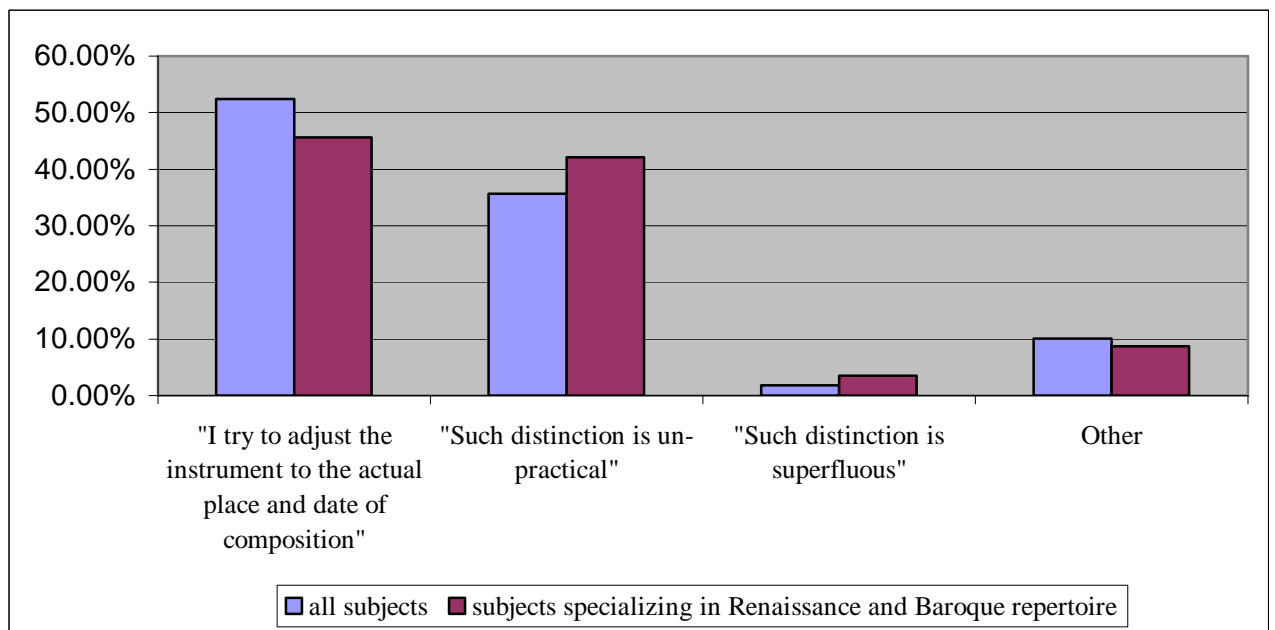
	Distribution	Frequency
“I oppose the use of ‘authentic’ instruments in early music performance”:	1	0.45%
“I use ‘modern’ instruments while performing early music, but do not oppose the use of ‘authentic’ instruments for this repertoire”:	5	2.2%
“I perform early music with both kinds of instruments”:	37	16.3%
“I use ‘authentic’ instruments while performing early music, but do not oppose the use of ‘modern’ instruments for this repertoire”:	137	60.4%
“I oppose the use of ‘modern’ instruments in early music performance”:	41	18.1%
Other:	6	2.6%
Total distribution (number of participants):	227	100%

Findings where the number of performers using “modern” instruments is small indicate the general denial of the more extreme critical attitudes presented throughout the years. It seems that the use of period instruments still serves as a major factor in early music performances, despite the emergence of contrasting positions. However, the data according to which about 16 percent of subjects perform on both kinds of instruments, while (only) 18 percent strictly oppose the use of modern instruments in early music repertoire, confirms the transformation that has occurred since the

movements' puritanical days. Moreover, results indicate that about 80 percent of subjects do not oppose the use of "modern" instruments, while others do not hesitate to use them in actual practice.

A different picture is revealed regarding attitudes toward distinction between subgroups of instruments during performance. Such, for example, is the practice of performing on different types of harpsichords during the same concert, chosen in accordance to the works' historical or geographic classification.

**Figure 3 Distinction between Subgroups of Instruments during Performance, Main Survey Group**

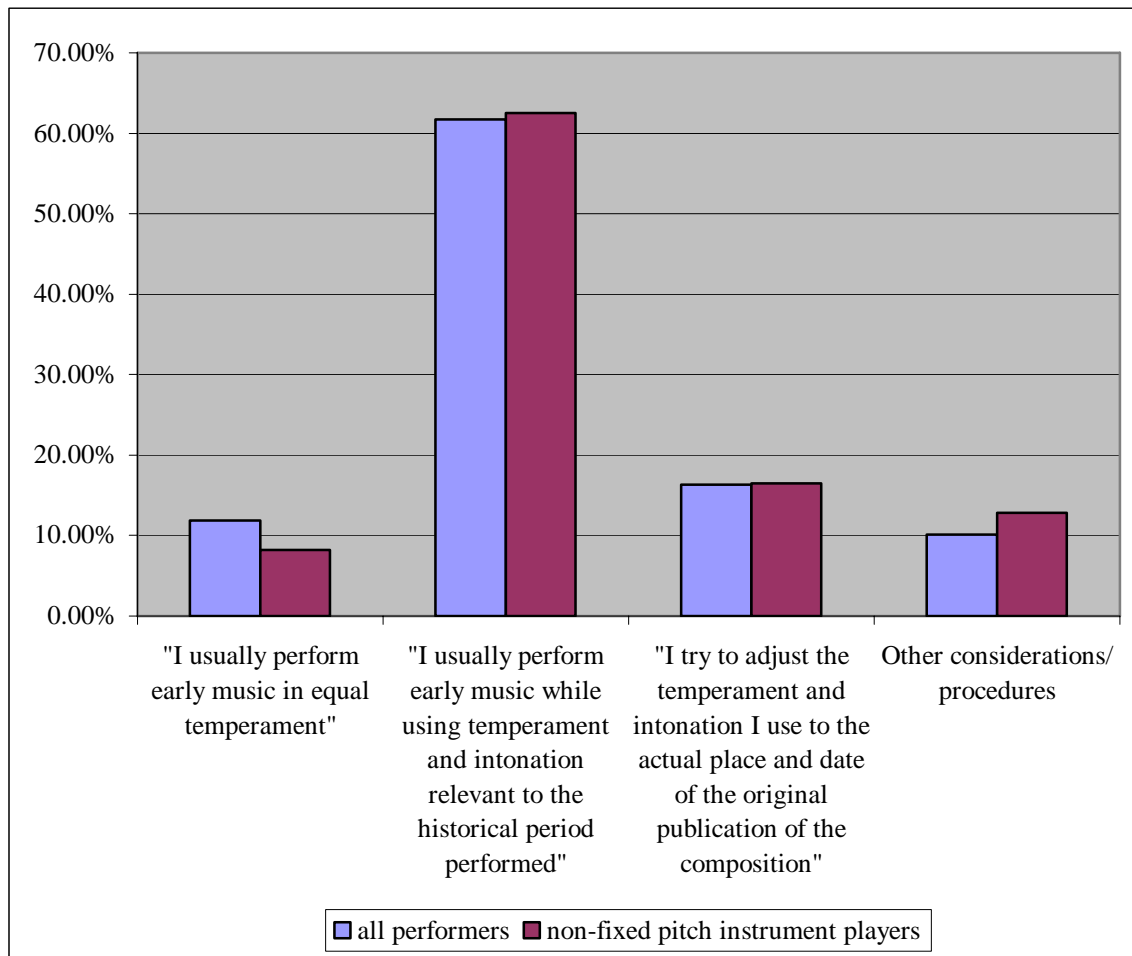


As seen in Figure 3, results point to almost full support for the instrumental subgroup distinction. Of the subjects specializing in Renaissance and Baroque repertoire, 45 percent claim that they try to adjust their instrument to the actual place and date of the original publication of the composition, while approximately 40 percent make no such distinction for solely practical reasons, ignoring the concept underlying such practice. Note that similar findings were found among all subjects, regardless of their era of expertise.

#### **4. Aspects of Performance and Interpretation**

Among the different factors examined, almost sweeping support was shown toward the use of intonation and temperament relevant to the historical period being performed, as summarized in Figure 5.

**Figure 5 Selecting the Type of Temperament and Intonation, Main Survey Group**



Approximately 80 percent of subjects claim to be using temperament and intonation relevant to the historical repertoire. Note that there is a similarity in this respect among the group of non-fixed pitch instrumentalists, out of whom 16.5 percent claimed that they adjust the temperament and intonation to the actual place and date of the original publication of the specific composition. Contrary to the research carried out on this subject, it seems that declarations as regards the observance of historical temperament and intonation are made regardless of the type of instrument being used.<sup>14</sup>

Among those who claim to be using equal temperament, many stated that they favored such a practice since there is no other alternative while performing with a keyboard instrument tuned to such a system. Others pointed to their ensemble

<sup>14</sup> The difficulty in matching specific temperaments while playing on non-fixed pitch instruments has been covered quite extensively by many scholars. Intonation discrepancies were found to be connected to a wide spectrum of influences, such as melodic direction and context, anatomic limitations, etc. In a recent study it was shown that, contrary to performer's declarations, no correspondence was found between scholarly opinion as to the relevant historical temperament system to be used in two of Bach's compositions and the interval sizes used in practice among HIP performances. See Eitan Ornoy, "An Empirical Study of Intonation in Performances of J.S. Bach's Sarabande: Temperament, "Melodic Charge" and "Melodic Intonation," *Orbis Musicae* 14 (2007): 37-76.

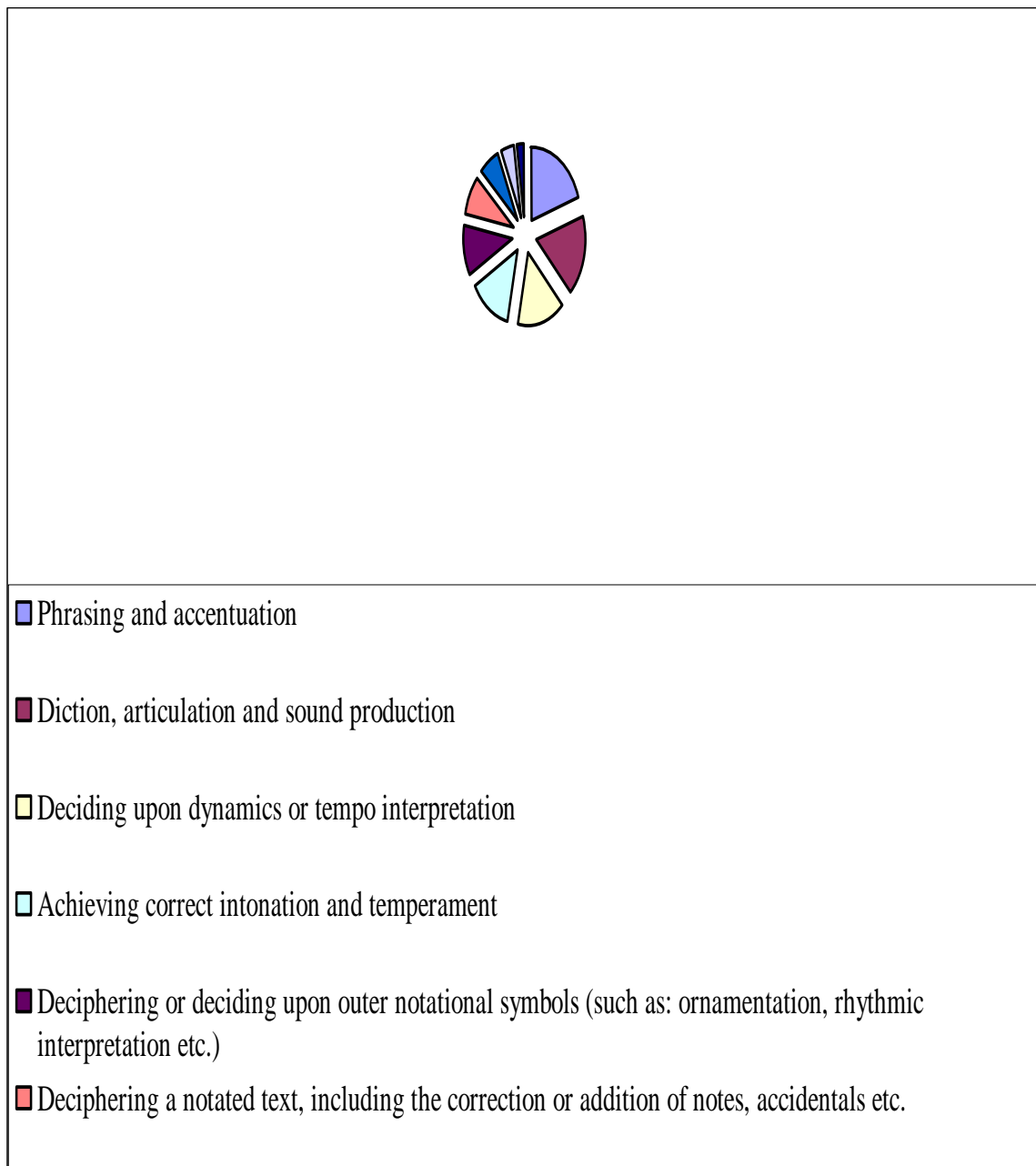
colleagues, who use equal temperament as the main element of their own similar practice. Hence, in both cases, in addition to theoretical attitudes, practical reasons serve as the main cause for the choice of temperament.

Nevertheless, some of the remarks gathered in support of the use of equal temperament derive from ideological and aesthetic considerations as well. Such is the case where intonation serves as an essential interpretational factor, open thus to constant changes unbound to any particular temperament system.

Similarly, the notion of the epistemological gap, questioning the ability to bridge over historical conventions of practice, serves as the basis for support for the use of equal temperament: the use of a familiar temperament system is said to have a positive effect in contradicting the alienation experienced by the modern audience when exposed to historical practice.

The public performance of a musical piece is made possible after a compound process of practice. In a relatively short period of time, the performer is expected to establish a sufficiently technical foundation for the transformation of his musical interpretation, while matching challenges that are not directly connected to the instrument, such as textual deciphering, ornamentation, etc. Figure 6 displays results gathered in the main survey regarding the hierarchy of performance elements. Similar to the pilot project, each performer was asked to grade various practice elements according to their degree of importance in the process of preparing a musical piece and in forming its interpretation.

**Figure 6 Hierarchy of Performance Elements According to their Importance in the Process of Preparing a Musical Piece, Main Survey Group**



The type of professional activity constitutes a crucial factor with regard to the issue examined: many of the professional decisions are not in the domain of the standard orchestral musician or choir singer bound to obey the conductor's instructions. However, one should assume that those who have chosen to respond referred mainly to their chamber music or solo activities.

Findings clearly show that most of the time is spent on technical-idiomatic factors such as diction, articulation, sound production or intonation. Less time is

dedicated to elements not directly related to instrumental factors, such as textual deciphering, formal analysis, or metaphorical concepts.

Hence, results indicate that subjects attach greater importance to technical proficiency than to other performance factors. They thus confirm assumptions made by some recent writers as regards prevailing norms of practice in the early music movement.<sup>15</sup> Findings also indicate that performance elements categorized as being important factors in both surveys are differently perceived in practice. Most conspicuous in that regard is the reading of historical treatises and musicological sources, which scored almost last, and ornamentation, rhythmic interpretation and other “outer-notational” symbols, which also scored relatively low.

## 5. Performers’ Role

Table 5 summarizes the views of the main survey participants toward their role as performers.

**Table 5 Attitudes Regarding Performers’ Role, Main Survey Group**

<b>Choose the statement that best reflects your position in regard to your role as a performer:</b>		
	Distribution	Frequency
“Subjective and individual transmission of personal messages”	1	0.45%
“Subjective and individual transmission of personal messages, while taking into consideration the composers’ intended, original messages”	96	42.3%
“Striving for an objective transmission and for the full exposure of the composers’ original messages”	43	18.9%
“Striving for an objective transmission and for the full exposure of the messages that are latent in the musical text”	53	23.3%
Other:	34	15%
Total distribution (number of participants):	227	100%

The categories for selection are derived from the ideological attitudes claimed in literature and in the pilot interviews. Nonetheless, many preferred their own definition with regard to the issue examined. Some, for example, claimed that the performer’s role is derived from the combination of all pre-written possibilities. Others pointed to the collaboration with other musical agents, i.e. composer, editor, instrument maker, audience and the like, as an eminent factor influencing their role.

The findings in Table 5 indicate the inferior status of the strictly positivistic attitude concerning the issue examined: a minority of performers chose the third category, which reflects a strictly positivistic agenda, rooted in the early writings of Landowska or Dart. The second category, which gained most support, reflects a wide

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<sup>15</sup> Dreyfus (p. 320) suggests increasing emphasis of the technical element over the years as the main factor leading to recognition and “acceptance” of early music performances on the institutionalized musical scene. Uniform technical criteria are perceived as being a leading factor for the emergence of canonic authorities, dictating fixed prototypes of interpretation, thereby resembling the situation prevalent in the “mainstream” performance scene. Such similitude, found both in “authentic” and “mainstream” norms of practice, corresponds to the view of Taruskin (pp. 67-81, 140, 173-76). Throughout his writings, Taruskin considers these two tangential arenas to be representative of the same aesthetic model, namely, that of Modernism.

spectrum of attitudes legitimizing performers' individual intuition, taste or aesthetic style.<sup>16</sup>

The fourth category is founded on the distinction between the original composer and the text created by him, traditionally regarded as autonomous, total, and self-contained.<sup>17</sup>

## Relation between Findings and Subjects' Classification

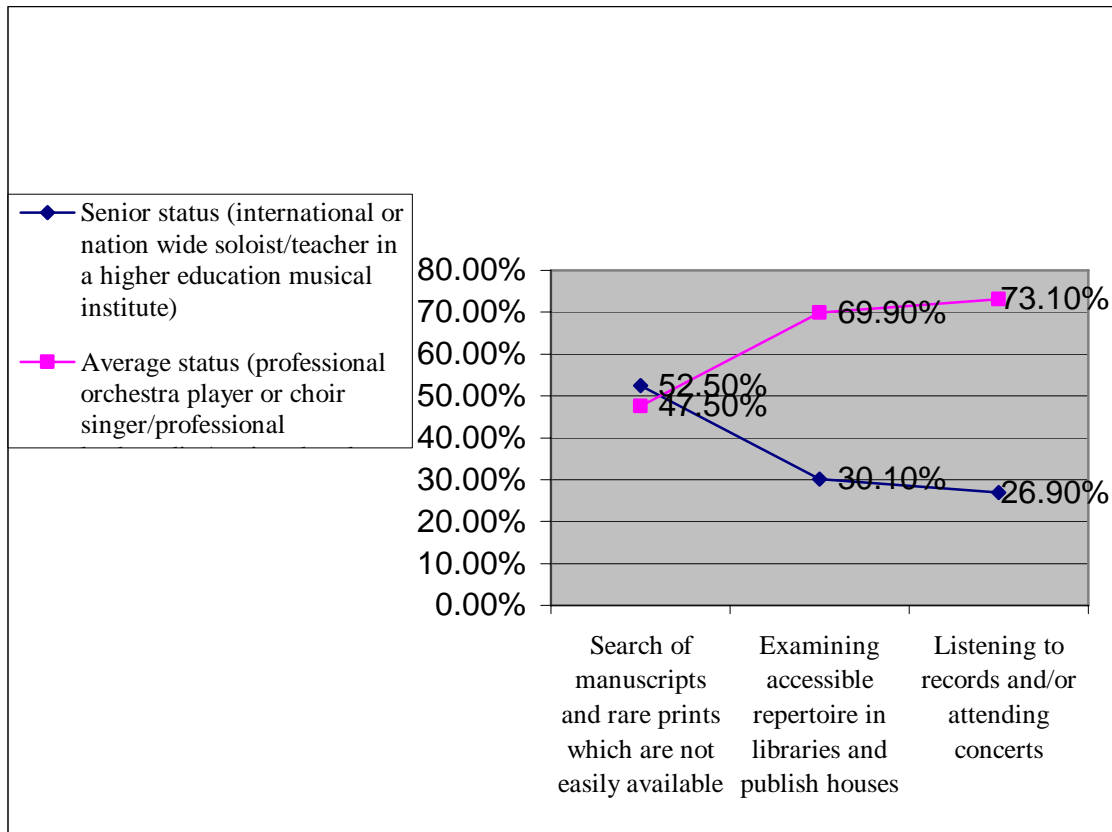
Results showed several correlations between the subjects' general background and ideological statements. Such is the correspondence found between the performers' status and the way they became acquainted with the repertoire for performance. As seen in Figure 7, the seeking of manuscripts and rare prints is a characteristic of the practice of "senior" performers more than other choices, while an opposite picture is found among the "average status" group ( $P=0.024$ ). Such findings are reasonable considering the fact that members of a large ensemble do not generally make decisions relating to the repertoire chosen for performance. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the early music movement's commercial success brought about an increase of editions and performance recordings of a long forgotten repertoire. Hence, nowadays, performers are exposed to a wide variety of renewed pieces without having to resort to tedious research.

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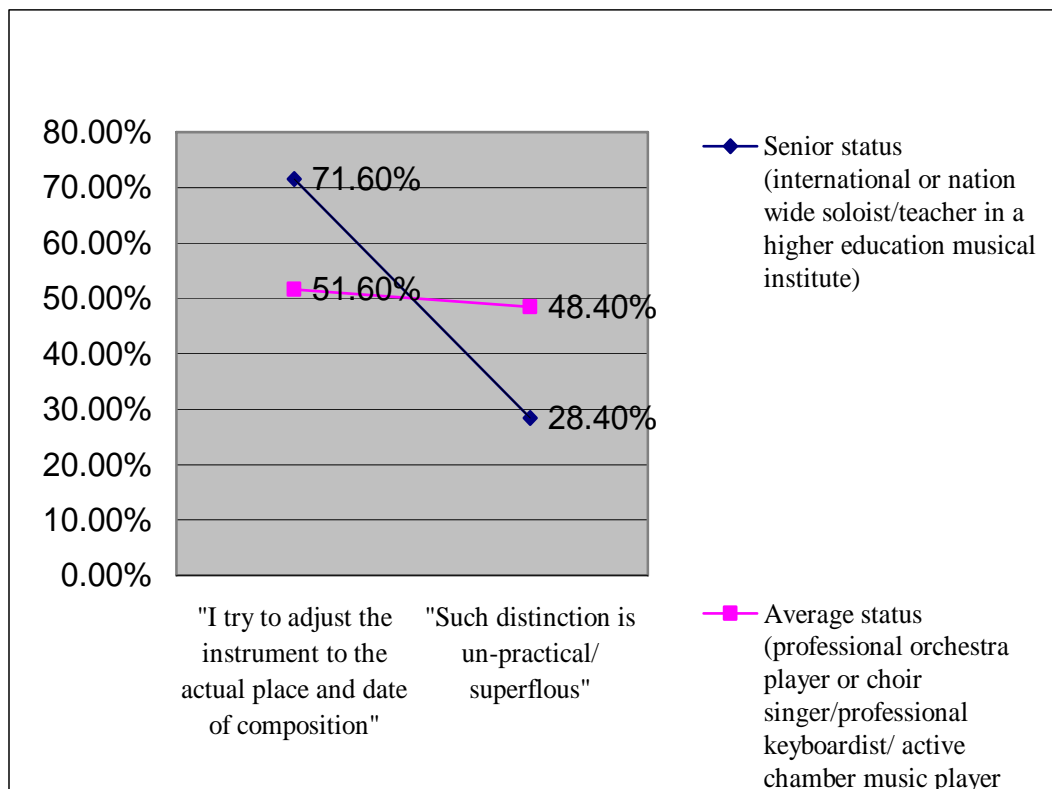
<sup>16</sup> Donington did not hesitate to give both performer and composer equal status, regarding the latter as necessitating the performers' individual creativity in all areas, including rhythm, sonic idioms, and notation; see Robert Donington, "Meter in Music," *Early Music* 26 (1988): 423-27; *idem*, "The Choice of Instruments in Baroque Music," *Early Music* 1 (1973): 131-38; *idem*, *A Performers' Guide to Baroque Music*, p. 31. Crutchfield points to the symbiosis between performer ("form") and composer ("content") as a fundamental component of the compositional process, long forgotten in the modern period's synthetic separation of the two. Giving both composer and performer equal status is considered by Crutchfield to be the major contribution of the early music movement. Symbiosis between both musical agents is regarded as being equivalent to the mutual relationship between sound and text, form and content. See Will Crutchfield, "A Report from the Musical Battlefield," *The New York Times* (28 July 1985), p. 8; *idem*, "Fashion, Conviction, and the Performance Style in an Age of Revivals," pp. 19-26.

<sup>17</sup> More recent writings deal with the aspect of textual meaning. Such is Tomlinson's perception of the ever-changing "authentic meaning" of a piece, derived from the infinite textual and contextual meanings concealed in the musical text. See Gary Tomlinson, "The Web of Culture: A Context for Musicology," *19th Century Music* 7 (1984): 350-62; *idem*, "The Historian, The Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music," p. 122. Taruskin (pp. 17, 267) similarly points to the change of context over the course of time, during which the continuous addition of cognitive layers enriches the original, intended "meaning." A different example can be found in Harnoncourt's position, rooted in the historical norm, whereby several composers contribute to the emergence of a single musical piece, or where the original composer's name was omitted. In such cases, the performer's role is compared to that of the arranger, casting his own creative contributions into the musical conglomerate; see Nicholas Harnoncourt, *The Musical Dialogue*, pp. 27-36. Walls (pp. 86-89) has pointed to the distinction between the "score" and the "musical work": While "no score is capable of prescribing every detail of performance," it still under-determines the sonic result through a "range of realizations that are all identifiably the same work." As such, it should be considered a legitimate source for the identification of composers' ideas. However, in order for the written notational symbols to be better interpreted, "external evidence"—such as treatises, iconography, archival records, etc.—should be richly contextualized and prescribed, for they are seen as "a way of getting as close an identity as possible between sign and interpretant."

**Figure 7 Relation Between Status and Ways of Acquaintance with Repertoire for Performance**



**Figure 8 Relation between Status and Distinction Made between Subgroups of Instruments**



Additional correspondence was found in regard to performers’ status and the distinction made between subgroups of instruments (Figure 8).

Adjusting the instrument to the particular works’ historical or geographic classification appears to be more a characterization of the “senior” group than of the average majority (P=0.004). Such findings are in accord with the “average” performer’s mode of professional activity, where playing in different ensembles and several genres of repertoire at the same time is not an uncommon practice. “Senior” performers, on the other hand, specialize in specific repertoire and perform in a relatively small number of ensembles. Competition and financial comfort, further identified with this group, serve as additional factors in that regard.

Correlation was also traced between subjects’ attitudes regarding their role and the use of historically oriented expressive devices. In the latter category, performers were asked about the manner in which idiomatic factors—such as vibrato, portamento, and means of articulation, diction, bowings or fingerings—are executed in the performance of early music repertoire. Among performers who use “historically oriented” devices (such as original articulation or bowings, selected means of vibrato, portamento, etc.), more claim the transmission of “objective” messages than those who view their role as enabling the transmission of individual messages (P= 0.15).

Further correlations were traced between performers’ age and their attitude toward orchestration: the younger group was found to be more “liberal” as regards orchestration modifications than the more senior group (P=0.002). Correlation was also found between the performers’ status and the number of instruments on which they were proficient: specialization in one instrument characterized only the group of performers with senior status to a degree greater than the average majority (P=0.007).

## General Discussion

Examining the results of both surveys suggests, first and foremost, that factors traditionally regarded as essential in the distinction between “historically informed” and “mainstream” performances, such as the performance on historically oriented instruments, the execution of unwritten compositional elements (ornamentation, rhythmic interpretation, etc.), or the use of the original score or its facsimile, still constitute the practice of most performers who identify with the movement’s agenda.

However, the general inclination toward “positivistic” attitudes found in most cases examined, suggests some interesting points for thought. It seems that positions stated in the first half of the twentieth century by writers such as Dolmetsch, Landowska (in her early years), Dart and others still dominate current performance practices—despite the passage of time and the constant emergence of contrasting ideas ever since. This fact points to their prominent influence in shaping the movements’ performance conventions and norms of practice.

The conspicuous discrepancy between the wide, multicolored ideological spectrum found in various writings and the somewhat uniform values of the performers’ actual practice might also indicate the lack of interaction between the two domains: many early music performers have been found to be “behind the times” with current ideologies, since they perform according to attitudes formed many generations ago.

The inferior status of nontraditional practices might indicate either a lack of acquaintance with or the rejection of critical standpoints so devoutly presented in the last few decades. Such a tendency might somehow be related to the ambivalent attitude toward the musicological discipline, by which “theoretical” writings, even if written by performers, are either ignored or found to be unrelated to “real” practice. Another aspect that may be connected to these findings is the fact that subjects were “pushed to the wall” during the research, since they were asked to address the hierarchy of their activities in the process of preparing a musical piece for performance. In such a case, practical considerations took priority over ideological aspirations, and contradiction between the two domains might easily evolve. Interestingly enough, such a contradiction could also be traced among some of the movements’ most prominent writers, and ideological declarations did not necessarily correspond to their own practice as active performers.<sup>18</sup>

It seems likely that the inconsistencies between the broad ideological spectrum and performance conventions that prevail in practice are also tied to commercial and economic factors: the movement’s ever-increasing commercial success is what prevents critical standpoints from becoming practice. As long as performers enjoy success, there should be no reason to expect any comprehensive adaptation of the critical agenda. In a reality where “authentic” instruments or

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<sup>18</sup> Such contradiction can be found, for example, in Harnoncourt’s activity during the 1970s and ’80s both as an eminent writer and performer: his preference for the “romantic” over the “objective,” (to use his own terms) his historically oriented style, his critical view of our ability to fully comprehend historical evidence, or his total legitimization of using “modern” instruments to perform historical repertoire have all been stated alongside seemingly contradictory practices. Such is the restricted selection of instruments or the declared policy of adjusting historical elements of practice to the chosen repertoire found in his numerous recordings of that time.

“historically informed performance style” sweep the board as quality trademarks in the current fashion of cultural consumption, early music performers who deny such founding elements are, in a sense, sawing off the branch on which they are sitting.