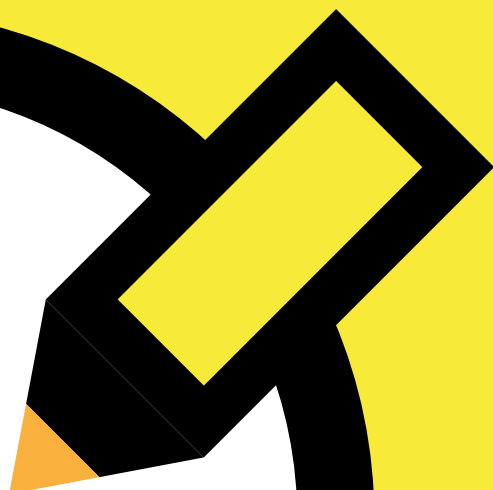




REMASTUDIES

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YOU!**



**EARLY MUSIC:
THE ART OF MOVEMENT, ART IN MOTION**

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PREAMBLE

EARLY MUSIC: THE ART OF MOVEMENT, ART IN MOTION

Oude Muziek, Musique Ancienne, Musica Antica... or Historically Informed Performance Practice? The Early Music ecosystem sometimes struggles to find a common word to define its own business, thus revealing a difficulty to pinpoint the essence of the work. For lack of a better phrase, “Early Music” is easily resorted to, while acknowledging that these words do not encompass the wide range of topics, approaches, activities, and, of course, periods, that we mentally allude to every time we use them.

At a time when REMA has moved from a programming-oriented network to a wider membership, endorsing the fact that its scope is more than just historically informed practice, but also includes research, recording, concert selling, education and training... the need for an inclusive definition of Early Music is strong. However, once the veil is lifted, it also becomes clear that no better wording could satisfy such a variety of interests and activities.

The following study is the result of an attempt to offer a different perspective on Early Music and what it represents, through the words of the people who are living in it. By focusing on individual approaches of Early Music, by giving the floor to personal experiences instead of a systemic survey focusing on organisations, it aims to make visible some common traits and trends that come from within the sector, and, very importantly, it aims to put the emphasis on the values and attitudes that are dear to our stakeholders. Some of these conclusions may be the confirmation of intuitions on how this ecosystem operates, while others will be hints to common values that could become the foundations of the sector. By giving the first place to individual feelings and careers, we are hoping to point towards a different perspective to what the sector does daily and how it impacts our personal lives and thoughts.

PREAMBLE

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEP BARCONS,

Artistic director
Espurnes Barroques
Spain

ARTEM BELOGUROV

Keyboards player
Ukraine / United States /
Netherlands

CLAIRE BERGET

Instrument maker
France

ANDREA BUCCARELLA

Harpichordist,
organist, conductor
Italy

TIM CARTER

Musicologist
United Kingdom / United States

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION

Recorder player
Germany

ANOUK DE CLERCQ

Video creator
Belgium

SASKIA DE VILLE

Journalist
France

MARÍA DEL SER

Journalist
Spain

**OCTAVIE DOSTALER-
LALONDE**

Cello player
Netherlands / Canada

JILL FELDMAN

Soprano
Italy / United States

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

CEO of Harmonia Mundi
France

DMYTRO KOKOSHYSKY

Harpichordist
Ukraine

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

Musicologist
United Kingdom

LUCILE RICHARDOT

Mezzo-soprano
France

HOPKINSON SMITH

Lutenist
United States / Switzerland

IMBI TARUM

Harpichordist
Estonia

**LUÍS TASSO
ATHAYDE SANTOS**

Bassoonist and oboist
Netherlands / Australia

MARK TATLOW

Conductor, artistic director,
educator, researcher
Sweden / United Kingdom

PREAMBLE

METHODOLOGY

HOW DO THE ACTORS OF EARLY MUSIC PERCEIVE ITS UNIQUE TRAITS AND NUANCES? WHAT CAN EARLY MUSIC ACCOMPLISH, IN THE WORDS OF THOSE WHO BRING IT TO LIFE?

Far from a rigid definition, the purpose of this inquiry is to provide a snapshot, a reflection of an identity in motion, nurtured by diverse sensitivities. Around twenty stakeholders of Early Music, members and non-members of the European Early Music Network, have been interviewed. This study aims to shed light on the sensitivities and questions that permeate Early Music at the present moment, in all its richness, remaining true to the different realities that the sector encompasses, from the perspective of its actors.

The interviews captured the perspectives of individuals from across Europe who contribute to the ecosystem in various capacities: musicologists, journalists, music critics, label directors, educators, artists, luthiers, programmers, and researchers.

*The individual interviews were conducted by
Sophie Lanoote (Galatea) and Nathalie Moine
(Florès) from June to October 2023.*

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Let's just call it
music

HOPKINSON SMITH

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CONCLUSION

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Early music opens the way of the imagination, of the creativity of other composers.

MARÍA DEL SER

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A CORNERSTONE:
THE PRIVATE
ROOTS
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“

It's a question of energy, of physicality, how it kind of engages with the body.

TIM CARTER

”

GENESIS

HOW THE LOVE FOR EARLY MUSIC COMES TO INDIVIDUALS

According to our panel, the love for Early Music often traces back to their youth and is intimately connected to their education and learning experiences. This love has grown alongside them.

Mark Tatlow describes the crucial role that school played for him: he credits it for his discovery of Early Music when he was a teenager and student, leading him to explore new repertoires quite different from those typically pursued by a “classical” musician. He also mentions that university was the place where he encountered “the Early Music movement.” This resonates with the self-portrait of Tim Carter: as a student at the University of Durham in 1970s England – *“a golden age for Early Music in the UK”* – he had transformative encounters, including with his professor Jerome Roche, and with his fellow students, some of whom became prominent figures in Early Music, such as Andrew King and Jeremy West, performers who inspired Tim Carter to dedicate himself to research.

Elisabeth Champollion was eight years old when she began studying the flute. The repertoire of Early Music is precisely what introduced her to the instrument and instrumental practice. She shares, *“I immersed myself in this repertoire before even knowing it was ‘Early Music.’”* At that time, she had not yet developed a passion for history, architecture, and other art forms that she would later enjoy “crossing” with music. The musician also emphasises what has allowed this love to remain vibrant: the fact that Early Music has become her most evident mode of expression, her language.



What kept me with Early Music is that it has become, since the very beginning, my language, my style of speaking musically [...] To me, it doesn't feel like a museum or like old music. It is my language.



ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION

It is not her very first memory of Early Music that journalist Saskia De Ville shared with us, but a key moment for her, a time of a 'real encounter' that led her to immerse herself completely in French music. This happened through a project led by the ensemble Correspondances and its musical director Sébastien Daucé: *'I had him as a guest on the France Musique morning show, and we got along very well. He then proposed that I participate in a MOOC titled 'Le Voyage musical dans la France du 17e siècle' [Musical Journey in 17th Century France].'* What followed was an in-depth process of research and writing that lasted for months over various shoots at the Louvre Museum, Versailles, and the Abbey of Port Royal. This work allowed her to explore a wide range of repertoire and to contextualise her listening experience (historical context, influences, audiences).

Some had a different musical life before choosing the path of Early Music.

“ *When I was a child I started learning music as a singer in the Sistine Chapel Choir. I was a soprano and enjoyed choral singing very much. I think this experience brought to me a lot of important knowledge and skills that I think are essential for a professional musician. Singing in St. Peter and in other important Churches in Rome and abroad gave me the chance to see and listen to a lot of beautiful organs: this instrument impressed me so much that when I changed my voice and stopped singing in the choir I really wanted to start studying and playing it. So when I was 14 I started learning both piano and organ, but the Early Music repertoire at the beginning wasn't the focus of my studies. I was mainly focused on romantic and contemporary music. But when I was about 20 I met a conductor, Alessandro Quarta, who was organising concerts in Rome with his ensemble and performing baroque music from the 17th century.*

“ *Alessandro asked me to join the ensemble as a continuo player and this meeting brought me to Early Music. So at first I started practising and learning basso continuo by myself, then since I liked it very much I decided to study Early Music, treatises and performance practice in depth. Finally when I was around 23 I started taking my first harpsichord lessons, and today I can say that I consider the harpsichord as my main instrument.*

ANDREA BUCCARELLA

Others, finally, would almost rebel – with a touch of mischief – when asked how their path crossed with that of Early Music. It is not about finding the genesis of a love for Early Music in a single foundational moment, an epiphany.

“ *Well, let's just call it music, because Early Music, it sounds like a little box on the computer when you click yes, Early Music. But it is actually music. And what interests me is that these early repertoires and what one can bring to life with an instrument that fits. But just because something's old doesn't mean it is good. What we want to do is keep looking for the way that most convincingly brings this music to life. And if you can do it with historical methods, this is interesting, but it is not the end result. The end result is music and the moment of creation, which is always the moment of performance.*

HOPKINSON SMITH

GENESIS

BEYOND THE ENCOUNTER: THE FASCINATION OF A NEVER-ENDING QUEST

For several of our guests, this quest is not just about bringing ancient repertoires to life; it also pertains to the sound. In this case, the encounter is not fortuitous; it is the result of a deliberate and sometimes fervent search.

A quest that is undoubtedly shared by the early pioneers of Early Music, and the Estonian harp-sichordist Imbi Tarum is undoubtedly one such pioneer, who can look back on the journey with a legitimate sense of accomplishment.

“

I am still looking for within the lute world, instruments and resonances and repertoires that are unknown and interesting. But if you think of the sound of the lute as resonating somehow within you – and I call this the musical soul, which is a little bit hard to define, but it is better that you can't really define it. But this is what draws me to a certain resonance, let's say, and the types of instruments I play.

HOPKINSON SMITH

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“

It has been a long life already together with Early Music, I was still in the conservatory when I was asked to join the group Hortus Musicus, in 1978. Since then, I have performed with them all over the world, and at famous festivals. Then in the year 1992, I resigned from this group and I started another epoch of my life, teaching and playing in other projects, [...] So I am the first one in Estonia, one of the first ones, but the first who really specialised in harp-sichord. And now I am teaching the students on this path.

IMBI TARUM

”

Embarking on such a quest can also coincide with the beginning of a fascination, one that does not diminish over time because it is linked to the very spirit of discovery.

“
People always ask us, but we also ask ourselves: why did you get into ‘this niche’? And some even say: ‘Why did we lock ourselves into this niche?’ For me, it is more of an opening. The day I discovered Early Music, it is not that it changed my life, but it changed my listening, my approach, my feelings.
And I was a child, in a choir in my homeplace, a choir school, the Petits Chanteurs de la Croix de Lorraine [...], and I discovered William Byrd, Orlando di Lasso, Palestrina, Charpentier [...]
When you sing that, it opens your ears, it opens up perspectives.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



Everything unfolded in two years: studying under fellow harpsichordist Elena Zikhova, he one day heard an ensemble from the renowned Schola Cantorum in Basel at the Academy, eventually joining the School at the dawn of his twenties.

He has been studying there with Francesco Corti ever since.

“
What did it bring?
Well, it brought me, first of all knowledge of a huge repertoire of which I had no idea.
And the more I was getting to know it, the more excited I have been.
Fascinating music!

DMYTRO KOKOSHYNISKYY



This initial fascination appears to have been preserved by harpsichordist Dmytro Kokoshynskyy, who began his musical studies learning the piano and then discovered the harpsichord at the age of 17 during a recital by a professor at the Kiev Academy of Music:

“
And then I realised I was really into the sound of the instrument, and I was discovering a lot of repertoire. I was very excited.

DMYTRO KOKOSHYNISKYY



PERCEPTION, VIBRATION, EMOTIONS

A LIFE-SIZED SPACE OF FRAGILITY, SINCERITY, AND SELF-HONESTY: HUMAN NATURE

RESOLUTELY HUMAN

If Early Music had a temperament, what would it be? When this question is asked, the answers always mention a human dimension. A space of sensitive perception, subjective entanglement, vulnerability as well. Does this fragility arise from the material, the fabric of the instrument?

“There is this aspect, I don’t know if it is the exact word, ‘organic,’ which resides not only in the strings, which don’t produce a smooth sound, but also... If I dare say, weaknesses or a kind of frailty that I find particularly moving. It is not ‘clean,’ it has nothing to do with machines. That’s why I say ‘on a human scale,’ as in full of weaknesses, fragilities. One may think of the voice itself.

ANOUK DE CLERCQ

This particular quality points to the possibility of an inhabited, sincere gesture, and this is one of the most commonly cited values.

THE INNER VOICE

Early Music makes it possible to speak from within and from its profoundly human nature, in contrast to the machine or the animal. It is the creation of a man, a woman. Jill Feldman sees this as one of the characteristic features of this aesthetic, deferring to the words of Shakespeare in Hamlet in 1599:

**“[...] What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused**

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Humanity in performance is the condition of grace, which, according to the singer, epitomises Early Music *“in the way of singing and behaving. That’s the first rule of the game. Baldassare Castiglione, in his book Il Cortegiano, in 1528, considers that the summit is not to force. Every human act must be accompanied by grace and “sprezzatura”, ease. Without this, the human values that Early Music seeks are not respected, to assert the human being rather than the beast, as Shakespeare writes. Castiglione was very interested in how to behave at court. You couldn’t do anything you wanted.”*

THE SPACE OF FREEDOM

This humanity is also the condition of freedom, or emancipation from preconceived interpretations and lines drawn by others before us.

“

There is often a sort of dogmatic sense of interpreting music in the modern sense, where you have to play the orchestra excerpts and the auditions in the same way all the time or to the way that someone in particular likes. But the freedom that Early Music has is that it is all based on these old sources that we will never be able to fully understand and incorporate. And of course, we can understand as much as we can, and we can incorporate as much as we can, but that doesn’t mean that someone is telling us exactly what to do, that we have this freedom to understand everything retrospectively and in hindsight, that you wouldn’t necessarily get with modern performance practice.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

”

PERCEPTION, VIBRATION, EMOTIONS

PLURALITY AND MUTABILITY OF OUR EMOTIONS

INFINITE NUANCE

Echoing what is most resolutely human, Early Music is the stage for the torment of emotions and an infinity of nuanced feelings.

María del Ser sees it as one of its most striking specificities, resulting from its history:

Joy, melancholy, sadness, regrets. All the things that we can associate with the Human, with our reason of being on earth, but differently than another kind of music. For me, this music can express the way that we feel, that we live. Perhaps we can find the reason in the different forms provided by composers. Maybe the oratorios, operas, ballets of the French court, for instance, in the 17th century, can help us visualise the king's influence over the creation of this music, through its brilliancy. But this splendour is more than just a convention, it is more than the vessel of a political message, it can also move us to our deepest core.

MARÍA DEL SER



A WINDOW TO THE INNER LIFE

A reflection of inner worlds, Early Music expresses, through relevant performance, emotions that still resonate today.

It is important to look for a truly poignant way to express certain emotions through music. When you look into the past, you realise that music was something that had a deep, urgent, and immediate meaning
In my mind, in Early Music, it is about always maintaining that connection to the music and not making it something everyday, a bit ordinary or mechanical, not by constantly replaying the same repertoire, always playing it exactly the same way, not settling for sounding like a recording.

Instead, it is about imagining that it is something contemporary, that has something to do with us as individuals, with those who play it as well as those who listen. To imagine that we

are in Mozart's time and hearing this music for the first time. To remember that music then had a lot to do with theatre, also very extreme in its expression. In this way, this music can be contemporary.

I believe that with Early Music, it is possible to get closest to the person who is listening, closest to the experience of a person, an audience member, or a musician in the moment, to create something very powerful.

OCTAVIE DOSTALER-LALONDE

Something very powerful can be created, bringing a fresh perspective on the relevance of a score, of a work with the people around us today. This is the subject of an inexhaustible search:

What made Early Music actually very interesting for me is that I was always thinking not only about how I feel on stage, which is what you do with a modern instrument, but also about 'what can I really say with the music using these older sources that we have specifically'? Also, what am I bringing in a new interpretation of the sources?

Of course, a lot of us have read the same sources and come to many different conclusions and also to many different performances of the same thing. And also some people haven't read certain sources and other people have, which means that everyone is kind of on a different path and on a different wavelength of understanding or interpreting. And this is what really makes it unique for me personally.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

THE PLACE OF SUBJECTIVITY, OF THE "I"

The subjectivity of interpretations adds flavour to the (re)discovery of a work, with each bringing a unique reading, allowing it to resonate quite differently.

Among artists from more recent generations, I think of two conductors who, for me, are doing absolutely fantastic work. First, Sébastien Daucé, especially around Charpentier's music. He really enlightened me about the scope of a composer who, during my conservatory studies, was always relegated to Lully's shadow.

With Sébastien, I began to realise that the great French genius of the 17th century might not be who we thought... or at least, he wasn't alone! The other conductor who comes to mind immediately is Raphaël Pichon, with a very different approach, an absolutely exceptional perception of drama that I had never encountered before. Whether he tackles Monteverdi's Vespers or Bach's St. Matthew Passion, he brings an absolutely fresh perspective to masterpieces that we thought we had 'heard everything' of, if I may say so. Going beyond the strict framework of Early Music, I could also expand my 'admiring triumvirate' to a third conductor with whom we also collaborate, namely François-Xavier Roth. The work he does with his historically informed orchestra Les Siècles embodies, in my eyes (and even more so in my ears), the perfect, even miraculous synthesis between a conducting skill acquired through many years of 'conventional' learning, if I may say so (as far as being an assistant to Pierre Boulez or Colin Davis can be called conventional), and a practice of period instruments from all eras.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

Taking into account this subjectivity does not deny, on the contrary, the plurality of expressed and evoked emotions.

“ *Music in general reflects many different aspects of human emotion. And I wouldn't want to eliminate any emotions from the palate, but neither would I exclude certain emotions from earlier repertoires. But I wouldn't want to give everything in every piece. Within the expressive world that the early instruments offer, there's room for all kinds of reflective and expressive devices.*

You think of Dowland and the depths of turgid, difficult, unfathomable misery that he puts in his songs. And then also there are completely frivolous and wonderful songs by Dowland, and it is all the same person. [...] So I am looking for the biggest, undefinable solution so that all these different characters are part of life and part of music, and they always were part of life. And in each epoch, you have different manifestations of the emotional depth that humans have.

HOPKINSON SMITH

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PERCEPTION, VIBRATION, EMOTIONS

A CONNECTION TO IMAGINATION, JOY, AND PLAY

WHERE IMAGINATION UNFOLDS

The plurality of possible choices in interpreting a work makes, for some of those interviewed, Early Music a space where imagination reigns supreme.

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Early Music opens the way of the imagination, of the creativity of other composers.

MARÍA DEL SER

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It is an incredible playground, both profoundly serious and light-hearted. But what is the goal of this game?

“

Maybe the key is to be found in the very aim of playing; in playing for being joyful as a kid, who discovers the world through a playful

outlook. And this outlook is full of commitment: a child, when he is playing, is absolutely committed to what he is doing, in the sense that it seems that – to him – there’s no other world than what he is doing.

As adults we talk about focus, but a child doesn’t have to intentionally focus on the game he is playing, because he is the game. So I would say another of the key elements (not the goal, perhaps, but yes the milestone) is focus, but focus meaning this: being in the play, being playful with what you are doing. And of course, when you are playing, you have to know the rules of the game you are playing. So perhaps the goal of the game would be being in the game with such a focus that the game reaches the heart of whoever is involved playing or listening.

JOSEP BARCONS

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AN INVESTIGATION

A game for some, and for others, an inquiry, or even exploration.

“

It is a form of intellectual curiosity. A mental awakening that brings ideas to the world, rather than technique. In the context of modern music, there is a lot of pressure to win orchestra auditions, for example. You have to play quickly, enter in two minutes, make no mistake. The emphasis is on a kind of ‘perfection in itself,’ with technique being the priority. I find that in Early Music, we are protected from that. There are no orchestra auditions, so people continue to evolve, trying new instruments.

Often, we play more than one instrument and reinvent ourselves a bit continually. We learn things throughout our journey, always looking for what we can find elsewhere, trying different bows.

There are so many doors to experimentation and renewal. I encounter this phenomenon much more in Early Music than when I was playing modern orchestral music.

OCTAVIE DOSTALER-LALONDE

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ROLLING UP YOUR SLEEVES

It is not just about performing: this exploratory dimension is present from the crafting of instruments.

“

In the tradition of craftsmanship, you get your hands dirty, you take out the peg, you tinker.

You think, ‘Right; this bridge.

Could I try enlarging the grooves in the nut?’ Faced with an Early Music instrument, you improvise, you can’t help it because you are dealing with things that are much more flexible. Is the bow not tight enough? You put a piece of leather. You are into experimentation. What do you want to do with this bow, are you playing at home or in a concert hall? It changes everything, everything has to be reconsidered each time.

CLAIRE BERGET

”

Thus, in this space-time that separates today’s actors of Early Music from the sources, the possibility of playfulness unfolds, both as in playing a game and in that of room for movement.

FROM THE CORPUS (THE OBJECT) TO THE BODY (THE SUBJECT)

EMBODIMENT AND INCARNATION OF EARLY MUSIC

The relationship to the body – of performers, instrumentalists or singers, as well as of listeners – induced by the engagement with Early Music, often comes up. It becomes one with Early Music, which, as a corpus of works, treatises, and transmitted knowledge – a heritage both material and immaterial – and of communicated emotions, possesses its own existence. It manifests itself in the bodies of those who perpetuate and share it.

“

I also like to think of integrity as involving the body as well as the mind. A good way to achieve this is to work with a sense of embodiment in all we do.

MARK TATLOW

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It is a question of energy, of physicality, how it kind of engages with the body. It is a question of discovery, and of shifting our whole musical frame in terms of the way in which we think we hear sounds and how we might hear sounds instead. And that's a whole bunch of complicated issues that come into it. One is tuning and temperament, the way in which we hear harmonies and pitches and how we tune them, which is not the same as equal temperament.

TIM CARTER

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My first encounter with Early Music was a cappella polyphonic vocal music. And then I discovered the positive organ, I discovered the A415 Hz, I discovered the meantone temperament and Pythagorean temperaments. Initially, for me, these instruments sounded out of tune. But now, it has truly become second

nature. How do you go from something that 'sounds out of tune' to something 'obvious and logical'? It is an immersion, it is vibrations in the body, in the brain.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



These vibrations may be a part of what Early Music artists strive to share with their audiences.



Maybe talking, singing, dancing movements are the most basic things that we learn as soon as we can stand on two feet, and music and dance are so closely connected. It feels unnatural for me to stand still when I am playing or listening to music.

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION



Can we compare the body language of a soloist to particularly expressive orchestral conducting, which not only serves an essential function for other musicians but also has a didactic "utility" for the audience?



My sound, my face, my body and my voice, how I talk in concerts and the way I dress, everything helps to bring across the message. Not only the sound, but also I help build a bridge between my repertoire and the audience. For I know that sound is not enough.

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION



Of course, it has so much in common with paintings and sculpture as well. But mostly paintings in my mind. And dance, of course. I have practised some dance, and it is really in our body when we play, because there is some inner movement all the time. So, actually, dance is very influential, and it is there all the time.

IMBI TARUM



FROM THE CORPUS (THE OBJECT) TO THE BODY (THE SUBJECT)

BETWEEN HUMILITY AND PLAYFULNESS:

BEYOND SOURCES, A SPACE OF FREEDOM AND SINCERITY, OF INTERPRETATION AND EXPERIMENTATION

Can respect for sources and experimentation coexist harmoniously?

“ *I have to honour musical integrity. And yes, I honour the sources and the materials. I am not going to change Monteverdi's notes. Well sometimes you have to, because they are misprinted, but you have the score or the parts there and you have to do something with them. And I have to honour the process of doing something with them that I fantasise is close to what Monteverdi would have heard wanted. But that is pure fantasy on my part.*

TIM CARTER



“ *It is an approach to the page, but it does not rely on playing exactly what is there; it relies rather on an understanding of what the page is: notation written to enable performers of the time to accurately decode musical information. And what has increasingly interested me is how performers in different periods relate to what is written on the page: I try to avoid using the word 'interpret,' and think of it as an "art of reading" instead.*

MARK TATLOW



Performers often compare the inherent freedom of Early Music to what's frequent for more recent repertoires.

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Looking at later repertoire, romantic symphonies or Lieder, sometimes I envy them. Brahms' violin concerto is so beautiful. It is much more elaborate than the old melodies. It is so rich. But they have to play it this way. This is what it is, the melody, all the notes are there; there is more or less guidance on how to play it. With my music I feel I have much more freedom. And during my studies, it was difficult because I see four bars with eight notes or twelve notes and I need to make them sound. But now I know how to add ornaments, how to take my freedom, and arrange a lot.

We do a lot of arrangement.

We have a lot of freedom: taking just a little piece out of a sonata, maybe just destroying it and then combining it with something else and then another piece. So, it is also a matter of being licensed or feeling licensed to take freedom. And if you would do that with Brahms concerto, then people would say it is not possible. It is not allowed. Because maybe while time was going on and the music was more written, and the composers would add specifications or nuances. [...] Fifty years ago, it was all about historical performance practice because that was what they were trying to find out. They were trying to read all the stuff and to do it right. And now it is not so much about copying the historical reality but making something individual out of it. So, I would say, yes, freedom is greater now.

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION

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Sometimes, this freedom is a principle not relative but absolute, demanding from performers the ability to abstract from the knowledge acquired throughout the years and from a rigorous practice.

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What it generally brought me is a sense of freedom as the stage itself. [...] The variety of ideas and approaches to the instrument is very wide, and this leaves a great space for a performer to grow. And there is lots of space where you can say something personal in the music you discover.

This is very fascinating. And for me, the search was to get this language from different parts of the repertoire as well as to let myself forget about what I – well, not forget, but not think all the time about what I have learned and just let ears and hands be in the whole plan, in the moment.

DMYTRO KOKOSHYNSKY

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What has increasingly interested me is how performers in different periods relate to what is written on the page: I try to avoid using the word ‘interpret,’ and think of it as an “art of reading” instead.

MARK TATLOW

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THE PERSPECTIVES THAT THE COLLECTIVE BRINGS



We could be playing
all sorts of scores
– not just Early Music
scores, all sorts of
scores –
very differently.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON



THE SENSE OF OTHERNESS

A REVOLUTION: EARLY MUSIC AS THE “OTHER”

In the turning point of the 1960s, a time of freedom, Early Music fully embraces the spirit of its era. According to Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, « *Trying to define itself as different from some kind of mainstream* » rebellious, hippie, or revolutionary. Far from the paths traced by orchestras or opera, which convey a sense of power and order, Early Music is off the beaten track, questions, disturbs the status quo, and shows new sensible approaches to music. It is then essentially subversive.

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Early Music was an alternative because it was saying ‘look, there are other ways of making convincing music’. And some of those ways were by using old scores and some of them were by playing scores differently, on different instruments and with different kinds of musical performance styles. And Early Music has been fantastically inventive in creating new performance styles, which is the one thing that classical music always tries to prevent. The last

thing you want is a new performance style: you are always trying to recover the correct one. So Early Music has created a load of new performance styles in the process, while believing that these were old performance styles, that it was correctly recreated. Of course they aren’t, but it has been, by accident, incredibly inventive. And in that process it showed that it is possible to create new performance styles and to play scores in quite different ways. And to me that is its greatest contribution, that we could be playing all sorts of scores – not just Early Music scores, all sorts of scores – very differently.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

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Singularity remains an essential component of Early Music, encouraging artists to cultivate their own interpretation, their own vision. María del Ser takes the example of Giovanni Antonini and his interpretation of the Four Seasons: “*It was an actual shock for all of us. It was a point of view of*

the reading of the treatises, of the interpretations, of the parameters of interpretations as an ornament as a trill, as a comma, as a respiration, as the silence. They make their own vision. And it is something very artistic.” This variability from one interpretation to another seems inherent in the instrument itself, from its conception.

In bow making, at a critical point in time, it was decided that the models developed during the 19th century become the standard models for classical music. It is taken for granted that they should be copied: these are the canons to which we refer with variations but overall enormous homogeneity.

In 19th-century bows, you can see some tiny differences but overall, visually, it is very homogeneous. In contrast, before the 19th century, there was an astonishing proliferation of shapes, textures, possibilities, lengths, weights: variability and heterogeneity were the rule, to serve each period and style of music. You don't need the same bow if you are playing early 17th-century Italian diminutions or if you are playing mid-18th-century German music.

As a result, we observe a multitude of differences. Just look at iconography, which constitutes for us a huge repertoire of forms, to realise that what matters then is to make a tool adapted to the intended use. This is work that has nothing to do with copying. It gives me immense freedom in craftsmanship, and that's also why Baroque bow makers all create different things, and a musician looking for a particular sound, a particular grain, a particular relationship with their bow will inevitably find their family of instrumental craftsmanship.

CLAIRE BERGET



THE SENSE OF OTHERNESS

THE COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING AND SENSIBILITY:

BEING A DRIVING FORCE, FACING THE OTHER, OR TOGETHER.

The concept of otherness seems central in the sector; the very organisation of the actors as a group shows it, with kindness and warmth.

“ People who became interested in Early Music were not far from a hippie movement, in contact with something a bit more archaic initially, and therefore perhaps a bit rougher. It interested people who had a human connection, who were drawn to something less academic. [...] I see a clear difference between modern instrument makers and those who work with Early Music in the quality of welcome. There is something very formal in modern luthiery that I don't find in workshops for historical instruments, where there is an open idea. People come, eat together, drink coffee, talk, try things. [...] The financial relationship is also different – in classical luthiery, everything is very expensive compared to what we can offer in historically informed luthiery. There's something of a capitalist spirit that is less present in Baroque bow making. My relationship with musicians goes beyond

the commercial framework; I try to preserve the quality of welcome I received myself when I entered this field. On Rue de Rome, you have a day to try a bow. Here, people can sometimes have the bow for three months, and I don't mind. There's something more humane, a support, something continuous.

CLAIRE BERGET

Sometimes, this alterity leads to a reciprocated consideration, strengthened by a sense of sharing. Imbi Tarum thus spoke of the particular spirit that prevailed within her community of Estonian artists, which she describes as “peer learning” as they taught each other, based on what they read, listened to, collected, translated, and more.

“ We use our knowledge to serve each other better.

IMBI TARUM

THE SENSE OF OTHERNESS

UNIQUE COURSES: EARLY MUSIC MUSICIANS CULTIVATE THEIR DIFFERENCES

This quality of listening and attention is not merely the result of chance and time. It might even be the essence of Early Music to acknowledge the infinity of courses through time, and the variety of perspectives, which actually echoes how individual subjectivities fit within a broader world.

“ ***In the past, there was less standardisation, so more variety. By engaging with Early Music, you come into contact with a different mindset, which forces you to accept that things are not standardised and makes room for much more diversity and variety. Diversity is an important value in Early Music, both in terms of knowledge, approaches, and aesthetic or stylistic sensibilities.*** ”

OCTAVIE DOSTALER-LALONDE

THE SENSE OF OTHERNESS

DIVERSITY AND ENCOUNTERS IN EARLY MUSIC

Hospitable, diverse, convivial, Early Music likes to unfold in the plural, taking numerous paths.

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With older recordings, such as those of William Christie, you can really feel like they are trying very hard to discover things and perform in an exploratory manner. But today there is often a tendency to rely on the mentors who have done the source reading but not do the reading, themselves.
However, today there is plenty of new research that I personally find fascinating; a lot of young people trying to do things as historically-informed as possible. Of course, whether it sounds to our taste or not is another matter. In any case, it is of interest that there are a multitude of ways of playing Early Music, just like there are a multitude of ways of playing contemporary music.
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LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

A growth of Early Music among new generations which contributes to the inventiveness and dynamism of the sector:

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I worked for 30 years, taught at the Conservatory of The Hague where singers and instrumentalists are now trained much more thoroughly. I observe this especially regarding violinists. At that time, we were experimenting; we took the bow, used gut strings. It was all new. Now, there are absolutely extraordinary baroque violinists in Japan, China, England, France. When I started, it wasn't like that. There's a whole generation of very good violinists in France, two, three, or four generations now, who are excellent.
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JILL FELDMAN

These new generations receive special attention from the field:

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Craig Ryder often says that he wants to maintain fees that allow students to play.

In a way, earning more would affect his relationship with young musicians who are still in conservatorie and lack means. An exorbitant fee could really handicap them.

I have students in conservatories who have little means and need a bow, and they pay me 50 euros a month.

It will take two years, but what can we do? Bows for people to play or to line our pockets?

CLAIRE BERGET

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However, this alternative and diverse scope constitutes a fragile legacy. So, how do we preserve this mindset, especially when Early Music settles in time and gains authority?

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I think we are not in this scenario of fragility, since no one has to fight to play the classical or even romantic repertoires with historical criteria. Even the symphonic orchestras are playing Beethoven or Mozart with some historical criteria in mind, even if the bows are classical or modern, or are playing with metal strings. They have this in mind and no one puts this in question. So in terms of how musicians who follow historical criteria are sociologically settled in the classical music world, the attitude has changed a lot in the last 50 years.

JOSEP BARCONS

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Daniel Leech-Wilkinson describes a two-faced Early Music, with an original alternative side that struggles to align with its institutionalised developments.

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A lot of the people who were engaged in it were young people who were also interested in the sort of more liberated culture of the late 1960s. And of course, we've all grown old, some of us are more established, and some of us have become less established ... but most of us have become more established.

Most people do that when they grow older. So Early Music is a bit like that. It is grown in the same way that people grow to become rather too comfortable, and so it has lost a lot of its edge in the process. But this is all part of a larger picture, which is the way in which classical music as a whole is by its very nature a highly conservative culture because of the things it believes about its purpose.

And if you believe that the purpose of classical music is to recreate sounds from the past, to make performances that would have pleased people who wrote scores hundreds of years ago, if you think that's the purpose of classical music, which almost everybody does, then you are locked into a culture which is always trying to reproduce the same result conservatively. Although there are still wonderfully inventive things going on in Early Music... There is a sort of tendency towards a kind of an international style which is convenient because it enables musicians to move easily between ensembles, different countries, to go and play a couple of days in Slovakia and then another couple of days in Italy and so on.

There's been a sort of an internationalisation and a homogenization because it makes good commercial sense. And through that process I do feel that Early Music has sort of lost some of its disruptive qualities.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

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For him, certain performance injunctions come into direct conflict with this diversity and uniqueness.

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In order to get work, you have to play more or less the same way that everybody else plays, otherwise no one will hire you.

Now, that's exactly the opposite of what we need in order to explore the potential that's locked in these scores. And it is also incredibly bad for musicians' mental and physical health. Musicians are caught in this impossible situation where on the one hand, they are supposed to be performing pieces the way they were originally performed, they are supposed to be recovering those intentions. At the same time, they are supposed to be obeying current performance norms so that they fit in with everybody else. And at the same time as those two incompatible things, they are also supposed to be bringing something of their own to their performances.

Now, you can't even do two of these things at once, let alone all three. So of course people are conflicted, insecure and anxious about whether they are playing correctly or whether they will be criticised more or less all the time. It is a constant worry at the back of any performer's head: 'am I going too far?' Almost anything is too far if it is different from what people expect. This is exactly the opposite of the situation we find with early recordings.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

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This is just where Early Music allows for a wide array of performance, as long as it is not dictated by the current trends.

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It is impossible to know what these scores sounded like in the past; as we know from early recordings, it is completely impossible to imagine unless you have the sounds, no written description is enough. And so, of course, people are making new styles even when they think they are making old styles. Of course they are, which is great: that's wonderful.

The problem comes when you arrive at a style that you like and then you ask your students, and everybody else around you, to play only in that style. And so it becomes a new norm, and that's disastrous.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

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The diversity of the people in the field could be stronger. This is not lost on the new generation, which struggles to reconcile its concern for diversity and inclusion with its artistic practice. How can one work to make Early Music a reflection of society, rather than just a small group of insiders?

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It is probably the least racially and culturally diverse field in the arts, but I am hopeful it will change.

ARTEM BELOGUROV

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From this perspective, openness to other practices and viewpoints could be a key.

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There is a kind of distrust, I would say, in inviting people like me, artists or other profiles, choreographers, and so on.

I believe there is a chance, an opportunity to open up to other audiences. While preserving, of course, the tradition in the way of playing and presenting music. I believe one does not prevent the other. But it is important to open up to other audiences, through other disciplines, to a more eclectic program. There is a fear of mixing it all up. But when you see the work of an orchestra like Manchester Collective, it is very interesting.

ANOUK DE CLERCQ

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In Early Music, there are wonderfully inventive groups and individuals, and that needs to be celebrated as much as possible and encouraged. But an awful lot of the innovation in Early Music and in all music is not so much in performance as in presentation. And it is fine to perform in alternative spaces and with theatrical productions and video and so on and so on.

This is all great, but the performances have to change as well, and they should always be changing. So really, I just want to see a culture in which there is difference, invention, creativity. The Other is always the aim.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

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This effort to renew audiences and perspectives constitutes a continuous opportunity to perpetuate the tradition of alterity, dear to Early Music.

CONNECTIONS AND THEIR MEANING

FROM
REBELLION TO
INSTITUTIONALIZA-
TION?ANTI-CONFORMISM OR CONVENTION?
SUBVERSION BY DESIGN?

There's more to it than it seems: these evolutions would rather be described as an oscillation, than as a simple transition, between A (rebellion) to B (institutionalisation)...

By focusing on a specific institutional figure, the ambiguity becomes clear. An institution can be both a place of normalisation (in terms of establishing and integrating academic and/or interpretative norms) and exception. Tim Carter emphasises the uniquely flexible nature of the Schola Cantorum in Basel, where a researcher can do almost anything, given the exceptional level of the students the school attracts, in comparison to conservatories that he views as more "difficult" institutions: there are rules, prohibitions, or precautions to take, and sometimes there is still a belief that the practice of Early Music can alter technique, especially for violinists. However, Tim Carter acknowledges that things have evolved considerably due to the emergence of versatile or "crossover" performers. It is now a necessity to be able to move between repertoires and enhance one's stylistic skills; it is undoubtedly a

guarantee of increased expressive abilities and greater employability. But beyond the institution itself, one must consider the mindset of those who influence it, which has an obvious influence on practices.



The Early Music movement has always been, and it will remain anarchic. There is always a sense of using Early Music to undermine something or other, usually the musical canon, even now, to undermine expectations of what performance actually is, how instruments should sound, how voices should sound.

So, there is always a kind of anarchic tendency within Early Music, and you should ask Early Music performers this question: do they celebrate anarchy? Not in a political sense, but in a kind of emotional sense? Do they believe in anarchy? Do they believe in undermining the system or reforming the system from underneath, as it were? There certainly was an anarchic tendency, and it probably is still

there. And that anarchic tendency feels quite virtuous; there's virtuous anarchy as it were.

We are resisting the system; we are going against the system. We are somehow radical. We are somehow revolutionary. We are not, but we construct ourselves as being so. We are green. We believe in climate change, we believe in democracy being undermined by high finance, et cetera, et cetera. I doubt you will find many Republicans performing Early Music.

TIM CARTER

I am interested in working, if you like, as a decolonising maestro, (and in getting rid of the word maestro too, if possible!) so that we move away from a 400 or more-year-old tradition with its strict performance hierarchies, towards a much flatter system, where performers' individual ideas can come to the fore. And that is not because I think the old way of operating produced bad results.

It is more that I want to value the integrity of every single performer by enabling their ideas to be heard in both rehearsal and performance.

[...]

If you read the history of Early Music, [...] you learn of a kind of activist beginning, which was socially relevant, and often countercultural, not least in the lifestyles of pioneer Early Music performers. And Early Music became a real force for renewal in the wider musical world. You also learn about the way in which the Early Music way of thinking has influenced other forms of classical music-making. Not just in terms of the inclusion of new repertoire, but in the way that repertoire and its performance practices have influenced and cross fertilised other repertoires.

MARK TATLOW

In the institutionalisation of the rebellious Early Music, Imbi Tarum identifies two forces: there is the everyday aspect, the significant place these repertoires occupy in daily musical life, their permanence, and there is the fundamental structuring of a social organisation. She emphasises how this is the result of the intentional efforts of the artists themselves, among whom she is included, but without declaring victory in a definitive manner.

In the beginning it was very hard to gain a position for Early Music in the concert life and educational life, because it seemed primitive, the modern instruments a bit not so serious. And sometimes the people who played Early Music were not on a high level. And this was maybe a reason that it had difficulties in the beginning. But Early Music now has achieved a very good position. And lots of this music is in all the festivals, operas, big forms like oratorios, or just orchestra concerts with soloists. So this is a big victory. And when this movement began, it was not the case. The fights are always there, between personalities, sometimes institutions.

Also, money is an issue.

IMBI TARUM

CONNECTIONS AND THEIR MEANING

HOW THE STAKEHOLDERS RELATE TO EACH OTHER

Here too, describing a clear-cut situation is futile. The main relationship dynamics in Early Music are nuanced: it could be described as chiaroscuro, where cooperation is the bright side and fierce competition is the dark side, reflecting the hyper-flexibility of freelance artists' careers. Depending on delineations – which “side” of the repertoire are you on? – a certain sense of community may emerge – or not...

“There’s something, nevertheless, in Early Music – not Early Music as such, but rather the milieu of Early Music performers – which is much more... not familial, but... Everyone knows each other, it is a network.

It is like REMA, it is a network. People know each other, and there’s no need to go through 36,000 intermediaries. [...] Early Music performers give me the impression of living much better, psychologically and financially, than the ‘solitary’ soloists of romantic or bel canto music or contemporary music.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



The flexibility of independent Early Music artists is also an asset: the capacity to adapt brings resilience.



In terms of cooperation also and this kind of flexibility that you are playing now with this ensemble and then with another one and the other with another one. We are no longer with mid-seventies or mid-nineties orchestras, you always have to play with different people. There’s a requirement for that, you have to be very attentive to what is happening, very adaptable and you have to like playing with another and to adapt yourself to the others very quickly, you are not playing with someone that will be your duo partner forever. And it can also help for living today.

Students are going to have more possibilities of playing with other people or even more flexibility and plasticity if they know the Early Music parameters and skills, bows etc. because

there are many more ensembles and options to play. If you are a “classic” violin player not developing a soloist career, maybe your goal is to have your desk in an orchestra, apart of doing some chamber music. But if you are in the field of Early Music, the possibilities of playing with various groups increases the opportunities you have to do several things.

JOSEP BARCONS



Here too, the leeway is greater than in the broader “classical music world”. Do Early Music actors put in more effort to drive, to investigate, on top of their hyper-flexibility? Unlike their counterparts in Early Music, classical artists may be less the architects of their careers, and more dependent on programmers:



They are not considered independent performers who can conceive their own projects, propose something themselves. They are just adjustments, pawns to be placed on a broader chessboard, which is the world of opera. Different people must be recruited, but these people are not the originators of the project. (...) We wait to be invited. It is like an actor who doesn't have his own projects and waits for the phone to ring.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



At this point, these relationships have a less positive connotation, that of artistic freedom hindered or never fully realised.

CONNECTIONS AND THEIR MEANING

SEEKING NEW CONNECTIONS WITH THE AUDIENCE

An issue that goes beyond Early Music: thinking about addressing the audience in the same breath as the artistic gesture itself.

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I value human connection on stage. When I play, there is a connection between me and the other players and a connection between us and the audience. It is all about being together, getting together, and communicating.

We had a concert last weekend in Holland and there were practically no boundaries between us and the audience. We really did walk in freely through the audience and when we went on while going on stage, we were talking to people, like just saying, 'How are you tonight? Where do you come from?'

And then it was 08:00 pm and we started the concert. But it started from a conversation,

so we did not have a grand entrance with applause. And later when we played the encore, some people got up to their feet and danced. They started dancing and they wanted and then they felt free to do so by us, but also from the other audience members.

So, nobody was trying to keep them quiet because it was clear that we were dancing so they could be dancing as well. [...] Yes, the one biggest value that I honour is connection.

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION

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A great deal has been done in terms of the study of ancient sources and the reconstruction of performance practice.

Obviously, this process of studying sources and reconstructing performance practice can be considered endless, but there will always be questions that are destined to remain unanswered.

Actually, it is better that we don't have an answer for every question, so what has been done in the theory is already quite impressive, and we can be happy with that.

From the other side, we could do much more to make Early Music more “popular”, to reach a bigger audience. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a kind of boom of baroque music and it started to be very popular and to reach a very big audience.

In the last ten-twenty years, as other musicians older than me told me, somehow it is as if baroque music was going out of style, and not as popular as it used to be.

We do not know exactly why, but I think we should reflect on that and try to change something in our approach to the performances, and also how we promote baroque music and performances in general.

ANDREA BUCCARELLA

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THE SENSE OF RISK

FROM A TASTE FOR RISK TO STRATEGIC INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The taste – and awareness – of risk is experienced in various circumstances, on different scales.

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For me, a good performance is full of fantasy and some elements of risk. If it is too ordinary, too correct, in a way, it can be slightly boring. For me, when I began, I also followed quite true text, true performances, and around me, it was also the thing the performers really followed with great care, what is written exactly and not allowing themselves much freedom. But I love this freedom. [...]

Some risk moments also in the performance, when you discover that there is this improvisation, that something is happening in the same moment. Of course, we have practised, we have prepared, but when you feel that there is something happening because it does not sound like before and it won't be the same in the next one. [...] It has something to do with speech or rhetoric. I mean, there is a sentence and there is a breath between the sentences

and there is some expression in some phrase. And then there is something else. If you make it clear somehow, it already has some freedom in a temporal space.

IMBI TARUM

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[...] in Early Music you have a lot of elements that bring you into a dimension in which your decisions can be very innovative and free.

ANDREA BUCCARELLA

Innovation, risk, and freedom also matter, when artists lead an ensemble, manage it, or initiate new projects dedicated to creation, dissemination, and/or transmission.

THE SENSE OF RISK

EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLES, MODERN ORCHESTRAS:

ATTEMPTS TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND INTENTIONAL RISK-TAKING

I find it fascinating how in the Netherlands, for example, the Early Music movement has been influencing the modern orchestras.

When Frans Brüggen was protesting at concert halls – saying that their interpretations of Mozart are lies – the connection between these two streams of thinking was not happening yet. And since then, as we see today in most Dutch orchestras, they use much less vibrato in 18th century repertoire than orchestras of most other countries, especially those outside of Europe.

This has been a formative part of modern Dutch culture; that the Early Music movement has had an equivalent place in society as modern performance practice, at least from my non-European perspective.

Outside of Europe, in countries which are physically and population-wise far larger than European countries, Early Music and performance practice as still seen as a sort of fringe thing, which is a shame.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

It is a paradox that we have also come to work with modern ensembles, equipped with metal strings and modern instruments, playing Early Music, while adhering to all the principles of historically informed performance.

One example is the Resonanz ensemble in Hamburg: they perform Mozart's Symphonies on modern instruments, with the exception of the horns. They were able to undertake this approach through their collaboration with Riccardo Minasi – a conductor who has mastered historically informed practices with such insight that he imparts it to the musicians, discussing theatre, rhetoric, and everything that brings this music to life.

The fact that today, so-called 'conventional' orchestras can once again confront a repertoire they were increasingly hesitant to approach is quite fascinating. And even more fascinating because we are certain of one thing: total authenticity is an unattainable ideal, a pure fantasy.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

THE SENSE OF RISK

TRANSMISSION:

DESPITE AN EDUCATED AUDIENCE AND INCREASED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, EVERYDAY LIFE SUPPORT IS IN DECLINE

ff *What we have gained tremendously is that in any conservatory, you can discover Early Music as a child. That wasn't the case in my time; we only had standard, modern instruments. I don't know where you had to go – to Paris? – to come across a harpsichord, but it wasn't easy.*

(...) What I liked in my time was having an association of music lovers with parents who lent a hand, and young adults who sang in the children's choir, took charge of their concert season, programs, organisation, etc. Now, as a child in the Vosges, you have to go through a conservatory to sing in the conservatory's children's choir.

(...) What we gained in conservatories with plenty of choices for Early Music now, we lost in the network of Pueri Cantores or children's choirs, which, when they no longer have the support of an educational or religious structure, cease to exist. Because it exhausted local resources, we also lost this local history,

as they have in Germanic countries, with choral societies, village music societies

(...) We would have to start from scratch, rebuild them, find subsidies, premises, support, and recruit people. Because it requires a lot of investment, and people no longer want to do it [voluntarily]. There is what is needed in conservatories, so it is considered that we entrust it to the conservatories. And for me, it was not at all the same project, nor the same flavour. Frankly, if I were a child in the Vosges now, I think I wouldn't have this openness.

I wouldn't have followed the same path.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



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We are certain of one thing: total authenticity is an unattainable ideal, a pure fantasy.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

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03

VANISHING POINTS
(*TEMPO DI FUGA*)
OR THE DEPTHS
OF EARLY MUSIC

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I found my soul
through Early Music.
Nothing else has made
me discover some-
thing so profound, so
important.

JILL FELDMAN

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SPATIAL VANISHING POINTS

EARLY MUSIC RESONATES WITH HISTORICAL PLACES

Let's draw an analogy: the notion of vanishing point, the imaginary convergence point of a perspective, can be applied to Early Music; the perspective it offers is rooted in a physical reality, situated in a specific era and place. Early music resonates with spaces, forming a kind of musical topography, revealing unexplored dimensions of places steeped in history.

“ I am from a rural area in the middle of Catalonia, a landscape that was destroyed by a big fire in 1998, 25 years ago. Almost all the woods (around 30.000 ha) were completely burnt. This landscape used to be the main interest of this area, which is in the middle of Catalonia, one hour and a half from Barcelona, Andorra, Girona, one hour and a half from any big city.

The main attraction being destroyed, we realised that we had another very distinctive element there, which was the preserved

Baroque altarpieces from the 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed, during the Civil War, from 1936 to 1939, many Baroque pieces were destroyed all over Catalonia, but not so much here, where we still have the highest number of baroque altarpieces per capita.

In 2018, we decided to showcase this legacy, to put this sparsely populated rural area on the map of cultural life in Catalonia, with a deep socio-educational perspective. To do this, Baroque music proved to be the key. That's why and how I came to Early Music, after being a classical guitar professor and writing my PhD on Arnold Schönberg.

JOSEP BARCONS

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SPATIAL VANISHING POINTS

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES:

EARLY MUSIC, A CONTINENT, A PLANET THAT ELUDES US AS WE EXPLORE IT

The geographical dimension of music is emphasised by Christian Girardin, who, when asked about a definition of Early Music, sees it as “a continent.” If it were a continent, would it not be, historically at least, Europe?

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A lot of the music we play is very Eurocentric, whether we like it or not, and this is part of the geography of Early Music. Before, when I was playing a lot of contemporary music, I often played music by composers from Asia or Australia or Indigenous composers. In Early Music we don't see that so much, despite the cultural imperialism of having brought over European musicians to places such as Australia, south-east Asia, and Latin America. Regardless of whether it is a good or a bad thing, this is a value that I definitely end up contributing towards.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

Opening up to new frontiers a challenge, the key to new canons and new leads?

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Of course, the canon is not going to change between, let's say, Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Telemann, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert. So this is the mainstream, but also earlier we have Palestrina, Victoria and Morales, not just Corelli, to make the canon a bit wider. Some other repertoires we already know from the archives, but they need to be played more to be really rediscovered. For instance, the Czech composer Zelenka is amazing and barely programmed, people do not know his name enough to say “Whoa, now they are playing Zelenka. Oh, I want to hear it”. One goal would be that audiences feel as enthusiastic about a Zelenka programme as they do about Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

JOSEP BARCONS

SPATIAL VANISHING POINTS

SCOPE:
EARLY MUSIC AS
A PLACE FOR DEBATE
AND BETTER
UNDERSTANDING
OF GOALS

Pushing these boundaries far beyond the European continent is expanding the ranging of possibilities.

“
A few years ago I read some letters written by a sixteenth century priest from Portugal who went to Ethiopia, talking about all the instruments they played.

He referred to “cravos” (harpsichords) which were “just like ours”. I find it commendable that there are educational institutions which really push for cultural diversity and diversity in music. But I still find that European culture, as a whole, lacks the organisation and understanding to push for intersectionality both in society and the culture which it fosters.

A recent ‘loss’ in the Early Music movement is that, essentially, a canon has been established. Unconsciously, this dictates organisations’ choices of repertoire and programming; generally focussing on the same ‘great’

composers of the eighteenth century that modern orchestras do, rather than utilising the swathes of repertoire that is unique to early musicians. Even if the canon is beautiful music, there is a lot more to discover and to play.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

Early Music becomes a place where connections are constantly created, modified, and redefined. The spatial vanishing point of Early Music opens up the perspective and amplifies its movement.

“
This planet eludes us as we explore it. In other words, we never cease to measure the wealth in repertoires of all kinds, in all countries of Europe and beyond.

Since I entered this profession in the early 1990s, I have always heard that we have explored all veins, exploited the best mines...

It turns out that we continue to discover new ones every year. Just last night, I went to a concert by The Curious Bards who have explored Gaelic repertoires (Irish, Scottish...) from the 17th and 18th centuries so far; yesterday, they introduced us to a whole Scandinavian repertoire of dance music with its own terminology, dances, and instruments.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

I see people, musicians who make lots of experiments with the repertoire, the B minor Mass with small groups, or, I do not know, a Haendel choir with enormous groups. And personally, I have no dogmas concerning arrangement. But we have to talk about what goal we want to reach.

[...] So, I don't believe in judging certain ways, certain approaches, without knowing the goal of the people.

[...] And it is still the musician's responsibility to tell me what they want to reach. Because this is what I am buying the ticket for, right? They need to give me their philosophy, their goals and then what ways they take to reach it; if I identify with a goal, if I am interested in that, then of course it needs to be consistent, it needs to be well done but then I have no dogmas about how to reach this.

ELISABETH CHAMPOLLION

Let's evoke the myth and figure of Orpheus to address the paradox of the artist's life, torn between creative objectives and doubt.

As far as I know, it is never really mentioned, but when Orfeo went to get Euridice in the underworld, he started to go back and then he looked back – and this is his doubt.

Orfeo had doubts, he was not sure if Euridice was really there. And one thing that is interesting is that every artist has doubts (and they can be general doubts about himself or herself, or it can be doubts about the music or doubts about this and that...). And that is the key to really one important part of Orfeo and one important part of being an artist: you have reflections, which do not have to be fundamental doubts about yourself, but doubts about this and that, that stimulate your reflection and feelings about different projects or different ways of doing things.

In a way, we are always looking for something... Trying to define our goals, sometimes through the jungle of doubts, is part of being an artist.

HOPKINSON SMITH

TIME VANISHING POINTS

THE INFINITE RESOURCES OF THE PAST

If the spatial vanishing point brings Early Music closer to painting, the analogy shows its limits when it comes to the temporal sphere. Unless one can see in the performer's work the hand of the restorer, revealing the work under the traces of the centuries?

“ I often compare the work that all these musicians do with the restorer of a Botticelli painting. We return to the original varnish and try to get rid of the ravages of time. And especially of later traditions. We get rid of the traditions that followed these musical practices.

If you take a Vivaldi concerto, when you listen to how it was done when it was rediscovered and played again, that is in the mid-1920s, you see that Vivaldi's music is interpreted with the interpretation and virtuosity criteria of the early 20th century and not at all in the spirit in which it was composed. It is all that work, getting rid of these somewhat negligent

traditions, let's say, that also made the success and relevance of what was called in the 1980s the 'baroqueux'.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN



The exploration proposed by Early Music would thus be primarily temporal, revealing for the same work, a quantity of possible readings, like a palimpsest whose layers juxtapose from the past to the present, as epochs unfold, and that it is a matter of discerning, thereby opening up the multiplicity of possible interpretations depending on an era, a zeitgeist.



We are always influenced by what is around us, how others play (taste!), how we are taught and these days by what we hear on our favourite recordings.

I thought it would make sense to curate my influences with history in mind and generally in a more structured way (instead of a more instinctive approach, which is what most conservatory students do for better or worse). So, I guess, in a few words HIP brought to me clarity and some sort of a sense of purpose.

ARTEM BELOGUROV



So, the initial area to explore and delve into is the timeline, focusing on the repertoire. The past becomes an infinite resource where archives or sources to explore can be discovered. But how far should the boundaries of the exercise be pushed?



Uncharted territories, or at least still underexplored – definitely the Romantic era and historical recordings. Extrapolating back to pre-recording times is a better guide than relying on our contemporary taste and source interpretation. We are working on it.

ARTEM BELOGUROV



French music from the late 18th century: Devienne, Méhul, Gossec, the early 19th century too: Grétry, who is very rarely played, and is only starting to be played again now. [...] We are still discovering quite incredible things. Further back in history, I remember an oratorio by Pergolesi that remained completely in the shadow of the Stabat Mater, the Septem Verba a Christo, restored a few years ago by René Jacobs. And downstream, I dream of hearing

the music of the late 19th century on period instruments, which Les Siècles do beautifully: what a pleasure to rediscover Ravel's 100 years old Boléro, which we thought we knew everything about, to hear it again with the castanets or Basque drums that a century of tradition had erased. But if we paraphrase Gustav Mahler (who was in no way a precursor to the revival of Early Music), 'tradition equals negligence.'

Nevertheless, this work of historically informed restoration continues today well into the heart of the 20th century, which says a lot about the evolution of tastes and sonic colours, by the way.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN



The further back you go, the less you know. There is still a lot of research to be done in the 14th century, in transcriptions and how to read manuscripts.

JILL FELDMAN



Beyond the repertoire, the tangible materiality of the instruments themselves bears witness to their placement in a historical time. The gesture shapes the past into a distinct entity that we have to work with.



With the modern instruments on which I was playing, for example, Vivaldi, I never felt that I was producing a seamless interpretation, because the instrument is not made for this music.

In contrast, when you play on a good copy of

a historical instrument – as in an instrument which is true to the original on which it is modelled, without the modernisms of a maker who is trying to ‘better’ it – it feels as if the music was happening on its own, as if you didn’t need to put much effort into it or think too much.

Of course, one must think about how they want to contribute to the music through the sources that they have read, and collating pieces of their knowledge together, but the instrument doesn’t require a forced interpretation of the music to function and to make ideas heard.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

Playing Early Music means dealing with time, its expansions, and its boundaries. Using period instruments, according to Josep Barcons, means disregarding the idea of progress through time, connecting yesterday to today. It means reconnecting with a beauty that addresses the soul throughout epochs and styles, liberated from technical advancements.

So, is there a demiurge in every Early Music performer, sleeping, yet waiting to be awakened by their own creative power?

“

Francesco Spinacino was one of the very earliest Italian lutenists in the 16th century. And actually, it is the first big source we have of Italian music, which is from a print, actually two prints, 1507 and 1508. And not many people have played Spinacino because the printed scores are a mess. They are full of mistakes. And there are different theories about this. Spinacino probably died before the book was published, but it was printed by Petrucci, who was famous.

[...] And Spinacino on the other side is a mess. What did I do in the pandemic? I had my musical microscope, and I went note for note through Spinacino to make sense of some of the pieces. And so, this was not a ‘battle’, but it was an opening to an approach to this composer who has been more or less enigmatic.

He will always be enigmatic, but to bring it to life, to discover a personality which fits in the spot between the 15th and the 16th century and to try to make sense of these disparate ideas which sometimes go all over the place.

HOPKINSON SMITH

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TIME VANISHING POINTS

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY, PLACES, AND BEINGS:

A “HEALTHY” ARTICULATION BETWEEN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

When performers perceive the historicity of Early Music, they better understand how the past, present, and future can be articulated. Historian François Hartog defined the “regime of historicity” as a “way of interlocking the categories of the past, present, and future in such a way that, depending on periods, places, and environments, one of the three tends to occupy the forefront.” The regime of historicity “allows us to question the relationships with time, yesterday or today, here or there, by focusing on moments of time crises, precisely when the articulation of the three categories becomes blurred, and the experiences of time become troubled, and disorientation affects individuals and societies.”*

Could Early Music be an activator of this regime of historicity, helping us better grasp the three categories of time and reorient ourselves?

“**For me, Early Music, as someone with a background in history as well, makes me travel through time and space. Thanks to Early Music, I feel connected to previous centuries. [...] For me, it is a soundtrack of the past.**

LUCILE RICHARDOT

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Yet, this music is not assigned to being past. She goes on:

“**Well-written music touches any listener from any century or sometimes also from any civilization. [...] There are things that are as ‘modern’ as if they were just written. And I never think when I approach an ancient score**

*F. Hartog. *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expérience du temps*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2003 Translated by S. Brown: *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*. Columbia University Press, 2015.

that I have to 'rediscover the sound of the time,' that I have to figure out what it might have sounded like in the 16th or 17th century.

No, we are fortunate to now have instruments that reproduce the craftsmanship of the time. We are reasonably sure about the sound of instruments from that era, but as for singers, we will never know.

It is our responsibility to sing these repertoires with our ears and our culture today, integrating all the music we have been nourished with in the meantime, the music of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, popular music – why not?

And consider, for example, that a song by Dowland is the popular music of that time and should be interpreted as such.

LUCILE RICHARDOT



So, are we refusing to give the first place to the past, or to a dated vision of music?



In Early Music, there are many interpretative questions that remain 'unresolved', but I believe that this is inevitable and also positive. This gap in knowledge, due to the impossibility of direct experience, can become a space and a dimension of interpretative freedom, a dialogue between the ancient and the contemporary world.

Naturally, it is very important to study the historical sources and try to reconstruct as much as possible the sounds and performance practices specific to each historical era, but I also believe that we should not stop there.

Music is an art that develops in space and time and, unlike other plastic arts, we cannot limit ourselves to trying to re-propose it simply by putting into practice a series of theoretical notions that we have learned, as if music was a museum object.

In a certain sense, every time we bring Early Music back to life, we inevitably give it the mindset of performers of our time, making it ancient and modern at the same time.

This dialogue between the music and the performer in turn must not remain on a solipsistic level, but must be able to reach the public. I believe this is the greatest challenge: to perform Early Music in the most faithful way possible to its authentic reality, with the awareness of being immersed in one's own time and all that this entails in interpretative and artistic terms.

ANDREA BUCCARELLA



THE EARLY MUSIC GAZE

A POEM THAT RESONATES WITH THE SOUL, AN EXPERIENCE OF GRACE

What if the purpose of our 'Early Music' was to illuminate what, beyond the limits of space and time, lives on within the art? What is vibrant and human through time? Jill Feldman thinks that this experience is one of grace, Anouk De Clercq mentions poetry: *"Like poetry, it is a region of human experience outside of politics, outside of technology, amidst emotions, the fragility of human experience. In literature and in our culture, we talk about the soul. It was always a very abstract concept for me. And then, I listened to Bach, and I thought 'I believe this is the soul.' Where it touched me, that's where the soul is. I found my soul through Early Music, in a way. I believe nothing else has made me discover something so profound, something so important."*

Historically informed music, according to those who embody it, becomes a space of resonance, according to the thought of the sociologist Hartmut Rosa.* Resonance occurs when a deep connection allows for the feeling of harmony, an echo between people, or between people and art, between ourselves and the world around us.

*H Rosa, Resonanz. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016

This is one of the best remedies for the feeling of a life devoid of meaning or lacking in connections in a modernity characterised by acceleration. In this regard, more than a confined perimeter, Early Music offers a relationship with the world, a poetry of connection, between the present and the past, the other and oneself.

The inexhaustible dimension of sources then echoes the equally inexhaustible dimension of the gaze upon them, always shifting, always unique.

“When reading historical sources today, we must understand that we come from a different historical context, so we end up having individual interpretations. Changing one's mind on such a topic can be a big step but it is becoming more and more relevant in our field to contextualise our perception of the cultures of the past.

Today, there is a gradual push for diversity, but can very easily be weaponised in the form

of tokenism. But having the opportunity to experience a greater diversity of repertoire allows us to see how much Europe's social standards have changed, as well as areas which have stagnated, such as intersectionality.

LUÍS TASSO ATHAYDE SANTOS

Rediscovering the past sheds a new light on the present, adding depth to our connection to the world.

Is authenticity solely faithfully representing the source, or does it also emerge from the individual who brings it to life, along with their subjective viewpoint, acknowledged as such?

When I was a student, we talked about 'authentic instruments,' even though authenticity doesn't exist. The only authenticity that could be valid would be genuine period recordings. Obviously, we don't have that, so we are searching not for authenticity but for a certain truth. I prefer to use the term sincerity; that is, we try as sincerely as possible to bring this music back to life. It is not necessarily a guarantee of quality, I admit, but it corresponds to an intention to present this art as rightfully living music.

Look at the thousands of concerts that take place every day all over the world, especially in Europe and notably in France: more than recordings, they testify to how alive this music is. Just like big band orchestras have managed to perpetuate swing in a lively way – a repertoire that is already old, if not closed, but played as if it were created yesterday.

CHRISTIAN GIRARDIN

Focusing on the gaze itself rather than just the object, empowers it to question and participate.

Art should be in a general sense, critical of the present. It should be showing us things about our world that need to be highlighted and making us think about the way that we live and about our values. That's kind of the point of art, it should constantly be challenging us. And the most disappointing thing about classical music is that it tries so hard not to.

The difficulty with classical music is that so many people think of it as something whose purpose is to reassure them that everything is well with their world. You go to a classical concert too often in order to be comforted, to feel that you live. It is a utopia, isn't it, that music, while it is going on and while it is being really brilliantly performed, seems to create a sort of better world than our own. It is a world in which everything that one says is perfectly formed and perfectly persuasive; and that gives it a really dangerous power to reassure us that our own world is already kind of a perfect one. It is just that in everyday life we don't express ourselves quite as well as we do in music, but broadly, we share the same vision.

Well, music needs to be more uncomfortable than that. And so one of the challenges for musicians is how to make performances of scores that we know and love, and how to make them less comfortable. And I know that's not what people want to hear, it is not what they want to buy concert tickets for. But look, they go to the theatre to see plays that they know very well mean something new. That is why they go to another production of a play that they have seen many times before, because they know that in this new production, it is going to teach them something new about the text, maybe about themselves. Now, that is the attitude that I would like musicians and audiences to have towards going to concerts of classical scores. To go to a concert in order to hear something new about a score, to hear it mean something it has never meant before, and to teach them something.

DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON

THE EARLY MUSIC GAZE

SOURCES AS ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD,

AN ETHIC OF INQUIRY AND QUESTIONING

This would be the essence of the discipline, a way of playing that relies on relentless questioning and research:

“ *There is still an effort to be made today not to settle for a sonic influence out of a listening habit, but to continue to embrace the approach embodied by historically informed performance.*

The interpretation of sources will continue to evolve as our understanding of what music can be evolves, considering that it is impossible to describe very precisely a sound or a manner, a sonic aesthetic. When we read a source, we interpret that source by default, with our imagination as humans of today. We can continue to play with our understanding of the sources and explore what is possible.

There are always things that will be set aside, explored later, aspects in the sources that were less important in the eyes of a first generation, which may become more important for various

reasons later on. I believe there is always room for new generations to explore, draw different conclusions from reading the same sources, or find sources that have not been explored.

[...] There are people who love what they have heard, the music they grew up with, the style heard on recordings, precisely from that pioneering generation, and who really have a deep desire to continue in that vein.

Personally, I am more interested in the revolutionary aspect of the mindset of these people than in the exact recreation of the style they carried. Revisiting, for me, is interesting. More interesting than just recreating or preserving it to the letter. It is about questioning. Asking questions about an aesthetic sense.

OCTAVIE DOSTALER-LALONDE

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Early music would thus respond, more than to a delimited definition, to a mode of relating to the world, to an ethic.

THE EARLY MUSIC GAZE

THE REGENERATIVE POWERS OF EARLY MUSIC

Early music exists in the world; our guests did not draw an 'ethereal' version, disconnected from the challenges of our time. On the contrary, each in their own way, they have expressed how Early Music helps them navigate the complexity of the world and feel alive. It is not just an intellectual perspective; it is, above all, a sensory reality that involves emotions. This applies to both artists and researchers, as well as audiences.

“
Emotional response is not only the fact of the performance, it is the quality. And there may be certain things that just fit right into place beautifully and they enrich a person. But when you go out of the concert hall, the change might be immediate, but it may be long lasting because of the discovery of some resonance within which you didn't know existed. So, it could be a discovery or it could be a big letdown if there are bad singers and the orchestra is out of tune... This is the regenerative power within us of music in general, not necessarily early or late.

HOPKINSON SMITH



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There is always room for new generations to explore, draw different conclusions from reading the same sources, or find sources that have not been explored.

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OCTAVIE DOSTALER-LALONDE

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CONCLUSION

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Early Music makes me travel through time and space, and feel connected to previous centuries.

LUCILE RICHARDOT

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CONCLUSION

PUSHING BEYOND THE HORIZON: WHAT EARLY MUSIC CAN DO

Throughout the interviews, Early Music's idiosyncrasies reveal themselves in both similar and diverse ways, like a mirage on the horizon, always just out of reach. It is not the destination that matters; it is the journey.

These conversations unveil a treasure shared by those who live with Early Music daily – in repeated gestures or the exceptional experience of a concert. It is a centre of gravity, a cornerstone, a private core. Yet, these stones are vibrant and resonate and speak: Early Music carries strong, physical convictions, and as a result, it becomes a driving force for personal and professional projects, a life dedicated to the pursuit of beauty and its sublimation in sharing with others.

These others are the very condition for gaining perspective on Early Music, whether in research, scientific or empirical or in collective practice with the audience. The depth – the power – of Early Music then emerges and breaks down our barriers as beings in time and space. Its 'tempo di fuga' is not that of escape in the sense of evasion but of an opening that has no end, of a horizon endlessly renewed.

This study draws a subjective, intuitive picture of Early music as something that eludes restrictive definitions, well-established chronologies, and boldly claims its sense of risk and passion for freedom. It is close to history, as it is described by historian Patrick Boucheron:

History can also be an art of discontinuities. By flouting the order that chronologies impose, it knows how to make itself literally disconcerting. It disturbs genealogies, threatens identities, and causes a spacing of time, where the historical becoming finds its right to uncertainty again, and in so doing, opens itself to the intelligibility of the present. [...] A period is a time that we set for ourselves. We can occupy it at will, transcend, and shift it.

PATRICK BOUCHERON

Why do we need such a treasure? Why have men and women born under diverse skies, who perhaps should never have met, converged toward Early Music and then carried it to the ends of the Earth? Here, too, the words of Patrick Boucheron are fitting:

“

***We need history
because we need rest:
a pause to rest our consciousness,
so that the possibility of a consciousness
may remain – as the seat not only
of thought, but also
of practical reason, affording
full latitude for action.
Saving the past, saving time
from the frenzy of the present:
the poets devote themselves
with exactitude to this.****

PATRICK BOUCHERON

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And undoubtedly, in doing so, these poets strive to save both the present and the future in the same art of movement, through art in motion.

*Inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, 2015, translated by Liz Libbrecht
in collaboration with Céline Surprenant
<https://books.openedition.org/cdf/5882?lang=en>

“

The Early Music movement has always been, and it will remain anarchic. There is always a sense of using Early Music to undermine something or other, usually the musical canon, even now, to undermine expectations of what performance actually is, how instruments should sound, how voices should sound.

—
TIM CARTER

”

THE AUTHORS

SOPHIE
LANOOTE

NATHALIE
MOINE

**GALATEA
CONSEIL**



The agency Galatea was created to combine artistic management, consultancy, and concert production in France and internationally. Now it focuses on consulting to leverage its expertise in strategy, management, and transformation for private and public cultural entities.

Sophie Lanoote Teaches in Sciences Po Paris since 2017 (School of Public Affairs, Cultural Policy & Management).

BOOKS

Le Spectacle et le Vivant (2021)
Mécéner la musique aujourd'hui en France (2021)
Loi Aillagon et mécénat dans la musique (CNM, 2023).

FLORÈS



Florès assists cultural organisations looking to reconsider their relationship with the community and its residents, with the goal of fostering inclusive participation in cultural life for everyone.

With a background in literature and humanities, Nathalie Moine worked in publishing before entering the performing arts sector, exploring new ways of connecting culture and society, and advocating for an interdisciplinary approach.



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