

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Music virtually exists because of live performance, which is a crucial part of music marketing for concert-goers, music lovers, and other audiences seeking entertainment and a growing source of revenue for performers¹. Several aspects attract live audiences to attend performances. Live performances enable interaction between performers and attendees, where the product is the concert experience itself². Another attraction is the performer's unique and strong identity. By interacting with their music through personal interpretation, performers build a unique persona. However, this creative process requires balancing historical authenticity with personal touch. Fortunately, studying a piece's music history allows performers to blend historical insight with their own artistic taste, ultimately staying true to the composer's intention while showcasing their individuality.

An authentic interpretation goes beyond the notes, uncovering the composer's original intention. A performer needs a creative process to learn the variables of music performance practice, which include both written musical elements and unwritten influences of a music piece. The written elements are tempo, pulse, instrument technology, dynamics, articulation, and other musical variables. The unwritten influences are the prevailing ideas or events of the historical period. These variables serve as parameters for the research, enabling performers to approach music with a clearer goal by applying and evaluating the significance of music historical study in forming authentic interpretations.

¹ Harbi, S. E., Grolleau, G., and Bekir, I. (2014). Substituting piracy with a pay-what-you-want option: does it make sense? *Eur. J. Law Econ.* 37, 277–297. doi: 10.1007/s10657-011-9287-y

² Holt, F. (2010). The economy of live music in the digital age. *Eur. J. Cult. Stud.* 13, 243–261. doi: 10.1177/1367549409352277

A performer who understands a piece's historical context can apply this knowledge to create a personal interpretation, adding their own flair beyond the score³. This involves blending personal taste, experiences, and emotions with authentic historical insight⁴. As John Rick notes, personal interpretation is the performer's narrative, recreating the piece through their conceptual lens⁵. In this creative process and decisions, performers have the freedom to shape the music's sound while staying true to the composer's intention. The decision often revolves around whether to imitate how musicians in the past would play, execute a piece according to new possibilities in the present, or find a balance between the two. In this modern context, new possibilities include advanced instruments unavailable in the past.

This research investigates the impact of music history knowledge on pianists' interpretive skills in achieving authentic and personal interpretations. The study employs Action Research with a control and experimental group design. Eight piano students from Universitas Pelita Harapan Conservatory of Music will perform Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *L'Aly Rupalich* without knowing the title or composer's name. The four experimental participants will receive historical knowledge of the piece, while the control group will interpret it without additional historical information or internet access. A pre-test and post-test would be conducted and graded by two piano lecturers at Universitas Pelita Harapan with a validated analytic rubric. Notably, all participants have completed Classic-Baroque History classes, ensuring a shared basic understanding of the piece's historical context. The study, conducted from March 3-7, 2025, compares the two groups to test the hypothesis that historical knowledge enhances authentic and personal interpretations.

³ Palmer, C. (1937). Music and Personal Interpretation. *The Musical Times*, 78(1134), 697–697.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/923340>

⁴ Packalén, E. (2008). Music, Emotions, and Truth. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 16(1), 41–59.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327289>

⁵ Rink, J., Davies, D., de Assis, P., Dorschel, A., Goehr, L., Hindrichs, G., Kiloh, K., & McNulty, J. (2018). The Work of the Performer. In P. de Assis (Ed.), *Virtual Works – Actual Things: Essays in Music Ontology* (pp. 89–114). Leuven University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv4rfrd0.7>

1.2 Research Question

How does the significance of music history provide perspectives in performance practice for the performer to form an authentic and personal interpretation?

1.3 Research Purpose

1. This research aims to analyze the significance of providing a music history aspect in learning piano to achieve an authentic and personal interpretation.
2. This research aims to evaluate the influence of music history knowledge on a pianist's authentic and personal interpretational skills.

1.4 Research Limitation

Research limitation refers to the factors that may affect the results and conclusions of the study.

In this research, the limitations are by the participants and the chosen piece:

1. Undergraduate students.

Eight participants are limited to undergraduates from Universitas Pelita Harapan Conservatory of Music batch 2023 and 2024, with piano major instrument. The participants age is around 18 to 20 years old.

2. The CPE Bach *L'Aly Rupalich* Wq 117/27 score edition by TobisNotenarchiv

The second limitation is the piece, *L'Aly Rupalich* Wq 117/27, is taken from one edition of *TobisNotenarchiv*. The edition is limited since it is not based on the "urtext" version of the piece. The study's focus on a single early Classical piece limits its generalizability to other periods and pieces, highlighting the need for further research to broaden its applicability and impact.