death and tied in very neatly to the next one, 'The "Very Choice and Valuable" Music Library of Thomas Bever' by Roya Stuart-Rees (Royal Holloway, University of London). A prime example of the amateur gentleman collector and music enthusiast of the mid- to late eighteenth century, Dr Thomas Bever (1725–1791), Doctor of Law and Fellow of All Souls College Oxford, was a member of the Academy of Ancient Music, a subscriber to the Concert of Antient Music and a founder member of the Glee Club. His private music collection was deemed to be one of the finest ever offered for public sale when it was auctioned in 1798, but the sale catalogue (detailing the complete collection, excepting the works of Handel bequeathed to James Bartleman) has only recently come to light. Matthias Range (University of Oxford) closed this session with a paper drawn from his forthcoming book, 'Eighteenth-Century "Concert Funerals"' (a sequel to *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations from James I to Elizabeth II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)). A highlight was Range's revelation that music's prominent role in funeral ceremonies probably influenced the change in the entrance procession's route, which was significantly prolonged for the benefit of the spectators, who themselves seem to have been a noteworthy innovation at royal funerals.

The next speaker, Michael Talbot (University of Liverpool), introduced me a few years ago to the life and works of the little-known violinist and composer Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli (died 1752), many of whose sonatas I have now had the pleasure of performing, at another MECB conference. And so I was particularly pleased to hear another captivating paper from him, this time on the life and works of Francesco Barsanti, with particular emphasis on his contributions to the dissemination of 'national' song through arrangements of French, English, Scottish and even Sephardic songs. Arguably one of the most important Italian immigrant musicians to take up permanent residence in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century, Barsanti appears to have had a low public profile, though he attracted many loyal patrons who supported his diverse published collections. Talbot showed how Barsanti's contribution to the cult of 'national' music went beyond his collection of *Old Scots Tunes* and tied in with his interest in the music of earlier centuries, as made plain by his membership in the Madrigal Society. This European theme was continued in the penultimate paper by Ellen Moerman (London), who provided a fascinating exploration of the world of eighteenth-century translators, in particular their impact on public perception of treatises and other books on the theory and practice of music. Her paper provoked a lively debate from the audience. The final paper of the day was 'The Shared Rhetoric of Handel and Eighteenth-Century Landscape Gardening' by John Bowker (Carnforth). Beginning with an interesting examination of Barack Obama's inauguration speech, Bowker argued that rhetorical devices were 'a crucial resource for *any* discipline which made a presentation to an audience' in the eighteenth century. His paper sought to illustrate this by highlighting the appearance of similar rhetorical devices in Handel arias and eighteenth-century British landscape gardening. Though based on a small selection of examples, Bowker's paper clearly held potential for expansion into a larger exploration of this fascinating subject.

AMANDA BABINGTON
<ababington@hotmail.com>

doi:10.1017/S1478570615000263

MUSICAL IMPROVISATION IN THE AGE OF BEETHOVEN AND 'OPEN' FORMS
FONDAZIONE GIORGIO CINI, ISOLA DI SAN GIORGIO MAGGIORE, VENICE, 28–29 NOVEMBER 2014

The multi-dimensional topic of improvisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been explored in various recent publications and international conferences. For example, the proceedings of the conference L'improvvisazione nella musica occidentale del Settecento all'Ottocento, held at La Spezia in 2010, were published as *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), edited by Rudolf Rasch. Rasch (Universiteit Utrecht) was one of several participants

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570615000263 Published online by Cambridge University Press

at La Spezia who reappeared in Venice for the third in a series of conferences on improvisation, organized like the previous two by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. The first two (November 2012, 2013) dealt with different eras. 'Musical Improvisation in the Age of Beethoven', held over two days, brought together scholars of varying provenance, from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The first day of papers was followed by an evening recital from Mozart scholar and fortepianist John Irving (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance) and violinist Davide Amodio. Scott Burnham (Princeton University), scheduled to speak on the second day, was absent, but a 'draft outline' of his paper was read by William Caplin (McGill University) and distributed as a handout. In the face of an unreliable broadband connection, Elaine Sisman (Columbia University) read her paper over Skype and participated frequently in the other sessions.

Despite the topical groupings implied by the four session titles ('Theory of Improvisation', 'From Improvisation to Composition: "Open" Forms', 'Improvisations Involving Instruments and Voice' and 'Improvisational Elements in "Closed" Forms'), the papers from all sessions tended to coalesce around certain recurrent themes, reminding one of Rasch's description of improvisation as 'a key concept with manifold ramifications' (*Beyond Notes*, x). This close interlocking of topics did create difficulties for later speakers: Pieter Bergé (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), who spoke last, substituted his original subject of Carl Czerny's *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, Op. 200, with Schubert's Fantasy in C minor, D48 (1813), for piano four hands, since the Czerny treatise had already figured extensively in earlier presentations.

In his introduction to Session 3 Rasch eloquently summarized the self-evident problems of studying improvisation in the pre-recording era. He also highlighted the paradox between the increasing need, in the early nineteenth century, for live improvisations to conform to 'compositional' ideals of logic and coherence (as espoused in Johann Nepomuk Hummel's *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1828)) and the expectation that written compositions with titles like 'prelude', 'fantasia' and 'impromptu' would retain their associations with improvisation. Many of the papers confronted the problem of locating and defining improvisatory elements in compositions whose titles may or may not connote improvisation. The first two papers of Session 1 explored the impact of the rise of formal theory on improvisational practice (and implicitly also on types of composition infused with 'improvisatory' characteristics). Utilizing reviews, letters and biographies, Angela Carone (Università di Pavia and Fondazione Giorgio Cini) demonstrated the frequent fidelity of improvisations to traditional formal principles. She cited a contemporary review commending Hummel's ability, in his improvisations, to develop a single theme 'in all its facets and formulas, without making a patchwork', whilst sustaining spontaneity and 'daring' (*Le Globe*, 21 March 1830, 139).

Jan Philipp Sprick (Universität Rostock) considered the question of form in improvisational practice with reference to treatises dating from 1800 to 1840. His analytical examples included a multi-sectional fantasia by Czerny that demonstrated the same kind of 'obsessive' motivic continuity seen in the fantasias of Jan Ladislav Dussek (including Op. 76 in F minor) and Hummel. More than one question session considered the suspicions about prior preparation provoked by the 'well-made' improvisations of contemporary performers like Ignaz Moscheles (see Mark Kroll, *Ignaz Moscheles and the Changing World of Musical Europe* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 165). Could the tradition, allegedly invented by Hummel, of performers taking themes from audience members as subjects for improvisation have represented a public refutation of such charges?

The relationship to improvisational practice of works with titles like 'fantasia', 'capriccio', 'impromptu', 'bagatelle' and 'prelude' was explored by Marco Targa (Università di Torino), who established certain common principles of formal construction. Unsurprisingly, 'fantasia' as title and as topic provided the focus for many papers and intervening discussions. My own paper (Rohan Stewart-MacDonald (Stratford-upon Avon)), on Hummel's fantasias, was predicated on the distinction between works entitled 'fantasia' in which 'improvisational' elements are infrequent or absent and those in which, following Leonard Ratner, the 'fantasia topic' infiltrates and animates, often fitfully and unpredictably. Hummel's Fantasia in E flat major, Op. 18, was repeatedly discussed (including in the coffee and lunch breaks) as a work of apparently

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570615000263 Published online by Cambridge University Press

inconsistent priorities. It begins by upholding motivic continuity of the kind identified in the composer's live improvisations and advocated in his treatise (often rather less evident in his sonatas, concertos and chamber works), only to become progressively more rhapsodic and formally elusive later on; the piece even ends in G major rather than the tonic key. Continuing the 'topical' approach, Sisman considered Haydn's Andante with Variations in F minor, HXVII:6, with reference to a contemporary review that likened the composition to a 'free fantasia'. Sisman identified topics like the 'elegiac hymn' mode underlying the andante theme, tracing equivalents in works by Schubert and Moscheles; bizarrely, but fascinatingly, she also traced imitations of the call of the quail in the trills and fast arpeggiations of the more quixotic major-key theme, as also evoked in Friedrich Kalkbrenner's Sonata in F minor, Op. 56, dedicated to Haydn.

Several papers explored the infusion of eighteenth-century forms by the spirit and substance of improvisation. Burnham alighted on the concerto cadenza as an obvious 'locus of improvisation'. He construed the cadential $^6_4$ as an 'antepenultimate phenomenon' preceding the 'penultimate' (the dominant). He described the 'functional antepenultimate harmony' as 'a site of elaboration, of fantasy, a way of keeping the music in flight before touching down at the next big cadence'. In the full version of his paper Burnham would presumably have surveyed a range of approaches to this 'antepenultimate space'; the absence of much analytical detail from the draft outline was therefore tantalizing and inevitably made his argument harder to follow. The question session took up the potential implications for Burnham's argument of sizeable cadenzas that occur elsewhere in the structure, or that are initiated with a harmony other than the dominant $^6_4$: one contemporary example that was cited in the question session is the first movement of Ferdinand Ries's Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 132 ('Abschieds-Concert von England', 1823), whose cadenza interrupts the third ritornello, early in the recapitulatory process. The cadenza begins on a diminished seventh to IV, and the cadential trill eventually resolves into the major subdominant, followed by a short link back to the tonic (major). In a different session Caplin surveyed a series of compositions structurally deformed by 'improvisatory' elements. He defined four techniques of deformation: omission of an 'expected function', substitution of an expected passage by a different one, obscuring of a passage's formal functionality, and a passage that 'produces only an incipient sense of its formal function'. His examples ranged over a variety of composers and genres, and in the question session there was renewed debate about Hummel's Fantasia Op. 18 and its receptiveness to Caplin's approach.

The conference's potential piano-centricity was averted by papers on violin music (by Catherine Coppola (Hunter College, City University New York)) and the improvisation of ornamentation within the bel canto tradition. Giorgio Pagannone (Università di Chieti e Pescara) and Torsten Mario Augenstein (Universität Münster) closely compared the melodic lines of operatic arias as originally composed and as embellished by various singers, with evidence drawn from singing treatises, notebooks and other performance materials. Particularly informative was Pagannone's overview of different versions of the flute/vocal cadenza in the mad scene of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, recalling Naomi Matsumoto's more extended treatment of the topic at La Spezia; the latter was published as 'Manacled Freedom: Nineteenth-Century Vocal Improvisation and the Flute-Accompanied Cadenza in Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*' (*Beyond Notes*, 295–316). Pagannone's handout reproduced part of Matsumoto's 'Table 2', which compares numerous versions of the flute cadenza from the nineteenth century onwards (*Beyond Notes*, 310–311). A topic potentially arising from the Pagannone and Augenstein papers, but not explored in any of the other contributions, was the evocation of bel-canto improvised ornamentation in instrumental compositions – by Beethoven and many others. Laure Schnapper has recently hypothesized that the notated cadenzas and melodic ornaments in Henri Herz's operatic variations represent virtual transcriptions of specific singers' public improvisations; see *Henri Herz, magnat du piano: la vie musicale en France au XIXe siècle (1815–1870)* (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2011), 136–141.

The topic of improvisation and pedagogy was addressed by Giorgio Sanguinetti (Università di Roma Tor Vergata), who located partimento schemata in works like Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15. Sanguinetti's documentary foundation was the extensive collection of Neopolitan partimenti in Alexandre-Étienne Choron's *Principes de composition des écoles d'Italie* (Paris: Le Duc, 1808). This pedagogical work was

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570615000263 Published online by Cambridge University Press

issued in instalments, and Beethoven was one of many subscribers. Sanguinetti hypothesized, intriguingly, that traces of partimento schemata become more overt in Beethoven's later music, as 'topics' coexisting with other, more explicit archaisms. Coppola's consideration of various turn-of-century violin capriccios and preludes included compositions written purely for teaching purposes, but also examined cases where the connection to improvisation transcended a purely didactic function.

Coppola (expertly supported by violinist Lucy Morganstern) was one of several speakers to include live illustrations. These were amply supplemented by the violin and fortepiano recital by Irving and Amodio, whose programme interposed composed works (Mozart's Violin Sonata in E minor, K304, and Beethoven's Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 12 No. 1) with transcriptions by Antonio Salieri and improvisations from the two players, inspired by the collection *L'Art d'inventer à l'improviste des Fantasies et Cadences pour le Violon* by Bartolomeo Campagnoli (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1812). The experience would have been enhanced further if the performers had explained their approach to the task of improvising as a duo; presumably, some prior planning and preparation was required!

Improvisation in the pre-recording era will inevitably remain a topic with an invisible centre: we cannot hear what singers and instrumentalists actually improvised at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, Neal Peres Da Costa's *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), sampling the very earliest recordings, illuminates the front end of performing traditions dating back to the era of Beethoven and even earlier, thereby providing further, albeit indirect, perspectives on the subject; and essential substitutes for the live experience are provided by the eyewitness accounts of contemporary improvisations that have emerged from the recent book-length studies of Moscheles and Herz cited above, and also Mark Kroll's *Johann Nepomuk Hummel: A Musician's Life and World* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2007). Many of the central themes of those books were continued by this excellently organized conference, the publication of whose proceedings is planned for the coming year.

ROHAN H. STEWART-MACDONALD
<rohan.stewart-macdonald@cantab.net>

doi:10.1017/S1478570615000275

LE STAGIONI DI JOMMELLI: CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE NEL TERZO CENTENARIO DELLA NASCITA DI NICCOLÒ JOMMELLI
AVERSA AND NAPLES, 5–7 DECEMBER 2014

In 1915, in the midst of war, a twenty-nine-year-old scholar by the name of Margherita Berio published an article that deplored the total lack of attention devoted to Niccolò Jommelli (1714–1774) on the bicentennial of his birth, the year before. 'No one,' Berio complained, 'not even before the flogging war swept away in its own horror lives, things, memories – no one, I believe, has broken the silence around Jommelli' ('Un centenario silenzioso: Nicola Jommelli', *Rivista musicale italiana* 22/1 (1915), 105). Berio was hopeful, however, stating that 'an authentic glory of our [Italian] art' had perhaps been 'locked up, yet not suffocated' by forgetfulness.

Although the name and legacy of Jommelli have still not fully recovered from oblivion, the future looks brighter than ever for the spearhead of mid-eighteenth-century opera seria. Not only are his operas being mounted again (most recently *Fetonte* in Schwetzingen, 2014, and *Il Vologeso* in Stuttgart, 2015), but scholarly interest in Jommelli's works has also seen a remarkable surge in recent years, with conferences being held in Reggio Calabria (2011) and Queluz (2014). Contributing to this vogue, Paologiovanni Maione and Francesco Cotticelli of the Seconda Università degli Studi di Napoli (SUN) teamed up with Naples's early-music centre, the Fondazione Pietà de' Turchini (FPT), to organize a three-day event entitled 'Le stagioni di Jommelli' (The Seasons of Jommelli).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570615000263 Published online by Cambridge University Press