

Inter-structures: rethinking continuity in post-1945 piano repertoire

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Background in History & Philosophy of Music. The challenge of delineating complex, discontinuous structures has characterised both the evolution of post-1945 piano music, and the radical theoretical shift towards post-structuralism in contemporary philosophy. While references to music as composed and heard are evident in the writings that constitute this theoretical shift (e.g. Deleuze 1980), the particulars of performance have remained disproportionately underrepresented in post-structuralist discourse. Considerable mileage thus remains to be covered in the study of non-structuralist views on performance practice, both as historical documents, and as emerging paradigms in the philosophy of music.

Background in Music Performance. To interpret post-tonal music one is often faced with a quintessentially practical line of questioning: If structure equals divisibility (Cage, 1949), how can the learning process adapt to compositions that seem to resist fixity and segmentation? Can the structuring of a performance reflect the structure of the music performed, when the latter resists a linear interpretation?

Aims. By exploring the notion of continuity as one of the first challenges brought about by the postwar re-definition of musical structure, we identify concepts and modes of navigation that address the processes and physical details of interpretation as well as unveiling historically resonant appropriations of philosophical terminology and conceptual imagery

Main contribution. This approach synthesizes history, philosophy and performance practice.

Its outlook is practical in that it addresses the small- and large-scale issues of performative continuity. Its scope is historically construed, as it focuses on the redefinition of such concepts as “reading” and “structure” and their implications for compositional and performing practices. Its conceptual basis is philosophically argued, as it employs the tropes and concepts that emerge in post-structuralist thinking and extends their application towards a new framework.

Implications. The proposed set of structural approaches can assist performers as well as musicologists in grappling with complex formations. It can also foster a practical exploration of post-structuralist ideas in music, strengthening the associations between philosophical, musicological and performance studies scholarship. The typology proposed here operates *in between* categories, and in so doing, it proposes *inter*-structures which retain the fluid character of the compositions discussed.

Keywords: continuity, complexity, post-structuralism, Cage, Boulez, Tudor, Ferneyhough, Deleuze.

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