Doing Collaborative Research on Symphonic Orchestra Audiences

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Learning by Example in Humanities and Social Science Research

Edited by Karin Bijsterveld · Aagje Swinnen

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Doing Collaborative Research on Symphonic Orchestra Audiences: Interventionist Ethnography of Music Practices

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Introduction

In the social sciences and humanities, collaboration across disciplines, including the arts, increasingly features as an extension of the repertoire of conventional research methods. As a programmatic ideal, it is thought to address challenges that higher education institutes and universities face in circulating and valorizing the knowledge they produce. As Georgina Born and Andrew Barry (2014) have argued, the current prominence of collaboration across disciplinary boundaries is linked to changing relations between science, technology, and society, an increasing need for the accountability and reflexivity of research agendas, and the claim that innovation in knowledge societies depends on interdisciplinary collaboration (2014, p. 1). A similar move toward forms of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration can be seen in the arts. Today, art worlds are often heterogeneous and include a broad range of actors and audiences. In contrast to traditional artistic production in an art academic and primarily crafts-based environment, artworks are now often created in academic, social, and economic settings that are institutionally diverse.

In our chapter, we will focus on collaborative research carried out by the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM).[1] This inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration between an orchestra, a higher arts education institute, and a university situated in the South of the Netherlands started from sharing a problem: how can symphonic orchestras shape new futures through innovating their practices? Each of the partners has a stake of its own in addressing this problem. Whereas the orchestra hopes to attract new audiences and strengthen its public presence, the conservatory aims to update its curricula and the academic researchers are interested in orchestral music as a major practice of cultural transmission. Reflecting on our work in the MCICM in recent years, we are interested in how the initial idea of setting up the orchestra as a laboratory for practice-based and artistic research on new concert formats and audience participation developed into an everyday reality of

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[1] The partners in the MCICM are Maastricht University (UM), the South Netherlands Philharmonic (philharmonie zuidnederland), and Zuyd University for Applied Sciences (Zuyd), which houses the Conservatorium Maastricht. The MCICM is co-funded by the three partners and by the Province of Limburg, the Netherlands.

collaborative learning. How did this collaboration play out in practice? What was successful and why? And what, perhaps, proved to be less effective?

To answer these questions, we discuss the NWO-SIA funded Artful Participation project (2017–2021) as an example of interventionist ethnographic research on symphonic music audiences (see Artful Participation, 2021, December 1). The design of this project, carried out by the partners of the MCICM, reflects the aim of the 2016 Smart Culture call for proposals that "in the area of arts and culture, fundamental and practice-oriented research can enhance each other" (Call, 2016, p. 2). This call echoed the claim that collaborative research can lead to innovation, in this case of the "ecosystem of the creative sector" (p. 2). Following this strategy, the Artful Participation project sought to combine strategic research into reasons for the declining interest in symphonic music with embedded research aimed at innovating this practice in artistically relevant ways. The collaborative research took place in a series of specifically designed experiments with audience participation in symphonic events. Our reflection on these experiments resulted in a learning model that aspires to help symphonic orchestras to innovate their practices, in particular when it comes to audience participation.

Elaborating on an experiment called The People's Salon, we will show how the practical work to make the experiments happen can be traced through the many conversations that shaped the collaborative process. To understand why orchestras focus on audiences when innovating their practices, we first provide an overview of recent developments in the symphonic sector. Next, we present several basic ideas behind the research design of the Artful Participation project and The People's Salon experiment. Reflecting on vignettes from our fieldwork through the lens of Richard Sennett's work (2012) on the rituals, pleasures, and politics of cooperation, we draw conclusions about the role of conversations in collaborative research. Following Sennett, we use the terms 'collaboration' and 'cooperation' interchangeably, as synonyms, even though we realize that they can have different meanings and connotations in various contexts.

Innovating Symphonic Music Practice

Symphonic orchestras in the Western world are faced with challenges that affect their status as cultural institutions embodying a living classical music tradition. Even when orchestras perform contemporary music, many of them seem to function more like museums. In a heterogeneous musical landscape, most of them have been focusing on a canon of symphonic works from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. This development coincided with the emergence of debates on the cultural and social relevance of symphonic orchestras, as reflected in the arguments for their funding. Starting in the 1980s, neoliberal cultural policies increasingly questioned the role of the government as the main funder of cultural institutions. In recent decades in the Netherlands, this gave rise to a long series of budget cuts, forcing several symphonic orchestras to merge, while others in fact ceased to exist. Today's market imperative introduces a paradox of legitimation: symphonic orchestras need to be funded because they are important, but if they are so important, why are there not enough people prepared to pay the full price of their tickets? Key criteria for funding continue to be linked to the need to attract new audiences and to create connections in a rapidly changing world (Ministerie van OCW, 2011, p. 37; Ministerie van OCW, 2013, p. 1; Raad voor Cultuur, 2014, pp. 41–43).

In response to these various challenges, symphony orchestras have tried to critically reevaluate and innovate their practices (Idema, 2012). Today, many orchestras engage with local communities or play music in classrooms, thus finding other sites to perform beyond the concert hall (e.g., the Scottish Nevis Ensemble, www.nevisensemble.org). Concertgoers are encouraged to read about the music they hear in real time on their smartphones with apps such as Wolfgang (www.wolfgangapp.nl/). More and more concerts can be attended through livestreaming, as if performed in a digital concert hall, where, as it is put on the website of the Berlin Philharmonic, "we play just for you" (www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home). Other orchestras, such as the Dutch Pynarello, have tried to break with concert conventions by performing without scores (www.pynarello.com), while Ensemble Modern gave the audience a role as artist in the

concert process (www.ensemble-modern.com/de/projekte/aktuell/connect-2016), aiming to re-explore the relationship between composer, musician, and audience and to enable the audience to participate in concerts more actively (Toelle & Sloboda, 2019). All of these innovations have contributed to changing the ways in which audiences participate in symphonic concerts (Peters, 2019).

Participating in What?

In the current symphonic practice, audiences are mostly conceived as listener, consumer, or amateur. In the Artful Participation project, we experimented with ways to change these roles into maker, citizen, or expert, thus actively involving audiences in programming, co-organizing, and assessing symphonic music concerts. Our research design elaborated on recent work on musicology and music sociology that aims to close the gap between page and stage (Cook, 2014), between the musical work and the practical work that needs to be done to make music happen. In line with this goal, we understand music in the making as a social, material, and situated practice (Small, 1998; Born, 2010; Hennion, 2015). Drawing on this practice approach, we studied empirically how audiences participate in music performances, using insights from fields such as audience research in the performing arts (Burland & Pitts, 2016), but also from science and technology studies (STS). A central insight from STS research on music and its instruments is that engaging users in the development of an innovation is key to its successful adoption (e.g., Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003). STS researchers have also argued that every innovation involves prescriptive choices, often implicit. This is certainly the case in the normatively charged practice of symphonic music, where aesthetic norms are constitutive of the way concerts have been organized since the early nineteenth century (Bonds, 2014).

Symphonic practice revolves around the performance of musical works. In what she calls the "Beethoven paradigm," Lydia Goehr (1992) argues that the work concept regulated how composers notated their music, how performers were expected to be true to the score to give authentic performances, and how audiences listened in silence to hear the

beauty of the work itself (see also Smithuijsen, 2001). In the Beethoven paradigm, music and aesthetic experience in general are abstract because they derive from a realm of the beautiful that is timeless. The aesthetic experience must focus on the artwork as such, while refraining from non-aesthetical aspects such as goal, function, and situation. By disregarding the original context of life, the music becomes visible as a pure work of art. Historically, this process of abstraction has also created places solely dedicated to art, such as the museum, the theater, and the concert hall. Today's classical music practice reflects many of the aesthetic assumptions of the Beethoven paradigm and its work-centeredness.

In our approach of the symphonic practice, the musical work cannot be isolated from the conditions under which it is presented. In fact, it can only exist in its relations to the lifeworld. Drawing on the ideas of philosophers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960/1989) and John Dewey (1934/2005), we are interested in how presenting musical works under different conditions leads to productive variations. Performing symphonic music, then, is a matter not of replicating earlier acts of presenting it, as argued by Gadamer, but of creating new renderings that keep the future identity and continuity of the musical work open. Dewey follows a similar line of reasoning against what he calls the "museum conception of art" (1934/2005, p. 4). Instead of understanding works of art in their external and physical existence, detached from the actual life-experience from which they emerge and in which they have consequences, we should show how the aesthetic experience is rooted in everyday experiences. We constitute the work of art through our interactions with it, using past experiences to provide it with new meanings. In our project, we radically conceptualized a musical work as an entity that has to be continually performed and worked upon to exist at all (Peters, 2019).

Following this reasoning, we understand musical performance as contributing to the life of a composition by extending its tradition in new ways. This means, first, that the performance of a musical work can be seen as extending its trajectory through actualizing it, or, in other words, giving it meaning in contemporary social, cultural, and technological contexts. Why this performance, why here, why now? Second, a musical performance has to be organized as a material and situated event that involves the work of many. In our project, we started from the

assumption that symphonic music audiences can actively contribute to the musical performance that brings music into existence. And finally, a musical work only exists as it is given value in the here and now. Conventional classical music practices seek to render excellent performances of musical works, the aesthetic value of which is considered as a given. Understanding this value as an audience member requires the cultural capital that comes from *Bildung* in the arts and a musical education. In our project, we were interested in ways to experience not-given, emerging values of symphonic music.

Creating The People's Salon

The experiments in the Artful Participation project were set up as interventionist ethnographies. These were aimed at creating events that would generate 'living' artistic experiences (Marres, 2012) as well as knowledge through collaborative making and reflecting. Actually, designing and performing concerts together with philharmonie zuidnederland was a way to learn about audience participation through observation and intervention. The experimental concerts were designed by Imogen Eve, the musician-researcher in the project, and co-organized by Ties van de Werff, responsible for the learning model that is one of the outcomes of the project. Peter Peters coordinated the project on the side of the researchers as the project's principal investigator, together with Jos Roeden on the side of the orchestra being responsible for the orchestra's programming (Artful Participation, 2021, December 1).

The People's Salon started with a 'mood board' created by Imogen Eve:

> This evening demonstrates how a community can take a shared responsibility and ownership of classical music through programming and hosting their favourite repertoire. The salon further reflects on the long history of the music salon itself, which has been a medium for classical music and the "meeting of minds." Possibly we can invite also new audience groups to partake in these salons (i.e., young people, non-regularly concert goers, etc.). (Eve, 2019, p. 1)

The project design focused on collecting stories and memories that the Friends of the Philharmonic, an association of audience members sponsoring the orchestra, shared through interviews and focus groups, where each individual was supposed to describe how a particular piece of music is valuable for them. The repertoire should consist of pieces that triggered memories and evoked shared values contained in these stories. The performance was to be held on one night as a promenade salon: the audience and musicians would gather in a room for the first piece and move on to a different room, a different piece, a different memory, and a new 'value/issue' to share. The performance was designed as an immersive experience for the audience. The repertoire had to be varied in terms of ensemble sizes, while the venue would also have to be big enough to contain a small-scale orchestra and yet intimate enough to have conjoining rooms to small spaces: "The aesthetic of this production is incredibly important and therefore we will need to ensure the space and the time for designing the space" (Eve, 2019, p. 2).

In the Fall of 2019, Van de Werff and Veerle Spronck, the PhD candidate in the project responsible for the academic research on audience participation in symphonic practices, conducted individual interviews with Friends of the Philharmonic and Van de Werff organized two focus groups. A group of twelve Friends participated in the focus groups, as well as members from the project team and Jos Roeden as the orchestra's programmer. The first meeting of the focus group gave the Friends the opportunity to share their stories and relate them to specific compositions. A longlist of works that might be performed was drafted by the research team. During a second focus group meeting, a smaller group of Friends finalized the repertoire for the evening, with the research team and Jos Roeden in an advisory role. It turned out that many of the compositions mentioned were either instrumental solo pieces or chamber music. Orchestral works selected by the Friends required a big orchestra which was not foreseen in the orchestra's schedule. The solution found was to choose smaller works and, in the case of one piece for a large orchestra, *Sheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, to make a new adaptation (by orchestra musician Roger Niese) for small orchestra. Whereas the program for the concert was developed in close collaboration with the Friends, the choice of the venue was made by the research team. Potential venues in the inner

Fig. 1   The foyer of the AINSI art space, photograph by Peter Peters © Peters

city of Maastricht, the Netherlands, were inspected, some of them with a nineteenth-century atmosphere. In the end, the research team chose a refurbished cement factory on the outskirts of Maastricht called AINSI. The building houses studios for artists and creative entrepreneurs, and it has a large foyer as well as a mid-sized black box theater space. The fauteuils in the foyer added to the salon-like atmosphere (Fig. 1).

The People's Salon concert on January 25, 2020, was attended by 150 Friends, the maximum number allowed in the space. When entering the building, the audience members received a program leaflet that offered a list of the works performed, mainly focusing on the selected stories from the Friends and the ideas behind the experiment. Before the break, piano solo pieces and chamber music were performed, followed after the break by three ensemble and orchestral works. Prior to the performance of the pieces, Friends were interviewed by Han Vogel, timpanist in the orchestra, in a setting with two fauteuils and a bouquet of flowers (Fig. 2). During the

Fig. 2 Friend of philharmonie zuidnederland being interviewed during The People's Salon, photograph by Jean-Pierre Geusens © Focuss22

break, the Friends were invited to have conservations about the meaning of classical music in their lives, helped by cards with suggestions for talking points. MCICM team members mingled with the audience to make short interviews and to take fieldnotes of their observations. These included the performances and the interactions between the musicians and the Friends.

Adapting the original ideas of The People's Salon to the actual concert situation on the night of performance required a long series of negotiations. Collaboration took the form of months of discussions, scheduling meetings, and making intellectual, artistic, and practical decisions. All this work was documented in plans and working papers, in our fieldnotes, in recordings of the two focus group meetings and the concert evening, in pictures, and video fragments. The heterogeneity of this material—mixing practical communication and reflective observations— offers an insight into what it means to collaborate. Looking back on the event, we realize that what remains is not only this documentation but also the memories of, often undocumented, conversations between

everyone involved at various moments and places. Understanding how we collaborated starts with analyzing these conversations.

Dialectic and Dialogic Conversations

To interpret the conversations recorded in our fieldwork, we draw on Sennett's ideas on the nature of cooperation. In his book *Together* (2012), Sennett defines the concept as "an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter" (p. 5) and argues that cooperation is a craft that requires skills. Examples of these skills are "listening well, behaving tactfully, finding points of agreement and managing disagreement, or avoiding frustration in a difficult discussion" (Sennett, 2012, p. 6). A typical situation of cooperation, Sennett argues, is the musical rehearsal. During a rehearsal, musicians do not primarily exchange their individual views on a composition. In fact, through listening well, they become more cooperative creatures (p. 14). Together, they "forensically investigate concrete problems" and work toward a particular moment of collective sound (p. 16). Rehearsing requires rituals and habits as well as the ability to improvise to solve unexpected problems (p. 17).

In his comparison of musical rehearsal to verbal conservation as forms of cooperation, Sennett distinguishes between dialectic and dialogic conversations. The first type of conversation gradually builds up to a synthesis. The goal of the conversation is to find common ground, to come to an agreement, and the cooperative skill involved is to listen to what a person assumes rather than says as a means to detect common ground (Sennett, 2012, p. 19). The second type refers to conversations "that do not resolve [themselves] by finding common ground" (p. 19). Here the goal is mutual understanding while reflecting on the differences between one's positions: "through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of on another" (p. 19). Sennett compares this type of conversation to a chamber music performance whereby the players do not seem to be on the same page but engage in a sounding dialogue experienced by the audience as more complex and interesting than a polished version of the piece based on agreement (p. 20).

We consider the two forms of conversation that Sennett introduces as ideal types. Dialectical conversation starts from two distinctive positions and leads to agreement in synthesis. This is the type of cooperation of which the value lies in the result. Differences are bridged through a shared commitment to a common goal, which, according to Sennett, assumes sympathy: the willingness to identify with others. In dialogical conversation, the differences are not bridged but taken as a precondition for learning; in making differences explicit and reflecting on them, the conversation itself becomes the goal. This type of cooperation builds on the ability to empathize with others, in other words to try to understand the other's position without giving up one's own: "Curiosity figures more prominently in empathy than in sympathy" (Sennett, 2012, p. 21). Sennett's ideal types help us to analyze four vignettes from our fieldwork, four conversations that made things happen.

The first vignette describes the moment when the technical crew of the orchestra arrived at AINSI the day before the concert to unload the equipment and set the stage. From the research team, Eve and Peters were present:

I arrive around 10:15 am and take pictures of the orchestra's truck parked in front of the building, feeling excited about us doing this. I look around in the foyer and take some pictures. I meet Imogen—"Hi Peter"—who is there already. The crew of the orchestra is busy lugging things and boxes inside. Werend [the orchestral inspector] has not yet arrived, as I deduce from the comments of the men. In a small room backstage, Imogen shows her sketch of the situation to the men. Immediately, I feel some impatience and irritation on their side. They were not informed of the changes we decided on yesterday, which are a deviation from the project plan they received. It's a slightly tense situation, but Imogen takes charge and tells the men what she envisions: a situation where some of the Friends sit on musicians' chairs, as if joining them. There is a discussion whether this is possible, but eventually the men get to work building the stage. (…)

Werend arrives. Imogen and I explain the situation to him. He reassuringly says all is going to be fine. Werend looks at the set-up for the *Brandenburg concert* and says that the musicians will probably want to stand in a semicircle because they have to be able to see each other. Imogen is not happy. Werend calls the concertmaster, who says—as expected—that

it must be a semicircle. This changes the whole setting into a more traditional orchestral situation, and there is no longer room for the chairs where, as Imogen hoped, the Friends could sit. (Fieldnotes Peters, January 2020 [Original in Dutch, translation PP])

The conversations in this situation were dialectical. In the end, the different positions were bridged in the shared task of setting up the stage in the time that was available. Although the orchestra crew and the orchestral inspector showed sympathy for Eve's set design, in the end, orchestral routines prevailed. Synthesis took here the shape of pragmatic solutions that allowed everyone to reach the goal of being ready for the performance, and the conversations were instrumental to that goal.

On the next day, during the dress rehearsal with the orchestra, Eve shared her design ideas with the musicians, including the colored lighting scheme that changes for each piece. This approach required flexibility and understanding on the part of the musicians, one of them being the pianist who would perform a solo piece and a duo with a violinist. During the solo piece by Mozart, Eve wanted him to be in a yellow spotlight and all the rest of the stage in shadows while he played:

And like a moment pulled from time, a golden lens, a structured spherical 1.5 × 1.5 vignette, he is cut out from another age. A memory. The story that we are forming from remembrance. Pre-War. Post-War. Mid-War. *The nuns at the nursery school had a music box, melodies from Mozart, it was beautiful* [from a story by a Friend] and fusing with yellowed keys, this living music box turns phrases, unlocking synaptic movements, tracing tarnished mechanical cogs like—wrong in the left hand.

'I'm sorry, I'm not sure I can do this.'

The yellow light fizzes as the pianist swivels around, blinking apologetically yellow at me.

'This light is so weird, I mean,' and he laughs, 'I'm looking at my hands but everything is just blurring together.'

I move over towards him and look at the keyboard. Golden brown hands on golden white teeth. My eyes hurt.

'You're right. Like trying to read in the dark.'

'Or underwater,' he laughs.

I sigh.

He swivels around and shrugs, smiles, smiles sideways at me. 'But does it look how you want it?'

I nod, rubbing the back of my neck. 'Yeah. Really beautiful. Really.'

He breathes out and stretches. I can hear the bones in his fingers crack. Then he places his hands on the piano again.

'Well then,' he says, 'Let's give it another go.' (cited from Eve, 2020, pp. 95–96)

We would interpret this conversation as dialectic in that it resulted in a solution to the practical problem: Eve saw the lighting as a way to suggest a different era, the pianist could not see his hands. The fact that the pianist was prepared to give it a try regardless of the difficulties he faced highlights how he sympathized with Eve's ideas and identified with her point of view: does it look how you want it? Although there is mutual understanding and reflection on each other's position, in the end, this conversation lacks the open-endedness of a dialogue. As in the previous vignette, the goal of the conversation was to solve a problem rather than a continued attempt at mutual understanding.

The aim of The People's Salon was to design a situation in which a concert audience, in this case the Friends of philharmonie zuidnederland, could participate by taking responsibility for the program and make a contribution to the actual concert by sharing their stories. Setting up this experimental situation revealed a fine balance between predetermining a certain course of events and leaving room for the unexpected, as became clear during the break when the Friends were invited to talk about the meaning of classical music in their lives:

How different is the kind of participation I now witness, during the break of the concert! We had hoped that the concert program—which included small ensembles and short interviews with Friends about their personal stories and memories—would trigger conversation among the audiences present, about classical music. To encourage audiences to talk about classical music, I had put little cards on the table, with some questions that could start a conversation. But now, when strolling around the foyer during the interval, I hear that people are talking about a lot of things but not about classical music. (Fieldnotes Van de Werff, January 2020)

Understanding the pitfalls of doing participatory experiments occurred when Van de Werff realized that planning a discussion through talking points goes against the idea that good conversations follow their own, improvised course. In Sennett's terms, his approach was dialectical in that its linear structure—with a clear idea of what the cooperation between researcher and audience entailed, and how its outcome of the situation should be—did not account for the complexities which might develop in this cooperation (Sennett, 2012, p. 26–27).

In the case of The People's Salon, cooperation between researchers and orchestra meant that traditional roles and responsibilities were exchanged to a certain degree. As researchers we took charge of the organization of a concert evening, taking over artistic and organizational tasks from the orchestra. For orchestra musicians and staff, the project meant that they were invited to observe and evaluate the concert as an experiment aimed at learning about their interaction with the audience. More than a year after the concert, Roeden and Peters looked back on how they remembered the evening in a long conversation, from which the following vignette is a sample:

> Roeden: I deliberately did not sit in between the audience. I stood at the side. I tried to focus on the interaction between the orchestra playing and the audience in order to be able to look the audience in the eye and see what originated there, what happened there.
>
> Peters: And what did you see?
>
> Roeden: The interaction, the disappearance of that anonymity that normally characterizes the division of labor between orchestra and audience. Producing something as a collective, performing something for each other. And enjoying it on both sides.
>
> Peters: I think so too. It was very beautiful. You also could see that making music in a broader sense—I am not talking about producing the sound, but music as an experience—actually became a shared responsibility of the audience and musicians.
>
> Roeden: Yes, yes. (Conversation between Roeden and Peters, May 2021)

This conversation more than a year after the concert is dialogic. Throughout the entire project, one of the main challenges was to find out how to work together from very different starting positions—as

researchers and as orchestra staff and musicians. Often, these positions were taken for granted. Sometimes, we managed to truly empathize with each other, which is, as Sennett claims, a more demanding exercise, "at least in listening: the listener has to get outside him- or herself" (2012, p. 21). Roeden empathized with the position of the researcher by taking an observer's point of view. He was curious not only to see how the audience would react but also to find out what would happen at a concert in which he shared the artistic responsibility with the researchers and the Friends. In their conversation, Roeden and Peters reflected on the differences in their perspectives and how they learned from these differences without transcending them in a synthesis or common ground. They both learned from The People's Salon that music is a shared responsibility of musicians and audience.

Conclusion: Working Together

The four vignettes from our fieldwork exemplify the many conversations that shaped The People's Salon. In the process of making a concert experiment happen, we had to learn and develop the skills that are needed to co-create a musical event and, also, to develop mutual understanding. We had to "learn how to rehearse cooperation, exploring its different forms" (Sennett, 2012, p. 24). This was all but easy. As any large organization, a symphony orchestra has to follow certain logics—of planning, scheduling, and realizing artistic quality—that limited the time and space for creative and open conversations needed to come to unexpected results and insights. And, as academic researchers, our styles of reasoning often failed to resonate with how the orchestral practitioners framed their work experiences and goals. Having to realize concrete products within a certain time frame frequently led to dialectic conversations where common ground took the form of pragmatic solutions. These differences also explain that the overall project had various specific outcomes. For the orchestra, The People's Salon gave them a new concert format that can be repeated, as currently happens in fact under the Covid-19 related restrictions. Stories about classical music told by Friends were recorded on video, and some of these served as an introduction to a streamed concert.

For the researchers, doing the collaborative experiments resulted in practical and theoretical insights that are shared with relevant scientific communities through publications and presentations, as in this chapter.

Coming back to the promise of interdisciplinary collaboration outlined at the start of this chapter, namely that it will bring innovation, we feel that our project should have been characterized by more sustained dialogical conversations. That we were able to produce results together indicates that our dialectical conversations were successful. We did share a commitment to the outcome, and sympathy allowed us, at least imaginatively, to identify with the other actors we worked with. In the everyday practice of doing research together, however, it was difficult to find or organize moments to empathize, to leave the safety of our routines and self-definitions, and to really wonder how and why others work the way they do. This is where dialogic conversations have an open-ended character: their goal is not consensus, but learning through being curious about the other. We realize that the conversational ideal types we borrow from Sennett cannot do justice to the complexity of all the things that happened, but they do help to draw lessons from our project that may be helpful to others who collaborate to fulfil the promise of innovation and change. Collaboration is a skill that does not only take time, but that also needs care, imagination, and the willingness to experience a sense of surprise. Instead of working toward the closure of collective results, it aims at the open-endedness of continued learning from each other. Organizing this learning is a matter not only of scheduling meetings but also of truly having an interest in what working together may bring, and in the skills needed in Sennett's rehearsal: musicking and communicating dialogically.

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