Re-enacting an eighteenth-century method for reinforcing musical expression

Tilman Skowroneck[1]
Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Maria Bania
Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract: This article demonstrates the artistic re-enactment of affective cultural practices in musical performance, with the goal of developing an increased understanding of the practices that we re-enacted, and the influence they can have on a performance. To re-enact a practice, an aesthetic mindset or conception means that they get embodied and experienced. In the research project explained here, we re-enacted the practice of evoking the music's affections in oneself in order to arouse them in the listeners – a practice that formed a part of the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility. Through enacting the affective content of selected pieces of music, we wanted to explore how musicians and listeners interacted in a performance; the mutual influences between aesthetic mindsets and affective practices; and what difference these practices and mindsets make to the artistic effect in a musical performance. Our process included musical and emotional preparations, a video-taped re-enactment-in-performance with six participants (two players and four listeners), the writing of reflections, and analyzing them. The re-enactment highlighted how the various ways of viewing music and art in different cultures interact with how art is and was performed and experienced. The option to modify codes of performance, such as the behavior of everyone involved, the placement of people in the room, or the lighting, showed a potential to pinpoint and reflect upon aesthetic ideas about music and artistry. It opened up for choosing between ideas and conceptions we want to emphasize in a performance.
Keywords: re-enactment; music; affect; sensibility culture

Introduction: on re-enactments

Re-enactments are a well-established practice within "live art, its histories, and its documentation" (Jones, 2011, p. 17). Apart from being a powerful and dynamic artistic method, they can give rise to decidedly complex tangles of outcomes. Consider, for example, the various intents and agencies that Elizabeth S. Hawley ascribes to James Luna's re-enactments (titled *Take a Picture with a Real Indian* and performed in 1992, 2001, and 2010). Hawley (2016, p. 25) expands the term from its simplest meaning, "to act or perform again" (in this example, performing various ways of confirming or confronting Western stereotypes about Native Americans on the one hand, and Western stereotypes re-appropriated by Native Americans on the other), to the "paradoxical" power of re-enactments to give "enduring presence" to the "so-called vanishing race [i.e. Native Americans]" and finally, to the "emancipatory potential" of re-enactments (because "the restaging of the performance allows for intervention, for potentially *changing* these [stereotypical] attitudes").

Re-enactments can problematize in complex ways the passing of time and the nature of the present, two elements that are part of the perception and documentation of live events. An example can be found in Amelia Jones' discussion of Jeremy Deller's 2001 re-enactment of the failed British miners' strike of 1984, *The Battle of Orgreave.* Jones writes, "while, at their most compelling, re-enactments present in visual arts and/or performance contexts interrogate the previously accepted bases for

---

[1] tilman.skowroneck@hsm.gu.se

documenting live artworks and political events, they are also ironically themselves turned into conventional aesthetic displays in their presentation in galleries via forms of documentation" (Jones, 2011, p. 23–24). For Jones, the irony appears to lie in the "paradox of re-enactments in the art context – the fact, precisely, that they activate the impossibility of presence in relation to the visual arts while also pointing to the impossibility of the ephemeral event ever being known as such in any *but* highly contingent and unreliable human memory and in the event's reified forms" (Jones, 2011, p. 24).[2]

In research in music, re-enactments tend to be used in that "most compelling" way mentioned by Jones, that is, as a way to produce knowledge about earlier performances (no matter whether the focus is on performances of music from the eighteenth century or John Cage, just to name two examples).

In the field of historically informed performances, re-enactments of various kinds of musical performance practices are very common, indeed central, for performers, researchers, and a combination of both. A quite elaborate example was the re-enactment of a "Concours révolutionnaire" for pianists at the Paris conservatory around 1803. The re-enacted piano competition took place in July 2018 at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium.[3] It combined the (historical) idea of a "prize-winning sonata" (by programming pieces that actually did win prizes at the time) and the application of judging criteria distilled from Louis Adam's piano method (1802) and works by other Paris conservatory professors. The actual re-enactment took form in the preparation process, the choice of repertoire, the establishment of a student-coach relationship, and in the event of the *concours* itself (by announcing the candidates as it would have been done at the time, having them wait in a so-called "passage du trac" – apparently an experience not for the faint of heart –, judging them, and giving first and second prizes and honorable mentions).

In the project that forms the subject of this article, we re-enacted performing and listening behaviors (in musical performance) that embody the aesthetic values and ideas of a community from a historical time and place.[4] Our aim was to develop an increased understanding of the affective and expressive practices that we re-enacted, and the influence they can have on a performance; of how musicians and listeners can interact when they re-enact these practices; and of the relationship between various practices in musical performances and aesthetic ideas and mindsets.

---

[2] Italics original.

[3] https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/news-and-events/historical-piano-summer-academy (accessed November 18, 2020). The *concours* was part of a summer academy directed by Tom Beghin and Erin Helyard.

What we re-enacted: an eighteenth-century affective practice of the sensibility culture

In the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*), a main purpose of musical performances was to move people.[5] The Cartesian view was still prevalent in mid-eighteenth-century Germany that the passions were separable, knowable, and thus nameable (Hosler, 1981, p. 75; James, 1997, p. 94–123). Musicians were expected to develop an understanding of, and evoke within themselves, the affections or passions that the composer wanted to express in a given piece of music (Bania & Skowroneck, 2020). The goal of this act of emotional immersion was to evoke the same passions to the listeners, relying on the effect of sympathetic reaction. This performance practice leads to the notion that some multi-directional, intersubjective emotional interaction needed to take place when music was being rehearsed, performed, and listened to.

A performance from the sensibility culture with its various performative layers was a collective experience rather than an individual or essentially private one. This culture did not merely welcome the open expression of individual feelings as a sign of sensibility, but actually lauded such behavior as a marker *par excellence* of social connectedness and moral status (Reddy, 2001, p. 164; Goring, 2005, p. 142; Van Elferen, 2007). The aim of a musical performance was a shared emotional experience, not merely in the sense that everybody was to have an individual emotional experience of *some* kind, but that everybody simultaneously experienced *the same* basic emotions.

A music performance in an eighteenth-century *salon* can thus be characterized as a joint interaction between the players' effort to enter the defined, but varying, affective states of a given piece of music (and to express these affections through their playing), and the listeners' readiness to immerse themselves in these same varying affective states (and to do so in a physically visible manner that was significant for the fellow listeners and musicians). For such a performance to achieve its stated goal, the listeners' role was just as important as that of the musicians. A defining feature of this joint effort, then, was how practical details supported that role. The performance venue, for example, did not have a separate stage that would create a physical and mental division between performers and audience (such barriers became more established in the wake of the Kantian view on an artist's genius). Players and listeners also shared one and the same dress code, and unlike in most modern stage settings, the lighting at such performances was not directed at the players. The listeners' positions, finally, remained flexible and made it possible for everyone to see each other's faces.

---

[5] For an eighteenth-century statement, see Sulzer (1774, p. 783).

Figure 1. Marcellus Laroon the Younger, *Musical Conversation* (oil on canvas, c. 1760)[6]

Scenes like these can be found in historical pictures. In Marcellus Laroon's painting *Musical Conversation* from c. 1760 (*Figure 1*), for instance, "Bodies of performers and listeners face each other, interact." Music, "like the eighteenth-century art of conversation," is here "shown as visual, performative, embodied, and gesturally expansive in its meanings: it encompasses personal gesture, interpersonal feedback, and the possibility of sociability in particular" (November, 2004, p. 135).

Modern psychological research provides support for this eighteenth-century practice, as it shows that people can be affected by music in a physical manner, leading to bodily responses (Juslin, 2019, p. 214–217). A concert performance where intersubjective emotions are exchanged, can be seen as a complicated network of material and immaterial actors. The artistic experience is driven by psychological mechanisms such as *emotional contagion*, which has been described as "the tendency to automatically [and without necessarily being aware of it] mimic and synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally" (Hatfield et al., 2014, p. 168). So, anyone who sees another person looking astonished or distressed tends

---

[6] Yale center for British art, public domain, via wikimedia commons.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/89/Marcellus_Laroon_the_Younger_-_Musical_Conversation_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg (retrieved April 7, 2022).

to automatically mirror those emotions. Other empirical research in psychology has found that people, besides being affected by the emotional mimic display of *another* person, are also affected by the facial expressions *they themselves* adopt (Hatfield et al., 2014, p. 162–163). So, if a musician smiles before playing a happy tune, she or he will more easily become happy; if a listener smiles or sheds a tear during a performance, she or he will likely become even more moved following these initial reactions.

Musical instruments, finally, are designed to produce a given range of sounds with characteristics that may be difficult to describe but are easily discernible – the instruments' *tone* and *timbre*. Direct emotional responses to an instrument's tone are possible, and will influence the musician's response in a process usually described as a feedback loop.[7] Even if some elements of such responses can be described as belonging to the mechanics of music making, others are clearly emotional.

To summarize, characteristic for a performance in the spirit of the sensibility culture would be the presence of a network of interactions: the performers would evoke the emotions of a piece of music within themselves, and reinforce the emotion via the feedback of the sounds created, as well as the facial expression or bodily stance they assumed when doing so. The listeners would pick up on the music's emotions directly via the sound and also via the performer's facial and bodily expressions. They would subsequently mirror these emotions through facial expression or body language, thereby transferring them to other players and listeners in the room, reinforcing the sensation. The sensation in the room would reflect back to the performers, thus potentially influencing the players in their performance. Characteristic of the performance are, in short, the myriads of potential exchanges between the actors that are part of the performance network.

The re-enactment process

We re-enacted this eighteenth-century performing behavior as a professional traverso flutist and harpsichordist, using a baroque flute and a harpsichord built in the style of the mid-eighteenth century. Needless to say, re-enactments in the manner described in this article do not hinge on the choice of instrument as such, but they obviously do benefit from using instruments the musicians are well familiar with.

We selected some pieces of music for flute and harpsichord from the mid-eighteenth-century Berlin circle of composers: the *Grave* from Sonata XIV in G-minor for flute and continuo by J.J. Quantz; the *Adagio* and *Allegro* from Sonata VIII in G-major for flute and continuo by J. Ph. Kirnberger; the *Adagio* from "Württemberg" Sonata III E-minor Wq. 49/3 for harpsichord solo by C.P.E. Bach; and the *Allegretto, Adagio di molto,* and *Allegro assai* from Sonata E-major Wq.84 for flute and obbligato harpsichord by the same composer. All of these composers recommended in their theoretical writings that composers and/or performers should aim to arouse the affections of the music within themselves, in order to move the listeners into feeling the same affections (Bania & Skowroneck, 2020). Their music therefore could be

---

[7] On feedback loops, see Harlow, (2013).

expected to support our intention to arouse a variety of defined emotions in ourselves and our listeners.

A musician has the ability to vary the character of the sounds emanating from their instrument (i.e., influencing the tone and timbre of the instrument) by means of tone production, tone intensity (projection and dynamics), and tone length (articulation). In this way, happy, sad, or other impressions can be created that might reinforce the built-in tonal character of the instrument, or expand or even transcend it (which explains how a flutist and a harpsichordist can join forces in the same emotional enterprise, in spite of the different timbres of their instruments).

We began our preparations by first individually identifying the emotions we perceived to be present in the music (this can be done by playing the music or by reading the score away from the instrument). Subsequently we labeled the emotions in as much detail as possible, down to the level of single phrases or single bars. This method of labeling the emotions in the music is something we developed for our own convenience in order to facilitate re-enacting the affective practice of arousing specific emotions in ourselves. The act of labeling was, simply put, the first step of the re-enactment of the Cartesian view of the separable passions. During the process (whenever the music is being played), the emotional words, or labels, become tools and assume an agency of their own (Reddy, 2001, p. 96–111).

Figure 2. C.P.E. Bach, Sonata E-major Wq.84, excerpt from the first movement *Allegretto*, transcription from the work copy, where the labels are written in the score.
The labels are as follows: a) generous joy; b) playful joy; c) flirtatious joy; d) mischievous joy; e) sudden (shock of) fear; f) worried fear; g) relief, joy; h) endurance; i) happy joy.

Of these labels, especially those addressing the basic emotions can be expected to match the original intent fairly closely. If, for example, a mid-eighteenth-century composer writes a lively melody in a major key, the obvious association is to upbeat,

happy emotions, and the chosen label should reflect that association.[8] It is, on the other hand, impossible to know a composer's precise intentions or feelings regarding the emotional *nuances* of a given passage or phrase, and so our more nuanced labels tend to first and foremost represent our subjective response to the affective content of a piece or passage. All the actors listed here have a potential to enhance and refine the preparing musician's perception. They help to generate an ever-clearer image of *what kind* of emotion one is dealing with in a given passage of music.[9]

Returning to the method of labeling, this was not an attempt to re-create actual eighteenth-century scenes, themes, persons, or emotional images, although we certainly drew on our familiarity with the musical style, based on our profession.[10] Indeed, the emotions were essentially our own, while they were, as described above, aroused by the music and the sound world of historical instruments.

Another part of our preparations was to train ourselves as listeners. We practiced by listening to music from the sensibility period, while trying to arouse the shifting emotions within ourselves, and to physically express the emotions we felt.

During a joint rehearsal session early in the process we compared notes, creating and trying out what could be called a detailed joint emotional landscape of each piece. We further trained ourselves to arouse the emotions in ourselves while practicing the music. This can, for example, be done by attempting to enter into a pre-specified state of mind, or inner sensation of a given emotion, using the music and the labels as a guide, while, as a scaffold, comparing the required emotion with personal reminiscences of real-life events that created similar emotions. This stage of the preparation process was accompanied by exercises in outwardly showing the intended emotion, for instance by smiling, or allowing for some emotion-underlining body language to happen.

Using a mirror while practicing helped in monitoring, adjusting, and enhancing our facial expressions. The mirror can be seen as a visual aid for enhancing the emotion via contagion. Facial expressions, real ones or mirrored ones, establish themselves as actors because they can both be physically felt, and are outwardly visible. They boost the musician's self-instilled emotions, and in this way, feelings felt from within can be reinforced.

The mirror also functioned as a kind of measuring tool for how far out of one's usual comfort zone one is able to venture during a preparation like this one. Our attempts to step outside behaviors that belong to the "acquired system of embodied codes" (Coessens, 2019, p. 137) – to actively modify the typical cultural, musical, and

---

[8] To claim that the emotion of such a sprightly passage is "sad," and to subsequently try to transport oneself into a mournful state while playing the passage would obviously be counterproductive for this research.

[9] On how realization changes the feeling, see Ellsworth (1994, p. 193): "The realization of the name [of an emotion one is experiencing] undoubtedly changes the feeling, simplifying and clarifying."

[10] The mind goes to candlelit scenes, horse-drawn carriages, wigs, daggers and courtly intrigue. This is patently not what we were re-enacting here.

technical habitus of musicians in our genre – required a certain amount of inner adjustment.[11] One problem, for instance, was to achieve a functional balance between physically living out the emotions and maintaining a secure playing technique. Whereas in the beginning, the active and visible engagement with the music's emotions could become a technical distraction, the preparation process showed that an integration was in fact possible (although it could never be taken for granted, as a certain fragility and tendency to relapse into well-known patterns did remain).

Rehearsals belonged to the second "here-and-now" network. Several of our joint rehearsals were recorded (as mentioned above, initially only on audio, later exclusively on video). During rehearsals, the emotion of the fellow musician's part, playing, and resulting sound of the instrument, are added to the individual experience. The same applies to the fellow musician's facial expression and body language, their self-instilled happiness, sadness, etc.

Analyzing our recordings helped to refine and add nuance to our expression of the emotions of the pieces, and occasionally encouraged us to make some changes. The video works not unlike the mirror: it can reveal if an emotional display is less obvious than envisioned or intended, or, conversely, if it is over-exaggerated. The videotaped rehearsals thus served as a powerful aid for matching our inner image with what became outwardly visible.

Every action – deciding upon the emotion of the music as we perceived it; naming it; thinking about it; learning to feel it on cue; moving and playing within it; recording it; and listening and evaluating – allows for connecting with every other action in interactive, cross-modal ways. This allows, in turn, for the continuous making of adjustments and refinements, reinforcing or enhancing the emotions that are felt at any given moment.

Then we invited four listeners with specialist competences in eighteenth-century culture and music to take part in the re-enactment. The listeners prepared themselves individually for the re-enactment of their affective responses. They listened to other music from the period in question, trying to re-enact the practice of arousing the shifting emotions within themselves, while opening themselves up to expressing, with their faces and with gestures, the emotions they were feeling – we suggested using a mirror for this part of the preparation (as we ourselves had done), which some of them did. Using the scores of the music we intended to play, they were invited to make their own analyses of its affective content. The listeners were not informed about the player's labels and annotations. Finally, all participants were asked for their permission to videotape the event. Some months after the re-enactment, everyone submitted their reflections in writing.

A staged re-enactment, May 20, 2019

---

[11] To avoid the use of the term "struggle" with its negative connotations.

The setting of the re-enactment of a performance with listeners (the third "here-and-now" network) thus was that of a videotaped private interactive performance involving six participants, a selection of single movements from music of the period in question, copies of musical instruments from the same period, and a suitable venue.

We performed our re-enactment on May 20, 2019 at Gunnebo House, a late-eighteenth-century country house outside Gothenburg. On the preceding evening all participants gathered at a Gothenburg restaurant for a joint dinner, since not everyone had met before.

The re-enactment was filmed from two different angles. Whereas decisions like this are technicalities, other choices were an actual part of the re-enactment. For example, we used only daylight instead of directed light. Also, the placing of the listeners was not static; instead, we made use of varying constellations with a sitting, standing, or walking, interacting, and (a few times) conversing audience (see *Figure 3*).
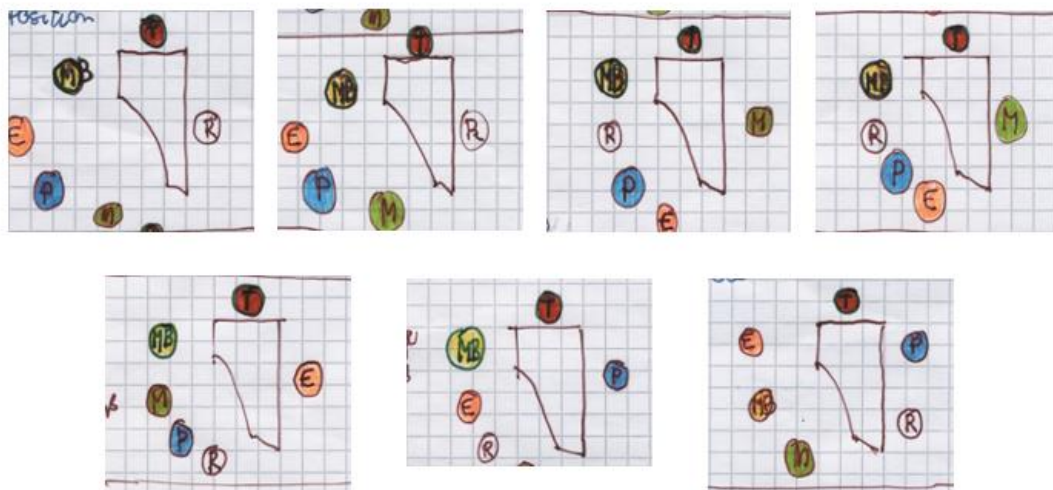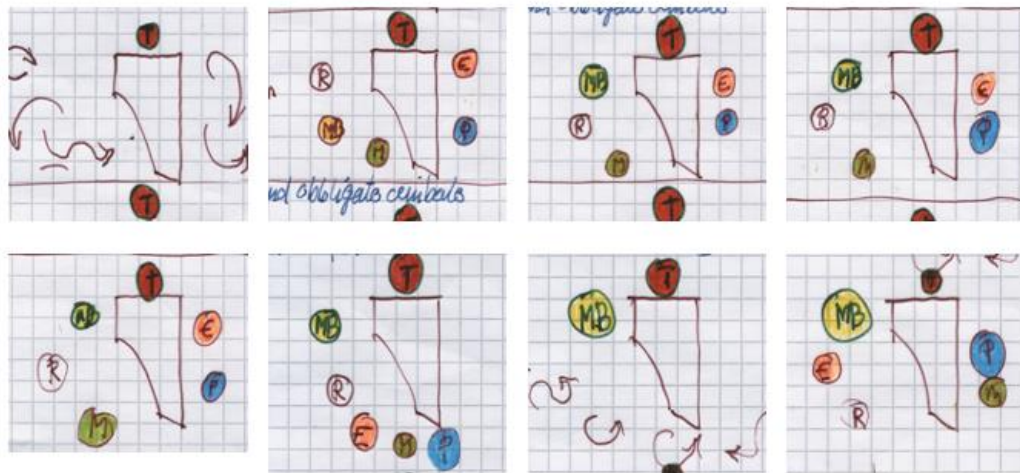
Figure 3. Fifteen hand-drawn plan views of the participants' various positions throughout the re-enactment.

Most of the time, the listeners were seated in various locations around the harpsichord, the lid of which had been taken off to facilitate visual contact in all directions. This helped us to become extra aware of our small number, of being visible at all times, and of our closeness to each other. Everyone was able to see everyone else's faces, except insofar as the players' faces were partly blocked by the instruments (the flute; the harpsichord's music stand) or perhaps by the music on the music stand from certain angles.

This dynamic setup was planned as part of the re-enactment: a reduction of the boundaries between the players and listeners, in order to prevent, as far as possible, a defined stage or listening area from being established, either by design or by getting used to a certain constellation as the day proceeded. In this way we could stimulate the affective participation and mutual interaction of everyone in the room. As anticipated, the players indeed became directly affected by the closeness, distance, mobility, or immobility of the listeners.

The chosen pieces of music were played one by one or pairwise, and repeated several times with a shifting focus, interspersed with short breaks for taking notes and group discussions. By repeating the selections up to three times, the participants were given ample opportunity to enter into the emotions of the piece. The repetition also helped the listeners in their rather complex task of acknowledging their emotional engagement to the point of acting out, and monitoring and remembering what was happening.

As to video recording the event, a balance needed to be struck between proper documentation and intrusiveness. To keep the amount of equipment to a minimum, we used only two cameras, operated by one technician, and no separate audio-recording device. To allow the participants to enter the affective world of the music and our playing without disturbance, both cameras were placed outside the circle of

action. As can be seen on the resulting video, the filming angles were occasionally adjusted by turning a camera on the tripod, or by zooming in or out during recording.

Wrapping up: reflecting and analyzing

In post-production, the two camera angles were combined into one split-screen video with a duration of one hour and ten minutes.[12] This video material was distributed to all the participants, to be consulted when writing our individual reflections, following the model of stimulated recall (Östersjö, 2017, p. 96–97). The earlier distributed questions – designed to function as an analytical aid rather than a questionnaire to follow strictly – were used as a reference.

I (Tilman) then analyzed all the reflections in several rounds, first by making extracts of the content on a separate paper for a general overview, or to get the "feel" of the material, and subsequently by color-coding the material. Initially there were five codes: "How we felt" – individual emotional responses at any stage, including responses to musical moments or to other participants' actions; "How it went" – comments about practicalities during preparation and/or the re-enactment, as seen relevant for the outcome; "Learning processes"; and "Musical observations"; "Unexpected events" – descriptions of unexpected things, but also comments that seemed unexpected during analysis.

Two categories were later added, namely "cross-over emotional/intellectual" and "home preparation," Theoretical or meta discussions were marked out as such in the respective color in the margin. A separate chart was created that showed all the timestamps mentioned in the reflections, identified by initials; the instances where several participants comment on the same moment on the video were marked as clusters or points. Finally, a number of simple plan views of the changing distribution of the participants in the room were drawn, to aid in understanding some comments about placement and emotional engagement.

Emotional and intellectual approaches: reflecting about feelings

Acting affectively on, and reacting affectively to, music in an organized, collective fashion was a new experience for us. The clearest sign of the process, sometimes a struggle, of getting used to the task at hand is a marked ambivalence throughout the reflections in the way emotional and intellectual processes were addressed. This ambivalence can show itself in simple word choices, for example in the use of the verb "feel," which can represent actual defined emotions coming from the music, but also more diffuse emotions caused by the social situation, as in the following two examples: "I remember feeling unsure…socially, not because the music made me feel uncertain." (Listener 1, p. 4).[13] "I am feeling somewhat unfree." (Listener 2, p. 3). At other times, "feel" is used to describe an entirely non-emotional response: "I felt that I had to discover [this piece] with my violin." (Listener 1, p. 2); "I feel that I would

---

[12] The main importance of this material lies in its function as a visual aid. Due to our choice to keep the amount of technical equipment small, the sound quality of the video is, however, compromised.
[13] In the following, page numbers refer to the individual written reflections and are here reproduced to show the position of a given observation relative to other observations by the same listener.

need to experiment with [physically acting out the emotions] more, and at my own pace." (Tilman, p. 4).

Conversely, at other times, emotionally neutral terminology is used as a stand-in for essentially emotional responses. One example is when a listener 2 notes the musicians' "story-telling" (p. 4), a formulation that reminds us of the rhetorical-emotional content and intent of eighteenth-century music, but stops short of identifying the actual emotion the listener felt at that moment of the musical proceedings. The ornamentation in one of the pieces (Kirnberger, *Adagio. Video example 1*) is mentioned in two reflections reports in just such a fashion. It seems clear that "avian allusions," "birdlike trills" (Listener 3, p. 3) and "bird-like ornaments" (Listener 2, p. 4) are meant to depict a positive, uplifting emotional response, but only by implication. In a more technical description of the same passage, listener 1 is able to point to a specific emotion: "I enjoyed Maria's ornaments on the repeat (starting at [00:58][14]),

https://youtu.be/QO6JdAUIkdU

Video example 1. Re-enactment, original time stamp 12:12.[15]

and in the video (*video example 2*) I exchange a brief look with [listener 2] who seems to share my enjoyment. I react to this with a smile and I look pleased." (Listener 1, p. 2).

https://youtu.be/jpj0x_sMYHo

Video example 2. Re-enactment, time stamp 13:10.

Often, however, participants clearly felt some emotion (maybe even the intended or collectively felt one) but were unable to define it: "…there were specific moments where I felt there clearly was more contact. Most clearly was the second take of the first movement of the C.P.E. Bach sonata for flute and obbligato harpsichord, bar 48 (*Video example 3* [01:13]) and onward where the timbre from the flute triggered a strong feeling of recognition throughout the group (it can be sensed on the video)." (Tilman, p. 6).

https://youtu.be/Lq8yUgT5kSo

Video example 3. Re-enactment, time stamp 42:59.

Such overarching emotional responses are reported rather frequently: "The expressiveness of the musical phrase with the flute in the bright register […] is very touching. I can clearly see my reaction […] as I bounce backwards." (Listener 2, p. 4). The *formulations* here suggest that some emotion should be there ("expressiveness"), that it in fact *is* there ("very touching"), and that there is a bodily

---

[14] The original time stamps were re-calculated to mirror the linked youtube videos, and the new values are indicated in brackets here and further below.
[15] The original time stamps remain part of the video captions, to indicate the placement of the video fragments within the course of the day.

reaction ("bounce backwards"). However, its nature remains hidden behind a rather general musical formulation ("the flute in the bright register").

One reason for the fuzziness of the border between the intellectual and emotional realm is formulated at the beginning of the reflections of listener 3, explaining the "paradox that was examined by theorists of performance of various kinds (elocution, oratory, acting, music), namely, the *cultivation* of 'natural' behavior." The fact that the listeners were experts in eighteenth-century culture and music did indeed introduce the risk of deeply ingrained, cultivated thinking patterns or attitudes taking over.

The clearest examples of such a takeover of previous knowledge and experience, sometimes at the expense of the individual listener's emotional engagement in the moment, can be found in those reflections that emphasize the quality of the music or the musical quality of the performance. Such passages typically refer to the character of the music in musical or analytical terms, either in anticipation (expecting a performance of a previously analyzed piece to be in a certain way), or in contemplation (assessing whether the performance met these expectations). This way of thinking can, for example, be found throughout the reflections by listener 4, where his/her satisfaction with, or frustration about, the musical experience is frequently described as leading to emotional experiences. Listener 4 spells this out in great detail in a number of explanatory parts, but it is also evident in formulations such as "The upward tritone at the end of the first phrase was especially painful." (Listener 4, p. 9). Interesting here is that the pain of that musical moment is not explicitly described as the result of a communicative interactive effort of all the players and listeners, but rather as the consequence of contemplating a harmonical detail (the tritone). This example seems to show the difficulties we occasionally had not to separate the performance from the composition that was being performed.[16]

An interesting approach to reflecting about feelings is introduced by listener 2, who makes use of Kate Hevner's eight clusters of adjectives describing human emotions (Juslin, 2019, p. 106–107): "The second movement (*Video example 4*) brings immediately emotions that can be described with adjectives from Hevner's cluster 6: merry, joyous, gay, happy, cheerful, bright, sunny, gleeful, vivacious, entrancing, fun." (Listener 2, p. 5).

https://youtu.be/ZYQ74m-C4Ec

Video example 4. Re-enactment, time stamp 18:23.

Often however, naming emotions – especially when labeling the music – was instead rather a hindrance for listener 2: "Naming the affects doesn't make it easier to perceive and feel the emotions, on [the] contrary, it almost gets in the way, somehow […]. Recognizing and labeling [one's] own emotions is a cognitive process that may interfere with the emotions themselves." (Listener 2, p. 7–8). For this listener, it was

---

[16] It goes beyond the scope of this article to analyze in detail whether or how our reflections included remnants of Romantic behaviors that favor individual experiences of musical masterworks as presented in musical interpretations, but it should be pointed out that the material would lend itself to such an analysis, too.

clearly easier to pick up on various emotions and enhance them spontaneously through their interaction with others during the performance (*Video example 5*):

> I look at the other participants' faces and my emotions seem to get a deeper dimension when I catch an emotional expression here, being supported and somehow approved. At [01:30, 01:37] I feel comfort and relief, and [at] [01:50] concern, responding to the music together with Maria's and [Listener 4's] facial expressions. (Listener 2, p. 5).

https://youtu.be/t3YVwkm57m4

Video example 5. Re-enactment, time stamp 25:09.

Private emotions versus public emotions: keeping sorrow to oneself and sharing joy

While these examples show how the task of emotional engagement in the eighteenth-century manner sometimes can pose problems on conceptual, linguistic and social levels, the material also documents how the re-enactment at its best offered the unique possibility to unite experience, knowledge, emotional, and social responses. Examples of integrated approaches can be found throughout the material, sometimes in passages of striking insight like the following one:

> I have a stronger sense of the music as light-hearted and playful here. A notable example is the long note with its slightly uneven and ultimately fading vibrato towards the end […] which seems deliberately ludic; I am aware of myself smiling here and, in peripheral vision, of [Listener 4] responding in a similar way. And I note that at the conclusion of the piece [Listener 4] and I look at each other with a type of mutual acknowledgment of the piece: with regard to "contagious" responses with an audience, this is perhaps a useful reminder that the comic may be shared in collective ways that are more obvious and tangible than the "darker" emotions (Listener 3, p. 3–4).

This passage labels the emotions of the piece, ("light-hearted and playful") and identifies the performer's emotional intent and engagement during the performance ("deliberately ludic"). It mentions in passing the performance-technical devices by means of which the emotions are evoked ("uneven and fading vibrato"). It describes the listener's emotional reaction ("smiling"), the emotional response by a fellow listener, and finally, a kind of mutual confirmation.[17] A bonus analysis is added, where the social aspect of emotional contagion is tied to the kind of emotion that is being shared; joyful or comic emotions are – to Listener 3 – more easily shared with others than the darker ones. The experience of this difference is reconfirmed in another text passage:

---

[17] As per Maria's labels in this passage, the affective intention was "pleasure" and "expectation," both of which do match the label by listener 3, "light-hearted." In the eighteenth century, the vibrato described by Listener 3 was a standard expressive device and might not have been experienced as "ludic." This is just one example of how expectations, informed by musical convention, influence how we experience the affective message of a passage or performance.

The piece [C.P.E. Bach, flute and harpsichord sonata, Adagio di molto. *Video examples 6 and 7*] shows little willingness to offer relief to its listeners. I am partially aware, as I listen, of my fellow listeners and I note particularly that the sense of melancholy is reflected strongly in [Listener 4's] facial responses, but interestingly there is not very much interaction between listeners. The piece seems to have the effect of sending listeners inwards to their own reflections rather than creating a community where responses are shared; it atomises the audience, allowing its moving melancholic tones to be deeply felt in an individual, private way. (Listener 3, p. 6).

https://youtu.be/xQ2qrtgat58

Video example 6. Re-enactment, time stamp 54:12, short.

https://youtu.be/_qRchpQVdUg

Video example 7. Re-enactment, time stamp 54:12, long.

The same sentiment, with reference to the same piece, is shared by Listener 1, who writes "I noted that sadness feels to be inward and private, and that, culturally speaking, I am not accustomed to expressing it publicly" (Listener 1, p. 5). Listener 4 also understands sorrow as a private emotion when remarking about the Adagio by Quantz: "I felt lost in my own thoughts and own experience of the music for its entire duration. Maybe this had to do with the fact that this was the first experiment, maybe it was because the overriding emotion was sorrowful" (Listener 4, p. 13).

Changes during the re-enactment

Most reflections contain passages about the changes that happened during the day, about the lasting effects of events or decisions, shifts in the participant's interaction, and learning processes. In the first passage by Listener 3 quoted above, the dynamic of learning and building collective experience throughout the day is hinted at with the word "stronger." Such shifts were, according to the participants, influenced by generally getting to know each other better, by matters like alertness or fatigue, but especially by the discussions between the playing sessions and the changing placement of the participants. Often such dynamics are mentioned in passing, suggesting that the gradual process of getting more familiar with the re-enactment was integral to the re-enactment itself. The video also shows rather clearly how all participants seem more guarded at the beginning of the day while they are much more relaxed in general later on.

At times, however, shifts were experienced more abruptly. During the second session with the harpsichord solo by C.P.E. Bach (the third piece on the program) the participants were asked to move around freely in the room (*Video example 8*).

https://youtu.be/SSd4LreYjPw

Video example 8. Re-enactment, time stamp 29:55.

This experience gave "freedom of bodily movement" adding "a new dimension to listening" (Listener 2, p. 6), but was seen as distracting by the performer (Tilman, p. 5) and two other listeners (Listener 1, p. 4, listener 3, p. 5). The true shift happened,

however, only after that session. Listener 1 writes about the experience of sitting down again (*Video example 9*):

> Our aim in this performance was to keep the same movement as when we were walking, but while [we] remained seated. I feel that this version marks a turning point in our listening day. What struck me at the time […] was the sudden change in eye contact, and I grew more comfortable with its increase as the piece progressed. My main feeling was one of closeness with the other listeners (and one of trust and even some vulnerability)." (Listener 1, p. 4).

https://youtu.be/JZ4R_ux_mBE

Video example 9. Re-enactment, time stamp 33:08.

Maria supports this observation: "The listeners interact visibly emotionally with each other and move their bodies more" (Maria, p. 7).

The functions of eye contact and movement are discussed by different participants in various ways. Eye contact was seen as important by most listeners among each other, and for Maria vis-à-vis the listeners, as she was facing them when playing. For Tilman at the harpsichord, it was more difficult to establish or maintain eye contact: "I felt that many times, glances were not necessary to experience some contact [with the others]," however, looking at the "impression I make on the video, I am becoming unsure whether this is correct" (Tilman, p. 6). Maria adds that communicating (in her role as flutist) with Tilman (at the harpsichord) was "not rhetorically effective" and created a feeling of a "stage area," something we tried to avoid, as outlined earlier.

Listener 1 observes how, in the earlier half of the day, eye movement worked as a substitute for body movement: "In general, I observe that we, in fact, move very little. The movement that I do notice is that of my eyes – when I make eye contact and when my eyes shift in focus." (Listener 1, p. 2). The distinction between the listeners' approach to experiencing sad feelings and happy feelings is reflected in their observations about eye contact. About the former, Listener 4 writes at one point, "I decided to close my eyes, sensing the closeness to the other listeners and our communal 'grieving'." (Listener 4, p. 12). Listener 3 comments on an uplifting movement (C.P.E. Bach flute sonata, first movement): "We exchange glances and smiles suggestive of appreciation of particular moments and passages." However, "if we are connected emotionally, it is by general pleasure more than by the emotional shades of the piece as it progresses." (Listener 3, p. 6). For Listener 4, closing his/her eyes did not prevent experiencing the emotion together, nor identifying it as sad in the first place. For Listener 3, however, the openly shared enjoyment of a lively performance did not automatically result in a shared specific emotional experience.

Initially, the invitation to move freely with the music's emotions was perhaps by some perceived to be unnatural, but towards the end of the day it became one of the main ingredients that created togetherness. Listener 4 sums this up as follows, addressing the cluster of performances of the C.P.E. Bach sonata after lunch:

> In my opinion two factors contributed to the success of this performance (particularly of the third movement) in terms of the listeners' physical movements. First of all, they had got to know each other much better, not only through having spent the morning listening, but also through having discussed their experiences over lunch. In the third movement the freedom and loosening-up created by the changes of position made the expression of emotion easier and more natural. I experienced this as a kind of circular process: experience of emotion led to movement and contact, movement and contact freed up the listeners to experience emotion more openly, this experience of emotion led to movement and contact, etc. […]" (Listener 4, p. 14)

Although effect of the changing sitting positions, mentioned here in passing, is in fact singled out by several other participants as instrumental for their emotional experiences at various points, it seems that the "circular" description of the day's progress by Listener 4 best captures the collective process as a whole.

Multiple observation angles of single events

Most comments that address the early stages of the re-enactment do tend to be diverse, but as the day progresses, some points or clusters appear in the material where two or three participants make their observations at or around the same video timestamp. Listener 1, for instance, writes, "I see in the video that once I open my eyes, I have a more open posture – head a little higher (starting at 13:01) and with a happier expression." (Listener 1, p. 2). This is the first performance of the first movement of Kirnberger's sonata, the same piece and performance where Listener 2 and Listener 3, as mentioned earlier, cited "avian allusions," and "bird-like ornaments." Maria hones in on the same musical moment (*Video example 10*): "[Listener 1…] takes two lovely deep breaths in a pleasant, relaxed way […] first at [00:03], then at [00:30]. So in the emotion I was trying to evoke." (Maria, p. 9).

https://youtu.be/aYmbJmVm0v4

Video example 10. Re-enactment, time stamp 12:32.

Even if we factor in a possible bias in Maria's after-the-fact observation, it remains clear that everyone here is addressing the same basically happy emotion. The unbroken transfer of the intended emotion observed here is especially remarkable because at the beginning of that movement, an external influence had threatened Maria's performance: "…during the 1st movement […] I heard a sound (cracking, or donk) from my right side […] I was afraid that it was a crack [in the flute] that had opened. I thought about stopping playing but decided not to" (Maria, p. 6).

A cluster of observations around the third time of performing Quantz's *Grave* shows a consistent progress of events that was experienced across the room. After a sequence of heightening emotional tension, Maria's initiative to present a new, intensified emotional beginning of the four-bar coda (*Video example* 11, bars 29–32; labels from Tilman's score are "otherworldly – consolation") initiates renewed emotional engagement of the listeners. Let's look at this in detail:

https://youtu.be/Zc2pAPKQtl8

Video example 11. Re-enactment, time stamp 11:08.

"Watching the video, I can observe increased activity of all the listeners at [the preceding passage], corresponding to the intense musical expression." (Listener 2, p. 4).

"[At] the end of bar 29 [00:02] in this version I evoked an emotion that I never evoked in me before at those bars: desperation, being scared." (Maria, p. 5).

"At [00:04], I can observe intensive expectations and receptiveness of the listeners." (Listener 2, p. 4).

"I can see my eyes wandering a bit in the video […]. But again, during Maria's coda, I was drawn in [00:08]." (Listener 1, p. 2).

"At [00:09], Maria poses a musical question, directing the eye contact towards the listeners, then the harpsichord partly answers, rounding off with poise while the flute elicits a comforting feeling [i.e. at the "consoling" end]." (Listener 2, p. 4).

"This ability to evoke another emotion which this music also affords at that place was generated by the affective power of the performance (the room/performance)" (Maria, p. 5).

The artistic re-enactment as an artistic research method

This article exemplifies an artistic re-enactment of cultural and expressive practices in a musical performance. It displays the process of embodying and acting out different specific emotions during a performance, and the interactions which were triggered by that process.

Characteristic of this re-enactment as an artistic research method, is that the re-enactment itself in fact helped creating actions and reactions, gave them shape in a continuous process, and made them recordable. While it was no real surprise that we were not able to fully re-enact those eighteenth-century practices, conceptions and mindsets, it also was not decisive for the outcome: a re-enactment does not need to be successful in all its parts to allow to develop new knowledge from it.

The re-enactment increased our awareness of how – when performing music from other cultural traditions and epochs than our own – we tend to apply affective behaviors and practices that belong to our own culture. As for me (Tilman), the most complicated mismatch between the habituated patterns and the approach re-enacted during this project has to do with showing actual emotions. Music-making on a professional level includes having to manage multi-faceted anxieties before and during performances, and to prevent (or counteract) the possibility of mishaps. How much this plays a foreground role obviously depends on the person and the repertoire, but the management of stage nerves is nevertheless a reality every

musician has to face. The emotional content of this facet of the profession may be linked to one's technical-musical abilities, but it is much less directly connected to the emotions inscribed into the music. One of the mechanisms trained and refined during decades of practice is to be able to *conceal* one's real emotions on stage, to replace anything that has to do with fear or insecurity with make-believe more positive expressions, or at least to apply a rigorous filter that only lets through a certain amount of emotions. Re-enactments like the one described here provide openings to emerge from such confines. So here we have an example of the "emancipatory potential" of artistic re-enactments cited at the beginning.

This re-enactment did deepen our understanding of the re-enacted practices themselves, how they can interact and how they relate to the aesthetic ideas of their own historical period. To re-enact a practice means that it gets embodied and experienced. The same applies to the re-enactment of an aesthetic mindset or conception. We thus developed understanding, and gathered experiences that exceeded the usual gains derived from source studies and reflection. This shows how artistic re-enactments can play an important part in historiography. Our re-enactment also made it possible to show how these practices can today influence a performance musically, artistically, and in terms of social and artistic hierarchy. As artistic researchers, we are able to identify "connections and relationships between agents and agencies" in "complex spatial situations" (Dyrssen, 2012, p. 226). Re-enacting not only a few but a variety of several expressive practices and mindsets belonging to one and the same culture has enabled us to explore not only the interactions between them, but also how our ways of viewing music and art interact with how we perform and experience art. We learned how, up to a certain level, we can choose which ideas and conceptions we want to emphasize in a performance. To modify things like the codes of a musical performance, such as the affective behavior of everyone involved, the placement of people in the room, or the lighting, showed a potential to reflect upon, but also enhance, aesthetic ideas about music and artistry.

A re-enactment like this one thus works as an expansion and enhancement of the usual practices in the field of historically informed performances. As musicians in that field, we are used to re-enact expressive tools such as articulation, dynamics, or timbre. Now we also re-enacted the affective-expressive performance practices of the mid-eighteenth century. The result is a musical performance the focus of which is less on the choice between expressive tools, and more on the physical interactions between the sounding music and the bodies of both players and listeners.

References

Bania, M., & Skowroneck, T. (2020). Affective practices in mid-18th-century German music-making: Reflections on C. P. E. Bach's advice to performers. *Early Music, 48*/2, 193–203. https://doi.org/10.1093/em/caaa022

Coessens, K. (2019). On the sensorial of the human body in performance. In K. Coessens (Ed.), *Sensorial aesthetics in music practices* (pp.133–150). Leuven University Press.

Dyrssen, C. (2012). Navigating in heterogeneity: Architectural thinking and art-based research. In M. Biggs & H. Karlsson (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to research in the arts* (pp. 223-239). Routledge.

Van Elferen, I. (2007). "Ihr Augen weint!": Intersubjective tears in the sentimental concert hall. *Understanding Bach, 2*, 77–94. https://www.bachnetwork.org/ub2/vanelferen.pdf

Ellsworth, P. (1997). Levels of thought and levels of emotion. In P. Ekman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotion: Fundamental questions* (pp. 192–196). Oxford University Press.

Goring, P. (2005). *The rhetoric of sensibility in 18th-century culture*. Cambridge University Press.

Hatfield, E., Bensman, L., Thornton, P. D., & Rapson, R. L. (2014). New perspectives on emotional contagion: A review of classic and recent research on facial mimicry and contagion. *Interpersona, 8*(2), 159–179. https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.v8i2.162

Harlow, R. (2013). Keyboard psychohaptics: A nexus of multidisciplinary research into kinesthetics, gesture, and expression. *Keyboard Perspectives 6*, 1–21.

Hawley, E. S. (2016). James Luna and the paradoxically present vanishing indian. *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture 5*(1), 5–26. https://doi.org/10.5195/contemp.2016.170

Hosler, B. (1981). *Changing aesthetic views of instrumental music in 18th-century Germany*. UMI Research Press.

James, S. (1997). *Passion and action: The emotions in 17th-century philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

Jones, A. (2011). "The artist is present": Artistic re-enactment and the impossibility of presence. *The Drama Review 55*(1), 16–45. https://doi.org/10.1162/DRAM_a_00046

Juslin, P. N. (2019). *Musical emotions explained*. Oxford University Press.

November, N. (2004). Theater piece and cabinetstück: Nineteenth-century visual ideologies of the string quartet. *Music in Art, 29* (1/2), 134–150.

Östersjö, S. (2017). Thinking-through-music: On knowledge production, materiality, embodiment, and subjectivity in artistic research. In J. Impett (Ed.), *Artistic research in music: Discipline and resistance* (pp. 88–107). Leuven University Press.

Reddy, W. M. (2001). *The navigation of feeling: A framework for the history of emotions*. Cambridge University Press.

Sulzer, J. G. (1774). *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (Vol. 2). Weidmann & Reich.