

# Student Performance in the Undergraduate Music History Sequence: Current Practices and Suggested Models

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In keeping with musicology's growth of interest in performance, some instructors have attempted to reorient their music history classes to include greater focus on the history of performance and performers.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this theoretical shift does not necessarily catalyze a change in classroom practices, and the history of performance can remain at a distance from performance in the present, especially as it is practiced informally and by students. While the analysis of historical and historically-informed recordings offers a vital way of approaching the issues of performance and performance practice in the classroom, the incorporation of another available resource, the abilities of students, offers a complementary set of possibilities that is often overlooked. Indeed, towards the end of a roundtable article on the subject of "Performance as a Master Narrative in Music History," Steven M. Whiting asks whether "in all this talk of performance, [...] anyone [has] stressed the importance of 'live' music examples as opposed to recordings? That's one benefit of teaching at a conservatory."<sup>2</sup> Neither Whiting nor I would suggest that performances ought to replace recordings. However, whereas the place of recordings in the music history classroom is firmly entrenched, student performances play little to no role in most classes. This article begins by examining the current state of student performances in the introductory music history sequence for music students, supported by a survey of instructors. The central focus of this article, however, is the implementation of student performances. Drawing on my own classroom experiments, I address the practical concerns of integrating student performances into the music history sequence.

1. Daniel Barolsky, Sara Gross Ceballos, Rebecca Plack, and Steven M. Whiting, "Roundtable: Performance as a Master Narrative in Music History," this *Journal* 3 (2012): 77–102.

2. In Barolsky, Gross Ceballos, Plack, and Whiting, "Performance as a Master Narrative," 99.

In recent years, several articles and book chapters have begun to address the pedagogical merits of including a variety of performative and creative activities (more broadly defined) in music history classes.<sup>3</sup> According to this previous scholarship, performative activities can inspire student interest, promote the retention of music-historical knowledge, introduce more active learning into the classroom, develop effective communication, and contribute to learning goals at the course, departmental, and university levels.<sup>4</sup> While the general skills developed through presenting and performing remain constant from presentation to presentation, I will show that one advantage of these activities can be attributed to their instability. Creating a student-centered classroom by making space for performances ensures that the course will never be entirely fixed, as the interests and abilities of students in the class will determine the content to some extent. For instructors who have taught the same course for a number of years, this renewal can be refreshing.

While previous articles suggest specific performative activities and make strong cases for their advantages, they offer less guidance about the practicalities of adopting the practice of student performance in the classroom. This article is directed at those who are interested in the pedagogical possibilities of using student performances in the classroom, but are unsure about how to incorporate them and about the challenges and insights that might arise from their inclusion. I focus on the introductory music history sequence for music students (typically consisting largely of music majors, but also including music minors and, occasionally, non-music students who have petitioned to take the course) because most of the students in these classes will have performance

3. For instance, Erinn Knyt suggests several ingenious improvisatory performance and role-playing activities that can be used to help students master specific forms and styles. James A. Grymes and John Allemeier have chronicled their techniques for incorporating composition and improvisation into the early music classroom. Examining musical performance in the more traditional sense, Sandra Sedman Yang has made a case for the pedagogical value of having students perform repertoire studied in the course. Erinn Knyt, "Student Performance as Pedagogy in the Music History Survey Course," *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy* 2 (2014), James A. Grymes and John Allemeier, "Making Students Make Music: Integrating Composition and Improvisation into the Early Music Classroom," this *Journal* 4 (2014): 231-54, Sandra Sedman Yang, "Singing Gesualdo: Rules of Engagement in the Music History Classroom," this *Journal* 3 (2012): 39-55. Books and book chapters that (often very briefly) make reference to the benefit of student performative activities include: Mary Natvig, "Classroom Activities," in *The Music History Classroom*, ed. James A. Davis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 27; Edward Nowacki, "Lecturing," in *The Music History Classroom*, ed. James A. Davis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 41. Colleen M. Conway and Thomas M. Hogeman, *Teaching Music in Higher Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 110; Douglass Seaton, "Teaching Music History: Principles, Problems, and Proposals," in *Vitalizing Music History Teaching*, ed. James Briscoe (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010), 70.

4. Sandra Sedman Yang devotes thorough attention to the benefits of these activities. Yang, "Singing Gesualdo," 49-51. See also Knyt, "Student Performance as Pedagogy" and Grymes and Allemeier, "Making Students Make Music," 54.

abilities. In addition, though the sequence may vary substantially in scope and duration, it is a standard component of music programs and is commonly required for music students regardless of their concentration. Before turning to methods for the integration of student performances, however, I examine the current state of this practice in the music history sequence for music students in the United States and Canada.

### **Student Performance in the Introductory Music History Sequence: Current Practices**

In order to understand the extent to which student performances are incorporated in the undergraduate music history sequence, as well as the benefits, difficulties, and procedures associated with this practice, I conducted a survey of current music history sequence instructors from institutions across the United States and Canada (I use the term instructor because invitations were sent to individuals regardless of academic status, including professors at all ranks, lecturers, contract lecturers, and adjuncts/sessional lecturers). The ubiquity of this sequence facilitated the surveying of instructors, and eliminated the variable of instructors using different approaches in more widely diverse class types. Of the two hundred instructors invited, seventy-five participated in the anonymous survey.<sup>5</sup> The results demonstrate, firstly, that instructors of music history sequences are aware of the benefits of students performing in front of the class: the respondents who already employ these activities in their classes particularly emphasize that they are an opportunity for practical applications of historical knowledge and make students more interested in the class and the repertoire (see **Table 1** for responses). Despite the recognized value of having students perform for and with their peers, however, over half of respondents reported that they devote no time at all to these activities in their courses. An additional forty percent of respondents allocate one to five percent of their class time to student performances, which, in a three-credit course, could range from twenty minutes to two hours and fifteen minutes over the course of a semester.<sup>6</sup>

5. Respondents teach in a variety of environments: conservatory (1.3%), conservatory or school of music within a teaching-focused university (20%), conservatory or school of music within a comprehensive university (1.3%), conservatory or school of music within a research-focused university (33.3%), department of music in a teaching-focused university (22.7%), department of music in a research-focused university (17.3%), and department of music in a liberal arts college (4.1%).

6. The low figure represents one percent of a thirteen-week course with three fifty-minute classes per week (thirty-two and a half hours total). The high figure represents five percent of a fifteen-week course with one three-hour class per week (forty-five hours total).

**Table 1:** Responses to the question “If you include student musical performances (singing and/or playing instruments in front of the class) in your music history survey, what do you perceive to be the benefits of this activity? (Choose all that apply)”

They are opportunities for practical applications of historical knowledge	87%
They make students more interested in the repertoire	79%
Students enjoy them	68%
They make students more interested in the class	66%
They contribute to the learning goals of the course	63%
They contribute to a student-centered classroom	63%
They convey visual, in addition to aural, information	50%
They promote understanding of the social contexts of music	29%

For the most part, the relatively low adoption rate of student performance in the introductory music history sequence can be attributed to the barriers to incorporating these activities into the course. Unsurprisingly, the leading impediment, cited by fifty-six percent of respondents, is a lack of time (an unforeseen result, however, is that this response does not substantially correlate to the length of the introductory music history sequence at the instructor’s institution: instructors who teach part of a four-semester sequence were just as likely to cite this impediment as those who teach part of a two-semester sequence). Other commonly cited obstacles include a high enrollment in the class (forty-three percent), insufficient or varying musical ability among the students (twenty-three percent) students’ unwillingness to perform in front of the class (seventeen percent), and disruption of the course schedule (eleven percent).<sup>7</sup>

However, sixty-seven percent of respondents are amenable to or enthusiastic about including more student performances in their classes, if only some of the obstacles to including this type of activity could be addressed.<sup>8</sup> In the remainder of this article, I draw on the scholarship of teaching and learning and my own teaching experiences to suggest how these obstacles can be mitigated or eliminated. I begin by describing the central performance assignment in my introductory music history sequence and address how the assessment

7. This data is derived from responses to the question “Are any of the following barriers to students performing in front of the class in your music history survey? (Choose all that apply).”

8. Participants were asked the question “[i]f the barriers to student performance were addressed, would you be interested in including more student performances (playing instruments and/or singing in front of the class) in your music history survey classes?” The respondents who answered “Yes” (25.3%) or “Maybe” (41.3%) were combined to total 66.6%. 12% of respondents did not think that there were any obstacles (“I do not think that there are any barriers to student performance”). Finally, 21.3% of respondents were uninterested in including more student performances (response of “No”).

of student learning can include performances. Next, I suggest possible ways to create an environment that is favorable to student performances. Finally, I reflect on how both specific student performances and the overall experience of including performances in the classroom contributed to my music history sequence courses.

### **Student Performances: Assignment and Evaluation**

A good deal of the performance that takes place in my classroom is improvised or collaborative in nature, and counts for little or no part of the students' course grade. But I also include a more formal performance option that is evaluated. These events—which I call “performance-presentations”—take place throughout the semester and are coordinated with the topics scheduled on the syllabus.<sup>9</sup> They are essentially mini lecture-recitals given by an individual or a small group, and range in length from approximately seven to fifteen minutes (I do not schedule more than one presentation during a class). For the oral presentation component, each person is required to speak for approximately three to five minutes, and the topics are confirmed with me in advance to ensure that they are suitably specific and that I will not duplicate the presentation during the part of the class that I have planned.<sup>10</sup> The option of giving a performance-presentation is included in the course syllabus amongst the brief descriptions of assignments. The notice reads:

PLEASE NOTE: A short performance-presentation (individual or small group) can be substituted for any of the short writing assignments once during the semester. Your proposed topic, repertoire, and date must be approved by me at least one week before the presentation date (your performance-presentation should complement the topic scheduled for that day of class). A limited amount of time will be set aside for these performance-presentations. Sign up early to ensure that you can present.

In my history sequence courses—as the syllabus note above specifies—a performance-presentation can be substituted for one of the short writing assignments. I give four to six of these assignments over the semester, accounting for twenty to thirty percent of a student's final grade, depending on the course. For example, in my current course, the final grade is broken down as follows:

9. In one class of about twenty-five students, rather than dispersing performances throughout the course, I used the format of an end-of-semester class lecture-recital. While this can be a festive way to close the course, many of the benefits that I describe in this article were curtailed by the formal and conclusive nature of the event.

10. This is similar to Yang's “Beyond Gesualdo” assignment. As this assignment is not the focus of Yang's article, she does not provide many details about its implementation. Yang, “Singing Gesualdo,” 54-55.

Short Assignments (4 collected, 3 counted)	20
In-Class Assignments (5 collected, 4 counted)	20
Final Paper Project	35
Preliminary Research Assignment	(5)
Paper Proposal	(5)
Draft and Peer Review	(5)
Final Paper	(20)
Midterm Exam	10
Final Exam	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

I allow the substitution of a performance-presentation for one of these assignments for several reasons. Since my music history sequence courses are writing-intensive (and include other written assignments in addition to these short assignments), I am not concerned about a student producing one fewer writing assignment. In addition, advocates of student-centered (or “learner-centered”) learning argue that there are many benefits, including greater student autonomy and responsibility, to giving students the chance to direct, to a certain extent, their own learning. One of the ways that this can be done is through assignment choice.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, as Yang points out, including performance opportunities cultivates a classroom environment in which multiple and varied approaches to learning are valued, creating opportunities for auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and social learners.<sup>12</sup> In my experience, although there are many students who excel at both their writing assignments and performance-presentations, some students who produce average written work or who fail to complete assignments give compelling and well-prepared performance-presentations. In the cases of some students, my and their peers’ recognition of their effective presentations seems to motivate them to improve their efforts in other areas of the class.

While the ability to give public presentations is an important skill, and presentations are a mandatory component of many courses, performance-presentations are optional in my introductory music history sequence. At first, this was due to the large enrollment (over one hundred students) in some of my courses, which would make scheduling a performance-presentation for every student unworkable. Indeed, in the survey that I conducted, forty-three percent of respondents cited the issue of having too many students in the class as a barrier to including student performances. Making these performance-presentations

11. Maryellen Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 98-107.

12. Yang, “Singing Gesualdo,” 49.

optional makes them feasible for use in large classes, especially as the syllabus notes that time allotted to them will be limited.

Practical scheduling pressures might limit the potential use of student performances, but there are also social and emotional factors to consider. Requiring students to perform in front of their peers might create needless stress and unproductive social tensions, especially in an environment in which performance abilities are varied. Another consideration is accommodating students with anxiety, especially in larger classes, in which performance and public speaking can be quite daunting. Twenty-three percent of survey respondents were concerned about the issue of insufficient or varying musical ability among their students, while seventeen percent mentioned students' unwillingness to perform in front of the class. In my experience, performance abilities are less of a concern for the students: those who elect to perform possess a range of technical skills and belong to several different sub-disciplines within the music degree. However, in classes where the distinctions between music performance students and others are even more pronounced, making this assignment voluntary mitigates this issue. In the next section of this article, I will address techniques for fostering an environment in which students feel comfortable performing. Despite the best efforts of instructors, however, it is reasonable to expect that there will always be some students who, due to anxieties, will not benefit from being required to perform. The voluntary nature of the performance-presentations also addresses these concerns.

Depending on the size of my class, the short assignments are either graded on a scheme of fail/pass/pass+ or are given a numeric grade, and the grading of the performance-presentations accords with the system in use. The criteria on which students are evaluated are content, delivery, performance, integration of performance and spoken presentation, time management and organization, and ability to answer questions. While making the performance-presentations optional limits the activity, offering credit for the presentations promotes them, motivating students to devote their efforts to these events, and ensuring that performances occur regularly in the classroom.<sup>13</sup> In addition, I have been glad to discover that enforcing a standard in terms of the musical performance has not been necessary, as both the understanding that they will be marked and students' pride in performing for the class seems to ensure a base level of competence in this area. Furthermore, many of the presentations have exceed my expectations, and, in contrast with other course components, I have not yet been faced with having to assign a failing mark.

13. In the survey, of the respondents who include student performances in their courses, 67% do not grade them; 18% grade them as part of a larger project, including lecture-recitals, presentations, and written projects; 9% grade the performances using a letter or numerical grade, and 6% grade the performances on a complete/incomplete system.

### Setting the Tone

In her chapter on “Classroom Activities” from *The Music History Classroom*, Mary Natvig suggests that, “[i]f students feel comfortable in the class, these kinds of activities [dancing, acting, and performing] are great fun. More importantly, they facilitate learning by using different kinds of sensory input.<sup>14</sup> Yet if students need to “feel comfortable in the class” in order to participate, how can instructors cultivate an environment in which performance is accessible for students? Survey respondents reported that students’ unwillingness to perform in front of the class is one of the obstacles to incorporating performance into their courses. To create an environment that is conducive to student performances, I address this aspect of the course in two ways at the beginning of the semester. By including performative activities in the first class and surveying students about their experience and willingness, I normalize performance in the course, while also making it clear that I will be considerate of students’ individual preferences.

In the scholarship of teaching and learning, the importance of the first class, beyond its function as a time to pass out the syllabus and to introduce oneself to students, is often emphasized. As Marilla Svinicki and Wilbert McKeachie explain, “an important function of the first day’s meeting in any class is [...] to present the classroom situation clearly, so that the students will know from the date of this meeting what you are like and what you expect. They come to the first class wanting to know what the course is all about and what kind of person the teacher is.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to providing basic information about the course, as Linda Nilson points out, the first day of class should demonstrate the type(s) and amount of student engagement that the instructor expects for the rest of the semester.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, I usually incorporate an informal performative activity into my plan for the first class, such as a short scene from a comic play that relates to the topic of the class, enacted by student volunteers (scenes from Aristophanes’ *The Clouds* and Molière’s *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* have been favorites). Although such an activity does not directly relate to musical performance, it does bring students to the front of the classroom, breaking down the barrier between the active space of the instructor and the passive space of the students that is implied by a traditional classroom arrangement. As the semester progresses, my class plans continue to incorporate low-stakes

14. Mary Natvig, “Classroom Activities,” in *The Music History Classroom*, ed. James A. Davis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 27.

15. Marilla Svinicki and Wilbert J. McKeachie, *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011), 21.

16. Linda B. Nilson, *Teaching at Its Best* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 45.

performative activities (that are not rehearsed or graded) alongside high-stakes performance-presentations to reinforce the role of performance in the course and to ensure that students who do not give performance-presentations are active participants in other ways.

The second step that I take at the beginning of the semester is to administer a student questionnaire. Nilson advises that such an activity (she calls them “Student Information Index Cards”) alerts students of the instructor’s interest in them and allows instructors to tailor course content to the students’ needs and interests.<sup>17</sup> In addition to these functions, the survey can prompt students to think about their roles in the course. For this reason, alongside questions about academic skills and learning preferences, my questionnaire includes the following questions about performance:

- What is your primary instrument/voice?
- Do you play other instruments or sing? Do you play a period instrument or study period-specific vocal techniques? If so, please list it/them.
- Are you willing to perform in front of the class, either individually or as part of a group? Yes/No
- If yes, are you working on or have you previously performed any works on the syllabus this semester or that belong to the time period we are covering?
- Do you improvise?

I ask students to complete the questionnaire during the first class to ensure full participation and ask any late-enrolling students to do so at home. The results give me an idea of how willing the students, as a group, are to perform. Furthermore, some students, especially those who do not perform regularly, require some encouragement before they are willing to commit to a performance-presentation. I often follow up with students who mention a particularly interesting skill or piece of repertoire in their surveys, as well as with students who are struggling with the written aspects of the course, but are active participants in other ways. Together, these strategies communicate that the course will actively seek to bring together history and performance, and encourage students to consider what their role in this endeavor will be.

### **The Performance-Presentations: Reflections and Issues**

In my most recent music history sequence class, a second year-course that spanned the period of time from antiquity to the end of the eighteenth century,

17. Nilson, *Teaching at its Best*, 46.

there were one hundred and fifteen students enrolled, of which thirty-six opted to participate in a performance-presentation. This resulted in thirteen student performances over the course of the semester, with repertoire ranging from “Nel pur ardor” from Peri’s *L’Euridice* to the first movement of Mozart’s String Quartet No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 458 (“The Hunt”). As a way of showcasing the possibilities of the format and examining some of the experiences, issues, and insights that arise from inviting students to perform and present repertoire in class, I would like to discuss several of the performance-presentations that took place in my course last year. As these examples will show, the ways in which performance-presentations contribute to the class are not uniform. By using these performance-presentations to create an environment in which principles of student-centered learning can flourish, the course is opened up to a certain amount of variability.<sup>18</sup> The peer-to-peer question and answer sessions that followed the performance-presentations—in which students to some extent were able to direct each other’s education—were valuable in this regard. So, too, was the opportunity for students to shape course content through their presentations. I will begin by discussing a performance-presentation that hews closely to the course content and then move towards other presentations that demonstrate how the course can be enriched through student innovation.

One group of students in my introductory music history survey elected to perform an Italian madrigal, Arcadeldt’s “Il bianco e dolce cigno.” The presentation began with a consideration of the central metaphor of the text (sexual climax as death), and proceeded to an explanation of the technique of word painting, based on materials from *The Oxford Companion to Music* and *Grove Music Online*. Having established the focus of their presentation, the group then performed the madrigal in its entirety. This was followed by an analysis of several instances of word painting in the madrigal, each accompanied by a performance of the musical excerpt in question.

From an instructor’s point of view, this presentation effectively communicated and illustrated course content (word painting in the Italian madrigal), and the responsibility of covering this material was shifted from the instructor to the group of students. For instructors who are concerned about the time devoted to performance-presentations, asking students to cover content that might otherwise be included in the lecture is an effective way of managing time. Even if the piece performed is not the one featured on the syllabus, in many cases a similar work can fit just as well with the topic planned, and students can study the originally-scheduled repertoire as homework.

However, the performance-presentation also elucidates some of the ways in which an in-class performance is more than a simple substitution for a

18. For principles of student-centered learning, see Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching*, especially 59-60.

recording. While the most important difference is simply that the performance is by students and places them in a temporary position of authority, at their most effective, performance-presentations can also be more flexible than recordings. Instead of providing a simple run-through of the piece of music (though that, in itself, would be enhanced through its visual components, short musical examples (illustrating word painting, in this case) can be elegantly integrated in the presentation. The group was even able to demonstrate some of the alternate performance choices that they experimented with in their mission to respond to the text. Finally, as I will elaborate further in the following examples, in contrast to listening to a recording, the experience of a performance-presentation involves interaction with the performers and even the ability to shape the performance. This is not to suggest that listening to recordings is passive. However, while students can engage critically with recordings, they usually cannot modify or influence them.<sup>19</sup>

While I have suggested some of the distinctions between recordings and performance-presentations, I would like to add the qualification that student-made recordings can present yet another experience. One student in a smaller class approached me, asking if he might create and present a recording of Thomas Weelkes' madrigal "Sit down and Sing," in which he would sing all of the parts. He had reservations about singing live in front of the class, and, aside from that, could not put together enough students to cover the parts. This example demonstrates that including student performances in the classroom is not motivated by a misguided valorization of "live" music.<sup>20</sup> As Georgina Born points out, instead of framing recording as a loss, it can be conceived as "an utterly distinctive musical object—a second primary object, if you will [...] [that] augments rather than either echoing or replacing music's live performance."<sup>21</sup> In this instance, the discussion of the process of creating the

19. I specify that this is usually the case, because some newer recording projects, such as *The Virtual Haydn*, a joint work by Tom Beghin, Martha de Francisco, and Wieslaw Woszczyk, also offer opportunities for interactive listening. Tom Beghin, *The Virtual Haydn*, Naxos NBD0001-04, 2009, Blu-ray Disc. In addition, technologically knowledgeable students might be able to adapt pre-existing recordings in compelling ways. At an institution with a music technology program, this might be another possibility. For a treatment of performance and recordings more generally, see, for example, Eric Clarke, "Listening to Performance," in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 185-196.

20. The literature on the relationship between live performance and recordings is vast. For scholars who have shown that "liveness" can be a property of recordings, see, for instance, Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999); Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Paul Sanden, *Liveness in Modern Music: Musicians, Technology, and the Perception of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2013).

21. Georgina Born, "Recording: From Reproduction to Representation, to Remediation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel

recording and its contrast with historical performance practices that ensued was productive. This could be another way to accommodate students who are reluctant to perform in front of the class, but who would nevertheless like to participate in the assignment.

The interactive and visual possibilities of the format were particularly apparent in a performance-presentation by two students who had been studying the natural horn alongside their primary instruments in their studio classes. They decided to share their new performance skills and knowledge of the instrument with the class by performing several horn duet excerpts from the first movement of Bach's first Brandenburg Concerto. Their studio instructor was so delighted by their opportunity to present that he attended the class as well. While the class had been vaguely aware of changes in instrument design and sound from their text, lectures, and recordings of period instrument ensembles, their questions were met with more satisfying responses when the presenters were able to pair them with immediate and informal displays of playing technique and demonstrations of how their instruments could be manipulated. For instance, a demonstration of how the hand-stopping technique changes the timbre of the instrument across pitches allowed students to understand the sonic consequences of the natural horn.

This furthers the point that, in addition to providing the multi-sensory experience of a live performance in class, the performance-presentation format also allows students to be at the front of the class as experts. With regards to the Italian madrigal presentation, I explained that some communication of the required content could be shifted from the instructor to the students. However, performance-presentations also go beyond delivery by *shaping* the course content. This allows for both an enhanced perspective on canonic repertoire and the incorporation of less central repertoire that is relevant to the interests of the students. In a class with several guitarists, for example, it would make sense to feature a classical-era guitar sonata, a piece of repertoire that would otherwise be unlikely to make it on to the syllabus. Issues of form and phrase structure can be explored just as effectively in this repertoire as in a Mozart piano sonata, and guitarists can be spared the indignity of progressing through an entire history sequence without ever hearing their instrument.<sup>22</sup>

As in the instance of the natural horn performance, several students gave presentations centered on the performance of excerpts. This is an effective and concise way of including performances of large-scale works in the class. For

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Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 294.

22. This might bring us back to concerns about time. On this issue, I take a position similar to that which Marcia Citron offers in her discussion of works by female composers: "pedagogical canonicity can be elastic; new members enrich rather than replace." Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 200.

instance, one student performed double bass excerpts from symphonies by Haydn and Mozart and spoke about ways in which his instrument was used in classical-era orchestral repertoire, a topic that otherwise would not have been addressed in class. Other groups elected to create arrangements of works to suit their instruments. For example, in a class that covered the music from 1500 to 1900, this resulted in an arrangement of Paganini's *Caprice no. 24 in A minor*, performed by an electric guitar duo. Although the performance was in a certain sense anachronistic, it opened up an interesting conversation about virtuosity and the demonic that was relevant to both nineteenth-century Western art music and twentieth- and twenty-first-century popular music. By expanding the possibilities for these performance-presentations, not only are more students given the opportunity to perform, but the content of the class is also enriched.

Aside from their enhancement of the curriculum—shining a spotlight on overlooked repertoire that is relevant to students, paying attention to individual parts of larger works, and making connections between musical traditions across history—these presentations also raise the issue of inclusivity. Although the performance-presentation is an optional component of my course, it is important to me that the opportunity is framed to be as inclusive as possible. I initially worried about how a saxophonist would participate in a class that surveyed music from antiquity to 1800, for instance.<sup>23</sup> The imaginative possibilities suggested by my students have allayed my fears that the presentations would exclude anyone who isn't an outgoing and brilliant performer, in addition to someone who sings or plays an instrument with a significant solo repertoire.

Finally, aside from what these events can do for students in music history classes, it is important to acknowledge what they can do for the experience of a musical performance—for both performers and listeners. In her article, Yang suggests that “the music history classroom might be the place in which we can find ‘teachable moments’ in less than perfect performances.”<sup>24</sup> While Yang makes a strong point, these performances can do a lot more than demonstrate that some works are more difficult than others. They aspire to something other than perfection, and, in this situation, performance can be something different than it usually is. Stripped of most of the formalities and hierarchies that Christopher Small analyzes in *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, performers and listeners can communicate, question, reflect, experiment, and learn together.<sup>25</sup> And that is exciting for everyone in the room.

23. This worry was shared by a small percentage of respondents (5%), who believe that one of the barriers to student performances is that “only students who sing or play instruments with extensive solo repertoire (such as the piano) can perform in front of the class.”

24. Yang, “Singing Gesualdo,” 40.

25. Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, Wesleyan University Press, 1998).