

RESEARCH PROJECT

Interpreting the Unheard:

Constructing Musical Meaning from Unpublished Piano Manuscripts by Guido Alberto Fano.

ABSTRACT

How do pianists construct interpretations of musical works that lack an established performance tradition? When no recordings, pedagogical traditions, or interpretative conventions exist, performers become active researchers, integrating philological investigation, musical analysis, historical contextualization, and artistic experimentation into a single creative process.

Using the unpublished piano manuscripts of Guido Alberto Fano (1875–1961) as a case study, the project examines the dynamic relationship between musical philology and performance, exploring how editorial and analytical decisions influence interpretation and how performance itself contributes to the production of musical understanding and knowledge.

Adopting a *Practice as Research* methodology, the study combines archival research, critical editing, manuscript analysis, and reflective piano practice. Interpretation is understood as an evolving process and interpretative hypotheses are continuously tested through performance and documented using practice journals, recordings of practice sessions, and autoethnographic reflection. Performance thus becomes a process of inquiry rather than simply a final outcome.

As complementary empirical strand, the project investigates also the different approaches adopted by professional musicians when studying previously unheard repertoire. Through questionnaires, interviews, and experimental observation, it seeks to understand how performers make interpretative decisions in the absence of an existing tradition and whether shared methodological patterns can be identified.

The project aims to produce the first critical edition and performances of Fano's unpublished piano works while proposing a broader methodological model for interpreting historical repertoire without established performance traditions. More generally, it contributes to current debates in artistic research by demonstrating how philological inquiry and creative performance can jointly generate new forms of musical knowledge.