CLASSICAL MUSIC FUTURES
PRACTICES OF INNOVATION

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Classical Music Futures: An Introduction

Neil Thomas Smith and Peter Peters

The 'Problems' of Classical Music

Does classical music have a future? In fact it has many, in a manner similar to all art forms, technological enterprises and institutions. One future sees it slowly dwindle as its grey audience shuffles off this mortal coil one by one; another places its faith in the institutions of the concert hall, festival and orchestra to fight against the degradations of time; yet another projects the diversification and democratisation of the art form so that it takes a meaningful place in the lives of a greater portion of society. What these three visions have in common is that the future presupposes a significant challenge: the future is coming for classical music and it had best be prepared.

For there are various 'problems' to which the art form must respond. Rather than being purely the result of an academic critique – though these are far from absent[1] – the problems are the everyday backdrop to the work of classical music practitioners. They are felt every time a funding round is announced that focuses on finding new audiences, and whenever the 'elite world' of classical music is discussed in mainstream

1 To give some diverse examples: Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Lewis Kaye, 'The Silenced Listener: Architectural Acoustics, the Concert Hall and the Conditions of Audience', *Leonardo Music Journal*, 22 (2012), 63–65; Anna Bull, *Class, Control, and Classical Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Philip Ewell, 'Music Theory's White Racial Frame', *Music Theory Online*, 26/2 (2020).

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media outside of the (dwindling) arts sections. These problems will be familiar to anyone even partially engaged in the field and the following is by no means an exhaustive list of their symptoms. The first, the *obsolescence problem*, is that classical music does not appeal to the young. It projects a future in which the art form slowly withers and dies if it cannot find greater relevance to younger people, families and people in employment. The second, the *demographic problem*, refers to the supposedly narrow sociodemographic appeal of classical music. Here, the music is seen as the preserve of the modern-day bourgeoisie, taking place in high-end locations, which present social as well as financial barriers. It is also racially homogenous to a significant degree. Finally, the *museum problem*, which describes a practice trapped in the past, unable to respond to contemporary currents in society and increasingly irrelevant to what is happening around it.[2] Suggested solutions to these problems do not merely tinker round the edges of this music practice, but can suggest radical revisions of how it is conceived and enacted. Yet, an old practice is like a large ship: difficult to turn in a hurry; while there is still a committed, active and vocal constituency willing to fight for the values that have sustained classical music over more than a century. When we use the term 'classical music practice', we understand this as covering the work of a whole range of music organisations, such as orchestras, festivals and music education institutes, as well as a professional field of musicians and other cultural workers. Yet, it is also a repertoire – a canon of musical works – around which particular rules, conventions and habits have emerged, such as performances that are true to the score and attentive listening in conditions that come as close as possible to silence. As such, the definition of the term 'classical music' has become contested, no longer only designating a certain genre, but also a context and approach to listening that is increasingly seen as high-brow and exclusive.

2 The research lines of the MCICM responded to the 'problems' of classical music by focusing on three main areas (see also www.mcicm.nl):
The role of classical music and its value for society;
The ways in which the relationship between performers of classical music, such as symphony orchestras and their audience is mediated;
The ways in which classical music contributes to the preservation of our cultural and social heritage.

This is the context that saw the creation of the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM), whose conference on 'Futuring Classical Music' in 2021 led to the present volume. The impulse for its foundation came not from a university or research institute but from an orchestra: Philzuid (South Netherlands Philharmonic). Its Intendant, Stefan Rosu, reached out to Maastricht University to initiate a collaboration: he wanted to open the orchestra up to researchers, rather like a teaching hospital is open to students and innovative medical practices. With this connection, two of the pillars of the MCICM were in place. The third came with the addition of the Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, which includes Maastricht Conservatorium. Orchestral music, Higher Music Education, and research were, therefore, all part of a structural collaboration, which then gained funding from the Province of Limburg, in which Maastricht is situated.

The collaboration at the MCICM is a sign of how classical music is an art form that is defined by a wide variety of people who are invested emotionally, spiritually and financially in its practice: festivals, ensembles, orchestras, and independent musicians all work to maintain its traditions; artistic leaders and support staff work tirelessly to create events of 'excellence' for a wider public; amateurs in orchestras, wind and brass bands, and choirs allow people to enact many of the conventions of the art form in their daily lives; music conservatoires and universities prepare their students for a world in which classical music might still be a potent force. The MCICM is built upon the belief that work within the institutions of classical music is vital to address some of the 'problems' identified above. Yet, there are also pitfalls here. It is easy to elide the future of classical music with the maintenance of its institutions. As such institutions are often significant barriers to change, this is by no means certain. For example, the people charged with addressing the demographic problem will most likely come from the very same privileged group from which classical music seeks to expand.

The problems of classical music and their associated futures are seen here as calls to action and reflection rather than any kind of neutral prediction of the art form's course. In this edited volume, we approach classical music futures and their practices of innovation and experimentation from various angles. The chapters in this book show how the future of classical music is made in the work of people all over the

world engaged in transforming this practice. As such, the contributing authors represent a variety of voices, offering their perspectives and positions on issues and challenges that are at the heart of current debates and practices in and around classical music. This diversity of voices is reflected in the stylistic format of the chapters, ranging from conference roundtable transcripts, practice-based research papers, reflections on concert experiments by the organisers, diary entries, and polemics, through to fully worked-through academic research chapters.

The aim of this book is not only to present these innovative approaches from the sidelines, so to speak, but also to actively contribute in shaping new classical music futures. We hope to do so by achieving three goals: to show and share what insights may result from performing innovation; to show under what conditions innovation is able to thrive in academic and practical settings; and, following the MCICM example, to inspire scholars, music educators, and practitioners to collaborate and learn from each other by sharing experiences and practices. Before we introduce the theme of innovation and outline the book's chapters, we will first elaborate on how the question of whether classical music has a future is closely related to its past.

Unfinished Music?

How can we shape new futures for an art form that revolves around reiterating the past? When we debate if and why classical music is in crisis, and begin to address its problems, we need to acknowledge the 'pastness' of the practice. Classical music practice as we know it today originated in the nineteenth century. Following the example of museums, which assembled collections of timeless master works, musicians and music lovers constructed their own canon that has remained surprisingly intact right up until today. The ideal of romantic art focused on the resurgence of the past as a source of new art, on the one hand, and, on the other, on the creation of art for eternity. Whereas composers before him wrote their music for specific occasions, the later compositions of Beethoven, for example, were thought of as timeless masterworks.[3] As

3 Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792-1803* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

their musical language became more complex, composers developed a sense of progress in their art.[4] Musical romanticism required new instrumental colours and dynamic range. To synchronise the playing of large orchestras, conductors became more important. As the size of orchestras increased, concert halls became larger. Romantic aesthetic ideas materialised in buildings such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, built in 1888.[5] Following examples in other European cities, the architect Van Gendt succeeded in creating a space in which music could sound as an isolated object of aesthetic admiration.[6] Audiences were disciplined to listen in silence and attentively.[7]

In the course of the nineteenth century, classical music became an art form that is defined in the 'romantic order', as the Dutch art philosopher Maarten Doorman calls it.[8] With other art forms, it shared the regulative idea of aesthetic autonomy: the self-regulation of art, independent of traditional morality, religion or politics, which allowed the performing and fine arts to become an independent domain in society. Autonomy thus related to the musical work itself, to the institutions responsible for performing these works, and to the place of art music in society.

Attempts to innovate classical music practice only seem to expose its roots in the romantic order. What is at stake is the value of timeless musical works and the skills to perform them, as well as the position of orchestras and ensembles as relatively autonomous art institutions. In her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1994), Lydia Goehr shows how any fixed philosophical definition of what a musical work is and how it exists has to establish a set of either essential properties

4 Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996). See also Maarten Doorman, *Art in Progress: A Philosophical Response to the End of the Avant-Garde* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003).

5 Darryl Cressman, *Building Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam: The Concertgebouw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

6 Two decades later, the new science of acoustics was able to explain the success of the building by showing how the shape and volume of the space resulted in a reverberation time that was perfect for large musical ensembles such as the symphony orchestra (Cressman, *Building Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam*, p. 82).

7 James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A cultural history* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994). See also Cas Smithuijsen, *Een verbazende stilte: klassieke muziek, gedragsregels en sociale controle in de concertzaal* (Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, 2001).

8 Doorman, *Art in Progress: A Philosophical Response to the End of the Avant-Garde*.

or identity conditions.[9] This approach, she argues, does not take into account the historical, contingent, and possibly changing character of these properties and conditions. Goehr suggests that instead of describing what kind of *object* a musical work is, we should study how the *concept* of a work emerged in classical music and how it has functioned therein.[10] Drawing on archival sources, she shows how the idea of the stable musical work only emerged around 1800. What Goehr calls the 'Beethoven paradigm' 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.[11] The concept of the musical work shows the 'pastness' of this practice in two ways: it explains how music can be transmitted through time as a relatively stable and autonomous artwork;[12] and it also reveals the continuities in practice between the past and the present as traditions that are often difficult to change.

In everyday language, the word 'tradition' might suggest something that lies behind us, or that is repeated without reflection. For philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, however, it means that the past is actively handed over in our situated understandings and applications of it. It requires active questioning and self-reflection. Gadamer's conception of tradition is dialogical: rather than a form of antiquarianism, it is a continuing debate on questions, problems and issues to which we ourselves contribute. When we play works of art, we revisit the tradition that handed them down to us. In music and theatre, presenting works of art is thus not a matter of following earlier acts of presenting, but of interpretations that keep the future identity and continuity of the artwork open.[13] This is

9 Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, p. 72.

10 Ibid. p. 4.

11 Ibid. pp. 205-243.

12 Although in different ways, consecutive performance styles all aimed at authentic renderings of the work. Bruce Haynes (2007) distinguishes between romantic, modern, and historically informed performance practice. Although very different in their aesthetic ideals, they share the centrality of the work concept. (Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)).

13 These interpretations do not give the interpreter unlimited freedom, and on the other hand Gadamer sees canonizations of particular interpretations, e.g. a recording of a musical composition by its composer, as a simple imitation of a model that would deny the real task of interpretation. Interestingly, Gadamer seems to criticise what later became known as the historically informed

why playing works of art leaves the works themselves fundamentally unfinished: their meaning is never exhausted as long as we continue to play them in new situations.[14] If we think of classical music concerts in this Gadamerian vein, we are not only reconstructing a past meaning of the music, but we mediate the music with our own world.

Shaping new futures for classical music brings to the fore the practical work of mediating music from the past in the present. When we observe the current critical debates on the practice, however, a paradox is revealed. Whereas in Gadamer's line of reasoning the past renews itself under conditions of the present, in everyday practice classical music's pastness and traditions are often in significant tension with processes of innovation. Now that we know how to explain the obduracy of the practice by pointing to the romantic order that underlies it, we can also more clearly set the agenda for change. As will become evident in the following chapters, change will have to address the ways in which access to classical music's performances is organised, the values that are embodied in its dominant concert rituals, the institutions that are responsible for handing down its traditions, such as music education institutes, concert halls, and organisations, and finally the ways in which the practice relates itself to broader societal issues and challenges, such as new and emerging technological change, diversity and inclusion, and the climate crisis. The chapters in this book address these issues and challenges. Before we go into more detail about their content, we highlight moments of coherence between the chapters in the themes that they address.

The first theme is that of the existing inequalities that have been identified in fundamental facets of the classical music tradition, including its reliance on a restricted canon, the image of genius to which non-white males do not subscribe, and the entirely intentional and explicit exclusions that women and people of colour have faced in musical, as in many other, spheres of operation in Europe, North America and

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performance practice movement: 'Thus, for example, historicizing presentations—e.g., of music played on old instruments—are not as faithful as they seem. Rather, they are an imitation of an imitation and are thus in danger "of standing at a third remove from the truth" (Plato).' (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1989[1960]), p. 118.)

14 For a more elaborate version of this argument, see Peter Peters, *Unfinished Symphonies* (Maastricht: Datawyse, 2019).

beyond. This topic is taken up in the chapters by Farnsworth, Cuyler and Lixenberg, as well as the first two round-table chapters. A vital question in these contributions is how to increase representation in terms of gender, race, and class.

Existing dominant concert formats embody the values that are central to the Beethoven paradigm: excellent performance of musical works by performers whose task it is to be true to the text, and audiences who allow themselves to reflect on the art character of the music by listening attentively and in silence. A second theme in the book is how attempts to change concert formats not only question the continued relevance of these values, but are also an invitation to explore new repertoires of qualities.[15] Performances are increasingly taking place in unconventional concert venues such as art galleries, museums, and cathedrals. Small venues with increased proximity to the artists can make these events intimate and exclusive – at eye level with the audience, as Walker writes in his chapter. The pandemic has accelerated the unprecedented (if enforced) explosion of experimentation in this area, whether online, outdoors, or in unusual buildings, as Smith explores in his chapter. Changing space alone, however, is unlikely to achieve the goals of improving classical music's value as an intrinsically meaningful and relevant cultural practice in society, as well as its demographic appeal. In their chapter on developing exceptional event concepts, Uhde and Gögl explore how music may provide the impetus for dealing with a particular social or political issue, as well as providing a resonating space for the spoken word. They describe this new curatorial attitude in their event conception as 'strategies of proximity'.

Addressing inequalities and expanding repertoires of qualities is a responsibility of the institutions that are embedding classical music in society. A third theme in the book concerns the ways in which these institutions respond to the significant changes in their external environment, notably the focus on generating a more sustainable future, the importance (and fragility) of global communities and the role of technology in the arts (Salazar and Guillaumier). Classical music institutions are often seen as struggling to react to contemporary events and developments, such as climate change. The third round-table

15 Veerle Spronck, *Listen Closely: Innovating Audience Participation in Symphonic Music* (Maastricht: Maastricht University, 2022).

chapter summarises the discussion between four music professionals, each giving their own perspective on how their organisations are beginning to address the most pressing issue of our time. The topic of how orchestra institutions cope with the challenge of making their practices more sustainable is also taken up in the chapter by Skovbon. She gives examples of non-profit charity organisations trying to reduce their environmental footprint. Meanwhile Toelle argues in her chapter that where traditional classical music institutions are under increasing pressure due to budget cuts and the questioning of their societal relevance, the fact that classical music practices can actually play many different roles in a society makes the discussions about their future exciting.

The responsibility that higher music education institutes have for educating the musicians of the future is a fifth theme in the book. Current curricula for composers, musicians and music educators are often still restricted to the assertion of artistic excellence in the first place. Broadening the skillsets of the musicians of tomorrow is not just a challenge of funnelling more people through the same conduits, but presents fundamental questions for classical music education. In their chapter, Pitts, Burland and Spurgin present research in which musicians reflect on their training and the extent to which this prepared them for professional orchestral playing. This raises questions about the role of conservatoires in supporting or inhibiting innovation in the profession, highlighting the challenges of work-life balance that were altered by the pandemic, and showing how musicians themselves can be agents for change. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified reflection on the merits and obstacles of online teaching. Salazar and Guillaumier propose that online teaching in the conservatoire has the potential to become an important vehicle equipping students to respond to changes in the external environment for all artists, notably the focus on generating a more sustainable future, the importance (and fragility) of global communities and the role of technology in the arts. In recognising the possibilities for online teaching, they move from a position of online 'replacing' or 'replicating' traditional conservatoire teaching to 'complementing' practice-led experiences.

As the experience in the MCICM suggests, reflecting on the benefits and challenges of cross-institutional collaboration as well as

interdisciplinarity are crucial in attempts at innovating classical music. An example of this sixth theme is to be found in the chapter by De Wit and Sevindik on the emergence of an interprofessional community of practice between healthcare professionals and musicians in Groningen, the Netherlands. When professional, classically trained musicians play live music for patients and healthcare professionals inside hospital wards, their work is underpinned by interprofessional collaboration with these healthcare professionals, as well as the development of new professional skills of person-centred music-making. Interdisciplinarity between art institutions can induce learning. In her chapter, Petzold looks at an art institution that is related, yet very different from the orchestra: the contemporary art museum. She argues that classical music institutions and practitioners may gain new understanding from contemporary art museums about the ontology or existence of artworks, and this may inform institutional change. Visual art practices can also be a context for alternative performances of classical music, as Chelouche shows in her chapter.

Finally, a seventh theme in these chapters is the role of technologies and how they shape and are shaped by the practices of classical music. Reflecting on the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic introduced audiences to new ways of engaging with artistic performance in an online environment, Philips and Krause argue that 'liveness' involves not only such factors as the opportunity to share an experience and interact with other audience members and performers, but also the sense of atmosphere, immersion, sensory experiences, and being physically present. A salient development at the moment is the use of Artificial Intelligence in artistic practices, including classical music. As with any new technology, the discourse combines both utopian and dystopian expectations of how it will be used in practice. As Laidlow writes, classical music as an industry is well placed to answer salient questions that the age of artificial intelligence demands we consider, including: how this new technology affects, and will affect, the way an orchestra interacts with a composer, and how orchestral music can be used to explore technology that has an increasingly profound effect on all aspects of our day-to-day lives. As a composer, Walshe offers a wide-ranging discussion of her interactions with AI, showing how music can engage with it, particularly in terms of language and the voice.

The list of themes that we identify as connecting the chapters in this book is by no means exhaustive. As will become clear in reading, the chapters implicitly cross-reference each other in many ways. What they share is the notion that shaping new futures for classical music requires practical work and reflection. To further focus the agenda of innovation, we need to analyse the concept of the future in more detail. What role does it play when it comes to bringing the new into the world of classical music? How do futures become reality?

The Future as Innovation

Reflections on the future of classical music not only draw on music philosophy and sociology; they can also build on an established interest of the social sciences in the idea of the future. Emerging as an academic field in the 1960s, future studies sought to set up processes and approaches that might help government planning, particularly at first in terms of the military and industry. Yet confidence in our ability to predict accurately, and faith in progress more generally, waned during the later twentieth century and such attempts at looking into a crystal ball were replaced by a critical study of how the future functions in the present. Tutton, summarising Bell and Mau, states that the 'future is real in so far as social actors produce representations of the future which have an effect on others' actions in the present'.[16] Brown et al. highlight the 'resources' actors use to 'compete for the right to represent near and far term developments'.[17] Van Lente, in the linked field of studies of 'expectations', argues that 'expectation statements are not only representations of something that does not (yet) exist, they do something: advising, showing direction, creating obligations'.[18] The future, therefore, has no sense of the inevitable but is an unpredictable and contested field of possibility. Brown et al. point out that there is

16 Richard Tutton, 'Wicked futures: Meaning, matter and the sociology of the future', *The Sociological Review*, 65/3 (2017), 478–492 (p. 482); Wendell Bell and James Mau (Eds.), *The Sociology of the Future: Theory, Cases and Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1971).

17 Nik Brown, Brian Rappert and Andrew Webster, *Contested Futures: A Sociology of Prospective Techno-Science* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 2–5.

18 Harro van Lente, *Promising Technology: The Dynamics of Expectations in Technological Developments* (Twente: University of Twente, 1993), 191.

little difference between discourses surrounding the future and the past in this sense, stating that the 'history of science as recounted in most textbooks gives little idea of the contested futures that once shaped the development of what is considered the "scientific canon" of today'.[19] The term canon used here is striking when looking at this sociological work from a cultural perspective. Work that calls into question the exclusions of the canon by arguing for a reorganisation of the problematic 'classical music museum' discussed above, is both making a different future for classical music while also revising its past.

On the question of how futures become 'reality', many authors point to the fact that futures need friends. For Little, futures are 'performative' in that they are 'understood as enacting a particular future (while also marginalizing alternative futures) in order to enrol actors in the present, who will, ideally, help realize the projected future in the future'.[20] Futures – either those to avoid or those to strive towards – are a means of building coalitions with others and it is this coalition-building that brings them closer to being realised. Harro van Lente, in the keynote address to the conference where this edited collection began, also argued for getting involved in 'creating your own futures': it behoves all who have a stake in classical music to shape it.[21]

At the same time, scholars of future studies do not believe there is an open field of possibility in which actors can blithely choose what the future will entail. Humans are not alone in creating their future, with the environment we work in and the materials we work with making certain paths more likely than others and creating particular limits. The limits of the natural world are the most obvious example of the

19 Brown et al., *Contested Futures*, p. 5.

20 Mike Michael, 'Enacting Big Futures, Little Futures: Toward an ecology of futures', *The Sociological Review*, 65/3 (2017), 509–524 (p. 513).

21 Images and expectations of the future are socially performative in that they structure decision-making and organise social actions and collaborations. Oomen et al. suggest that the concept of 'futuring' captures the active dimension of the future. Futuring is defined as 'the identification, creation and dissemination of images of the future shaping the possibility for action, thus enacting relationships between past, present and future.' See Jeroen Oomen, Jesse Hofman, and Maarten A. Hajer. 'Techniques of futuring: On how imagined futures become socially performative', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 25/2 (2021), 252-270 (p. 254). According to Oomen et.al. imagined futures can bring together various actors and serve as shared orientations for collaborative actions in futuring practices. Innovation of classical music thus requires 'techniques of futuring' (p. 254).

ways in which human activity is constrained. Yet such limitations and contexts are not all physical but also cultural.[22] As we have seen, the traditions of classical music and their roots in the romantic order create a significant obduracy in relation to change. Organisational approaches of institutions, as well as practices and rituals of concert-going and listening, create a barrier to any immediate and revolutionary change. A major theme of this future-orientated work is the sense – just as in the description of classical music above – that the future is ever closer at hand. This is captured in Helga Nowotny's description of the 'extended present' in which problems 'which could formerly be deferred into the future' now 'demand to be dealt with today'.[23] Chief among such issues are those of climate and sustainability, a discourse that has only increased in urgency since the publication of Nowotny's book in 1994. Barbara Adam argues that, rather than an 'empty' future, today 'the costs have to be paid, the disasters rectified, the cancers endured; our predecessors' glorious creations rebound as nightmares'.[24]

For Nowotny, two 'escape routes' from these issues are offered: either a 'non-existent idyllic past' or the 'next phase of technological innovation', but neither is effective and the future horizon becomes 'flat and motionless'.[25] The idyllic past is by no means absent in classical music discourse, with appeals to return to the 'core business' of performing music that is certain of its place at the pinnacle of Western culture: from this perspective the museum problem is no issue, but the art form's greatest asset. Nowotny's second point, which references technology, is taken up specifically in this volume in discussions of Artificial Intelligence but with the nagging feeling that it may create as many problems as it solves.

Concern over dwindling audience numbers and a withering of the art form evidently stems from a belief that classical music offers intrinsic value to society. Within classical music, any desire to return to a previous

22 See John Urry, 'Climate change, travel and complex futures', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 59 (2008), 261–279 (p. 275).

23 Helga Nowotny, *Time: The Modern and Postmodern Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 11.

24 Barbara Adam, 'Future Matters: Challenge for Social Theory and Social Inquiry', Keynote Address to Italian Sociological Association Conference, Future Matters for Social Theory, Cagliari University, Sardinia (29 October 2009), p. 1.

25 Nowotny, *Time*, p. 49.

'normality' is a relatively straightforward call to maintain the conventions of concert events and the prized position of its cultural achievements within the canon. Far less discussed is the role of innovation, particularly within such a venerable art form. Innovation presupposes a particular relationship with the future as it assumes that what is to come may be radically different, and presumably better, than what has come before. It militates against a view of art forms as the concentrated preservation of a tradition, which can be seen in a 'traditionalist' reading of classical music as the performance of the great works of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods, as well as many traditional art forms around the world in which apprentices learn a seemingly fixed set of traditional practices from a master.[26] This links the current volume with another established area of scholarship: studies of innovation.

The dominant approach in innovation studies, according to Martin, has been to analyse radical technological innovation in the manufacture of products.[27] Take Schumpeter's now classic definition, in which he identifies four broad types:

> (i) a new or improved product; (ii) a new or improved process (new, at least, to that particular sector, but not necessarily entirely 'new' to the world); (iii) the opening of a new market (again 'new' for that sector and country); (iv) the acquisition of a new source of raw materials or semi-manufactured goods (irrespective of whether that source already exists); and (v) an organizational change (in the firm or the sector).[28]

The language of 'product', 'market' and 'raw materials' here is rather different from what we expect in the realm of culture, yet it still gives a sense of what people working within classical music expect from innovative practices: novel artistic approaches, reaching new people, achieving more through personal and organisational development. Such vocabulary may make some engaged in the arts uncomfortable,

26 The traditionalist reading is somewhat ironic considering symphonic music in particular grew up in a society shaped by capitalist expansion, colonial exploitation, and rapid technological progress.

27 Ben R. Martin, *Twenty Challenge for Innovation Studies* (Cambridge: Centre for Business Studies, University of Cambridge, 2015), p. 4; c.f. Paul Stoneman, *Soft Innovation: Economics, Product Aesthetics, and the Creative Industries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1.

28 Thomas K. McCraw, *Prophet of Innovation: Joseph Schumpeter and Creative Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), p. 73.

yet market forces have far more effect on cultural work than some would like to think.[29]

At the same time, the specific values of cultural work should not be forgotten. Caves (2000) describes two fundamentals when considering creative industries: firstly that actors may not act in a purely economically rational fashion as an 'art for art's sake' agenda may still hold greater sway; and secondly, that the principle of 'nobody knows' is in play, which means that there is no way of knowing what will become commercially successful or useful to others.[30] While the latter applies to technology and the sciences far more than is often credited,[31] there is a sense that logics of traditional innovation studies work against the practices of cultural workers. Peris-Ortiz et al. point to a paradox in that the 'wealth of novelty [in the creative industries] is fueled by tradition', with Jones et al. arguing that it is the depth of culture that sustains the capacity to innovate.[32]

As with many western art forms, there has paradoxically been a simultaneous reliance on, but resistance to, artistic changes within the tradition. The museum problem describes an institution that is venerable but not entirely static. Famous scandals of the early twentieth century now only colour the programme notes of canonic works by the likes of Igor Stravinsky or Richard Strauss. Charles Rosen goes so far as to argue 'that tradition is often most successfully sustained by those who appear to be trying to attack or to destroy it'.[33] That these individuals are most frequently composers is not surprising. The roots of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution and Romanticism give us the legacy of the

29 This is well-worn topic, with significant contributions by Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); and Valentina Vadi and Hildegard E.G.S. Schneider, *Art, Cultural Heritage and the Market: Ethical and Legal Issues* (Berlin: Springer, 2014).

30 Richard Caves, *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

31 Most notably beginning with Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific* Revolutions (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963).

32 Marta Peris-Ortiz, Mayer Rainiero Cabrera-Flores and Arturo Serrano-Santoyo (eds.), *Cultural and Creative Industries: A Path to Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (Cham: Springer, 2019), p. 2; Robert DeFillippi, Gernot Grabher and Candace Jones, 'Introduction to paradoxes of creativity: managerial and organizational Challenges in the Cultural Economy', *Journal of Orgnaizational Behavior*, 28 (2007), 511–521.

33 Charles Rosen, 'Culture on the Market', *The New York Review of Books*, 6 November 2003, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2003/11/06/culture-on-the-market/

artist hero, who is a locus for innovative practices: struggling under the weight of their tradition, they push forward into unknown territory through a torturous inner struggle. Progress is to be found in the work, the 'musical material',[34] which adds another block to the pantheon of Western culture. In the case of artistic production, therefore, questions of innovation are far from new.

For some commentators, the composer is still the instigator of musical innovation par excellence. Certainly, there should be no study of musical innovation that leaves out their voices. Yet, the belief in the work and the composer as the only, or even primary, site of innovation within the art form can now be called into question. Berardi states that a lack of faith in the future, and in progress, has led the 'artistic imagination' into a situation in which it is 'unable to escape the territory of fear and despair'.[35] Certainly this volume is testament to the wide variety of actors who are engaged in what they see as classical music innovation, with composers being only one piece of the puzzle. Before we present our concluding thoughts on classical music innovation today, we will first give an overview of the sections and chapters of this book.

An Overview of the Book

This volume proceeds in five sections, each approaching the future and the problems of classical music from a specific thematic perspective. The first section, **Whose Future?**, addresses one of the most pressing challenges to the question of classical music demographics: the issue of representation and diversity**.** It describes some of the unique issues and baggage that classical music faces, such as its demarcation as a white space and the challenges associated with 'diversifying' its audience and practitioners. The first chapter presents snapshots on this theme from three different perspectives: Maria Hansen on Higher Education, Kirsteen Davidson-Kelly on creative learning in the orchestra, and George Lewis on new music. Inspiring change is at the centre of the second collaborative chapter looking at best-practice guidance in the classical music world. This focuses on three very recent guidelines

34 See Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 65–107.

35 Franco Berardi, *After the Future* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2011), p. 17.

published by organisations working in new music. The first, the 'Fair Access Principles', were created by Sound and Music and outline what all competitions or competitive opportunities for composers should consider. The aim is to stop the exploitation of aspiring composers in the name of 'exposure' and to improve representation and diversity within new music. For the second set of principles, the internationally recognised organisation Keychange discusses their manifesto, which is focused on efforts to improve gender representation in the music industry. Finally, 'What we need to thrive' was created by Sound Scotland and concerns how to work with neurodiverse composers. Representatives from all three organisations contribute to the chapter and provide reflections on the principles themselves, a description of the process of their formation, and how such documents require 'buy-in' from partners and supporters: in other words, how their notional futures require friends. Antonio Cuyler reflects on this process of 'documenting change' through his research into Blacktivism in opera, asking how space can be made for people of African descent within classical music of the future.

The next contribution comes from Brandon Farnsworth, who continues the discussion of diversity by suggesting that classical music's chief problem is its tendency to universalise its practices and experiences, thereby invalidating other cultural activities. Farnsworth asks the question whether simply changing the people involved in the production of classical music is a way of challenging 'the field's fundamental contradictions', or whether rather more radical change is required. Just such radical change is the subject of the final contribution to the section, Lore Lixenberg's political-party-cum-participatory-opera, 'The Voice Party'. This party stood in the UK General Election with Lixenberg as its candidate on a manifesto that proposed putting music at the centre of everyday life in provocative and sometimes authoritarian ways. In exploring the connections between music and society, the Voice Party is a story of direct action with consequences impossible to predict.

The second section, **Future Musicians**, concerns itself with the future-readiness provided by musical education and professional development. Stephanie Pitts, Karen Burland and Tom Spurgin use survey responses from professional UK ensembles the Manchester Collective and the Philharmonia Orchestra to assess how well musicians

feel their training prepared them for life in the profession. In particular, they ask how innovative practices impact on these professionals, raising questions both for how these practices are implemented and traditional conservatoire training. This is then followed by a reflective interview with the two orchestra directors on the role of professionals as catalysts and barriers to change. Musicians and their institutions are a key site of tension between renewal and tradition, as this contribution lays bare.

The issue of conservatoire training, its future and purpose, is also taken up by Diana Salazar and Christina Guillaumier in their study of the 'Global Conservatoire'. The pandemic has demanded significant changes to teaching and these authors consider their lasting impact and potential. They argue that the focus should now change from replication of in-person teaching experiences to 'complementing practice-led experiences'. Furthermore, the transnational nature of digital tools has the potential to deeply inform global artistic citizens and enable responses to the urgent issue of artistic relevance in classical music. In so doing, these tools provide the foundation for a reframing of classical music not as a superior art form in some Western-weighted hierarchy but as a practice that challenges and invigorates artistic action in multiple contexts.

The final contribution to the topic of musician training comes from Krista de Wit and Beste Sevindik, who use data from the Dutch Meaningful Music in Healthcare project to probe the navigation of professional identities when classically trained musicians are put in healthcare settings. Music in health is a growing area but little research considers the training needs for the musicians themselves, nor puts this in the wider context of training for greater societal relevance. The findings are important for this burgeoning area of practice, as well as other 'coal faces' in which classical musicians and practices meet with other societal partners. All three contributions examine the skills, training and approach required for musicians to look beyond their usual audiences and performance context, thereby addressing each of the 'problems' discussed above.

The third section looks at **Innovating Institutions** and their role in creating classical music futures. Jutta Toelle examines the sector at large to create a 'taxonomy of interventions': a catalogue of the types of things organisations do to innovate and reach new audiences. The

chapter focusses on classical music practices in the German-speaking world. Several big questions are addressed, such as the advanced age profile of audiences and the seemingly old-fashioned canonic repertory. These two issues, coupled with the high subsidies that classical music receives, make classical music practices vulnerable. Alternatives are to be found in the concept-orientated performances by non-institutionalised performers, who are free from the burden of the big institutions but also responsible for providing their own income.

The section continues with two contributions on the issue of sustainability. The first is a roundtable, curated by the MCICM, in which an international array of representatives from ensembles and orchestras discuss classical music's responses to the climate emergency. The organisations include Germany's Orchester des Wandels, Scotland's Nevis Ensemble, and Finland's Lahti Symphony Orchestra. [36] They explore mainstays of the classical music scene, such as large orchestral tours, flying in star instrumentalists and conductors, musicians working two jobs in distant locations, and old and draughty concert halls, which are all potential areas of challenge in a sustainable future. More than this, however, the roundtable explores what classical music can offer *as an art form* in exploring the broader questions of engagement with the climate and nature. Finally, Stine Skovbon presents early findings from her research on orchestras and sustainability, mapping the challenges and arguing that sustainability goals must be at the heart of any future policy initiatives.

Approaching classical music innovation from the perspective of the arts is the topic of the section **Learning from the Art Museum.** Though the museum problem has been described here as an ill that haunts classical music practice, Denise Petzold argues that approaches to the conservation of contemporary art from Museum Studies provide useful perspectives for the preservation and presentation of classical works in the future. In particular, more recent approaches to performance art and time-based media from museum studies offer an area of scholarship that deals with similar 'ontological complexities' to music. Just like conservators, classical musicians and institutions are involved in a long-term effort to 'care for' the repertoire of the classical

36 It is with sadness that the editors note that the Nevis Ensemble, who feature in the climate roundtable in this volume, have folded due to financial pressures.

tradition. Petzold seeks a new perspective on how this work might be understood and reveals new ways of caring for the classical canon. Noga Rachel Chelouche considers the presentation of classical music in the work of contemporary visual artist Anri Sala. Chelouche contrasts the experiences of the canonical compositions in Sala's work with their presentation in a traditional concert and, in so doing, confronts once again the museum problem by exploring a different way in which classical works can be experienced.

The format of the traditional concert is a key site in efforts to innovate classical music today, with changes large and small on the minds of institutions and individual practitioners alike. As one of the vital interfaces between the art form and its public – along with radio, records and streaming – these developments are primarily aimed at reaching new audiences in immersive ways, often in locations other than the concert hall. This is the focus of the contributions in **Space and Proximity**. In his chapter, Neil T. Smith explores attempts to innovate concert spaces. The chapter presents a diary of unconventional concert spaces, two pre- and four post-pandemic. The aim is to explore the effects of spatial innovation, providing insights for the future of performances outside the concert hall. Although he sees great potential in spatial exploration, which should be further exploited, the chapter is also a corrective to an approach that would imbue space with the ability to transform musical and social relations without the complicating factors of music's previous socialisations and the pre-existing complexities of the new spaces that are used.

The second chapter in this section describes the concert series Monsieur Croche, which is based in Antwerp, Belgium. The series seeks to present classical music in unusual concert venues in the city, thereby attempting to engage new audiences and to give a different sense of inclusion and interaction. It is part of an international effort to get classical music out of the concert hall and into people's lives. Walker describes the challenges of such a venture organisationally and artistically, providing a useful document for others engaged in similar efforts. In their contribution, Hans-Joachim Gögl and Folkert Uhde seek to move beyond discussions of dramaturgy, choosing instead to examine curatorial 'strategies of proximity': ways in which music can facilitate new types of interaction and experience with social and political themes. This they do using examples from their extensive curatorial

practice, particularly in Austria. Michelle Phillips and Amanda Krause consider the legacy of the pandemic for live performance, reviewing recent literature on 'liveness' and the value of co-present versus online performance. While many classical music devotees were delighted to return to the concert hall, Phillips argues that there were benefits to the explosion of options for digital performance. This is a timely discussion of what the long-term benefits might be and if they offer tools that allow classical music to speak to a broader range of people.

As explored above, technological progress and musical progress appeared to be going in hand-in-hand for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet the impact of technological change on culture itself often occurs in a rather more subtle and complex fashion. In the **Artificial Intelligence** section, two contributors give their thoughts on how the questions of direct technological intervention – specifically AI – are displacing previous creative certainties, and opening up new creative possibilities. Robert Laidlow reflects on his own implementation of artificial intelligence in his works for orchestra, questioning the temporal relations between future and past that AI contains and the ideas of 'authenticity' that have been such a mainstay of classical music practice. He describes the 'benefits and limitations' of his approach as regards traditional compositional concerns such as the development of musical material and structure, as well as his own strategies for amplifying or mitigating the effects of this approach. In a personal reflection on the voice, its potential and the future role of AI, composer and performer Jennifer Walshe describes the challenge of the future as 'deciding what it means to make music when the machines can.' Walshe argues that the advent of AI will mark a turning point in human creativity that is both terrifying and enlivening. The future posited here is of a radical technological shift that requires an equally radical change in artistic consciousness.

Classical Music Innovation Today

Innovation in classical music today is a different animal from the often formalist and technical discourse that surrounded 'progressive' composers in the twentieth century. The concept has been fragmented and dispersed. Critiques of various concepts such as genius, linear views of musical progress, the work concept and the supposition of

Western supremacy are now mainstream. While there is undoubtedly still aesthetic and technical discourse in new music around value and experimentation, there is an increasing awareness that all musical activities are geographically situated and bear some relation to the market (whether through public funding or private philanthropy). Few within new music are (openly) claiming to be personally making great strides in advancing the western tradition in their works and, through this, bettering humanity at large. As discussed above, the future has become more uncertain and with it the belief in progress. What to add to the museum of great works is a fraught question, particularly when the contemporary music world has traditional drawn some of the most pointed accusations of elitism. For some, the answer is to try and change the idea of the museum altogether.

Rather than purely taking place in the world of composers and the avant-garde, the innovation that the MCICM has observed in classical music today is a case of self-reflection by individuals and organisations at all points within the network of classical music practitioners.[37] It is in the organisations seeking better representation amongst their artists and staff; in the individual musicians teaching stylistic diversity; and in unusual concert formats and series. It is taking place in all manner of locations: in schools, hospitals, car parks, and online; and we see it is as significantly dispersed, though by no means yet democratised due to the sociodemographic profiles of the vast majority of people in the classical music world.

Such dispersal is, however, no guarantee of its success. For, in these various locations, what constitutes innovation is highly dependent on various contextual factors, particularly on the default practice of whoever is involved. Thus, an outdoor performance for Pynarello (a Dutch conductorless orchestra) or the Nevis Ensemble (Scotland's 'Street Orchestra') is a very different beast compared to a more traditional, concert-hall-bound institution. This has the consequence

37 Veerle Spronck, Peter Peters and Ties van de Werff, 'Empty Minds: Innovating Audience Participation in Symphonic Practice', *Science as Culture*, 30, 2 (2021), 216–236; Ties van de Werff, Neil Thomas Smith, Stefan Rosu and Peter Peters, 'Missing the Audiences. Online Musicking in Times of COVID-19', *Journal of Cultural Management and Cultural Policy*, 7, 1 (2021), 137–150; Neil Thomas Smith, 'Constructing the Public Concert Hall', *The Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 146, 2 (2021), 255–281.

that certain 'innovative' ideas are continually being rediscovered and recirculated: playing outside or in an unusual location, performing to school groups, and accompanying films are all ideas that pop up in orchestral programmes with some regulatory, yet may all be identified as innovative by those involved. This rediscovery tells us about the situated nature of innovation but also about the difficulties faced in moving forward and learning from previous experiences elsewhere in the field. There is a danger of classical music innovation becoming the dog forever chasing its tail. Were this so, it would fit within a perspective that sees the 'innovations' of classical music institutions as tinkering at the edges of a fundamentally flawed model that many do not have the courage or wit to abandon. This is the tension that Brandon Farnsworth's chapter describes between 'reformist' and 'radical' critiques, the former working within the system to bring about change, the latter seeking to change the system. Certainly, there is a danger that the old contents are packaged in new ways and it is called progress. One purpose of this volume is to describe in some detail, and with a critical eye, certain common moves towards classical innovation so that the sector can break out of this repetitive loop.

Appeals to innovation can also be a powerful marketing tool: ensembles and performers can be made to 'look' experimental and disruptive despite offering the most common fare. Yet, any essential division between 'real innovation' on the one hand and 'marketing' on the other is problematic as innovative practices now involve reaching more, and more diverse, people, and marketing – who gets to hear about such events – has an important role in this. In trying to appeal to more people, however, marketing drives can often double down on the art form's elite nature, or the supposed 'genius' of its practitioners. In trying to solve one problem of classical music, another is encountered almost immediately. This is the basis of calls for rather more radical change.

There is, however, also a danger that a focus on innovative practices is part of a drive towards increased instrumentalization and marketisation of culture. For example, from a mainland European perspective, the United Kingdom appears a hotbed of innovative practice. This may be so, but these moves are tied to long-term decreases in state funding and an increased sense in government that the philanthropic model of the United States might be preferable to that of European social democracies

since World War II. Economics defines artistic, or at least institutional, priorities to a significant degree and innovation in the UK context is partly a reaction to scarcity. One interpretation of this evidence is that such scarcity creates agile, innovative organisations, yet for innovative practices to take hold significant resource is required. The sector laments the often project-based nature of innovative interventions, which reach new people and places for a time but do not have the funding to be sustained, not to mention the knock-on effects of unstable employment for musicians of project-based work. Institutionalising innovative practice effectively is not, ultimately, a low-cost option, but if the only alternative is the future posited by the obsolescence problem – complete extinction – then practitioners have no choice. Such is the power of a convincing future with friends in the right places.

It is difficult to overstate the severity of critiques of the diversity of classical music. The problems listed above are not external to the way the art form has been understood, marketed and practised. The canon, orchestral discipline, the work of youth orchestras,[38] instrumental and vocal virtuosity, and the legacies of genius and artistic superiority are some of the most significant foundations on which the image and practice of classical music has been built. Removing them raises the question: what is left? At present there is a lack of overarching positive vision for the work of musicians and institutions within classical music, while efforts in this direction can too easily fall back on old (and continuing) exclusions. These are important considerations when considering how such exclusions in classical music might be subverted and transformed. As Bull and Scharff describe, 'discussing diversity means calling into question the boundaries of what counts as classical music.'[39] Starting again is not an option in a tradition this widespread, with such deep historical roots. The solutions, therefore, are to be found in conscious engagement and in playful experimentation. They are to be found in the diverse tools that are created in the work of people all over the world engaged in transforming this practice.

38 Bull, *Class, Control, and Classical Music*.

39 Bull, Anna, and Christina Scharff, 'Introduction' in *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions*, ed. by Anna Bull, Christina Scharff and Laudan Nooshin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 13.

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