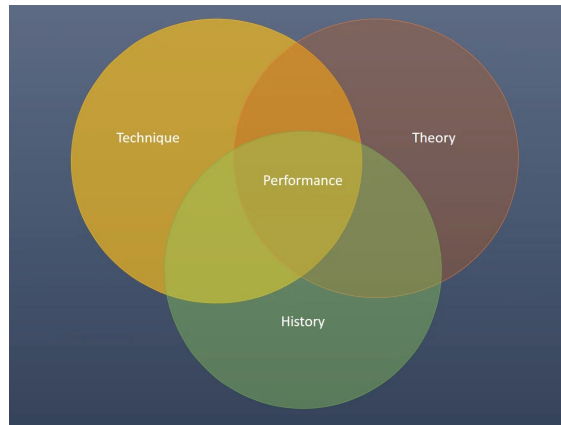


Theory-informed Performance

With Dr. Andrew Rosenfeld

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- Knowledge is power - and this applies to music too!
 - The music has structure/substance
 - The structure is this weird space between what is on the page and what is conveyed to the audience.
 - The more you know about structure and substance, the better you understand why the music sounds a certain way.
 - Understanding the structure and substance of the music means we don't need to depend on others to decide how to make it sound
 - Become a musical leader rather than a musical follower
- We often group performance and technique together
 - Music history and music theory are other important very aspects to learn about and incorporate in your performance. These are all intimately linked.



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Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings

- Starts in the minor vi, first phrase ends in the home key of C major
- Second phrase starts on a I (C major chord) which gives an effect of the first 8 bars as a big anacrusis
- Tchaikovsky compensates for the 'weaker' nature of the second phrase by marking it fortissimo
- The color of the second statement is very different than the color of the first statement
- You can tell from the writing that Tchaikovsky wanted a huge orchestra to play this piece!
- The use of the secondary dominants are reinforcing a minor, not C Major
- It ends on an E7 chord, leading our ear to A in the next movement, but tricks our ear by actually making the next movement in C major

- Understanding the chord structure allows us to pay more attention to the dynamics and the reason why they are there.
- In the next movement, Tchaikovsky alternates between a C major chord in first inversion (I6) and a D7 chord (V7/V) - neither of which provide a solid tonic to listen to.
- How do these oddities impact how we would perform this section?
 - Do you phrase towards or away from the downbeat, despite the downbeat containing a nonharmonic chord? Do you do anything?
 - Being aware of the substance of this section provides us with options for how to play it
- Understanding the context of certain passages allows the musician to understand where there should be more tension in the music, among other musical decisions
- The more you understand the harmony, where your voice is within a chord, and where the chord is going, the more you understand how to bring a whole ensemble together to perform the piece effectively.
- Why theory?
 - It gives you a sense of understanding of where you fit within a piece/what is going on in the entire work
 - Anticipating mechanical and expressive challenges (knowing motives, phrases, etc.)
 - Allows us to make more informed interpretive decisions
 - Puts us in a mindset to look more closely at details of form and structure so we understand the piece better
 - Makes you a “musical detective!”
- You don't have to be really good at every aspect of theory, just understanding the basic structure of a piece can set you up for success!
- Allows you to have a conversation/connection with your music on a more sophisticated, deeper level
- Find motives, phrases, anything that unifies the music. Also, find the sections and figure out how they relate to each other
- It's your responsibility as musicians to be as informed as possible about the music