Archives of change

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Impact paragraph

This book investigates what the classical music community can learn from studies of contemporary art conservation about how to innovate its practice and bring the music and tradition into the future. Throughout my research, I show how practitioners and materials embedded in a range of classical music practices engage in the ongoing existence of classical music as a lived artistic practice (rather than merely a performance of transcendent artworks). By bringing together classical music, contemporary art conservation, and science and technology studies (STS), I aim to explore how, in light of the current drive for innovation in the Western European classical music landscape, practitioners may deal with the challenges emerging from innovative processes and projects in a very tradition-laden landscape. In doing so, I address the broader question of how practitioners and researchers may conserve and take care of this artistic practice and its heritage, while simultaneously finding ways to innovate it.

This project is part of the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM), a structural collaboration between Maastricht University, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, and the Dutch orchestra philharmonie zuidnederland. The MCICM aims to shape classical music futures by examining the processes behind changing classical music practice. For this, it brings together music practitioners (music students, orchestra musicians, and other staff), academics and researchers, and other art practitioners.[112] Additional funding for my research was provided by the province of Limburg, the Netherlands. This book constitutes one of the many academic contributions by the MCICM, yet within the centre it is so far the only project actively concerned with the topic of heritage conservation in classical music. It constitutes the main contribution to the MCICM's third research line, entitled 'Adapting sounding heritage'.[113] At the heart of this research line is the question of how to conserve this musical heritage, as well as how to create new strategies to access it. Notably, my colleagues at the MCICM have conducted much empirical work in investigating the practices and processes of innovating classical music, as demonstrated by the project 'Artful Participation: Doing Artistic Research with Symphonic Music Audiences'.[114] This is important to mention as my research project aimed to provide a backdrop against which to better understand the practical challenges of innovation experienced in the MCICM. By conducting research into how classical music tradition and practice has become so static – and who or what is involved in this music's continuing existence and how so – my research project offers fundamental insights into the workings of classical music

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112 For more information on the MCICM, please see www.mcicm.nl.

113 Detailed descriptions of the three research lines and the specific projects they encompass is available under https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/mcicm-maastricht-centre-innovation-classical-music/mcicm-research.

114 More insight into the Artful Participation project, including its many activities and outcomes, can be found under www.artfulparticipation.nl.

practice, which complements the work of the other research lines in the MCICM. It does so by focusing on the 'pastness' of classical music and its practices, aiming to better understand the relation between tradition and innovation. Therefore, my research will also inform future activities of the MCICM, which I will describe in more detail below. In what follows, I will first reflect on the academic contributions of my research and then discuss its societal impact.

Academic impact

With help of the fields of contemporary art conservation studies and STS, my research fosters and stimulates an interdisciplinary dialogue that helps classical music innovators understanding and approaching processes of innovation from new angles. In Chapter 2, I add to scholarly work both in music scholarship – particularly music sociology and relational musicology – as well as to theoretical approaches in contemporary art conservation studies by relating these literatures to each other in order to develop a nuanced understanding of how art and artworks exist over time. By empirically investigating how this music is brought into continuing existence with the help of various materials and actors, I conclude that it is crucial to develop an understanding of these existing practices and traditions *before* engaging in processes of innovation. I propose to understand the question of innovation as one of conservation, exploring and building on the practices and bodies of knowledge already established. This, I believe, is a relevant insight also to scholars of innovation in other fields.

In my conclusion in Chapter 9, I offer both researchers and practitioners examples of how to do so, further expanding the theoretical framework of this study. I demonstrate that the concept of the archive – a theoretical framework borrowed from the work of conservator and media art researcher Hanna B. Hölling (2015, 2017a) – may be a helpful tool not only to think about artworks but also to view artworks as part of other related archives and practices. In addition to this, I provide detailed surveys of practice-related bodies of literature and scholarship – on concert programmes in Chapter 3, online music streaming in Chapter 5, and embodied learning in higher music education in Chapter 7 – which I hope are useful for the respective practitioners in these practices and sites, either as the basis for future research or as a starting point for innovation.

During my research, I participated in four scientific conferences and symposia. These took place in the fields of STS, contemporary art and heritage conservation, and classical music (innovation). For the MCICM's 2019 symposium 'Rehearsing Orchestral Innovation: Doing Collaborative Research on Symphonic Music Futures', I co-organised a workshop together with contemporary art conservation professionals from Tate (UK), helping to bring the case of conserving Tony Conrad's *Ten Years Alive on The Infinite Plain* (1972) to classical music practitioners and researchers. Here, I made the first steps of bringing experts from both classical music and contemporary art conservation together, crafting a dialogue that helped to inform potential conservation strategies of this artwork. As it turned out, this session proved to be a wonderful preparation for a week-long workshop that I helped co-organise and develop

with three colleagues from Maastricht University (prof. dr. Peter Peters), Utrecht University (dr. Floris Schuiling), and the University of Amsterdam (dr. Hannah Bosma). The workshop was entitled 'Music Beyond Fixity and Fluidity: Preservation and Performance as Instauration' and took place at the Lorentz Center in Leiden from 12 to 16 September 2022. In this workshop, we invited roughly thirty international scholars and music and art practitioners, who engaged in both practical exercises and theoretical discussions about how three different musical genres – classical music, improvised music, and electroacoustic music – exist through time.[115] In this workshop, the notion of archive emerged as an important theoretical concept to understand how music exists, helping me to further specify and probe my understandings of this concept in a larger context and in relation to different musical genres.

My research has (so far) led to two academic publications, both of which are under review or in progress. Based on Chapter 2, I wrote a book chapter on the role of contemporary art conservation in classical music innovation, summarising my theoretical insights for an edited volume of the MCICM's past and current work (Smith & Peters, forthcoming). Currently, I am working to submit an article to a peer-reviewed journal. This article, which builds on Chapters 3 and 4 of this book, examines the role of concert programmes in the making of orchestral identities. After this, I plan to work on two more publications that draw on the research and experiences of this PhD project: first, a peer-reviewed article on the role of not-knowing and idiocy in interdisciplinary collaborations, which has resulted from a workshop that dr. Veerle Spronck (HKU), dr. Ruth Benschop (Zuyd University), and I conducted as an intervention into the pandemic-inspired experiment 'Online Musicking' by the MCICM in 2020. In this paper, we explore what happens when interdisciplinary collaborators find themselves working together, and how experiences of feeling like laymen, strangers, and amateurs may become a productive force in such collaborations. Then, building on Chapters 7 and 8 of this research, Peter Peters and I will co-author an article in the context of ongoing curriculum revisions at the Conservatorium Maastricht. We plan to discuss the innovation of classical music from a conservatoire perspective, further investigating how conservatoires may adapt to prepare students for this changing artistic practice. With the help of the case of the Conservatorium Maastricht, we intend to add to scholarly insights on the innovation of tradition-laden contexts and higher music education.

115   For more information please visit
https://www.lorentzcenter.nl/music-beyond-fixity-and-fluidity-preservation-and-performance-as-instauration.html.

In the course of next year, I will also be involved in the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (SPARC, under the directorship of prof. dr. Stephanie Pitts). As a close partner of the MCICM, SPARC offers both networking and research opportunities for classical music innovators and researchers. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, SPARC will host a range of symposia and a conference for early career researchers in the upcoming year that I look forward to participating in. In this network, I plan to further initiate and stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations and dialogues between classical music and the contemporary art museum.

Finally, an important goal for the next year is to further engage in opportunities that bring the 'musical' perspectives of my research back into contemporary art conservation, for example by participating in workshops and conferences that revolve around the conservation of performance-based art. I am convinced that not only classical music practitioners and researchers can learn from contemporary art conservation; I also hope to explore in more detail what conservators may learn from classical musicians and their practices. This will further strengthen the dialogue between classical music and contemporary art conservation, as well as music scholarship.

Societal impact

While communicating my research to non-academic outlets like philharmonie zuidnederland's magazine *deKlank* (2020, 2023) were important moments of translating my findings into public and societal contexts, in this section I reflect on what else my research can offer classical music innovators practically. In doing so, I would like to highlight my empirical case studies – concert programmes produced by orchestras, classical music streaming applications, and an instrument (the violoncello) – and, based on Chapter 9, summarise the practical suggestions for innovations that my theoretical framework has helped to inspire revolving around these artefacts and their related practices.

The case study on concert programmes of the London Symphony Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (see Chapters 3 and 4) has demonstrated and opened up the capabilities that these objects hold regarding renewals of orchestral and institutional identities and the production and communication of musical knowledge. Despite building on well-established conventions when it comes to their making, concert programmes can help to innovate how orchestras present both themselves and how the music is connected to these institutions beyond the context of performance. To do so, their producers (for example marketing personnel, authors, and designers) need to take into account the concrete institutional identities, histories, and cultural contexts of the ensembles. In carefully observing these, they may for example shift established ways of working by revealing and building on previously unknown resources, such as musical histories, archival material or local connections, or by assisting the institution in exploring its identity through these documents' materiality, appearance, and haptics or feel. Thereby, it might be important to closely examine an orchestra's audience and – depending

on the institution's relation to this audience – involve this audience in the production of the concert programmes in differing ways (for example by sharing their knowledge, experiences, own archival materials, and memories of the orchestra or the musical pieces). Concert programmes – which, after all, hold valuable musical knowledge and societal clues – could also be made accessible in different ways, responding to an orchestra's resources. For example, through exhibitions underlining their epistemological and artistic value, or as digital documents that can be easier disseminated to hitherto unconsidered audiences. Different material explorations and expansions might also be interesting to orchestras, depending on the institution's values, activities, and aims. Audio postcards and brief radio-like features, for example, might increase accessibility and inclusivity. Investigating new forms like these might innovate how orchestras relate to and use these documents, while also potentially changing, in the long term, how concert programmes engage in the production of musical knowledge and expertise, what this knowledge entails, and how it is communicated and disseminated to the outside.

My case study on the classical music streaming apps IDAGIO and Primephonic in Chapters 5 and 6 has shown how 'cloud' music streaming platforms can innovate how classical music exists online, and how it may be made experienceable and 'navigable' in new ways. Here, innovation takes place by building on and adapting previous modes and conventions of organising and navigating classical music, while also trying to open up and shifting these into new directions. This process involves the respective companies, software developers, designers, customer managers, music curators, (non-)users, and technologies. For example, such apps could introduce new classification systems based on difference rather than likeness in order to diversify the modes in which music can be discovered and explore by users – and therefore also critically interrogate algorithmic processes and their relation to musical discovery. Practices of curation (playlists, playlist-based features, or album collections) could be made transparent by apps and experts, for example, by giving insight into how curators compose a playlist and the decisions involved. Users could collaborate in such curation in order to establish new musical connections, or be allowed to publish their own playlists in order to expand the musical offer and expertise at hand. Communal areas – similar to online forums, but on the apps – might enable users to listen to music together, while comparative listening modes could allow them to compare recordings of a given musical piece and their histories. Functions like this might strengthen user engagement while revealing new musical connections, histories, and meanings. Also these apps' materialities have innovative potentials and affect how classical music is organised on such platforms. They could give users space for individualisation of images and interfaces – for example by uploading pictures of their own CDs and LPs to bring online and offline collections closer together. Making the music elusive or scarce through treasure hunts, limited-time releases, and 'geo-locking' can generate new ways of interaction with the music that pick up on traditional practices of collecting while also questioning and extending these. Innovating classical music on online streaming platforms, however, also requires these companies to shift their focus, at least to some extent, from the

music as a primarily marketable and maximised product for engagement toward features that respond more concretely to the music, its contexts and histories, and relation to users. This may also lead to the development or implementation of functions or modes of operation that respond actively and critically to the existing logics of music streaming more generally.

The third case study on a classical music instrument – the violoncello – as presented in Chapters 7 and 8 testifies to the importance of embodied relations between musicians and their instruments, and this relationship's importance and potentials in innovating classical music. By further exploring this embodied relationship and its physical and affective layers, music education institutions such as conservatoires may find new and alternative spaces of engaging with classical music, which may help students to address the complexities that sit within this embodied relationship (such as the changes that both flesh and wooden bodies undergo over time). For example, conservatoires could help students explore how the material specificities of these bodies – both of the musicians and the instruments – are involved in shaping the music. Interactive lectures or workshops led by other instrumentalists, artists, experimental ensembles, or researchers could invite students to experiment with their instrument, discover the effect of specific materialities on music making and sound, and help them to better understand how this embodied relationship both takes form and could be the source for different or even complementary interactions and techniques. Providing space for such exercises may help students to attend to uncertainties rather than trying to eliminate them and understand how such uncertainties shape processes of learning and performing. While many conservatoires have improved or improve their education on aspects such as mental and physical health, students still know little about the materials they engage with. Researching and writing a biography of their instrument, keeping an instrument diary, or obtaining insights into processes of instrument design and building may deepen understandings of possible interactions and relations, as well as their potentials for innovation. This may also lead to a better understanding of exclusive and inclusive practices in learning and teaching activities. All of this is, I believe, important not only in a classical music context but also in other higher art education institutions, such as theatre or art academies.

In connection to this last point, I look forward to exploring the societal impact of my project in more depth in the coming year. In my current position as postdoctoral lecturer, I continue to do research for the MCICM. In this capacity, I will assist the MCICM in helping the Conservatorium Maastricht to reflect on and potentially realise changes in the institution's curriculum. As classical music practice is changing, the conservatoire seeks to adapt its curriculum in order to better prepare young musicians for the future. In these curriculum revisions, my research will provide an important starting point to formulate best practices and guidelines together. This gives me the opportunity to further explore my theoretical insights in a societally relevant and practical context.

In addition, there might be other possibilities to investigate my findings in practical musical and artistic contexts. Particularly, I would like to further investigate the practical

worth of the three archival lenses, which I introduce in section 9.3 of this book. Rather than seeking to apply or communicate these as ready-made tools, I believe it would be much more worthwhile to explore their value critically in intimate, workshop-like contexts, further enabling them to add to the catalogue of possible innovations above by revealing situated, innovative potentials of existing practices and traditions in classical music. I feel fortunate that I can continue to work on these issues in my current position and look forward to exploring my research's societal potential(s) more concretely in the near future.