Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-century Violin Performance: An Examination of Style in Performance, 1850-1900


Abstract

With most of Western art music, it can be argued that music-making requires performers to interpret a composer's original, notated ideas. Often, an informed and perceptive reading of the score needs to be combined with the inspiration to convey the feelings and emotions intended by the composer. The difficulties inherent in such an undertaking are further heightened when the music was composed several generations ago. In this book, David Milsom argues that in order to convey late 19th-century musical style appropriately, the performer needs to have a grasp of the philosophical orientation of musical thinking at that time. In effect, one must "unlearn" the value systems of the present, in order to assimilate those of the late 19th century. To arrive at a better understanding of performance in this period, the book examines performing style in the German and Franco-Belgian schools of violin playing from c.1850 - c.1900. Milsom explores selected instrumental treatises written by noted players and theorists, together with a number of recorded performances given by celebrated artists in the early years of the 20th century, to review the similarities and differences between theory and practice. An accompanying CD illustrates this relationship.
Twentieth-Century Music Theory and Practice introduces a number of tools for analyzing a wide range of twentieth-century musical styles and genres. It includes discussions of harmony, scales, rhythm, contour, post-tonal music, set theory, the twelve-tone method, and modernism. Recent developments involving atonal voice leading, K-nets, nonlinearity, and neo-Reimannian transformations are also engaged. While many of the theoretical tools for analyzing twentieth century music have been devised to analyze atonal music, they may also provide insight into a much broader array of styles. Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-century Violin Performance. An Examination of Style in Performance, 1850-1900. Author: David Millsom. Publisher: Gower Publishing, Ltd.