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Daring to Perform

Intervening

Jon McKenzie's *Perform or Else* needs no introduction from me. It is more than capable of performing its own place in the world, of inhabiting its own presence, and in due course of enacting its place in the longer history of human ecological intervention. For that is its primary achievement: intervention. Not just a historical account of the terms, discourses, and practices of performance—though also that. Not just a philosophical argument about the ways in which contemporary life, human and other than human, accounts for itself and projects itself onto its shared planetary future—though also that. Not just a performative narrative in which the staged experience of reading it and following the multimedia evolution of its literary and visual materials is genuinely a part of understanding its so-called content—though also that. *Perform or Else* is an inhuman admixture of all these things and much more than merely the latest advance in the discipline of Performance Studies.

I propose, instead, to explore the way in which McKenzie's intervention into performance—which includes, in various ways, Cultural Performance, Organisational Performance, Technological Performance, Performance Studies, Performativity, Global Performance, and his own neologism "Perfumance" (McKenzie 2001, 203)—can be used to provide insights into a much narrower and self-absorbed domain, namely the performance of notated western classical music. My examples, both musical and discursive, come from the music of Igor Stravinsky, a figure who remains as influential today as ever and whose ideals continue to exert an iron-clad impact on how many musicians live. I focus on Stravinsky because his ideals continue to influence the ways in which classical music is performed, even when it is music far removed from his own aesthetic and musical language; indeed, it remains fair to say that the discourse of western classical music performance is in large part a Stravinskyian discourse. I do not claim in this essay that my remarks have relevance to non-western, non-classical, and experimental musics; McKenzie's project speaks to them, but that requires a separate essay.

This essay attempts to read the Stravinskyian discourse of music performance in McKenzian terms: as a challenge. What is this challenge? For McKenzie, it is the challenge to "**Perform —or else**", and this challenge is "the order word of the performance stratum" (190,

emphasis in original). The consistent hyphen—and the curious lack of an exclamation mark driving home the point that an imperative is being launched at the performer! —indicates what is at stake, namely what it is like to drift between two world-enacting paradigms, which McKenzie terms discipline and performance. The drift away from discipline and towards performance is always already accomplished and unfinished: accomplished in the historical sense that since 1968 (though gearing up before that), there have been global movements towards reconfiguring what agents do, how they actively intervene in the contemporary scene, and how worldly action may activate overlaps between and enhancements of the political, ethical, and aesthetic registers of our mutual co-existence, not to mention our ecological sharing of the planet; unfinished in the epistemic sense that the continual ecological re-positioning of public activity not just through but as performance continues to redefine, contradict, retheorise, deconstruct, and in general, challenge itself. The challenge is thus to challenge forth into the world: to enact this world as a performer, to cause transformations to happen, and to be part of the transformations.

This is where performativity surges into the frame, both positively and negatively: positively in terms of performance as resistance; negatively in terms of performance as normative. McKenzie's breakthrough is to configure performance's challenge as beyond positive and negative (though, as is clear below, the discourse of western classical instrumental music pedagogy has yet to acknowledge this lesson). The genealogy of this performative upsurge includes the emergence of a new world order driven forward less by discipline and more by performance, the latter being an "*onto-historical formation of power and knowledge*" (18, emphasis in original). At the start of his rehearsal, McKenzie relays the histories and dynamics of three types of performance, each of which is shot through with performativity in a different way. He labels these cultural performance, organisational performance, and technological performance, and shows how they are intimately interwoven—non-fused yet undivided. Cultural performance is where the performance of Stravinsky's music is situated, and it is, therefore, the focus of this essay. However, the colourful theatrical history of cultural performance will be bracketed simply because music's engagement with developments in anthropological thought and continental philosophy has taken a different route from the other performing arts over the last half-century.

This essay suggests how elements of all three types of performance, plus their respective evaluative mechanisms (efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness), can be read in rehearsal within the nominally narrow domain of performance where the performer's evolving relationship with the musical work is situated. In order, then, to read music performance with McKenzian tools, this essay sets out from McKenzie's claim that his project is to "rehearse a general theory of performance" (4). I suggest below that this is where discourse about classical music performance generally heads: towards performance. The level of generality at which music discourse operates is understandably narrower than McKenzie's project, and while reaching deep into performers' bodies, it generally does not seek to embed its performer and her performances into wider discursive frameworks—its interventions into the performer's life and its inscriptions onto her body operate more locally. This said, though, there is much within music discourse that deserves to be read more broadly than its agents (teachers, students, professionals) usually need, and this essay contributes to that task.

To read music performance through the sprawling lecture machine uncovered by McKenzie, and to imply as I do below that Stravinsky's wartime Norton lectures at Harvard

constitute a similar—if more stentorian—lecture machine, is not to criticise the local efficacy of music discourse as it is conventionally configured in instrumental pedagogy. Indeed, it may be a slight caricature of pedagogy to describe it as a Stravinskyian undertaking, since everybody—even Stravinsky—knows that music is, and has always been, expressive. However, framing instrumental pedagogy as broadly Stravinskyian is a useful starting point for unpacking its longstanding dynamics. For although pedagogy has justifiably subjected the infamous Stravinskyian anti-expression rhetoric to numerous dialectical therapies, pedagogy remains pretty much faithfully subscribed to Stravinskyian ideals of 'execution' and 'interpretation', and only mildly toned down from his somewhat non-negotiable public rhetoric. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It may simply be because, given the composer's iconic status, Stravinsky's ideals have become Stravinskyian ideals, and the latter have come to resonate paradigmatically across much of the Western literate tradition, including across the historical development of instrumental pedagogy into a thriving business enterprise. In any case, Stravinsky and his ideals hardly have—or had—a monopoly on playing accurately and stylishly.

Disciplining

Witnessing the Stravinskyian lecture machine at work requires an initial step back into the basic dynamics of instrumental pedagogy. This is done here in broadly McKenzian terms, beginning with the following claim: the disciplinary exercises relevant for learning a musical work do not disappear when the work has nominally been learned and when performer has walked on stage and in theory put pedagogy behind them; rather, they ripen and become properly useful prompts for what the performer has agreed to do. At this point, having walked on stage, the performer might begin to realise the extent to which (note the tense) the relevant disciplinary exercises might have started to become properly useful to her actions: they have ripened, become fruitful inscriptions onto her body. This is the way in which music performance becomes performative.

What is meant by the terms 'disciplinary exercise' and 'ripen'? Ripen is defined in the next section. Here is a working definition of disciplinary exercise: all effortful activities that help the performer to come to terms with what the work requires for its performance. The relevant activities discipline the body, condition its reflexes, and train its mind for all that might happen on stage. They include the following: being able physically to execute embodied actions that result in the required sounds (including ergonomically efficient fingering, breathing, arm control, etc.); understanding expressive, stylistic, and structural aspects of the work (pacing and balancing different voices and different passages); a willingness to engage in dialogue with other interested parties about the music (friends, teachers, listeners, critics, writers, media producers, recordings—such as the one by the composer's friend Beveridge Webster); and so on. The term disciplinary exercise is used here, rather than the simpler commonplace 'practice', to emphasise the discipline produced by the activity (McKenzie discusses Foucault here) and the expenditure of energy required of the performer. Disciplinary exercises turn a person into a performer. At issue is how the performer works through these disciplinary exercises in such a way that, proverbially, 'Practice makes Perfect.'

Once the performer has agreed formally to perform the solo piano version of Stravinsky's *Circus Polka* (1942) on a set date, the relevant disciplinary exercises have effectively been determined and will hold for the duration of her engagement with the concert: while

practising before the event, while on stage in culmination of the contract, and while she debriefs afterwards and assimilates the learning involved in the process. Following the Stravinskyian terms of the performance contract, disciplinary exercises are specified that, if worked through appropriately and sufficiently thoroughly, will help the performer to prepare a performance that is clearly recognisable as the *Circus Polka* and not as a different piece—or indeed as no recognisable piece at all. These predetermined disciplinary exercises are also designed to train the performer to perform the *Circus Polka* in a particular Stravinskyian way: so that it sounds like Stravinsky rather than Poulenc, so that it sounds Neoclassical rather than classical, so that it presents a critical angle on tonal language rather than unwittingly furthering it, and so on.

These two *Ur*-intentions of performing—so that the music is recognisably this piece and no other, and so that the sound is stylistically appropriate—function legally and aesthetically. Following this brief, the performer is required to submit herself to a veritable cornucopia of disciplinary exercises that will help her achieve the required quality and standard of performance, on the basis that "[t]he idea of execution implies the strict putting into effect of an explicit will that contains nothing beyond what it specifically commands" (Stravinsky 1947, 122). These "commands" are embodied in disciplinary exercises that include the following: attaining enough technical facility at the instrument with her fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders, waist, and body to manage the rhythmic and polyphonic textures; assessing the historical contexts of the work (first as the music for a ballet, secondarily as a concert work); working out a way of balancing the original material and borrowed material (quotations of Schubert's *Marche Militaire*) so that the parody is clear; considering tempo choice, given that although this is no longer an orchestral work, passages such as bars 152-159 are still notated like an orchestral reduction (decisions about textural management might be made before performance); planning a dynamic profile for the performance that allows the music's shape to be clearly projected; reflecting on how the *Circus Polka* fits into the concert programme as a whole (if it had been planned as an encore, its musical profile would be different).

The disciplinary exercises in the above paragraph are not the only exercises, of course, and the statements above are simplistic summaries that are not usually phrased in such black-and-white terms during conversations between teachers and pupils, or when the performer takes a break and thinks aloud to herself about what she is doing in the practice studio. Some coffee table books, aiming for a readership broader than just working performers, tend to incorporate literary techniques (metaphor, metonymy, storytelling, anecdotes and so on) into their texts, and many teachers demonstrate at the instrument to the same end. Each of these pedagogical genres is less a means of avoidance than a means of glossing an essential directive about what the performer must do that is difficult to put into linguistic propositions. After all, some disciplinary exercises are phrased implicitly, others explicitly: the former could be phrased by saying that the *marcato* markings in bar 27 and bar 30 need an appropriate dynamic and weight; or that the contrasting accents in bar 33 and bar 35 (the first *subito forte*, the second *fortissimo*) need a Stravinskyian articulation, not the delicate bell-like articulation that has become associated with a Debussyian aesthetic. The latter exercise could be phrased thus: "Don't give too much to the poco *sforzando* in bar 46, as you'll need something in reserve for the *subito forte* passage that follows it." Both ways of phrasing disciplinary exercises (implicit, explicit) have psychological and social registers in addition to their physical embodiment. By such means, teachers, along with the managers of music discourse more widely (international performers giving masterclasses,

radio pundits interviewing an ensemble about its latest recording, and so on), assert themselves as the approved role models for the performer as she comes gradually into the orbit of *Circus Polka*. Even though most managers are less direct than Stravinsky, for whom interpretations are "criminal assaults" on music (125), the same managers are still often forthright about the nature of the performer's individual scope for decision making.

The performer's pedagogical activity is, then, literally managed by disciplinary exercises, by the process of working through these exercises and coming to terms with what the music requires for its performance both physically and psychologically. It is worth noting, moreover, that the bipartite ideology that performing *Circus Polka* should, first, be a matter of recognisably intentional actions and, secondly, be a matter of maintaining a recognisably repeatable relation to the work, is an ideology that requires not just monitoring but measuring and evaluation (the degree to which elements of performance can be adequately described as 'intentional' requires a separate essay and is irrelevant to this essay's main argument). Measurement of performance success, of the extent to which the performer has worked through the correct disciplinary exercises in the correct manner to the correct extent and correctly demonstrates this in her sound, is done according to quality control protocols that the community of musically interested parties has agreed (proposed by the managers, seconded by music lovers; of course, in practice these two cohorts share membership). This regime of measurement and evaluation is a regime of testing that shadows the performer's every activity; indeed, it defines what she does precisely as 'educational progress' and not as 'artistic evolution'. Evaluation takes many forms: these range from mid-year technical tests to end-of-year recitals; from etude tests to concerto movements with the orchestra played on a second piano; from playing to other students in the teacher's class to dressing up to perform in a visiting musician's public masterclass; from recording herself on her iPhone and listening back to it on the train to uploading that snippet of the piece to her YouTube channel and waiting to see how it fares with her followers; from writing a blog about her engagement with the work to being interviewed prior to the concert by the venue manager in a pre-concert event for ticket holders; and so on.

Such monitoring and testing normally is normally holistic, in the sense that while it is unusual for managers to praise a performance on the basis of a single component ("Your off-beat right-hand articulation starting in bar 33 *on its own* made your performance great"), deploying the same statement as a criticism ("made your performance problematic") is used when the performer still needs to practice the passage. Monitoring and testing are also normally completed with feedback for the performer that ensures her continued compliance, on the basis that, given that "[t]he first condition that must be fulfilled by anyone who aspires to the imposing title of interpreter, is that he [*sic*] be first of all a flawless executant" (127), it is only fair that "flawless" be not just defined in the abstract but also described in concrete situations.

By these and other mechanisms, the managers of music discourse come to exert their pedagogical authority over the performer and ensure that she remains on the straight and narrow for the period of her engagement with *Circus Polka*. If this way of describing the managers' interventions seems unduly negative, it is worth noting that the term 'manager' has positive and negative connotations; managers keep chaos at bay, but also determine what it is that should keep the chaos out. Another way of putting this might be to acknowledge that the performer is not the only person responsible for the success of the

performance of *Circus Polka*, even if it is her own body onto which the various gestures and physical actions need to be inscribed; performance is socially distributed. The wider issue about the authority of positive and negative interventions into the performer's learning concerns musical law, that which binds the performer to the music, the music to the performer, and the performance to its legal and aesthetic contracts; that which lies beneath the raft of pre-determinations and post-judgements made by each of the numerous parties with a vested interest in what the performer does. Stravinsky says of the performer that "[t]he secret of perfection lies above all in his [*sic*] consciousness of the law imposed upon him [*sic*] by the work he [*sic*] is performing" (127). It seems fair to say that, even if the notion of laws being imposed upon the performer's body might end up creating the potential for all sorts of social-psychological difficulties (given that most performers are driven by similarly single-minded notions of freely expressing their own artistic identity), nevertheless there is something useful in this notion of law that relates to the disciplinary exercises to which the performer submits herself: whether her "translation into sound of his [*sic*] musical part [is done] willingly or grudgingly" (124), it must be done.

This said, it is worth pausing to consider the function of disciplinary exercises in relation to the performer's body, since without the inscription onto her body there is no performance. Recall that although disciplinary exercises generally underdetermine how the performer might get physically from the seven-bar metrically ambiguous transition from the opening section into the second more stable E major section, navigating across the notated *sforzandi* and accents, her body still needs to consider what physical actions might best ensure that the musical shape of this passage is recognisable to the audience. Even if the term 'inscription' is avoided as being too extreme or as perhaps focussing too much on the physiological register of pedagogy, the function of disciplinary exercises nevertheless needs to be phrased in terms of, say, control, surveillance, monitoring, measurement, or evaluation. Without evaluation the music discourse within which Stravinsky's *Circus Polka* is situated would collapse in a chaotic mess, in a free-for-all that permitted of no meaningful comparisons and praise of performers and their performances. It is a question of balance, of course. What is sometimes called 'corrective teaching' supervises the performer's evolution of an ergonomic technique ('ergonomic technique' means in this context a transferable skill that can be deployed in other pieces and re-used at a later date). This mode of teaching limits the performer's free play to a quantitatively small role but allows qualitatively large freedoms, and it measures everything in a predetermined manner, and revises everything that fails to measure up—or, *in extremis*, rejects it. Such correcting teaching embodies an essential authority with which performers are allowed to negotiate but not to disagree, at least during the early stages of pedagogical engagement.

Such teaching is not always explicit about how it monitors the performer's working through of disciplinary exercises. Nevertheless, its pedagogical work is not abstract, but forcefully and deliberately concrete and physical, directing the performer's embodied development, allowing her to shift gradually from reactive to passive modes of engagement as the concert approaches. Given both the physical inscription of disciplinary exercises onto the performer's body and the role that the managers of music discourse play in this pedagogical process (particularly instrumental teachers), it is worth noting one common aspect of the performer's psyche that arises inside the practice studio. This is her hesitation about resisting the raft of disciplinary exercises to which she submits herself, not to mention the various agendas imposing themselves on her attention from an early stage in the learning process. These agendas, broadly consonant with one another, range from a parent's loving

"Do your best!" to a teacher's supportive "Good luck, and remember the voicing in bar 98!" to a critic's imagined "Make sure the witty Schubert quotes stand out, like in Markevitch's 1965 recording with the LSO!" to an audience member's anticipatory "Make me smile!" It is perfectly reasonable that the performer hesitates about resisting, let alone rejecting, or even merely modifying, disciplinary exercises: even though these disciplinary exercises direct the performer carefully on the quickest and most effective route towards recognition of professional status, they are unforgiving and unavoidable. The performer also submits herself to a long and concentrated timetable of practicing *Circus Polka*, during every moment of which she is required to maintain her underlying projection towards the eventual public performance. Understandably, then, throwing off the regime of disciplinary exercises happens infrequently—and perhaps rightly so: the risk of public failure, and, more radically, of unscripted performance belongs to different more 'experimental' performance traditions. Stravinsky himself offered some comforting *bons mots* about such hesitation, mostly hidden behind blunter rhetoric about the importance of doing nothing more than 'executing' the score: to wit, "my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of operation and the more I surround myself with obstacles [read: disciplinary exercises]" (65). Submission to disciplinary exercises is comforting and protective on many levels, and not to be knocked.

Before the next section of this essay, it is worth clarifying briefly what is meant by "managers" in the descriptive phenomenology sketched above. I have been saying that what counts as recognition is determined by the managers of music discourse, and that it is these managers who monitor the performer's activity and process the subscriptions of the self-selecting community of all those musically interested parties who wish music performance to measure up to its pre-determined standards (from music lovers all the way to music critics). These managers comprise a bunch of "diverse readers and scanners" (McKenzie 2001, 22) who read, scan, and assimilate performances in order expand the net of music discourse ever wider. While McKenzie talks about "executives" as serving a similar function with respect to the three types of performance (organisational performance especially), and even at one point of "executive execution" (10), I prefer to stick with the term "managers." This is because it affords me a way of distinguishing between the performances of performers (in the conventional sense: the pianist playing *Circus Polka*) and the performances of the managers. The latter's activities are certainly performances, but they are activities that are also configured vicariously in relation to their musical agents, while those agents are on a folk-psychological trajectory that is ultimately away from "being subject" and towards "being a subject".

At any rate, thus is the Stravinskyian performance of Stravinsky's *Circus Polka* set up by the managers of music discourse. Disciplinary exercises are predetermined and offloaded onto the performer for her to work through while she is learning the work. Evaluations about the success of her performing are made by managers on this basis. The next section moves towards a domain that is, it is hoped, more pragmatic and slightly less Stravinskyian: namely, the performer's embodied presence on stage and the way in which her body is central to the ripening of disciplinary exercises. The focus therefore turns from private practice to live performance.

Ripening

This section considers the ripening of disciplinary exercises on stage. The aim is both to reflect on McKenzie's appropriation of Nietzsche's term, and, somewhat more narrowly, to suggest a viable understanding of the process of ripening that might be useful to all performers beyond its immediate function as an off-the-cuff metaphor for a black box deep within Arrau's pianistic body. At issue is the complex interweaving of mind and body, the materialist supervenience of the former onto the latter (notwithstanding certain aspects of aesthetic discourse), and the physical reality of performance: the fact that, proverbially, 'The proof is in the pudding'. Ripening is inscribed by McKenzie in different registers; with respect to Perfumance in particular, he defines it as "the citational mist of any and all performances. […] the incessant (dis)embodying-(mis)naming of performance. […] the becoming-mutational of normative forces, the becoming-normative of mutant forces" (203). How does this becoming-mutational and becoming-normative lecture the performer as she prepares to perform Stravinsky's music?

It is a longstanding and still reasonable assumption of conventional instrumental pedagogy that its core business (summarised in Stravinskyian terms in the previous section) can be transacted between teachers and pupils in venues ranging from the practice studio to the concert hall, and through various forms of dialogue ranging from full privacy through to quasi-public settings in front of other teachers and/or other pupils. This section considers what happens to this assumption when the performer comes to communicate to the audience in public. It is suggested, not that the assumption is mistaken, but rather that the epistemic drift from practising to performing, from learning to playing, from green room to stage, from private to public, all of which are threshold activities, causes the performer to change her relationship to the managed pedagogical activities described above. More specifically, she will have to take her leave of Stravinsky, if not of his *Circus Polka*. Of interest in this section is how, during live performance, the performer comes to expend energy that contributes towards the maintenance of the aesthetic event for which she is the prime responsible agent, over and above her multifarious preparatory activities prior to the concert (physical stretches on the floor, technical warm-ups such as scales, a last-minute run-through of the tricky passage at the end, and so on). The aesthetic event of music performance—the embodiment of *Circus Polka* at a specific time and in a specific place—involves a certain type of energetic expenditure and a new, second, assumption about the performer's actions in relation to a projected and maintained liveness. This second assumption requires an understanding of what might be meant by saying that "things should simply ripen". This section moves in two parallel directions, then: first, to undo the Stravinskyian logic underpinning pedagogy (alternatively, to free pedagogy from Stravinsky); secondly, to extrapolate a sense of how ripening works—though this is neither to say that ripening is Stravinskyian or to say that Stravinsky would have endorsed it (he probably wouldn't).

Before proceeding further, it is worth providing the term ripen with a summary definition. Ripening is an epistemic transformation that happens when the indeterminacy resulting from (the combination of) elements of performing pushes the event in one or more unplanned directions. In such moments the performer needs to immediately and suddenly adapt to the changes, this being sometimes no more than a microscopic adjustment of posture, sometimes a quite conscious feeling that, for example, the *ritardando* in bar 14 (the only one in the work) can be more extended than had previously been planned—or that later transitions, such as the ones in bar 108 and bars 152-153, could benefit from similar *ritardandi*. The actual term ripen comes from that part of music discourse that speaks of how performing blossoms, comes into its own, emerges, matures, resonates, and ripens.

McKenzie talks about the "maturing" of practices (183) in relation to their self-articulation and presence in the world. The term ripen is used in this essay because it reeks of natural processes, of the coming into a certain fullness or plenitude, of how a process culminates and reaches its peak (after which point the life in the process begins to fade). On a very general register, the need to "ripen" is identified by Nietzsche (cited in McKenzie 2001: 3). On a music-specific register, to cite one representative example, consider Claudio Arrau's response to a question from Joseph Horowitz about the role of experimentation in interpretation: "If I am in any doubt about the way I play something—whether to make a crescendo, whether to make a ritard—I just let it evolve. When you're working on a piece, such things should simply ripen" (Horowitz 1992, 128). When an event "simply ripens", either between practice and a performance, or in the middle of a performance, or over the course of several performances, quite possibly unbeknownst to the performer, the performer is thereby challenged to be a performer. However, the manner in which she has worked through various disciplinary exercises prior to the concert does not suddenly become redundant or confined to the past; rather, the disciplinary exercises remain present to the performer auratically, in an enveloping "mist" (McKenzie 2001, 3, 201), and their proper transformational function emerges.

The disciplinary exercises to which the performer submits herself seem to be configured as tight, rigid, oppressive, and black-and-white in the manner of their imposition onto the performer's body. The Stravinskyian ideology operates like this, emphasising execution at the expense of interpretation. In this respect it is useful to note McKenzie's emphasis of the fact that, in addition to its artistic register (performance harbours the potential for social critique and resistance), performativity has a normative register (159-165). Disciplinary exercises have a psychological register, some aspects of which are positive and productive, such as the exercises in imagination, intuition, and intensity and the exercises in finger strength, dynamic subtlety, and physical stamina. Disciplinary exercises also have a physiological register attaching the performer to the work and allowing her to shunt back and forth between what the music requires and what she wants to do artistically.

Practising has a sprawling logic, and different disciplinary exercises are relevant in different ways on different days at different stages of the learning process and differently for different performers. Most performers embrace the positive aspects of practice's sprawl and allow their mode of working through disciplinary exercises to remain a little loose and flexible. However the performer manages her time, her goal is to allow the disciplinary exercises to be assimilated into the habitus of her "whole body" (which includes the ears); for even exercises that are nominally targeted at her ears or her left hand (say, the varieties of staccato possible in bar 68 or the wide tessitura in bar 139 respectively), are in fact apprehended by the body as a single unified entity. There is no hand that plays the tenor register chords and the bass line in bar 139 that does so separately from the performer's body, so when the performer feels that her fingers are not doing what they are supposed to do, this is often because they are, simply, acting in consort with 'the rest' of her body and she has not yet found a way of thinking about it holistically.

Nevertheless, it is still useful to talk about the performer as hosting two bodies: these can be labelled heuristically as everyday body and artistic body, offstage body and onstage body, private body and public body, practising body and performing body, and so on. It is not that the everyday body vanishes when she is on stage, but rather that it is overwritten by the artistic body (overwriting as ripening). There is no categorical distinction between

bodies, simply a dynamic movement back and forth between them. The epistemic shift of ripening begins long before the physical shift from everyday body to artistic body when the lights are dimmed, but the shift is never simply over, even within a single performance, for practising never simply vanishes from the horizon of performing, even in the middle of a concert; it retains its auratic presence. Pedagogically speaking, it is therefore unadvisable to configure everyday and artistic bodies too differently, for this makes ripening more difficult, and in any case each performance is also a practice session for the next performance.

There is a general point about the overwriting of the performer's everyday body by her artistic body. This concerns the relationship between the physiological and psychological registers of disciplinary exercises. The performer's artistic body operates with a notion of centre stage that is both physical and symbolic, the important divergence between life and art being that the ripening of the disciplinary exercises initiated by the everyday body in the practice studio is continued by the emergent artistic body in public. Another way of saying this is to say that the manner in which the performer submits herself in the practice room is overwritten by the manner in which she submits herself on stage. This has physical implications for the performer's hosting of her two bodies, primarily in that she is Janus-faced and conflicted (or at the very least hybrid), and therefore responsible for several streams of activity, the interrelationships between which might be complex rather than linear, even indeterminate and distractable. McKenzie writes of organisational performance that its success involves "a series of negotiations, trade-offs, compromises, and sacrifices between different evaluative matrices" (81), and much the same is true of how the performer needs to act with respect to the ripening of her performance of the *Circus Polka*. Working through the relevant disciplinary exercises is a matter of balancing (or at least negotiating) complexity and indeterminacy and of mitigating the centrifugal effects of distraction, the results of this activity being the basis for musical expression.

The performer's working through of the managers' disciplinary exercises is a deeply embodied matter. The effects of the disciplinary exercises are literally written onto her body. This means that if the performer devotes the lion's share of her attention to working through the disciplinary exercises in terms of her everyday body, then she may find it harder to engage *Circus Polka* on more pragmatic terms that focus on dealing with whatever might happen in front of the audience, when her artistic body is working. The body consumes enough of the performer's energy without her having to work through disciplinary exercises twice —first in the practice studio and secondly on stage. Given that performance domains themselves ripen under their own head of steam in relation to what performers do (10), it is only pragmatic to acknowledge that the performer's task is to develop strategies that might allow disciplinary exercises to ripen. It is important for the performer to learn the Stravinsky in such a manner that submitting to the disciplinary exercises can remain pleasurable: no pleasure, no ripening, to put it schematically. Ripening begins while the performer is working through the relevant disciplinary exercises, and it continues—indeed, it evolves—on stage; it is auratic. Certain disciplinary exercises, particularly physical and technical ones, might be early to ripen. Exercises concerned with timbre, sonority, and theatrical gesture, such as those concerning the sparse textures in bar 15 and bar 109, being dependent upon acoustics, might only ripen on stage—and might even need to be adjusted when the audience has entered the space.

Daring

If the previous section seems to worry about whether the performer can develop sustainable ways of connecting her embodied actions on stage with her artistry, of connecting disciplinary exercises in the practice studio with what the public concert requires, of letting pedagogy become auratic rather than empirical, then it should be clear by now that much of this scepticism is merely an unnecessary worry imposed by the managers of music discourse. Their imposition of the essential disciplinary exercises is important, but the performer should understand and accept it as an imposition, as one of the rules of the game. Thus accepted, the performer can drift towards focussing their energy on the more important point: namely, that the essential components of public performances—risk, spontaneity, surprise, indeterminacy, and an edgy potential for failure—arise in the process of the performance events themselves, as a function of what public events are, and in separate trajectories to those prior impositions and pre-judgements determined and monitored by teachers and critics (which sometimes seem to view public performances as mere simulacra of private run-throughs). This means that what the performer needs to take with her from the practice studio, from her working through of the relevant disciplinary exercises, and from her dialogue with teachers and others prior to the concert, is in fact a sense of her own place in the world. Since, not just proverbially, all the world's a stage, this is nothing more and nothing less than the following: *all else being equal, this is what I will do when I come to perform this work*.

This essay has suggested that the management of disciplinary exercises within the pedagogy of music performance needs to be underwritten by the phenomenon of ripening, in order both that a meaningful distinction can be maintained between practice and performance (they are related and joined but are not identical) and that performance can be configured as an aesthetically and culturally significant event. What are the pragmatic implications of this underwriting? What should the performer make of ripening?

While practising *Circus Polka*, the performer needs to tread a careful path in relation to the disciplinary exercises determined and monitored by the managers of music discourse: she needs to assess, accept, and work through the relevant disciplinary exercises, while at the same time daring to seek a path that affords her the possibility that when she walks on stage these same disciplinary exercises will ripen and she will become both the performer that she is legally contracted to be and the performer that she desires artistically. Submitting herself unthinkingly to the disciplinary exercises is not enough, but, equally, it would not be enough to reject these same disciplinary exercises in the mistaken belief that her artistic path will find its own way without help; compromise and dare are the flipsides of pragmatism. The performer's compromise is of a piece with her feeling that her body is coming into its own, and that the performance she is intending to give is neither simply an external intervention onto her body nor the internal obedience of her body, but rather its ripening from practice to performance in the event that approaches. It is a daring proverbial hybrid of 'Only time will tell' and 'There's no time like the present.'

With a final nod to McKenzie's project to "rehearse a general theory of performance", it might be suggested that the performer might consider reconfiguring her activity—both her 'own' actions and the actions fulfilling her submission to the managers' disciplinary exercises—in terms of a dare. A dare that only she can accept. A dare that perhaps differs from the challenge proposed by McKenzie. The actual term dare is far less frequent in

Perform or Else than the term challenge, perhaps because dare is more open-ended and unscripted (less responsible?), while challenge is tied to objects and tasks: daring to perform *per se*, as opposed to rising to the challenge to do something. What McKenzie describes as "the ruse of a general theory" (203) is precisely that: a lit taper burning down from practice to performance, the time running out between practice and performance, the birth of performativity from the spirit of performance, the world's ruse provoking the performer into making her proper intervention, daring her to perform—or else. If this minor speculative history of performing sounds reasonable and feels plausible, then perhaps this is because it unfolds the extraordinary flight plan mapped out by McKenzie in a further dimension. With respect to McKenzie's desire to "speculate on the future of performative resistance" (142), we might end by suggesting that any future resistance of performance will come from daring to perform, from daring to embody the genuine indeterminacy of ecologically sensitive planetary intervention. After Stravinsky, after Cage, after Foucault, Lyotard, and McKenzie, where?

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