

A Heretic's Guide To Musicianship

Kevin Noe

Rekindling the lost art of interpretation



HARMONY TOURS
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A Heretic's Guide to Conducting

Score study and interpretation today ...



“The emperor has no clothes”

We never actually learned how to do this!

First we need to *understand*, and then be able to articulate and teach the ways that the notes on the page influence *expression* and *communication*...
the way they work together to become more than notes...

... the way they become *stories*...
our musical stories...

W. A. MOZART
Sinfonie in g

KV 550
<1. Fassung>

Molto Allegro

Vollendet Wien, 25. Juli 1788

Flauto

Oboi

Fagotti

Corno
in Sib/B alto

Corno
in Sol/G

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello
e Basso

12

19

“INTERPRETATION”

*“the particular way in which something
is understood and explained”*

But, do we understand what the music
we are making and teaching *means*?
Do we understand what it means *to us*? *Really*?

Or are we presenting and teaching...the facts?
Ab, C#, quarter note...

*For me, this is the deepest,
loneliest secret in our profession*

We don't know how to study...
how to interpret, how to understand.

We don't know what the music means... to us...
And we don't know how to know...

And it's harder to care when the story isn't yours.

Recordings?
“It goes like this!”

Much like playing the Joker,
what we do,
is essentially covers.



Consider covers in
popular music...

Meryl Streep
Heath Leger's *Joker*

A “Noet” on recordings



Sparing use of recordings:

Check out *several* diverse recordings very late in your study process.

Recordings are not the script...
The score is the script...



But if *understanding* doesn't mostly come from copying recordings....

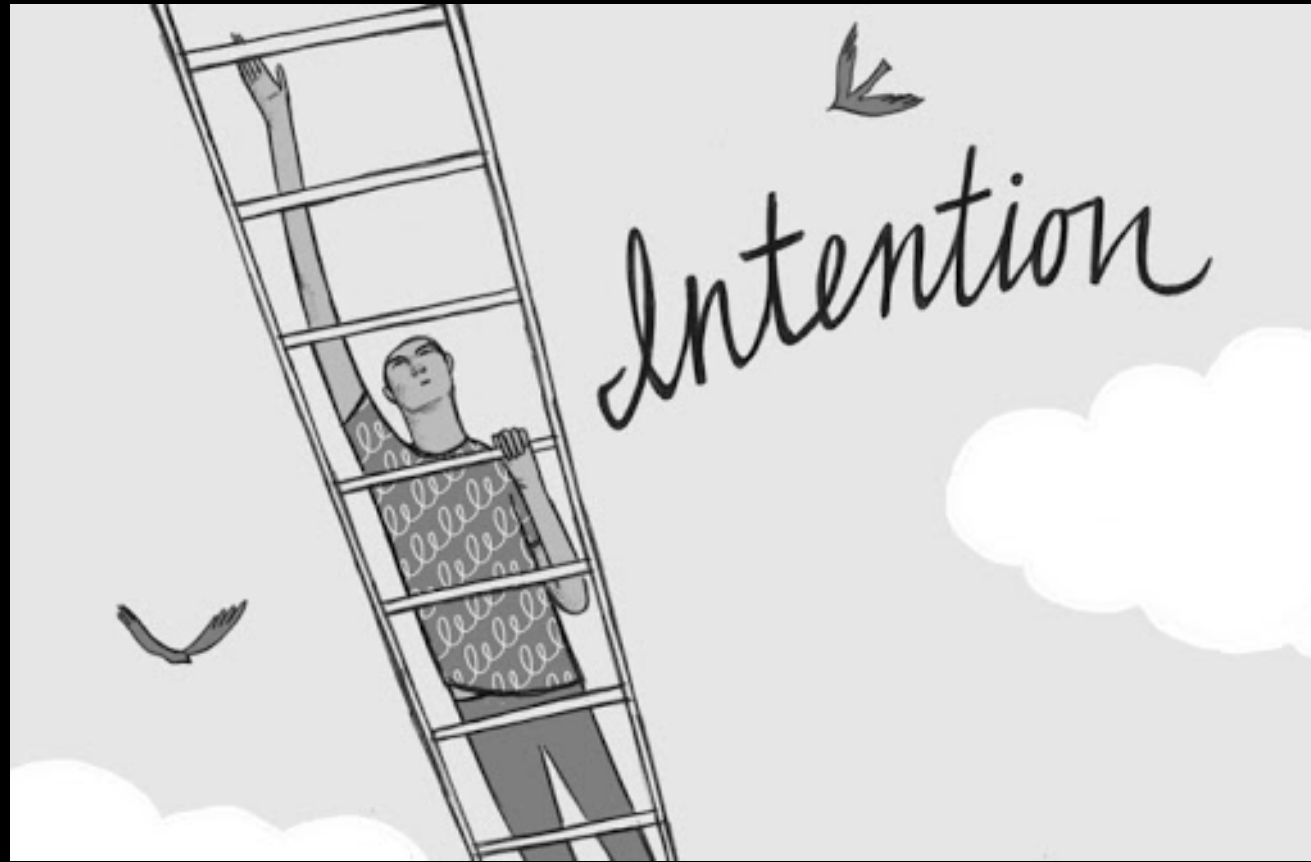
How do we do this?

The goal of score is to *understand*
the musical story so deeply



that you can
retell it in your own voice.

Score Study builds



*..when you know and care
about the story you are
trying to tell...*

*you know what you
need to accomplish....*

- Confident
- Calm
- Listen
- Responsive
- Flexible
- Efficient



3 stages

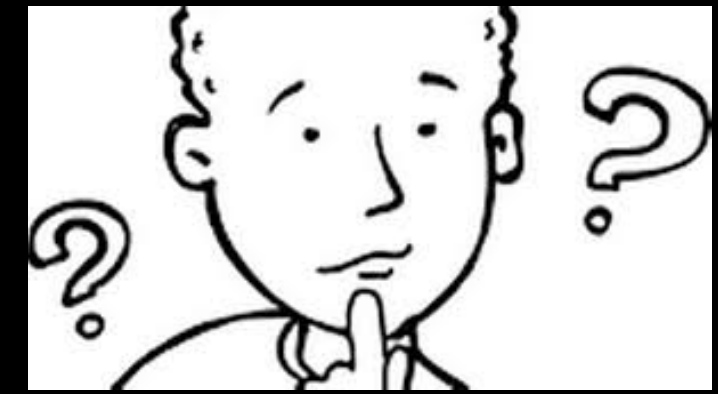


1. Context

What IS this story?

- Background
- Form
- Initial Marking

Background



What IS this? How does it fit in?

“Background” has many meanings and points of entry

Let's use Mozart
Symphony no. 40



Focus on discoveries
that can be made *audible*...

- Titles ~ what is this?
- Dates
- Composer
- Background
- Cultural history
- Reception
- Influence
- Peers
- Other Arts

Symphony in g minor

Other similar works from Mozart at the time.

What about the other 40 symphonies?

Is *this* symphony special in any way?

Datiert Wien, Juli 1782

Flauto I, II
Oboe I, II
Clarinetto I, II
in La
Fagotto I, II
Corno I, II
in Re
Clarino I, II
in Re
Timpani
in Re-La-D-A
Violino I
Violino II
Viola I, II
Violoncello
e Basso

Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum, Online Publications (2006)

Mozart ₃

Sinfonie in C *Symphony no. 36*
 („Linzer Sinfonie“)
 KV 425

“Linz”

Entstanden Linz, Ende Oktober/Anfang November 1783

Adagio

Oboe I, II

Fagotto I, II

Corno I, II in D^{ol}C

Clarino I, II in D^{ol}C

Timpani in D^{ol}-Sol/C-G

Violino I

Violino II

Viola I, II

Violoncello e Basso

6

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Mozart ⁶³

Sinfonie in D *Symphony no. 38*
(„Prager Sinfonie”) *“Prague”*
KV 504

Datiert Wien, 6. Dezember 1786

Adagio

Flauto I, II
Oboe I, II
Fagotto I, II
Corno I, II
in Re/D
Clarino I, II
in Re/D
Timpani
in Re-La/D-A
Violino I
Violino II
Viola I, II
Violoncello
e Basso

W. A. MOZART
Sinfonie in Es

Mozart,
Symphony no. 39

KV 543

Vollendet Wien, 26. Juni 1788

Adagio

Flauto

Clarineti in Sib/B

Fagotti

Corni in Mib/Es

Clarini in Mib/Es

Timpani in Mib-Sib/Es-B

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello e Basso

“Jupiter”

(„Jupiter-Sinfonie“)

KV 551

Vollendet Wien, 10. August 1788

Allegro vivace

7

p

f

p

f

tutti

f

Violoncelli

Why do they all start with a bang?

Why are those all in Major keys?

How many are in minor keys total?

g-minor characteristics?

f# minor?

Datiert Wien, Juli 1782

Flauto I, II a^2 f tr

Oboe I, II a^2 f tr

Clarinetto I, II a^2 f tr

Fagotto I, II a^2 f tr p

Corno I, II a^2 f

Clarino I, II a^2 f

Timpani tr f

Violino I f tr p

Violino II f tr p

Viola I, II f tr p

Violoncello e Basso f tr p

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Mozart ₃
Sinfonie in C *Symphony no. 36*
 („Linzer Sinfonie“) *“Linz”*
 KV 425

Entstanden Linz, Ende Oktober/Anfang November 1783

Adagio

Oboe I, II
Fagotto I, II
Corno I, II in D
Clarin I, II in D
Timpani in D
Violino I
Violino II
Viola I, II
Violoncello e Basso

© 1971 by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel

Mozart ⁶³

Sinfonie in D *Symphony no. 38*
 („Prager Sinfonie”) *“Prague”*
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Flauto I, II
Oboe I, II
Fagotto I, II
Corno I, II
in Re/D
Clarino I, II
in Re/D
Timpani
in Re-La/D-A

Violino I
Violino II
Viola I, II
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e Basso

W. A. MOZART
Sinfonie in Es

Mozart,
Symphony no. 39

KV 543

Vollendet Wien, 26. Juni 1788

Adagio

Flauto

Clarineti
in Sib/B

Fagotti

Corni
in Mib/Es

Clarini
in Mib/Es

Timpani
in Mib-Sib/Es-B

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello
e Basso

4

“Jupiter”

W. A. MOZART
Sinfonie in C
(„Jupiter-Sinfonie“)

KV 551

Vollendet Wien, 10. August 1788

Allegro vivace

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Soprano voice, the middle for the Alto voice, and the bottom for the Bass voice. The music begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The Soprano part starts with a whole note chord, followed by a series of eighth notes. The Alto and Bass parts provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The system ends with a double bar line.

Mozart⁶³

W. A. MOZART *Symphony no. 40*

Sinfonie in g

KV 550

<1. Fassung>

Molto Allegro

Vollendet Wien, 25. Juli 1788

Flauto

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Corno
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p

p

p

p

6

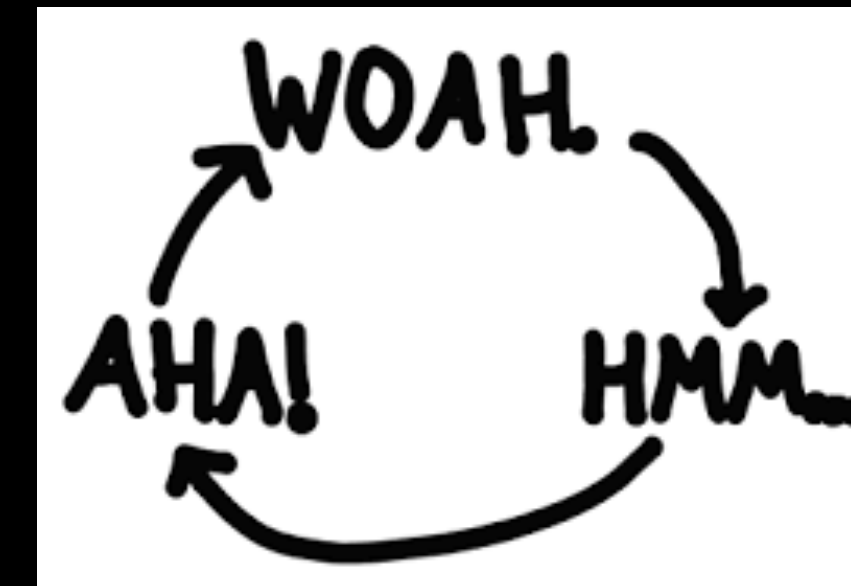
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SCORE STUDY

$$\begin{array}{r} 85\% \text{ analysis} \\ + 15\% \text{ intuition} \\ \hline = 100\% \text{ authentic} \end{array}$$

SCORE STUDY is 85% *Analysis*..?

What's "Analysis"?



"NOTICING"

3 stages



1. Context

Background, Form, Initial Marking

2. Deciding

Commit to audible expressions
of your ideas

How does one DO this?

On what basis?

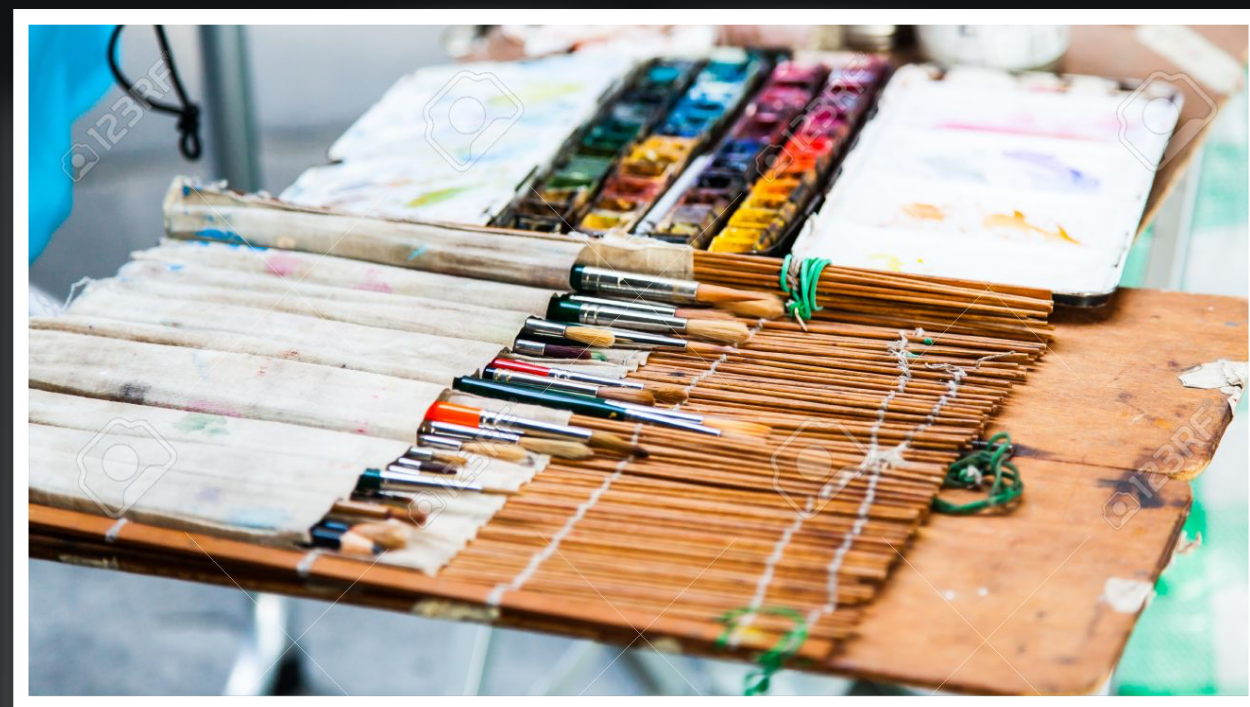


What ARE we looking for?

DECIDING

The Storytellers

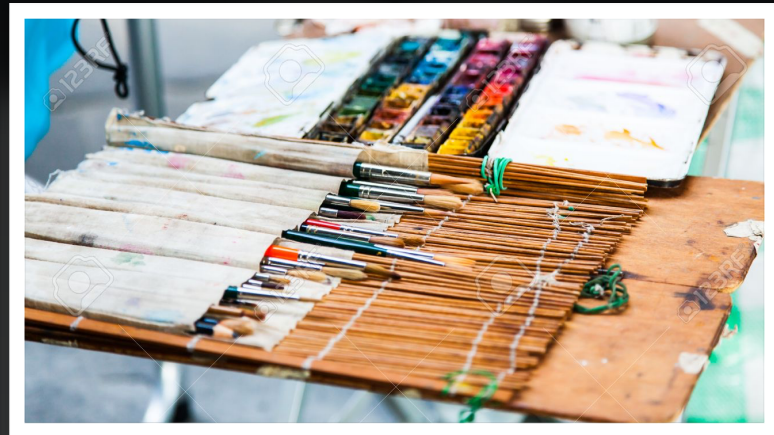
Tools of Interpretation



C H L R O M I

- CONTEXT
- HARMONY
- LENGTH
- REGISTER
- ORCHESTRATION
- MARKINGS
- INTUITION

Making decisions



The Storytellers Tools of Interpretation

*All there is!
The usual order!*

Harmony

Length

Register

All = tension and release

- CONTEXT

Background. What IS this?
Identity – framing – mindset

Title/ Contrapuntal/ Rhythmic/ Style
*Harmonic Motion / *Newness*

- HARMONY

Why? “Western Art”
Tension and Release

Stress dissonance
Release into consonance

- LENGTH

Why? Speech!
(Slurs = length) (Little notes lead to big notes)
Tension and Release

“Longer is stronger”

- REGISTER

Why? Speech!
(shape of the line... the contour)
Tension and Release

Up when up, and down
when down. Except bass lines

- ORCHESTRATION

Who? Cl then bsn....
Why not the other way around?

(color, adding and subtracting voices)

Color, Personality, Identity

Consider your parents?

- MARKINGS

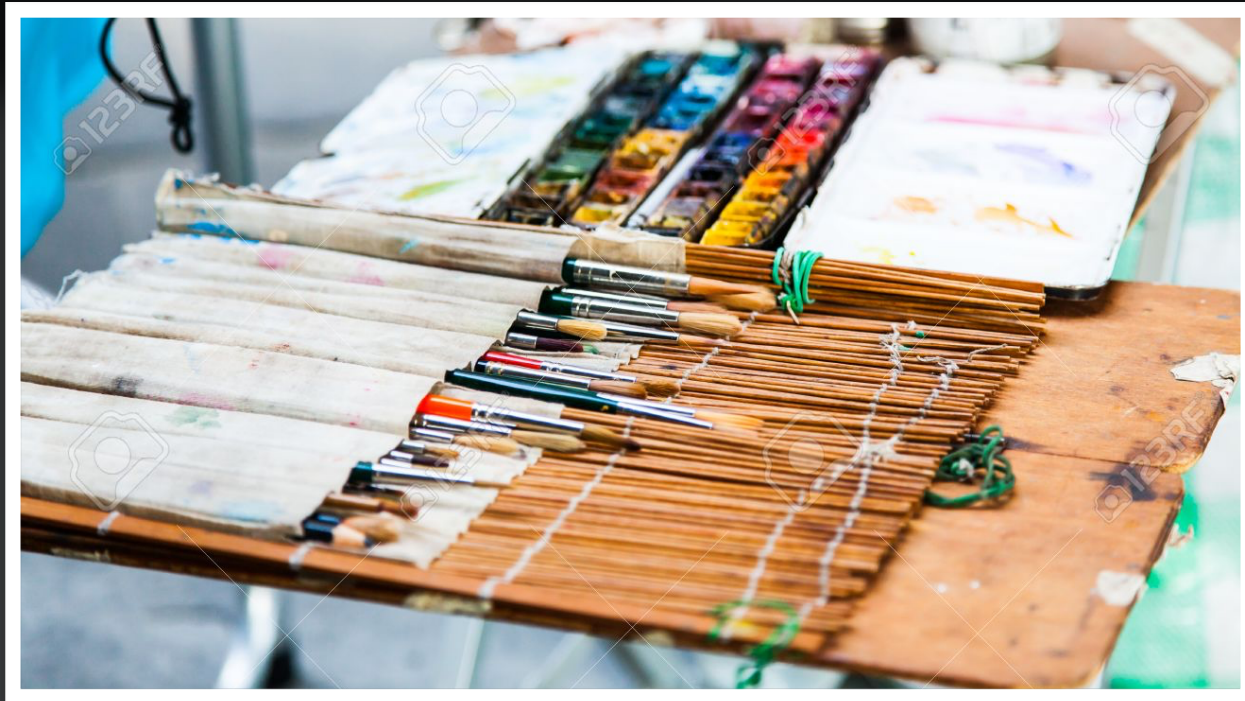
Dynamics, articulations, tempi, etc.
(think of them as confirmations or qualifiers)

- INTUITION

85% Noticing, 15% Intuition
85% Stock, 15% Garnishes

Like making a great soup!
What's *primary*?

Tools of Interpretation



CHLROMI

Let's USE these...!

And let's PLAY!

- CONTEXT
- HARMONY
- LENGTH
- REGISTER
- ORCHESTRATION
- MARKINGS
- INTUITION

W. A. MOZART
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Oboi

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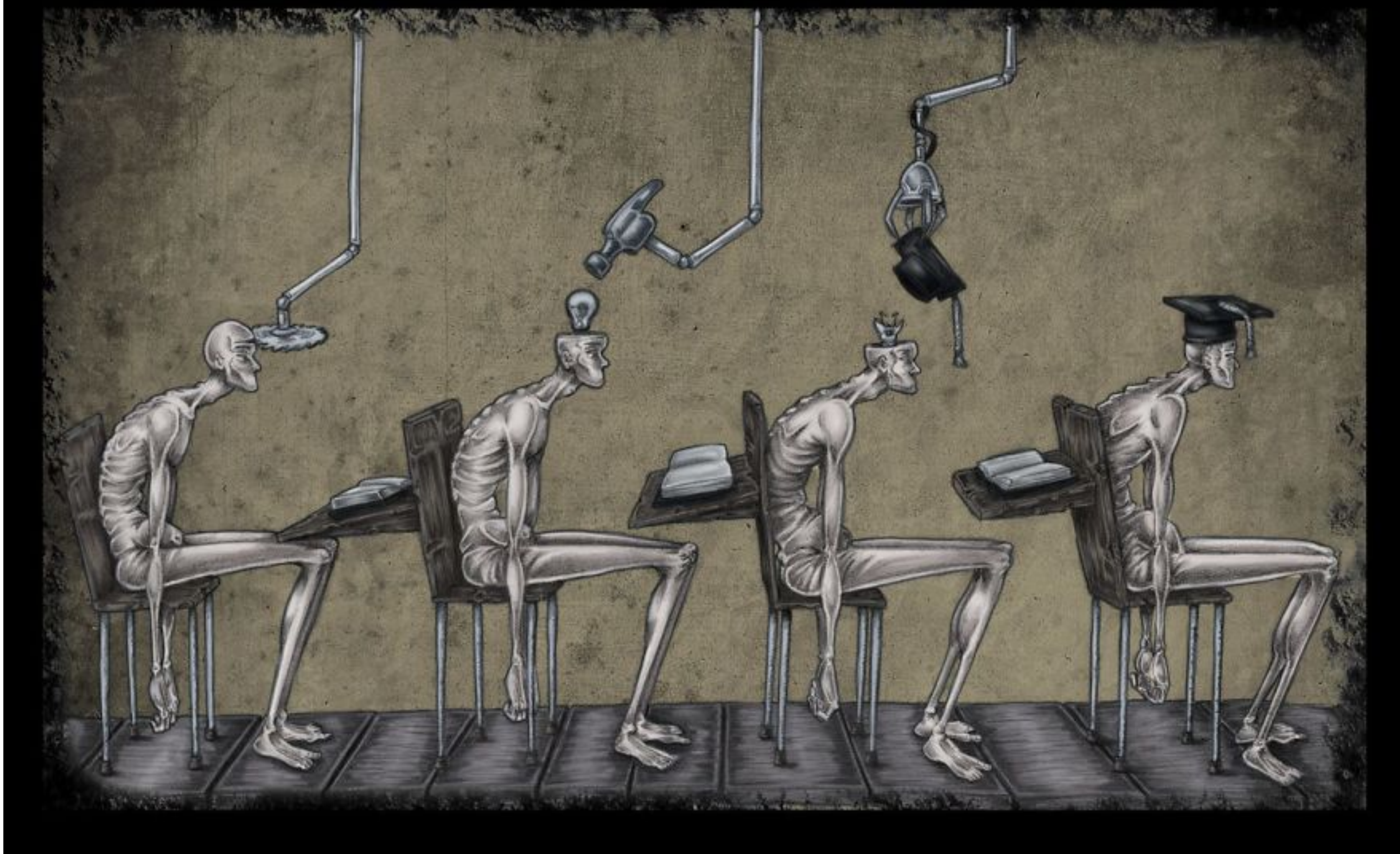
Viola

Violoncello
e Basso

6

12

19

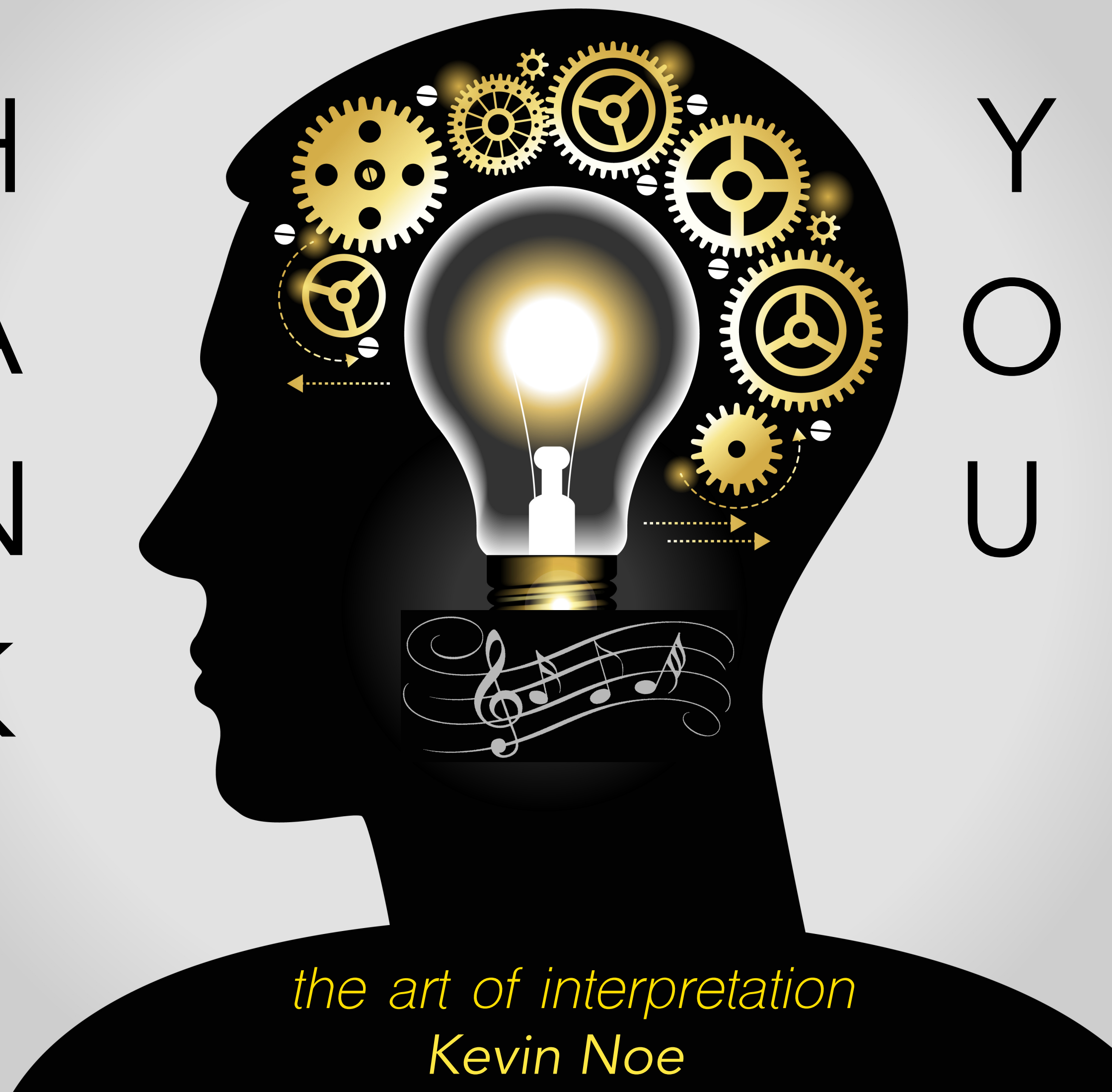




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