

Nor is his severed head, which has been severed only from the production.

This is poor theater in all senses of the phrase, but one could forgive the penalty of the circumstances were there the slightest hint of boldness in the performance or resolution in the staging. Raul Julia is invariably a strong presence on stage and screen, but he plays Macbeth like a man with a headache. He shows no anguish or despair, simply discomfort; his sleepy eyes and sardonic smile are those of an ironist, not a tragic sufferer. Julia reads his soliloquies like lectures to an anatomy class. The dagger speech costs him nothing. In a play riddled with occultism and superstition, the title character seems like a cynic and a secularist.

Because Julia's beard is grizzled since we saw him last, he also seems a bit advanced in age for Melinda Mullins's unripened Lady Macbeth. There's some heat in the relationship between this middle-aged man and his young wife, but the passion is largely uxorious. Little of it spills over into the conspiracy scene. The couple plot Duncan's death like they're organizing a dinner party, with the wife displaying petulance over the placement of the guests and the arrangement of the silver; after Macbeth has done the bloody deed, she handles the daggers like a pair of unwashed carving knives. Mullins speaks her role as if she's doing an exercise in scene study. There's no depth in her, no size; her voice is disembodied when it should issue from her internal organs. In the production's single interpolation, Mullins's Lady Macbeth commits hara-kiri before her husband's eyes with a knife; curiously, he fails to notice her prostrate body until it's time for his next speech ("Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow").

The other roles are also played by able actors performing below the level of their gifts. I can say this with some authority since a number have acted with my company. With the exception of Daniel von Bargen's Ross, which would be a forceful contribution to any *Macbeth* production, almost everyone seems at sea or resting on familiar, comfortable habits. William Converse-Roberts's Macduff is stalwart and handsome, but occasionally given to harsh rant. Harriet Harris has genuine emotional strength, but her somewhat neurasthenic Lady Macduff could double as a Tennessee Williams heroine. The gifted Harry S. Murphy turns the Porter into stock comedy, losing his pants, bumping into posts, engaging in so much stage business that he fails to build a character. Mark Hammer, more successful as the Doctor, plays Duncan like Father Christmas ring-

ing a bell in front of Harrod's. Larry Bryggman's Banquo is more nerd than nobleman, a lamebrain Thane.

A less congenial director might have pressured, cajoled, harassed, tickled, wheedled, intimidated, frightened, irritated, encouraged, inspired these actors beyond the easily accessed limits of their known gifts. But Jordan, possibly in con-

sequence of his own bad experience with intrusive directors, has merely contented himself with recruiting a good cast and leaving them to their own devices. The result is another in a long line of calamitous *Macbeths* against which critics can aim their artillery and I, abandoning all good intentions, seem to have unmuzzled my howitzers as well. •

Edward Rothstein on Music

Jolly Roger and the Musical Past

I.

A tale from the annals of authenticity: according to Stravinsky, the celebrated actor Mounet-Sully was once rehearsing a medieval play at the Comédie Française. The text called for the actor to swear an oath on an old Bible, but during rehearsals it was suggested that he use a telephone directory instead. "The script calls for an old Bible," roared Mounet-Sully. "Get me an old Bible!" The director rushed to his library to find a magnificent old edition of the two testaments, and triumphantly brought it to the actor. "Here you are, mon cher Doyen," the director proclaimed, "a 15th-century edition. . . ." "Fifteenth century!" said Mounet-Sully. "But then at that time it was brand new!"

I am not sure what tome would have satisfied the dramatic orthodoxy of Mounet-Sully, but we may be thankful that this version of verisimilitude never had a chance to dominate the stage as it has musical life. Of course, historical dramas are sometimes stocked full of authentic props from earlier centuries, each given the appropriate sheen of age; even the modern technology of stagecraft has been shunned for candlelight and grinding stage gears. (Ingmar Bergman created such a stage for his film of *The Magic Flute*.) But no one has yet proposed casting a prepubescent boy in the role of Lady Macbeth as was the custom of Shakespeare's time, nor has there been any lobbying for the old practice of having prostitutes available for patrons in the boxes.

But music—at least as far as performance is concerned—is another story. Fifteenth-century costume is often de rigueur for groups performing 15th-century compositions. Concerts of early music are almost sentimental in their extramusical evocation of the practices of

earlier periods; and applause seems too modern a response to the appearance of troubadours or jongleurs. Hardly a surviving sackbut or shawm has remained untouched: the relics in museums are constantly being used as models for contemporary reproductions. Early-music manufacturing industries have sprung up around gut strings and baroque bows and fortepianos. In Europe boy sopranos have, in recent decades, been in unusual demand, singing soprano roles taken in less authentic times by women.

And while passions for historical performance were once bounded by the late Baroque period, they are now extending well into the 19th century. The modern instruments that once so proudly formed the heart of the orchestra are gradually being replaced during performances of older music by "instruments of the period." Since all orchestral music is "older" in our peculiar musical world, when should anything contemporary be used? Scholarly advice is now essential. How many players were at the first performance? What was the tuning pitch? How were phrase marks executed? How were the performers seated?

Christopher Hogwood is the most famous of the restorationers. His recordings (with the Academy of Ancient Music) reportedly outsell Pavarotti's; aside from the Baroque repertory, he has turned attention to the un-ancient Mozart and Beethoven symphonies. The most ambitious and extraordinary recording project of recent decades has been the complete edition of the Bach cantatas ("mit Originalinstrumenten"), conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt—a 45-volume set on Teldec packaged, in LP versions at least, with complete scores. And most remarkably, perhaps, one of the best-selling conductors of the Beethoven symphonies is an authentician. In a few short years Roger Norrington has emerged

from obscurity to stardom. Along with Hogwood and Frans Bruggen, he has pushed the ideology of authenticity well into the 19th century. This has been a crucial move, since the rejection of the 19th-century repertory, its culture, and its performance practice was the defining characteristic of the authenticity movement when it began at the turn of this century.

The achievements of this movement hardly need recounting, so thoroughly has it transformed our tastes. In a musical universe that is essentially built around the repetition of 19th-century repertory, the movement of "authenticity" has opened vast regions of sound once as lost to our ears as the music of our own time. It has given us performances of medieval plainchant, Renaissance madrigals, and Baroque trio sonatas that are, if not identical to those that graced earlier eras, surely their technical and expressive equals. Early instruments have introduced a transparency of sound that reveals musical texture—a nappy, bur-nished sound to strings that gives them vocal intimacy. Timbre has a lot to do with how an ensemble is "voiced"—what is heard and what is submerged—and it even affects the character of the phrasing. Properly played, these instruments sound less "objective" than modern instruments, less intent on display, more able to suggest the formal gestures of premodern inner life.

The authenticity movement has also changed our sense of musical style. It would be unthinkable—at least unconvincing to musically educated ears—to perform Bach's B Minor Mass with 600 chorus members, as was done in 1885. (One historian and performer, Joshua Rifkin, has even argued that no more than one singer should be used per voice in Bach's choral works, shrinking the 600 voices down to a mere four.) It is clear that we hear Baroque music in a different way than the last generation did. The "revival" of Baroque in the 1950s was best represented by the Italian string group I Musici, who still perform Vivaldi as they did then: phrasings tend to arch as in Romantic music; vibrato is insistent and regularly used; tempi are metrically rigid, except for ritards at cadences. That style now seems "old-fashioned," or artificially modern.

We are now used to thinking of Baroque music as more involved with gesture and breath, with more freedom in note values, more attention to the subsidiary pulses in dance movements; we hear it, that is, as more expressive of individuals than institutions. Most influential in this change in taste have been per-

formers from the Netherlands, where there has been a renaissance of early music performers—Gustav Leonhardt, Bruggen, Ton Koopman, the Kuijken brothers, and various ensembles. They have defined a distinct "authentic" style that is never self-indulgent, is always restrained, but focuses on the shapes of individual notes and phrases, creating exquisitely crafted sighs and swells. These interpreters, along with such expressive players as Malcolm Bilson and John Eliot Gardiner, now form a roster of the most talented and dedicated musicians playing today, when much of the rest of musical life centers on ersatz virtuosity and empty repetition. We have come a long way since Thomas Beecham said that the harpsichord "sounds like two skeletons copulating on a tin roof."

But the achievements of "authenticity" should not blind us to the extraordinary peculiarity of this movement. In a collection of essays—*Authenticity and Early Music*, edited by Nicholas Kenyon—unusual for its intelligence and scope, Howard Mayer Brown argues that the entire notion of authenticity is distinctly contemporary: it was never an issue for any previous age how precisely to re-create the works of a still earlier age. Interest in the works of eras past is not new, of course, but never before has "authenticity" been an ideology of performance as it is today.

Just how unusual it is becomes clear when we look at what has been done in the name of "authenticity." The doctrine itself maintains that in order to understand and to appreciate a composition, it should be performed as the composer first heard it or imagined it. This project is not as elementary as it seems. Music gives us a series of signs on paper, and an oral tradition for interpreting those signs. But what if we are dealing with musical runes whose precise meaning is lost?

It turns out that guesses and lost traditions are far more common than was once believed. It is often an open question which instruments were used, what timbres they possessed, under what circumstances letter and practice differed. Robert Donington, in his remarkable *Baroque Music: Style and Performance*, surveys two centuries of descriptions of musical performance, drawing conclusions about interpretive styles. Tempo, for example, was far from rigidly constrained. Frescobaldi (1615-16) asked that his Toccatas be played "now slowly, now quickly, and even held in the air." Couperin (1716) called for a "spirit," a "soul" that must be added to his compositions' metrical regularity. Such com-

ments suggest that the letter of the text—at least as far as metronomic regularity is concerned—was tempered by something more flexible in practice. And this does not even begin to take account of "oral tradition" such as ornamentation, tempi, accents in phrases, improvisation. The score itself, in sum, may be unable to give us a hint of appropriate performance.

Much of musical scholarship during the last century has concentrated on such issues: first the establishment of the letter of the score and then the documentation of its performance tradition, creating canonical texts along with laws governing their reading. What has given the authenticity movement its energy is partly the assertion that at the end of this quest there will be an immutable version of musical truth, which is latent in the letter of the text and in the ways in which that text was first brought to life.

This is a view at once absolutist (it asserts a notion of the score that is almost biblical in its authority) and totally relative (the score is a mere cipher without the interpolation of historical understanding). It is also resolutely anti-contemporary. If authenticity sounds like a form of fundamentalism, a view of a holy text protected from the grubby chaos of debate and revision, this is because it is. "Interpreting [the Brandenburg Concertos] is a very complicated thing," Nikolaus Harnoncourt has said. "Like reading the Bible." Authenticity believes in the sacredness of the original text and in the privileged positions of those who saw it come into being. It rejects the accumulated traditions established by less privileged believers. It treats performance as a matter of restoration and rehabilitation rather than interpretation.

As authenticity has become the dominant interpretive approach of the late decades of the century, the musicological debate over its virtues has become more and more intense. There have been the expected semi-philosophical critiques, on the order of "if a tree falls in a forest, does it make a sound?" How can we presume to guess what the will of a composer is? If we knew what that will was, would it be that important to satisfy it? Can we ever truly re-create a historical performance? Isn't any authentic performance doomed to be of our time?

These are all attempts to take authenticity at its word. But no fundamentalism is shaken by reasoned argument, even when the answers are fairly obvious. Sometimes the will of the composer is important, sometimes it is not. ("Can an interpreter restrict himself to remaining

in the shadow of the author?" asked the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska. "What a commonplace! What a joke!") Sometimes the composer is the best spokesman for his scores, sometimes he is not. (Stravinsky's music is not generally served by his performances.) Sometimes a historical re-creation is interesting, sometimes it is beyond even a fanatic's fantasy. (There has been, as far as I know, no true re-creation of 19th-century concert music, for that would mean eschewing electric illumination for the sake of candlelight. This is not a minor atmospheric point: much of the reported swooning and sensitive sighing common during Chopin's piano playing had to do with the crowded salons, the closed windows, and the dozens of candle flames consuming oxygen.)

No "authentic" performance, of course, is ever authentic. It is always contemporary. Landowska's readings were of her time, and Norrington's are of ours. The "in itself"—that re-creation so devoutly wished for—is as elusive in music as it is in metaphysics. In short, the demands of authenticity are frequently absurd. And its claims are, for the most part, overwrought.

II.

The main problem with the authenticity movement, however, is not its claims but its results, its musical performances. An intriguing case is Roger Norrington's recent recordings of the Beethoven symphonies. Norrington, aged 55, a British-born conductor, rose to prominence during the last five years, after working as a choral conductor, a tenor, a string player, and music director of the Kent Opera in England. He made his name directing pedagogical musical weekends, called "Experiences," that focused on major works performed in "historically aware" style. There was a Haydn Experience, a Beethoven Experience, a Berlioz Experience, combining lectures with rehearsals and "authentic" performances.

Norrington brought the orthodoxies of authenticity into the 19th century. He insisted first on instruments of the period. This means that the timpani are small and hit with hard sticks rather than cushioned mallets; that the horns are valveless; that the violins are played with gut strings. As Norrington put it in his notes to the Ninth Symphony, the aim is to restore it "to the humane, quicksilver thought-world of the Classical Period." The major innovation in all these performances, though, is in tempi. In 1817 Beethoven obtained a metronome and proceeded to put down detailed tempo markings for his symphonies and string

quartets (through the "Harp" Quartet); he criticized tempi that "to my great regret have so often been misunderstood." The Ninth Symphony was composed after Beethoven had already used the metronome extensively; and so his instructions, it is argued, were precise.

Two of the most controversial sections in the Ninth Symphony are the trio of the second movement and the march of the last. Norrington takes both at an uncharacteristically plodding pace, following the metronomic markings. Yet Benjamin Zander, the music director of the Boston Philharmonic who was one of the pioneers of the "original tempi" school of Beethoven performances, reports that he began by playing the works at Norrington's tempi, but then discovered that the presumed authentic metronome markings were actually due to mistakes by Beethoven's relatively unschooled nephew Karl, who transcribed his uncle's instructions. The conversation books in which the deaf composer wrote in his own hand, Zander argues, indicate tempi twice as fast.

I won't enter the debate about conversation books and manuscript annotations, but the argument does display the style of the contemporary discussion. Each side claims absolute truth and argues the musical obviousness of the results. The final word is not primarily musical (what are the implications of a tempo for an interpretation?) but scholarly (which metronome setting did Beethoven put down?). Tempo is also a notoriously slippery musical element. Even the metronome markings now taken as holy writ in the symphonies were mostly put down by Beethoven years after the work's composition. So who is to say that they were precisely the ones originally intended? And even if they are "authentic," the way they are executed can create radically different results. Karajan once told of a performance he recorded in one city sounding much too fast when he listened to it again in another; he felt that the altitude had changed his heartbeat, and thus affected his timing.

Rather than argue over the letter of the text, it makes far more sense to argue over the text's meaning. Zander, for example, attacking Norrington's slow tempo, argues:

The ecstatically heroic character of the words for the march are much more apt for a very fast tempo ("Joyous as his suns are flying across the firmament's magnificent design, run, brothers, your race, joyously, as does a hero towards victory") than for the comic, farcelike slow tempo of dotted quarter = 84.

This textual argument is more powerful

than any that could be mounted by scholarship. Norrington's performance does not, in fact, make sense of the tempo. At first one's interest is piqued, but under reflection it fades. What sort of interpretation should be given this text? Why would it be somber or mocking? What role do the variations of the last movement play in this scheme? Norrington leaves no answers.

Because authenticity locates the meaning of music in the sounds produced during a composition's first performance, it also produces a strange kind of formalism—a formalism of practice. At its most



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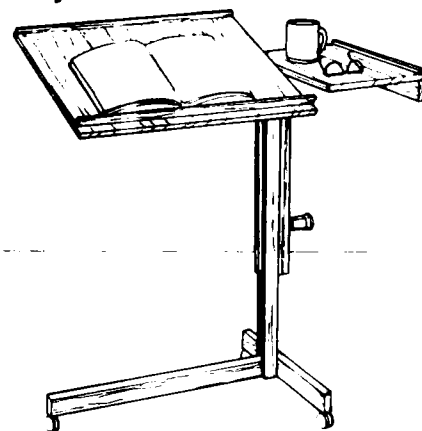
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extreme, it means that authenticity is applied most rigorously when most connected to "objective" detail, to the facts of timing and timbre; but that is precisely the sort of detail that is least essential to music's life, which is to be found in its phrasing and its conception.

Norrington, again, provides a powerful example. He has a fine sense of pulse, a sort of rhythmic poise. When I saw him conduct the "Pastoral" Symphony last summer in Tanglewood, I had the same sense I have in listening to these discs: he drives the music, his eye resolutely fixed on its accents and vigor. That is why his performances of the Second and Eighth symphonies are often convincing; they create the quicksilver playful world Norrington seeks in every symphony. But they also "move" even when they shouldn't. The accents are disruptive, self-conscious. One doesn't hear a musical argument, but something resembling an accompaniment to dance. Norrington stresses the aspect of dance. "It's also the life of the music," he has said. "It's what it's about—the general sense of moving, or making one feel the movement." But this is not what this music is about. It is not dance; it merely uses dance. Movement is only Beethoven's tool. Transformation is his goal.

"Once you have the right instruments and the right speed," Norrington has said of his interpretations, "you're doing everything it says. But phrasing is where the creativity comes in." Phrasing though, is a matter not of creativity, but of understanding. It is precisely where authenticity is most important—intellectual authenticity, which has very little to do with original instruments or tempi. Furtwängler had it, and so does Bruggen, who is also recording the Beethoven cycle with original instruments. For phrasing is what allows one to follow the musical argument in the "Eroica", to hear the deliberate imbalances and surprises that spice the first movement's sweep. It is hard to stay with Norrington's interpretations; they slip and slide with a quaint, frenetic glee.

It is also hard to imagine anybody reacting to these works the way one listener of the period did: "Now that I have heard the terrifying giant Beethoven, I know exactly where musical art stands; the question is to take it from there and push it further." The image of the "terrifying giant," the preoccupation with the sublime, the qualities of obsessive analysis and dreamy reflection—all these Beethovenian traits and Romantic tropes seem irrelevant to Norrington's project.

They are also irrelevant for Norrington's recording of Berlioz's "Symphonie

Fantastique"—which should be no surprise, since it was Berlioz who wrote that line about Beethoven. Norrington's performance is almost a "novelty" in the old sense of the word; it is not weighty, but casually amusing. It is characterized by the use of original instruments—including ophicleides (obsolete brass instruments with a sort of gaseous bleat). Norrington wants to give the work "a classicism and a clarity which go well with what we know of Berlioz." Yet in fact, as Berlioz put it, the "Symphonie Fantastique" was to have "fire and tears within." The timpani were not meant to be punctuation, but "distant sounds of thunder."

As D. Kern Holoman points out, Berlioz loved the innovations of ever newer instruments, including some he used in the symphony and others developed even later. Berlioz was enamored of the modern English horn, valved brass, pedal harps, and the instruments invented by Adolphe Sax. He later thought that the wooden flutes used at the premiere of "Symphonie Fantastique" were "only fit to be played at a fair." Adrian Corleonis has noted that Berlioz later wrote of the ophicleides in one copy of the score, "Change to tubas." And—most peculiarly for an authentician—Norrington ignores Berlioz's orchestral desires by using just over four score players; Berlioz wanted at least 130, and actually thwarted a scheduled performance because sufficient benches and chairs would not fit on stage. So much for levity and lightness, let alone fidelity to the first mythic performance, about which Berlioz gave this ringing endorsement: "It was good enough to give a reasonable idea of the music."

III.

In the last few decades, in fact, criticism of authenticity has grown. Raymond Leppard accused orthodox authenticists of creating a "world of cult and bigotry" in their absolute demands. Joseph Kerman has called "authentic" a "baleful term" that "has now acquired the same cult value when applied to music as 'natural' or 'organic' when applied to food." Richard Taruskin, a performer of early music, a musicologist, and an ardent polemicist, has linked the impulses of authenticity with all the evil adjectives he associates with "high modernism": "introsigent, objectivist, elitist."

In response, during the past ten years, some of the barricades have been crumbling. More and more practitioners have claimed exquisite moderation. Harnoncourt, who once proclaimed of the elements of historical performance "All or nothing," last year said, "We were al-

ways misunderstood. I never used the term authenticity, I never used the words right and wrong, because I was always convinced that authenticity is nonsense and it was not our interest to pursue it. . . . The only authentic performance of a piece of music would be the composer's own." His colleague in authentic Bach cantata performances, Gustav Leonhardt, said of "historical faithfulness": "I don't know what it amounted to and I still don't know what it amounts to." And even Norrington says that "the point about playing Beethoven on old instruments, of course, is to make him sound new." It is as if the priests of a religion were suddenly turning agnostic.

The truth is, there has been a crisis of belief. Among some, it has meant a welcome change in musical approach, particularly in recent recordings of Bach. Philippe Herreweghe and John Eliot Gardiner, both interested in historical performance, have argued that an understanding of musical "rhetoric" is just as important as any of the issues of instrumentation and tempi that exercised the authenticists of years past. Both have chosen to use mature women singers in preference to soprano boys, and both have treated the notion of re-creation of the original performance as a "chimera," to use Gardiner's word. Their "rhetoric" is something more traditional, familiar from Bach scholarship dating back to Schweitzer and Spitta: the music's organization and its form, its pictorial connection to texts, the structure of its arguments—aspects that were often subsidiary to the brute positivism of other authenticists. Gardiner, in a recent recording of Berlioz's version of Gluck's "Orphée et Euridice," has even called this manifestly inauthentic revision of Gluck's work a "fascinating and plausible alternative version of the opera." He grants the composition a form of "secondary authenticity," because of its effort to reach the essence of an earlier work through a secondary elaboration of it.

This is near heresy, of course, for the ideology; for it argues that a text can indeed be modified, modernized, and interpreted, creating versions that are "alternative" rather than invalid. It asserts, along with the mainstream tradition of musical interpretation since the 19th century, that music is a historical art, that it not only takes place within time, it also takes place through time. Bach's music is simply not the same now as it was; it is a part of history, not a frozen thing standing outside it.

This is what the concept of "early music" implied from the moment it became

important during the last century. The pre-bourgeois repertory was obviously different from the music that was beginning to be heard in the new concert halls. It existed on the other side of a cultural and aesthetic boundary; it required reconstruction, rescue, reinterpretation. That was why Mendelssohn's revival of the St. Matthew Passion was such an extraordinary event in 1829, and why modern musical scholarship itself began to develop out of the love of past music. Brahms, Wagner, Liszt were all captivated by the musical world lost to them. But the approach of these figures to early music was not fundamentalist, it was historicist. There was no attempt to restore the past with "authentic" practice. Berlioz rewrote Gluck; Busoni rewrote Bach. The past was loved, and appropriated; the scores were rescored, brought into the contemporary universe. The music was made part of the living tradition of interpretation—even if distortions were introduced in the process.

Some avatars of contemporary authenticity are returning to historicism, and correcting excessive appropriations. In some recent "authentic" performances, the interpretation is quite orthodox in some respects, but in others it is given a twist that is unmistakably contemporary. This was the case last year when William Christie conducted a hauntingly historical version of Lully's "Atys" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, complete with historical instruments and historical costumes. For all the authentic trappings, this 17th-century opera became an extraordinary contemporary ballet, so formal and abstract were its motions, so self-conscious its presentation. The work was returned to history. Its alien character was made more clear by being taken seriously; there was no pretense that this was what Louis XIV might have seen.

Still, for other performers—for Norrington, above all—the crisis of belief has taken a rather different, more dangerous course. This course derives from the original oppositional impulse that gave birth to the authenticity movement—an opposition to historicism and to mainstream musical taste. The attempt is not to bring the work through the past into the present, but to reject historicism in favor of a restored past. At one time this impulse was aligned with the "avant-garde," rejecting the performing tradition of the 19th century along with its repertory, opposing the bourgeois musical universe with pre-bourgeois exoticism. "An interpretation must be attempted," Harnoncourt has written, "in which the entire romantic tradition of

performance is ignored."

Norrington preserves the avant-gardist pose, but he applies it to the very 19th-century repertory against which "authenticity" once defined himself. In doing so, he has inadvertently exposed a central paradox in his movement. One of its unspoken presumptions has been that a work could be considered in some way "authentic," true to itself or to an idea, in opposition to an "inauthentic" world and "inauthentic" performance; but this, it turns out, is a tenet central to the 19th-century aesthetic tradition. The authentic movement has accepted the key notion of "truth" in a work even as it has rejected the culture that gave birth to that notion.

In taking authenticity into the 19th century, Norrington extends the movement's adversarial pose to the aesthetic itself, to the very premise of the music he performs. He argues not only that we have the performances wrong, but that we have the aesthetic wrong. You think the "Eroica" Symphony is grandly heroic, ruthlessly brilliant, egomaniacally profound? No, says Norrington, it is bouncy, conversational, light-headed. You think the art of early Romanticism is weighty with import? Lighten up, it is an extension of the early classical period. Musical "authenticity," with its reverence for first things, here weakens the impact of the notion of "authenticity" itself. It substitutes the idea of truth in scholarship for the idea of truth in art. Norrington ends up rejecting a central aspect of these works themselves. For what better representative do we have of the Romantic belief in inner truth and authentic expression than Beethoven's symphonies? An authentic performance of a 19th-century work, in Norrington's hands, is one from which all pretense of spiritual specificity is stripped away.

"I like to get an orchestra to smile while they're playing," Norrington told *Interview* in January, "instead of that awful high seriousness that sets in." The "Ode to Joy" he described as "humorous, rather naive," "certainly not cosmic," and a "very jolly piece." "Prairie music," he concluded. And what of the Mozart operas and their mixture of humor and grace and tragedy? "You find it's a huge send-up, that you're being carried along." Mozart should be played "very, very wild." As for all the rest of Romanticism, it should not bear the least relationship to the literary texts so central to it, nor to the performing traditions that have come down to us. Wagner should be played "without too much weight." Tchaikovsky "could be played a great deal lighter."

"The whole of 19th-century music might have been overblown," says jolly Roger. "There was a time when art was serious, and I guess that was important to people. But we can relax now; we can stop trying to protect it. If we go on protecting it, it will die on us, because people will get bored, and they won't think it's relevant any longer. Especially kids. They want to enjoy it. They want to have fun. They get excited when an orchestra's enjoying itself and it becomes more like jazz or popular music." And so the 19th century is turned on its head; art is merely fun, entertainment for all, useful for amusement.

All this is hardly "true" to the content of this music. Surely fun is not the most certain path to authenticity, though it may be the surest way to popular success. In Norrington's recordings, in sum, authenticity becomes postmodern. If the term "early music" denoted a break in a tradition, this most recent turn of authenticity makes nearly *all* music early music; the tradition is giddily splintered, governed by instances of performance and an overarching attitude of playful noncommittal. The Norrington Experience brings to mind Lionel Trilling's etv-



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mology for one of this century's most overused words: "Violent meanings," he pointed out, "are explicitly in the Greek ancestry of the word 'authentic.' Authentic: to have full power over; also to commit a murder. Authentic: not only a master and doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide."

Trilling meant that the quest for authenticity in art is risky: it can disrupt the balance between truth and interpreta-

tion, between tradition and will. Norrington goes even further. Taking authenticity to its limits, he dismisses any content of the work other than its statistics. This gives the performer ultimate power over the text; he becomes the arbiter of the "authentic." The text is tied to no tradition, only to its origins and to postmodern play. This power over the text overturns our notion of art itself. And the perpetrator, despite himself, really does become a suicide. •

subject to debate. Soviet-style socialism, in short, is more often blamed than celebrated. According to more and more people in positions of power, salvation lies outside of state action and central control—in decentralized individual and group effort, in worker collectives and cooperatives interacting in real, if regulated, markets.

Anders Åslund, a Swedish economist who recently spent three years in Sweden's embassy in Moscow, has thoroughly analyzed the background and the early stages of Gorbachev's economic reforms. He shows how they began as little more than a continuation of the "treadmill of reforms" of the preceding 20 years, which meant further "perfectionings" of the economy and its "economic mechanism." But quickly the process started to evolve, each new stage driven by earlier failures and by growing resistance within the state and Party bureaucracies, each reaching for ever more radical measures. As the truly disastrous consequences of the Stalinist economic system became more apparent, the situation looked increasingly alarming: within the Soviet leadership, fear grew that the Soviet Union could lose its position as a major power. Åslund traces the muddled odyssey, both among Soviet intellectuals and within the Soviet leadership, toward a "market socialism" that would replace the "command-administrative mechanism" inherited from Stalin's "great Socialist offensive" of the 1930s.

Some of the fruits of this process are evident in recent books by Soviet authors who set out to explain the causes, the course, and the consequences of *perestroika* to an American audience. Abel Aganbegyan is the administrative head of the economics section of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and was recently appointed Rector of the Council of Ministers' Academy of the National Economy. His book addresses the situation of late 1988, giving a highly personal account of the evolution of the reform driving *perestroika*, and passionately arguing that this reform must become irreversible in order to succeed in modernizing the Soviet socialist economy. Aganbegyan's position, and his reported closeness to Gorbachev (he was an early adviser), gives his views an official air, though his manner is relaxed and conversational. His book expresses an optimistic, centrist position. It calls for decentralization within a framework of regulated markets and prices, and assumes continuing central control over key industries and technologies, to ensure the proper development of the Soviet economy.

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The elusive market, or the sad history of *perestroika*.

What Is To Be Done?

BY RICHARD E. ERICSON

It is no secret that Mikhail Gorbachev's economic reforms are not working. Inflation is rampant, markets for consumer goods have broken down, production quality and quantity remain poor, and the long sought technological advance has yet to take place. Radical economic reform seems to be stuck. Many of its economic laws and administrative changes are in place, yet they have had no positive effect. *Perestroika* has disrupted economic activity and loosened controls, but it has not provided alternative mechanisms to the Stalinist economic system that Gorbachev inherited. Thus the economic bureaucracy, responsible for "making things happen" in the Soviet system, has struggled to maintain economic activity in the only way it knows; and it has become a serious obstacle to further change.

Gorbachev's response has been to shift the central focus of reform efforts from economics to politics, where the aim is to mobilize support from "the bottom up," since initiatives from the top have gotten bogged down. The realization that resistance to reform is rooted in the psychology, the political culture, and the ideology of the nation has made *glasnost* an increasingly important part of *perestroika*. It's not just outside analysts, such as Padma Desai of Columbia University, who argue that political democratization is an essential part of a successful reform strat-

egy. That is the official position that emerged from the 19th Communist Party Conference of June 1988, and the theme of Abel Aganbegyan's inside look at the state of *perestroika*.

The "radicalization" of the reform process is reflected both in the understanding of the depth of Soviet economic problems and in the nature of the proposed solutions. The early diagnosis was that the economy was fundamentally sound but required greater discipline,

*Inside Perestroika:
The Future of the Soviet Economy*
by Abel Aganbegyan
(Harper & Row, 241 pp., \$19.95)

Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform
by Anders Åslund
(Cornell University Press, 219 pp., \$38.50, \$12.95 paper)

*Perestroika in Perspective:
The Design and Dilemmas of Soviet Reform*
by Padma Desai
(Princeton University Press, 138 pp., \$14.95)

*The Turning Point:
Revitalizing the Soviet Economy*
by Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov
(Doubleday, 336 pp., \$21.95)

improved planning, and better social and investment policies to pull itself out of near stagnation. Now the Soviet leadership acknowledges that the economic system faces a true crisis: it is the system itself that is at the root of the economic problems facing the Soviet Union.

Originally, the official prescription was more "discipline" and "acceleration." Now central planning, state ownership of the means of production, and even the "leading role of the Party" are

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