

‘The Revival of Heritage’: In memoriam Richard Taruskin (1945–2022)  
STIMU Symposium, Utrecht Festival Oude Muziek, 28–29 August 2023

Richard Wistreich

### Colonialism, Late Capitalism, and the Invention of Early Music

The success and enormous growth in Early Music’s sonic productivity over the past four or five decades (of which the Utrecht Festival Oude Muziek is one notable example) has been matched by an equally copious outpouring of academic research, most of it concerning the reconstruction and contextualisation of historic (‘old’) repertoire, but also including a steady stream devoted to the writing of Early Music’s own history. Richard Taruskin’s prolific attention to the historical performance movement in both scholarly and public arenas, was mostly produced during the 1980s, the same decade in which, thanks to a propitious confluence of various artistic, economic and technological forces, the Early Music tidal wave that had been building in momentum ever since the end of the second world war finally crashed ashore, sweeping right into the heart of the professional Western classical music mainland. Bursting with almost irresistible energy, self-confidence, and allure, above all it projected a powerful message that it intended not only to disrupt and even displace the existing order, but that it came wrapped in a righteous mantle of difference, and of unassailable rationality. Taruskin, meanwhile, situated his sophisticated (and at the time, unsettling) critique of Early Music’s various self-delusions in terms of a somewhat undeveloped notion of ‘modernity’, succinctly expressed in one of his earliest essays to tackle the issue: ‘But even at their best and most successful ... historical reconstructionist performances are in no sense recreations of the past. They are quintessentially modern performances, modernist performances in fact, the product of an aesthetic wholly of our own era, no less time-bound than the performance styles they would supplant’;<sup>1</sup> or as he more bluntly (and famously) put it in a later piece: ‘historical performance ... is the sound of now, not then’.<sup>2</sup> The particular target of Taruskin’s exposure of this apparently key fallacy of the reconstructionist performance project was the loose bandying about at the time of the word ‘authentic’ by some of its more opportunistic promoters. While the ‘authenticity wars’ of the early eighties turn out in retrospect to have been of much less import than their bristling antagonists then thought, the style of some of Taruskin’s pugnacious interventions in the knockabout reveal insights that I believe still deserve our attention.

In the Introduction to *Text and Act* (1995), Taruskin wrote: ‘the [“performance practice”] movement ... has interests aplenty, and protects them... [It] is aggressively prescriptive and territorial, dispensing or conferring the status of authenticity as oxymoronical reward for conformity, claiming a specious moral authority, and laying guilt trips on those who fail to endorse its goals’.<sup>3</sup> Even if we were to replace the

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Taruskin, ‘On Letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance’, *The Journal of Musicology* 1 (1982): 338–49, at 346.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Taruskin, ‘The Modern Sound of Early Music’, in Taruskin, *Text and Act* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 19.

word 'authenticity' with the more recent, but equally dubious term, 'historically informed', I am struck by the high concentration of other highly charged words and phrases in this short extract: 'protect[s]', 'aggressively prescriptive and territorial', 'dispensing or conferring ...status', 'conformity', and 'specious moral authority'. Although Taruskin rarely displayed quite such pugilistic rhetoric, I often find myself wishing he had taken the fight beyond his otherwise painstaking and impressive, but essentially parochial work of dismantling of performers' faux historicism and disentanglements of them from historical musicology, and instead, had extended his dialecticism to engaging with the larger historical forces that shape both the epistemology and the practical performance of 'historical' music.

For me, this outburst recalls the political philosopher, Jean Rancière's concept of *police*:

an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying.... It is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible, and another is not, that this 'speech' is understood as discourse and another as noise.<sup>4</sup>

Taruskin, it seems to me, had stumbled upon an extraordinary irony sitting at the heart of the historical performance practice movement — a conspiracy of self-deception, even — whereby far from being the radical, disruptive counterinsurgency against the established classical music order that it claimed to be at this high-point of its success in the 1980s, the Early Music project might in fact be quickly transforming itself into an authoritarian, sectarian, and potentially oppressive order.

Picking up on this thought (that, I realise, always exercised me during over forty years of working as a professional performer and thirty as a musicologist), in this paper I offer some tentative thoughts about how Early Music's apparent success has been achieved and sustained against two of the greatest historical forces that shaped and continue to shape the 'modernity' that Taruskin identified as the true condition of its manifestation — nineteenth-century colonialism and twentieth-century late capitalism. This is an exercise in metaphorical rather than empirical, causal, or even cultural historiography, and I do not plan to offer either a Marxian analysis of 'historical performance' or to suggest that the Early Music phenomenon can be understood as a straightforward outcome of the inexorable forces of capitalist production (although I'm confident there is a historical materialist account of the Early Music movement to be written by somebody). I do, however, want to state emphatically that Early Music, like all cultural production, cannot exist outside the ideological spaces in which it operates, and only by recognising and understanding the ways in which it is interpellated into the prevailing political order can its participants progress its transformational aspirations.

### **Early Music: A Colonising Project**

For its consumers, Early Music is effectively a brand identity that competes with others for their attention within a crowded music market. For early music's producers — performers, concert promoters, media companies, broadcasters, marketers,

---

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (1995), trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis University Press, 1999), p. 29.

publishers, teaching institutions and other supporting industries – the usefulness of the term has been (at least in the last 50 years or so) primarily its strong recognition factor, but also its elasticity and swift adaptability to changing needs – all key features of successful consumer branding in general. As Italian Wikipedia succinctly puts it:

‘Early music’, however, is not a historical-musical category, since it covers an unspecified span of centuries, and a vast and heterogeneous output.<sup>5</sup>

The effect of this is that the field of Early Music’s actual and potential interests is more or less unlimited both within, but also overlaid upon, music’s traditional spheres and modes of activity. As a space it is, then, effectively a *terra nullius* ripe for settlement and colonisation by anyone ready to stick a flag into the ground, with all the attendant possibilities for creating surplus value from the mining and processing — or, perhaps more accurately, re-processing – of its raw materials (in this case, existing musical notation) into commodities: primarily performances, preferably further monetised as reproducible recordings.

Historically, colonisers have always needed either God-given and/or quasi-legal justifications both for appropriating, and then subjugating their newly occupied territories to a rational and uniform systematic order that will form the basis for governing and policing both their external borders and the behaviour of their inhabitants. Such legitimisation as ‘property’ of the claims of settlers of geographical spaces that –irrespective of any already present indigenous inhabitants – are declared *terra nullius*. This legalism then licenses them to engage in unfettered exploitation and extraction of naturally occurring and apparently unclaimed resources. In the same way, the occupiers of this ‘vast and heterogeneous’ musical-historical construct – ‘Early Music’ – needed something far more concrete and rationally grounded than the ill-defined and overdetermined descriptors ‘old’ or even (in fact, only sporadically used before the mid-twentieth century) ‘early’ music. Indeed, as recently as 1994, even that most authoritative depository of definitions, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (MGG)*, found itself tied in knots even trying to get the term under either historical or semantic control:

At present [that is, in 1994], there are increasing discussions about the temporal determination of the term early music as well as about whether it should be spelled ‘early music’ or ‘Early Music’. The capitalized version is to be understood in relation to the spelling of [the term] ‘New [*i.e.*, *Contemporary*] Music’.<sup>6</sup>

Amusing though this *Problematik* might be (especially to a non-German), the formal acknowledgement of ‘Early Music’ (capitalized) as a universally recognisable category that nevertheless bears only a tenuous connection to any particular repertoire, genre, or group of musical practitioners, is significant. Likewise, it highlights the fact that in order to provide even a veneer of ‘legality’ to enable such a

---

<sup>5</sup> ‘La ‘musica antica’, tuttavia, non è una categoria storico-musicale, dato che copre un arco di secoli non ben definito, e una produzione molto vasta ed eterogenea.’ [Musica antica - Wikipedia](#) (accessed 17.08.2023).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Gegenwärtig] tauchen verstärkt Diskussionen über die zeitliche Determination des Begriffes *Alte Musik* sowie über die Schreibweise *alte Musik* oder *Alte Musik* auf. Dabei ist die Großschreibung auf die Schreibweise *Neue Musik* bezugnehmend zu verstehen.’ *MGG ‘Aufführungspraxis’, Dieter Gutknecht, ‘A. III: Zeitliche Begrenzung der Alten Musik’.*

potentially hugely profitable, or at least, aspiring settler enterprise, this relatively young, but voraciously land-grabbing force would require the cover of a suitably flexible, but also robust regulatory apparatus through which to legitimate its increasingly hegemonic claim over whatever territory it might choose to incorporate in the atlas of 'old' music.

That function is provided, of course, by the construction that somehow manages to emanate a near-ontological solidity while simultaneously evading all attempts to grasp its conceptual limits: 'Performance Practice' ('Aufführungspraxis'). It describes an entire epistemological apparatus, forged within the academy but quickly assimilated into the world of re-creationist music-making and the discourse of earnest scientism about itself it has assiduously cultivated. Its status as a legitimising concept is affirmed not least by the terms 'Aufführungspraxis' and 'Performance Practice' having acquired their own entries in the most recent editions of *MGG* and *New Grove*, each rivalling in length the respective articles 'Musikwissenschaft' and 'Musicology' in these two august music encyclopaedias.

The term 'Aufführungspraxis' was first coined by German musicologists, beginning with Max Seiffert in 1906.<sup>7</sup> The first two scholarly monographs on the subject were both published in 1931: one entitled *Aufführungspraxis der Musik*, a copiously illustrated history of the subject from ancient Babylon to the Hollywood talkies by Robert Haas, Head of the music collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna; the other by Arnold Schering, Bach scholar, Professor of Musicology in Berlin, and future president of the Deutsche Musikgesellschaft under the Nazi regime. His title narrowed the field to *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik*: 'performance practice of early (or 'old') music', and it is this 'sub-set' which quickly became dominant, soon metamorphosing into the phrase 'historische Aufführungspaxis ('*historical* performance practice'), a subtle, yet deft slippage that has the effect of conferring a sense of unimpeachable authority underwritten by scientific certainty. This formulation later spawned other marketing slogan versions such as 'period performance' and 'historically informed performance', not to mention Taruskin's particular bugbear, 'authentic performance'. I do not intend to do further battle with these problematic terms in the present paper. What I do wish to emphasise, however, is the determination of the academy from early in the development of this new 'colonialist project' to impose a particular definition and a resultant structure on the discipline of 'historical performance practice', ensuring that the legitimising conditions for recreating 'old music' would remain firmly under its intellectual and ideological control. As far as Early Music's consumers are concerned, the scholars mainly remain in the shadows while its executants take the stage and enjoy the limelight; nevertheless, the badge performers often sport, declaring them to be (merely?) 'historically informed', makes clear the largely unspoken hierarchy of legitimacy.

In the year following the publication of these two seminal books by Haas and Schering, Paul Sacher, Ina Lohr and August Wenzinger issued their manifesto for the foundation of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, which would promote 'the study and practical exploration of all questions related to the revival of earlier [musical] works, with the goal of establishing a lively interchange between musicology and

---

<sup>7</sup> Max Seiffert, 'Die Verzierungen der Sologesänge in Händel's *Messias*', *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 8 (1906/07): 581–615, at 582.

performance'.<sup>8</sup> The Schola Cantorum opened the next year (1933), thereby cementing both the institutionalisation and professionalisation of, and creating the foundational legitimacy for, what had hitherto been primarily a marginal cottage-industry, largely the preserve of amateurs, and perhaps most importantly, effectively setting in stone the symbiotic relationship between the performance of 'early' music and the discipline of musicology.

Although the Schola was (and remains) primarily a training school for performers, it was from the start based on the idea that musicians should learn for themselves the necessary musicological skills to be able 'to initiate interaction between critical scientific research and music-making'.<sup>9</sup> This 'lively interchange' between scholarship and performance, whose most complete personification is the 'scholar-performer' (a guise pioneered, in fact, more than fifty years before by Arnold Dolmetsch) contributed to one of the key differentiating features of the Early Music project compared to the performance traditions of musical works from 'later' eras, and it became one of its principal brand markers, as *MGG* declared with a hint of breathless excitement unusual for this otherwise rigorously sober work:

Nowhere is the relationship between theoretical musicology and practical music practice as close as in the field of historical performance practice. Theory and practice meet not only in coproduction but even in the same person.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of the second world war, the theoretical apparatus of historical performance practice had also entrenched itself as a sub-discipline within university based academic musicology, even if it had yet to achieve much penetration of professional early music performance. This really only began to happen in earnest in the 1950s and 1960s with such pioneering figures as Gustav Leonhardt and Nicholas Harnoncourt, who succeeded in engaging substantial new audiences for what felt like something both fresh and exciting as Europe sought to throw off all vestiges of its recent catastrophic past; but their 'new' approach to the even that most sacred cow of Germanic cultural self-identity – the music of J. S. Bach – also curated its own 'scientific' legitimacy with care.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, leading German musicologists forced into exile in the 1930s and 1940s took with them traditions such as the institutional (and distinctly amateur) *Collegium Musicum*, as well as the idea that

---

<sup>8</sup> 'In enger Zusammenarbeit von Vertretern der Wissenschaft und von praktischen Musikern sollen alle Fragen, welche bei der Wiederaufführung älterer Werke in Betracht kommen, geprüft und erprobt werden.' *Gründungsprogramm der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis* (November, 1932), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> 'die Vermittlung anzubahnen zwischen der kritisch wissenschaftlichen Forschung und der Musikpflege', *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> , Nirgends ist der Bezug zwischen theoretischer Musikwissenschaft und praktischer Musikausübung so eng wie im Bereich der historischen Aufführungspraxis. Theorie und Praxis begegnen sich nicht nur in Koproduktion, sie begegnen einander sogar in Personalunion'. *MGG: 'Musikwissenschaft'*, Heinz von Loesch, A. II: 'Musikwissenschaft nach 1945, 3. Historische Musikwissenschaft'.

<sup>11</sup> This is, of course, something of an over-simplification of the 'history of historical performance', which goes back to the mid nineteenth century, or even before. However, it is fair to say that the emergence of a formal linkage between scientific musicology and the professional performance of early music only really took firm roots in the early 1960s. For overviews, see Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988) and Richard Wistreich, 'Performance Practice Scholarship', in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (eds.), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Historical Performance in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 476–82.

performance of old music always begins with the making of scholarly editions, and they found fertile ground, above all in the principal American universities.

Such landmarks as the founding of the British journal *Early Music* in 1973, and later its equivalents in Germany, France, the US and elsewhere launched the formal and more public marriage of scholars and the mass of early music makers – professionals and amateurs – that had had its origins more than half a century earlier, and it cemented the apparently permanent achievement of Early Music's 'colonial settlement'.

### **Musicology and early music in the marketplace**

I have often thought about how the totalizing historiographical project of the grand *Gesamtausgaben* projects, begun in the middle of the nineteenth century by Raymond and Hermann Härtel and followed in the next generation by Friedrich Chrysander, Philip Spitta and Otto Jahn, seems to parallel the industrially based capitalist model of commodity accumulation which reached full steam during the same period. Classic capitalist accumulation begins with wholesale extraction and processing of raw materials, followed by their conversion into standardised and reproducible commodities through systems of manufacture; these are then sold at a profit into a constantly stimulated consumer market. The relentless focus on a comparable extractionism from the sources of every work by the 'great' composers, and when these are exhausted, moving on to second-rung players, and eventually the less obvious but almost inexhaustible seams of 'Kleinmeister', and their subsequent subjection to uniform styles of editing, scholarly apparatuses and even typesetting can perhaps draw a helpful parallel between the *Gesamtausgabe* and *Denkmäler* industry and classic capitalism. Its products are made ready to sit in serried rows of uniform folio volumes along the shelves of specialist libraries (where they often remain undisturbed from one decade to the next). The warehousing of all of this musical capital, the result of highly standardised labour processes would, it was imagined, underpin the successful sustenance of the musicology–professional practice nexus, and in particular, provide a continuing rationale for university-based music philology, even in the face of rapidly shifting economic and ideological forces.<sup>12</sup>

However, without constant stimulus from the demand side of the equation through reproduction, use and replacement – which for music editions means continuing sales of multiple copies and above all, performances – accumulation of finished goods alone fails to realise the potential return on such capital investment. Notwithstanding this inherent weakness in the model (exacerbated, for example, once performers start to make their own editions of music from the uncopyrighted source materials or even worse, to read directly from the original notation), the *Gesamtausgaben* and *Denkmäler* probably represent musicology's own most enduring 'monument', insofar as they contributed enormously to the establishment of the classical canon and its domination of mainstream art-music performance that is even now only beginning – at glacial speed – to crumble at the edges.

---

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Pamela Potter's brilliant analysis of the ways in which German musicology adapted to changed political conditions at the end of the First World War: Pamela Potter, 'German Musicology and Early Music Performance, 1918–1933', in Bryan Gilliam (ed.), *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 94–106.

The commercial explosion of Early Music from the late 1960s onwards is often characterised as having been powered (perhaps ironically) by a kind of 'subversive insurgency' against this dominant mainstream classical music order (paralleling, for example Arnold Dolmetsch's resistance to what he called 'the cold march of intolerant modernity' at the height of the First World War). Even though it was not until 1977 that the politically freighted expression, 'early music *movement*' was first used in print, many of its motley bands of devotees, apparently rejecting the alienation and Fordism of conventional classical music production, began experimenting with new approaches to performing and then proselytising for the music they were discovering, very often circumventing, or at least insisting on cooperation on equal terms with, the musicological and *historische Aufführungspraxis* authorities. Some performers harnessed and developed the basic palaeographic and editing skills they had learned as musicology students in the academy while others taught themselves to unlock the hitherto closely regulated source materials: notation, treatises and organological evidence. Most importantly, the often messy but open and experiment-oriented 'early music movement' generated an energy that seemed to catch the same propitious breeze in the late sixties and early seventies that was also driving the whirlwind of creativity in jazz, soul, gospel, experimental rock music, and so many other 'counter-cultural' musical genres, as well as the beginnings of the discovery by musicians in the global North of the riches of the music of the global South.

Still, it was the quality and revelations of the music itself together with refreshing styles of presentation that quickly began to attract large and enthusiastic audiences to Early Music, including many who would otherwise be more likely drawn to avant-garde or folk music than to mainstream classical concert music. But it is important to note that much of this public exposure could happen only thanks to the propitious and entrepreneurial conditions in the main European centres – in other words, the same music industry that ran the rest of the professional music business. Aware that it needed to refresh its products to satisfy a new generation of music consumers, the market was happy to appropriate the talent and ride the energy across all of these 'counter-cultural' musical scenes. For Early Music, this took the form of a confident commercial recording industry (notably Deutsche Gramofon's 'Das Alte Werk' and 'Archiv', and Decca's 'L'Oiseau Lyre' labels, and the British independent Hyperion Records) ready to take risks with both unknown A(rtists) and R(epertoire), aided and abetted by supportive state-subsidised radio stations, such as the BBC, WDR Köln, and France Musique.

Meanwhile, many of Early Music's newer practitioners managed to project an attractive confidence in their apparent independence from the established order by using contextual ambience (for example, by performing in 'historic' venues or simulating suggestive acoustics on recordings) and projecting a more relaxed image on stage (for example, emulating pop and folk musicians by talking to the audience between pieces).



These two 'action' publicity photos taken around the same time in the late sixties or early seventies show, respectively, the distinctly earnest members of the *Studio der frühen Musik* doing their best to emulate the norms of presentation of, say, a conventional string quartet (note the men's white tie and tails, and the satin gloves and pearls worn by the singer, Andrea von Ramm, as well as the absence of music stands and studied lack of eye-contact, signifying an aura of disconnection from the practicalities of actual music-making), contrasted with David Munrow's *Early Music*



*Consort of London*, captured during a tv recording session, who at least look as though they may be having fun.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, the long-haired character nearest to the camera playing a drum is none other than the young Christopher Hogwood. With his *Academy of Ancient Music*, founded in 1973, Hogwood pioneered the extension to Early Music of the mid twentieth-century recording industry's adaptation of the 'proto-Capitalist' *Gesamtausgabe* idea, with his complete recordings on 'historical instruments' of the complete Mozart symphonies and piano concertos, Beethoven symphonies and piano concertos, all 106 Haydn symphonies (unfinished at his death in 2014), and dozens more individual volumes and collections ranging from Purcell and Vivaldi to Handel and Bach. It was a strategy soon emulated by other early music directors and would-be superstar conductors (abetted – or drive by – their record companies). As in classic capitalism it was technology, first in the form of digital recording, and then the coming of the CD in 1982, which hugely enhanced the project of adding the 're-recording' of much of the standard orchestral and choral repertoire to all the other first-time recordings of old music, thereby not only sustaining, but effectively turbo-charging the brand identity and (albeit modest) commercial success of Early Music.

The early phase of the Early Music boom was built on the performance of medieval and Renaissance music, that occupied a space peripheral to the mainstream and posing no competitive threat to it. However, as Hogwood and his emulators soon realised, the route to sustainable growth and potential market dominance was a quasi-colonialist move onto the 'mainland' first of the Baroque, and then the Classical and Romantic canons, that for a while really did begin to challenge the hegemony of the existing order. Meanwhile, ensembles and individuals determined to stick to music from before 1700 have in most cases had to try to emulate the models of the mainstream recording industry and festival circuits in the ways they present their products, a strategy that might allow a small number of musicians to pursue professional careers (especially those who can also find teaching posts in conservatoires), while leaving most others to dip in and out when time and incomes allow. Nevertheless, one thing that remains common to all Early Music practitioners, whether performing troubadour songs, Dufay masses or Brahms symphonies, is their need to maintain at least the semblance of commitment to their Unique Selling Point: 'historically informed'. This requires a fundamental adherence to the logic of the *Aufführungspraxis* model, more or less as set out in the *Grundungsprogramm der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis*. But however worthy, this has also proved over time – like all dogmas and marketing slogans – to have a limited shelf-life and waning excitement value. These days, while some performers do engage in occasional questioning of established normative processes, especially as new information emerges or fresh interpretations of evidence are aired (but only if rehearsal time allows), and muttered discussions continue among the tiny group of scholars chipping away within the pages of equally little-read journals, the reality is that with very few (but mostly noble) exceptions, the counter-cultural idealism, energy and informality that fired the early music performance movement as it geared up in the 60s and 70s no longer really drives debate, nor more importantly – with the possible exception of a few specialist festivals – mainstream classical music production and consumption.

---

<sup>13</sup> Photographs reproduced in Haskell, *The Early Music Revival*.

## Conclusions

To be clear (in case it is not), I am not suggesting that the development of the Early Music phenomenon since its beginnings in the late nineteenth century and its heydays in the last third of the twentieth is in and of itself either a *product* of colonialism or necessarily explicable just in terms of the relentless march of capitalism. However, parallels between the fortunes and strategies for survival of a distinctive 'Early Music' and general trends in recent phases of a post-colonial, post-liberal and now, post-democratic, late-capitalist world order are, like just about everything else in the sphere of cultural production, remarkably clear. They include: constant re-packaging of modes of presentation of the same or similar materials (Early Music now has its own canons of key works); diluting nuance or difference to 'make familiar' what at other times it might have been considered desirable (or profitable) to 'make strange'; or alternatively, affecting an elitist veneer of exclusivity and 'mystery', all in order to try to sustain market share. Another survival strategy borrowed directly from late capitalism is continual downward pressure on the cost base of the surplus value of labour, mainly achieved by the traditional method of forcing real cuts in the wages and paring down numbers of participants in the production of early music's outputs in the face of diminishing state subsidies (aided by fierce competition among skilled performers for employment). It also involves taking advantage of cheap technology and instant online distribution that allows musical content to be made available at low- or even zero-cost as an advertisers' 'honey-trap' to attract consumers, who then become the food on which parasitic data-feeders like Spotify and YouTube can gorge themselves.

But to end on a more positive note, it is worth noting that Jean Rancière continued his explanation of the concept of *police* (that I invoked near the start of this paper) by counterposing to the rather dismal picture of subjugation to the order of allowable discourse, his definition of 'political activity'. It's a definition and a call to persevere that I like to think still captures the idealism of Early Music's original spirit of insurgency, one that could, if taken to its inevitable conclusion, help to reshape the present Western classical musical order for the better. Its energy and aspiration are certainly what first drew me into Early Music, and continues to hold me in its exciting grip, even after all these years:

Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen and makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (1995), trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis University Press, 1999) p. 30.