

Archives of change

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Propositions
belonging to the dissertation

Archives of Change

An Art Conservation Studies Approach
to Innovating Classical Music

Denise Petzold

1. The innovation of classical music requires researchers and practitioners to move away from the idea of classical music as performing transcendent artworks towards exploring and becoming attuned to the actors and materials situated in this lived artistic practice.
2. The contemporary art museum and its conservation department can act as role models for institutional change in classical music by providing conceptual and practical tools for understanding how art exists over time, as well as for bringing it into the future in meaningful ways.
3. By approaching classical music materials and their related practices as archives, practitioners and researchers of classical music interested in innovation can open up musical heritage in ways that both reveal and mobilise its histories, contexts, and participants.
4. In classical music, the notion of the archive helps to not only disclose the contingencies between and boundaries of heterogeneous actors, materials, and practices but also the imaginative potentials, neglected interactions, and unnoticed opportunities within this tradition. Attending to both carefully is key to innovating classical music.
5. With the growing establishment of art forms like performance art or time-based media art in museums, contemporary art conservators should prevent absorption into disciplinary forms of conservation. They need to maintain a dialogue among a range of artistic forms and practices – such as music – because this is where the field draws its innovative and epistemological potential from.
6. Science and technology studies (STS) needs to stimulate and include more research on the arts and artistic practices if it wants to progress as a field. The arts can inspire STS to interrogate established methods and conceptual frameworks, and to do so playfully.
7. Being ‘at home’ in one field does not mean being an outsider to others. Following from that, interdisciplinary researchers must constantly assess their own position. This requires empathy, perseverance, mediation work, and the ability to embrace uncertainty.

8. Higher music education institutions, such as conservatoires, need to offer alternative forms of engagement between students and their musical instruments, exploring for example these objects' specific materialities, biographies, or roles in students' lives. This might result in new insights into this embodied relationship as an archive that is relevant to classical music innovation.
9. Conservation and care are indispensable elements of any kind of meaningful innovation.
10. There is no such thing as being too old to learn how to play a musical instrument, or to pick up where one left off. (This is the sign you have been waiting for.)
11. By altering our questions ever so slightly, we might find extraordinary and unexpected answers. Next time, instead of asking someone *what* they play, ask them *how* they play.