

# Digital Editing of Music

a reflection on model and presentation

# Scholarly Music Editions

- Editorial activities that establish the status of a given text
- Sources (written) and their historical and cultural context
- Well-established concept
  - Work
  - Composer

# Work-concept

- Lydia Goehr 1992
  - *“The work-concept began to regulate a practice at a particular point in time*
  - *it is correlated to ideals*
  - *it is a regulative concept.”*
- “accurate notation” (score)
- “compliance to notation” (performance)

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- **Philology** ← (composer)

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- Changes in the work-concept influence editorial practice
- Roman Indegarden (1986)
  - Composer's + performers's *intention*
- James Grier (1996)
  - Score + performing conventions “*at any particular historical moment*”

# Work-concept

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- Roman Indegarden (1986) **Eclecticism**
  - Composer's + performers's *intention*
- James Grier (1996) **Context-based approach (postmodern?)**
  - Score + performing conventions “*at any particular historical moment*”

# Layers of interpretation

- Final receiver: listener
- Main reader: performer – final interpretation of the text
- Notation is not standardized
  - Writing conventions of the time
- Transcription is interpretation
  - Copyists
- Part of the work of the editor is discerning through this layers

# Paper-based Editions

- Limits of paper
  - The edition is for performers
- In some cases the editor is forced to make choices and relegate explanations to introductory material or footnotes
- What is affected
  - Modernization of notation
  - Variants
  - Order of parts, movements

# Digital Editions

- Sperberg-McQueen 1997
  - “There is an infinite set of *facts* related to the work being edited
  - Any edition records a *selection* from the observable and the recoverable portion of this infinite set of facts
  - Each edition provides some specific *presentation* of its selection”

# Digital Editions

- A digital model is a structured *selection of facts* by the editor
  - Transcription, or critically edited text
  - Editorial apparatus
  - Complex, semantically structured content as it would be before making ‘cuts’ to accommodate it on paper

# Examples

- “*Modern transcriptions are careless towards the original*” Feder 1986
- Adaptation of notation
  - Order of parts in the score
  - Piano score: notes on three staves
- The digital model can contain information about the original and an adapted notation

# Examples

- Presence/absence/order of movements in complex works
- “La cabaletta, filologo” – Gosset 2006
  - Verdi’s *Ernani* performance in Milan 1982
  - Muti omits the cabaletta for the bass in the first act finale “Infin che un brando vindice”
  - Probably not Verdi’s, but traditionally performed
  - Reactions from the audience

# Eclecticism?

- A model containing multiple reading paths
- Where is the editor?
- Sutherland 1997: “the selection is still eclectic”
- However
  - “ethical” responsibility towards the reader: editor needs to make clear choices (Parker 1993)

# The model

- Needs an extensible encoding:
  - Transcription of notation that might not be standardized
  - Encoding of editorial activities need guidelines but not fixed standards
  - What to model is dictated by research needs.
- In literature philology, XML is proving to be the community-favourite technology for now (Text Encoding Initiative)
- Music Encoding Initiative?

# The model

- Creating the model is complex
- Alan Galey 2009
  - “There is a need for stable, extensible technologies that enable a range of practice, from the simple to the complex.”
  - “editing is not a task for any one piece of software in the way that a single word processor serves most scholars for writing”
- The “digital editor” needs to become familiar with the technologies involved

# Presentation

- Sperberg-McQueen 1997
  - “Each edition provides some specific *presentation* of its selection”
  - The *presentation* of a *selection* on paper-based editions is limited by the medium
- The digital medium is flexible

# Presentation

- Vetch 2009
  - “The visual and functional design and implementation of web interface for a scholarly digital edition are deserving of greater significance than has previously been the case”
- Web is the publishing medium that is preferred at the moment

# Presentation

- Writing code for the presentation becomes part of the editorial practice
  - Identify the reader's need is a scholarly edition
- Facsimiles of sources are useful tools in a digital edition, especially alongside a “flexible” transcription
  - Where should the transcription stop in diplomatic edition? (Pierazzo 2009)

# Paper vs. Digital – *Don Carlos*

- Grier 1996 reviews Günther's edition of Verdi's *Don Carlos*
- Seven versions identified using Verdi's correspondence
- Aim: identify the several stages of the text
- Provides -on paper- the music for all of them

# Paper vs. Digital – *Don Carlos*

- To avoid repeating notation
- on paper (Günther's solution - gamebook)
  - Complex indices
  - Chronological order of composition
  - “go-to-page” to follow one version
- On digital medium (web)
  - Generated, searchable indices
  - Show / compare the seven versions running code on the model

Metadata

Information about Sources

Information about Editorial Practices

...

Encoded  
text

Paris 1866  
Paris 02/1867

Preludio e Introduzione

...

Paris 03/1867  
Modena 1886

Introduzione (Coro di Cacciatori)

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