

DISCUSSION

Why do we need to know this?

Performers of all music genres are constantly interpreting the music they are performing in order to communicate the character, atmosphere and emotions of the work to their audience.

Having a thorough and practical understanding of the elements of music and how they work is an essential part of being a performer. In order to make informed decisions about how to achieve an intended expressive outcome, a performer needs to first understand how these elements of music affect the sound.

Also, being aware of the expressive elements of music, and of how they can be manipulated and modified, allows performers to become more connected to the music being performed and adds depth and sophistication to performance. Character and mood are more easily portrayed using this knowledge and this can lead to a more expressive and meaningful performance.

As performers, we need to listen actively to, and learn from, other performers. By focusing on the technical aspects of these elements of music (tone colour, dynamics, blend of music lines) and the interpretive decisions being made by the performer(s), how the

expressive elements are being manipulated in order to achieve a particular expressive outcome) we can begin to understand how these decisions impact the way the character of the work can be communicated to an audience. By understanding how these expressive elements can be manipulated and modified, our own performances will become more expressive and engaging.

For performers crafting their own interpretations of music written before the modern era of recordings, trying to recreate the historical sound of the music – or not – is a big consideration. Historically-informed interpretations aim to remain faithful to the conventions, techniques and musical style of the era in which the music was composed, so that it sounds much as the original audiences would have heard. Features that are commonly manipulated in the pursuit of a historically-informed musical style include tone colour, articulation, phrasing, *portamento*, *agogic* accents, *rubato*, rhythmic choices, bowings and fingerings, tempi, and, of course, ornamentation.

Musical Interpretation

The way in which a performer personalises their performance of a music work.

