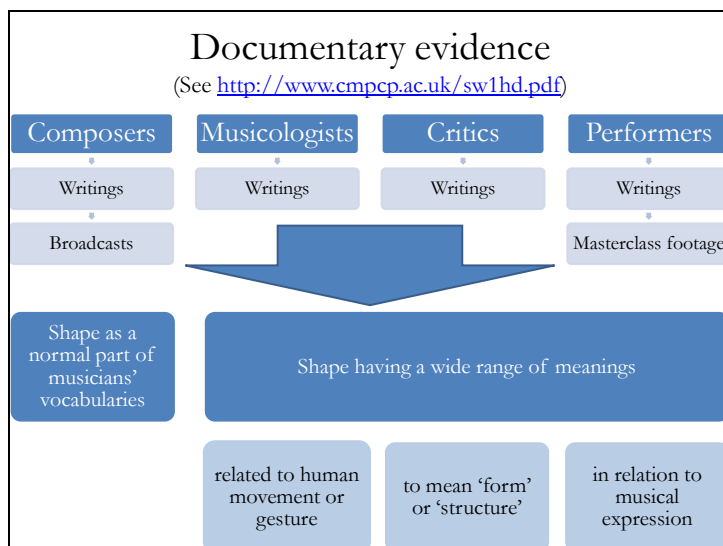# Exploring the experience of shaping music in performance

Dr Helen M. Prior

Shaping music in performance
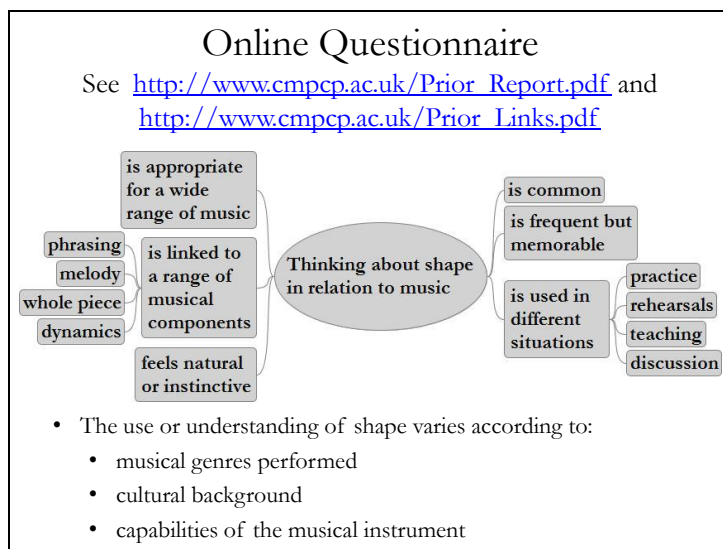
- Investigating the term or idea of 'shape' or 'shaping' in relation to music performance
- Initial approaches:
  - Documentary evidence
  - Online questionnaire
  - Interview studies

The idea of shaping music is prevalent in discourse surrounding musical performance, and yet the term is rarely discussed in any formal way. This project explores the ways in which performers use this idea of shape, or shaping, when they are preparing for performance. I have, so far, used three main approaches: documentary evidence, an online questionnaire, and interview studies. I will talk briefly about the first two of these, before moving on to the first interview study. The aim of today's paper is to give you an overview of some of the many and varied aspects of musical shape used and discussed by musicians.

Documentary evidence
(See http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/sw1hd.pdf)

Composers	Musicologists	Critics	Performers
Writings	Writings	Writings	Writings
Broadcasts			Masterclass footage

Shape as a normal part of musicians' vocabularies

Shape having a wide range of meanings

| related to human movement or gesture | to mean 'form' or 'structure' | in relation to musical expression |

The first approach I took was an exploration of the documentary evidence for the use of musical shape. I examined writings of composers, musicologists, critics, and performers, as well as masterclass footage. I found that shape was used with a remarkably wide range of meanings: to relate music to human movement or gesture; as a synonym for 'form' or 'structure'; and in relation to musical expression. Additionally, the term seemed to be a normal part of musicians' vocabularies (for more details, please see Daynes, 2010).

Despite these varied meanings, and the apparent prevalence of the term, it has not yet been explored specifically and systematically in relation to music, or, in particular, in relation to the meaning and importance it holds for current performing musicians. So I conducted a questionnaire study.

Online Questionnaire
See http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/Prior_Report.pdf and
http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/Prior_Links.pdf

is appropriate for a wide range of music

phrasing
melody
whole piece
dynamics

is linked to a range of musical components

feels natural or instinctive

Thinking about shape in relation to music

is common
is frequent but memorable

is used in different situations

practice
rehearsals
teaching
discussion

- The use or understanding of shape varies according to:
  - musical genres performed
  - cultural background
  - capabilities of the musical instrument

An online questionnaire was completed by 231 participants of various ages and types of performers. Over 50% claimed to be of a professional standard of performance. The majority of participants played classical music, but some played other genres too.

Participants were asked whether they thought about shape when thinking about how to perform music, and whether they thought about shape when talking about how to perform music. Nearly 90 per cent of participants claimed to think about shape when thinking about music; over 80 per cent claimed to think about shape when talking with others about how to perform music. We asked participants to describe an example of each of these experiences, and it became evident from their responses that thinking or talking about musical shape can be very memorable – there were examples from many years ago – but that it is also fairly frequent – many participants described recent practice sessions or rehearsals. It was used in practice, rehearsals, teaching, and in discussion about music, and it became clear that it was appropriate for a wide range of music, including classical, jazz, non-tonal, and pop music (for more details, please see Prior, 2011).

Musical shape seemed to be related to a range of musical components, including phrasing, melody, the whole piece, and dynamic change; and participants reported that it felt natural to use. I also found that the use or understanding of shape seemed to vary according to the musical genres performed, participants' cultural background, and the capabilities of the musical instrument (Prior, 2010).

This provided a helpful snapshot of the current use of musical shape by performing musicians, but it didn't enable me to question participants further when they began to write something interesting, or allow participants to demonstrate their ideas about shaping. The third approach to the study of shaping music, then, has used semi-structured interviews to explore participants' experiences of shaping music in performance.

Interview Study

	Age group	Years playing	Genres played	Country of birth	Place of study
Tina*	25–34	11–20	Orchestral parts, chamber music	UK	Manchester University (UG); RNCM (PG); Sheffield University (PG)
Bridget*	25–34	21–30	Orchestral parts, chamber music, pop, folk, dance, contemporary	UK	Trinity (UG)
Elsie*	25–34	21–30	Orchestral parts and solos, chamber music, baroque specialism	Australia	Sydney Conservatorium of Music (UG); RCM (PG)
Victor*	35–44	31–40	Orchestral parts, crossover	Uruguay	Privately (UG); RAM (PG)
Darragh Morgan	35–44	21–30	Orchestral parts and solos, orchestral and operatic conductor; Chamber music; Musical theatre (solo; Musical director); pop, rock/metal, folk, urban, contemporary, world, crossover	Ireland	GSMD (UG); Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (PG)

*This name is a pseudonym; the remaining participant wished to be named

I recruited five participants, through the questionnaire study and through personal contacts in conservatoires. All of these participants were currently resident in the UK, and all of them were professional performers, and declared that most of their income came from performing. Further details are shown in the slide above.

Interview Schedule

- Demographic questionnaire
- Unprompted musical task
  - play 12 bars of 1st Movement of Devienne's Sonata for Clarinet in Bb and Pianoforte (Clarinet part)
  - explain thinking
- Prompted musical task
  - play 12 bars of 1st Movement of Devienne's Sonata for Clarinet in Bb and Pianoforte while 'thinking about musical shaping'
  - explain thinking
- Explain experiences of shaping music

The interview schedule was developed using the findings of questionnaire study, but also designed to incorporate practical music making. Participants were asked to bring their instrument and some music they were working on. They were given a consent form, and a brief demographic questionnaire that asked about their name, gender, age group, main instrument, years of experience, musical status, current musical genres played, and other musical interests.

They were asked to play an unnamed brief musical extract selected for its potential for musical shaping and its probable unfamiliarity to violinists. This extract was the first 12 bars of the first movement of the second Sonata for Clarinet in Bb and Pianoforte by François Devienne (1759–1803). Participants were asked to play this as they would normally approach a new piece of music, and then describe what they were thinking about as they were playing. After this discussion, they were told that the study was about musical shape or shaping, and they were asked to play the extract again, while thinking about the shape of the music, or how they were shaping the music. They were then asked to describe their thoughts once more. This procedure was inspired by the ideas of retrospective protocol analysis (Ericsson & Simon, 1993), though I found the formal procedures used in that method too formal in piloting, so it was modified so that participants were asked to explain their thinking in the way that they would to a violin student. Although this meant that we could not trace participants' thoughts exactly, it did elicit more helpful responses and had greater ecological validity.

Following the musical task, participants were asked how this compared to their usual experiences of shaping music, what they meant when they referred to musical shape, and about shaping pieces they had brought with them or knew well. The

schedule contents and order were flexible to ensure that the interviews felt natural and comfortable for the participants. At the end of the interview, participants signed the consent form and were compensated for their time.

The interviews were recorded using a Panasonic SD700 HD Camcorder and a Sony ICD-UX200 Digital Voice Recorder.
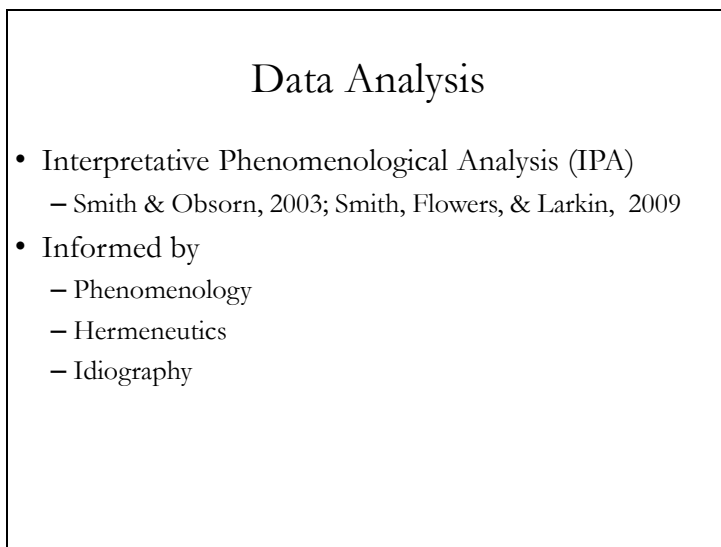
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. This approach allowed participants' thoughts and experiences to be examined idiographically and in detail. Data analysis proceeded according to the guidelines for IPA provided by its pioneers (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Obsorn, 2003). IPA has been developed fairly recently by psychologist Jonathan A. Smith, from Birkbeck. It has been used in much health psychology research, and an increasing amount of music research. It is a qualitative research approach, and it is concerned with the ways in which people make sense of their experiences. It is informed by phenomenology, particularly in terms of Husserl's idea of 'going back to the things themselves'; hermeneutics and the idea of interpretation, in that as a researcher, one is making sense of the participants making sense of an experience; and idiography, in its focus on the individual, rather than general rules

The actual process of IPA involves initial summarizing of the interview, transcription, two distinct stages of coding, one focusing on the phenomenological aspects, and the other on the interpretative aspects of the interview, and the formation of themes. I listened to the recordings throughout the coding process, and the coding was validated by another researcher. The interviews are compared only when the coding is complete, and then an integrative analysis is performed.
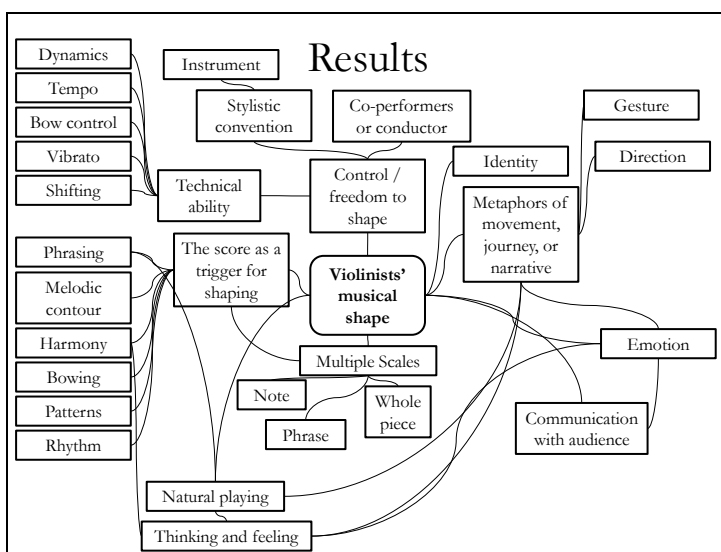
This slide shows the preliminary results of the integrative analysis of all five interviews. You can see a considerable amount of information here, and not all of it will be discussed in this paper. And when I am presenting a theme, I may not be able to show evidence from all participants, as I would in a written paper.

I'd like to focus on three strands: firstly, some of the technicalities of musical shape (shown to the left hand side of the diagram); the idea of movement, emotion, and metaphor; and the relationship between identity and musical shape.

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The technicalities of musical shape

- The score as a trigger for musical shape
  - mirroring the contour with dynamic shape:

Darragh: 'I suppose we talk in classical and baroque repertoire, in particular, in terms of tessitura, a lot, so the actual, following the contour, following the shape. And you can literally, in this piece, for example, one can actually put a piece of graph paper in front of it very easily, and just see the contours, a little hill going up and down, and essentially, that tessitura in classical music without these [notated] dynamics, already, that's, kind of, a rough rule, isn't it, for dynamic con-, you know, dynamic rising and falling.' [00:04:30]

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All five participants seemed to view the score as a trigger for musical shape. Most commonly, they discussed mirroring the contour with dynamic shape (which also encompassed intensity and phrasing) – Tina, Elsie, and Darragh all discussed this; here is a quote from Darragh:

Darragh: 'I suppose we talk in classical and baroque repertoire, in particular, in terms of tessitura, a lot, so the actual, following the contour, following the shape. And you can literally, in this piece, for example, one can actually put a piece of graph paper in front of it very easily, and just see the contours, a little hill going up and down, and essentially, that tessitura in classical music without these [notated] dynamics, already, that's, kind of, a rough rule, isn't it, for dynamic con-, you know, dynamic rising and falling.' [00:04:30]

But this is not a fixed rule; it is a starting point, and participants commented to that effect.

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The technicalities of musical shape

- The score as a trigger for musical shape
  - contour, intervallic relationships, and harmony

Elsie: 'Every note should have some kind of shape. And every phrase needs to have a shape. And it all depends on whether the note is important or not, whether the harmony's important or not' [00:13:30]

Tina: 'it might be that , I don't know, that the melody's there, the first violin's got something to play that's just a, basically a scale, but underneath, I dunno, halfway along, you get three dark chromatic chords, and ... that might influence how they play, it might change the intensity of what ... they play, they might want a lot of tension into that note, to draw attention to it, or, collectively, whoever's playing, say a quartet ... might want to increase tension into that note ...' [01:09:30]

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For some participants, this observation of melodic contour was linked with a keen awareness of the intervallic relationships between each note and of the harmonic implications of the music. Bridget commented that she found harmony 'difficult', but was aware that other performers found it useful [00:38:00]. Both Elsie and Victor saw it as very important, with Victor describing it as 'incredibly powerful', [0011:30] and Elsie commenting,

Elsie: 'Every note should have some kind of shape. And every phrase needs to have a shape. And it all depends on whether the note is important or not, whether the harmony's important or not' [00:13:30]

Harmony was seen as an indicator of tension and emotion by Victor, Elsie, and Tina, who described a specific example of shaping being influenced by the underlying harmony of a phrase:

Tina: ' ... it might be that , I don't know, that the melody's there, the first violin's got something to play that's just a, basically a scale, but underneath, I dunno, halfway along, you get three dark chromatic chords, and ... that might influence how they play, it might change the intensity of what ... they play, they might want a lot of tension into that note, to draw attention to it, or, collectively, whoever's playing, say a quartet ... might want to increase tension into that note ...' [01:09:30]

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The technicalities of musical shape

• The score as a trigger for musical shape
  – contour, intervallic relationships, and harmony

Victor: 'I suppose the harmonic rhythm, combined with the direction of the notes, and the patterns I see.' [00:12:00]

'Elsie: Yeah, 'cos harmony is, it's everything for me, it's the foundation, you know, and it always fascinates me how, let's just take four notes, that's a chord, right? or even three notes, but four is much nicer! [laughs] If you just change one of those notes, you will notice that you will feel differently, something changes, it changes your mood, it takes you in another direction, doesn't it? ... You know, that's how I feel the phrases, and that's how I know where to go, because of what's happening with the harmony underneath, you know.' [00:32:00]

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Harmony was used very much in conjunction with other technical aspects of the music. Victor commented that his shaping of the music was prompted by the harmonic rhythm indicated in the score, in conjunction with the direction of the notes (a movement-based metaphor to describe the melodic contour) and other patterns of notes, which would correspond in part to phrasing markings, but probably also in part to gestalt patterns (Deliège, 1987):

Victor: 'I suppose the harmonic rhythm, combined with the direction of the notes, and the patterns I see.' [00:12:00]

Because of the importance of harmony for Victor, his response to every other trigger for his shaping had to correspond with his understanding of the harmony, to create a 'coherent' and 'balanced' performance [00:27:30].

It became clear that the harmony was of utmost importance to Victor and Elsie. Victor described it as a sustaining force in the music; Elsie appeared to 'feel' it in terms of both movement and emotion, and allow it to show her where the music was going.

Elsie: 'Yeah, 'cos harmony is everything for me, it's the foundation, you know, and it always fascinates me how, let's just take four notes, that's a chord, or even three notes, but four is much nicer! [laughs] If you just change one of those notes, you will notice that you will feel differently, something changes, it changes your mood, it takes you in another direction, doesn't it? ... You know, that's how I feel the phrases, and that's how I know where to go, because of what's happening with the harmony underneath, you know.' [00:32:00]

I haven't got time to go into everything in detail, but other aspects of the score that provided triggers for shaping included the bowing markings, patterns in the music (as mentioned by Victor, above) and the rhythm. Tina, in particular, discussed the shaping of syncopated rhythms in Bartok and the emphasis given to each note. Overall, the score was seen as an important source of information, and acted as a trigger for shaping, but it was also seen by some participants as a connection with the composer.

The technicalities of musical shape

- Using technique to control the musical shape
  - Right Hand:
    - Bow pressure
    - Bow speed
  - Left Hand:
    - Shifting
    - Vibrato
    - Finger contact
  - Co-ordinated action
    - Dynamics
    - Tempo
    - Tone colour

There were also interesting issues concerning performers' control or freedom to shape the music, which was potentially limited or enabled by their technical ability. At a minimum, technical competence was seen to allow the melodic shape of the music to come through to the listener [Darragh, 00:23:30]. All participants, however, discussed using different techniques to shape the music: their technique allowed them to control their shaping of the music. They discussed aspects of the music that were controlled principally with the right hand and the bow, such as dynamics and variations in tone colour; aspects of the music that were controlled principally by the left hand, such as vibrato and shifting, and even the type of touch used on the string with the left hand; and aspects of the music that required more equal co-ordination between the two hands, such as tempo fluctuations. Bridget, for example, discussed having more bow at a certain point in the music, adding vibrato, bow pressure, and volume [00:30:30]. She described these and features such as dynamics or tone, as 'the building blocks' of shape [00:53:30].

Darragh used dynamics to shape the music in response to the contour, and also varied the tempo. He described metronomic playing as 'boring' [00:19:30] and without much shape [00:22:00], and described 'pulling [the tempo], just fractionally, forwards or backwards' [00:19:30]. Tina discussed an even more subtle tempo variation. She described 'playing on the front edge of the tempo' [00:10:00]. This idea implies a kind of perceived tempo 'window' within which a performer can play a piece at the same tempo, but with a feeling of increased or decreased motion. She clarified that this was not a tempo change, even in the sense of *rubato*, but rather 'a sense of line through' [00:10:30] the music. She also described this as a sense of the performer's intention, which she likened to prosody in speech.

Overall, the technical ability to modify parameters such as dynamics, tone colour (including bow control, chosen shifting patterns, and vibrato), and tempo, was an important component of the shaping process, as it enabled the performers to shape the music as they desired.

Performers also discussed their freedom to shape in relation to stylistic convention, their co-performers or conductor, and their willingness to relinquish technical control and relax in order for the music to be expressed in an optimal way.

Movement, emotion, and metaphor			
	Ppt		Ppt
'falling'	V, D	Tension	T, B, E, V
'rising, moving upwards'	D	'like an elastic band ... it has to release'	B
'moving underneath you'	E		
'forward movement'/'moving forwards'	T, E	'resolving onto home ground'	D
'coming back' or 'coming away'	T, V, D		
'heading/going/leading towards'	T	'flow'	V, D
'what note we lean to'/'leaning'	T, D	'spin the sound'	B
'treading water'	T	'drawing the sound out'	B
'it just keeps going'	E		
'going somewhere'	V, E	'push it out'	B
The music 'searching'	E		

The second strand I'd like to discuss is movement, emotion and metaphor. All five participants discussed the music using metaphorical language that involved movement, and some examples are shown in the table here. In particular, participants discussed the 'direction' of the music, and this was closely linked with the idea of musical shape. Bridget commented:

Bridget: 'For me, I feel if someone said 'shape', it's ... I think it means the phrasing ... And the direction that the music is taking. Kind of, which, um, notes that I'm heading towards that I want to, kind of, make important, and which, for me, is also part of the phrasing' [00:10:00]

The agency of the music's direction was divided between the music itself, and the performer, with several participants switching between the two ideas.

Movement, emotion, and metaphor

Bridget: 'but if I like was maybe to change it, if it was like, fairies hopping on the snow or something ... then it would maybe so [plays] I would just do it daintily, and light, and like a fairy, but because it's like [stamps]... Stamping your feet, it's kind of [plays] ...' [00:43:30]

🔊

Similarly, external imagery involving movement was important to several participants for their understanding of the required shape of the music. Three participants used imaginative movement metaphors: Elsie used a moving animal; Victor used the idea of a moving vehicle and putting on the handbrake; and Bridget used a fairy.

For Elsie, her own physical movement was also a way of understanding the required expression of the music. She discussed shaping a phrase in relation to physical movement:

Elsie: 'Well, the way I shape a phrase is actually, funnily enough, a lot, for me, related to how I would move, in a completely dark room, with nobody watching, it's just a bit of music, but if I was to see what movements my own body would make-' [00:29:30]

This may have been partly due to her strong background in ballet [00:30:00], but also, she claimed, the dance origins of much baroque music [00:30:00].
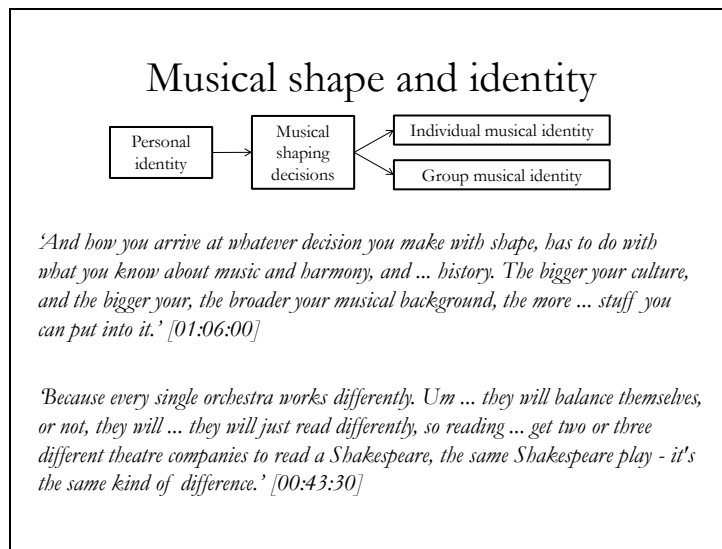
Elsie also used movement to aid her understanding of the sound and the bowing action she wished to perform. She commented that her experience of ballet had taught her movements that involved sliding the feet across the floor. The comments her ballet teacher had made appeared to have had a large influence on the way Elsie understood her playing, in terms of the contact with the string and in terms of the timing of the shaping of the note:

Elsie: 'because I did ballet, I know a lot of these, you know, sliding across the floor, and you can, my teacher always used to say, feel the floor; feel connected to the movement you're making' you know, if you're doing a, one of these kind of glissad-ey things, or even lifting your leg up, you have to feel, you know, feel it all the way through, the whole journey of that step, from one to the next, do you know what I mean? ... Yeah, so, even those two notes, you know [plays] up, and then you [plays] That down bow is the same as me going [moves feet] you know what I mean? It's the same kind of thing. Feeling the floor, and feeling the bow.' [00:45:00]

Here, a movement habitually made in one part of the body was understood in terms of the movement to be made with another part in order to make a particular sound. This appears to be a metaphor of a *glissade* being used for the bowing action and the sound produced, and is therefore crossing the domain of body parts and then linking with the domain of sound. In each domain, the dynamics of the experience, the way it changes over time, remains the same.

This was not a unique experience: Elsie gave other examples of understanding the music in terms of physical gesture; both Elsie and Darragh discussed thinking about allowing the music time to breathe; and Tina discussed the effectiveness of gestures for indicating musical shape, when teaching [00:12:30] and in rehearsals with her quartet [00:13:00, 00:21:30, and 00:57:30].

This use of an embodied understanding may reflect the work of Marc Leman, who suggests that gesture is a more direct way of understanding musical experience than words (Leman, 2008). Tina herself referred to the work of Dalcroze (see Bachmann, 1994; Jacques-Dalcroze, 1967; Juntunen, 2004), saying that she hoped to attend a course on the technique to aid her teaching of, particularly, musical expression [00:13:30 and 00:42:00].

Musical shape and identity

'And how you arrive at whatever decision you make with shape, has to do with what you know about music and harmony, and ... history. The bigger your culture, and the bigger your, the broader your musical background, the more ... stuff you can put into it.' [01:06:00]

'Because every single orchestra works differently. Um ... they will balance themselves, or not, they will ... they will just read differently, so reading ... get two or three different theatre companies to read a Shakespeare, the same Shakespeare play - it's the same kind of difference.' [00:43:30]

The third strand I would like to discuss is musical shape and identity. I would like to focus specifically on just one participant in relation to this third strand. Victor, in particular, saw the musical score as a coded emotional message or idea provided by the composer. He, as a performer, had to interpret that code to try to find that emotional idea and convey it to the listener. Victor saw various aspects of the musical shaping as things that he could make choices about, but he also felt that there was only one way that he could shape the music at the present time, in order for it to make sense to him. He did not enjoy changing the way he shaped too frequently, such as when playing with different orchestras [00:43:30]. This was perhaps partly because of the way in which Victor saw every aspect of his knowledge of the music, and therefore his identity, as influencing his shaping decisions. He commented:

Victor: 'And how you arrive at whatever decision you make with shape, has to do with what you know about music and harmony, and ... history. The bigger your culture, and the bigger your, the broader your musical background, the more ... stuff you can put into it.' [01:06:00]

Victor also saw musical shaping as a hallmark of a group's identity. Orchestras were seen to develop their own identity through the shaping they applied to the music that was comparable to the differing interpretations of other realisations of texts:

Victor: 'Because every single orchestra works differently. Um ... they will balance themselves, or not, they will ... they will just read differently, so reading ... get two or three different theatre companies to read a Shakespeare, the same Shakespeare play - it's the same kind of difference.' [00:43:30]

Musical shape and identity
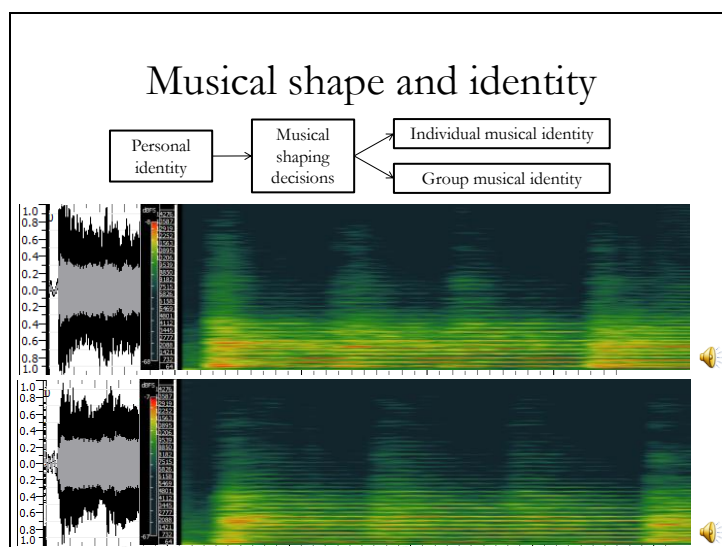
Although this was influenced by conductors working with the orchestra, this was only seen to occur when the composer had earned enough respect from the players to justify them changing their musical shaping. Conductors were sometimes

seen as a link with an orchestra's historical roots and its traditional shaping; but the orchestra's musical shaping identity was seen to remain largely consistent under different conductors. Victor used this identity to name his own orchestra as the 'European' London orchestra, and another London orchestra as the 'American' London orchestra. Each of these labels was exemplified, or perhaps defined, by very specific ways of playing concerning the sense of horizontal line in the music and the type of attack used on each note.

Victor: 'American playing is much more vertical, and immediate. Brash, bright, a bit like Hollywood films. And the European tradition is um ... there's an organic idea behind the notes, which comes from the historical, cultural, um ... surrounding of where that piece was created from. And it's a long, uninterrupted line from, from Bach through Handel, Mozart, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruch, and the rest of it.' [00:46:00]

Victor: 'in my experience, the European approach is much more concerned with finding out what that idea is, and then realising that the dots on the page are there because they're necessary in order to create this.' [01:00:00]

Victor: 'to me the American approach is much more, well, you take the dots, reproduce the dots ... to ... the highest, um, technical degrees, and the music is that which ... results from playing that, from re-creating those pitches.' [01:01:00]

There is a slight negativity implied here towards the American style of playing. Victor's reverence for tradition and the associated idea of the depth of understanding of the European style of playing is apparent, and seems to make him view the immediacy of the 'American' interpretation as slightly soulless. This may be a reflection of the match between his own personal identity and his group identity, and the way he views the score as a trace of the composer's wishes; or it may be an indication of the tendency to perceive an out-group more negatively than an in-group, as described by Social Identity Theory (described in Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2002).

Victor demonstrated these attacks by playing the first four notes of Beethoven's fifth Symphony. He played the excerpt firstly with a short, loud attack to the notes (the 'American' style), and secondly with a slightly slower, warmer attack (the 'European' style) [00:47:00]. The differences in these attacks can be heard, and also seen on the waveform and spectrogram. The beginning of the waveform of the 'American' style (top) is very straight, whereas the 'European' style (bottom) has a curved edge, indicating a slightly more gradual increase in loudness. The spectrogram of the 'American' version shows a faster decay between each note, particularly in the higher harmonics, than the 'European' version. It is evident that Victor sees this as a musical reality, and this contributes in a very real way to his group identity.
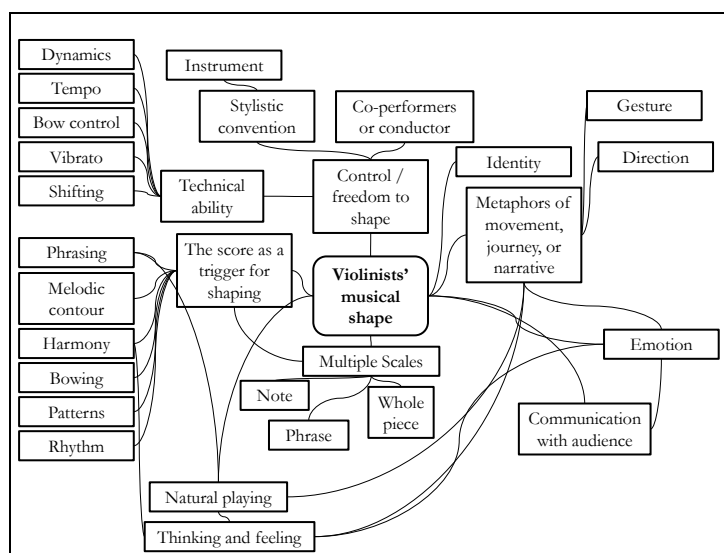
To return to the summary diagram, it is evident that the area of musical shape is complex. I've discussed three areas of this diagram (Technicalities of musical shape; Movement, emotion, and metaphor; Musical shape and identity), and I will briefly discuss how these relate to the existing literature in relevant areas.

In terms of the technicalities of musical shaping, it is clear that the performers here were aware of many score-based triggers of musical shape, and I particularly highlighted their comments concerning melodic contour and harmony, as well as mentioning rhythmic aspects of the score. Other aspects of the score were discussed in the interviews, including

dynamic markings and other written text on scores, but it is interesting that those structures we often see as 'just notes' actually play a crucial role in performers' decision-making concerning their musical shaping. The range of techniques used to vary the musical shaping was broad, and led to variations in tempo, dynamics, and tone colour. Existing research in musical performance is beginning to branch out from its extensive exploration of tempo and dynamic expression, to the study of vibrato and other aspects of tone colour (Juslin & Timmers, 2010). All of these seem to be important in the creation of musical shape and it might be that musical shape is a means of performers accessing all these techniques through a single word.

The prevalence of comments relating to movement and emotion was interesting, as was the use of metaphor. Existing research has highlighted the similarities in musical expression with human movement (Lee & Schögler, 2009; Todd, 1994), and researchers are increasingly studying our gestural responses to movement, avoiding the difficulties of representing those responses in words (Camurri et al., 2003; Cienki & Müller, 2008; Leman, 2008; Lidov, 2006; Toiviainen, Luck, & Thompson, 2010). We know already that musical performers use metaphors and imagery to help them to convey emotion in their performance (Barten, 1998; Persson, 2001; Woody, 2002); it is notable that the idea of shaping music is tied up with this, as well as the technical aspects of changing the sound.

And finally, the idea of an individual expressing their musical identity through performance is not new (Clarke, Cook, Harrison, & Thomas, 2005; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2009, 2002); but existing research in identity often focuses on a fairly large-scale view of music, such as the identity of being a musician as a whole, or the fact of liking a particular genre. What this research seems to show is that identity also plays a role at the smaller-scale shaping of the music. We saw a performer who uses every aspect of their personal identity to shape the music, and who recognises very specific features of musical shape as hallmarks of group identity. This is despite the reported general trend of increasing similarities between orchestral performances (Tolanski, 2003), and it clearly carries considerable meaning for this participant.

Overall then, we can see that for these violinists, musical shaping is intertwined with both the technical and emotional aspects of musical performance, and is closely linked with at least one of the participants' personal identities.

To what extent can these findings be generalised to other musicians? Obviously, the sample size is very small, and the idiographic nature of IPA encourages only very cautious generalisation (Smith, et al., 2009). However, it is possible to look at each participant as a whole, and to identify similarities between them, and I hope some of those have come across. It might therefore be possible for some theoretical generalisation to be made to other violinists of similar experience. Future studies will extend the exploration of musical shaping to other instrumentalists, including harpsichordists – it will be interesting to see the extent to which this group of instrumentalists describe similar and different things when describing their experiences of shaping music. If similarities are found in participants with different experience, then these have the potential to be explored as possible generalisations of the findings.

There is much more to explore, and the data are being analysed in more depth; however, I hope I've given you a flavour of some of the complexities of violinists' experiences of shaping music.

Following the delivery of this paper, questions arose concerning the nature of Victor's descriptions of the 'American' and 'European' styles of playing. It was acknowledged that although there were perceivable differences between Victor's demonstrations of each style, the nature of each style may have been exaggerated by Victor to help him make his point. In other words, it might be that the differences discussed here are not in evidence in performances or recordings of the orchestras discussed. Indeed, some authors highlight the perceived lack of variety between individual artists or orchestras (Tolanski, 2003; Wen, 1992). There are similarities, however, between the playing style of the Berlin Philharmonic as described by Tolanski (2003) and Victor's descriptions of his own orchestra, suggesting some reality in his descriptions of the styles. Confirming this would be beyond the scope of the current study; however, the important point for this paper is that Victor is using this idea of the two different styles of playing to situate his own playing within his own identity and its associated ideological position. Additionally, members of the audience noted the existence of 'schools' of violin playing, an area that will be explored further in relation to this issue.

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