

Research Day: The Musician as Curator

Friday January 25th 2019

Jan Michiels, Musician as Curator ... Composing Programs

Upon receiving the invitation to participate in this research day with the title 'the musician as curator', two persons came immediately to my mind. The first of them was the legendary pianist Alfred Brendel writing that the ideal performer should act towards a musical work synchronically as a curator and as a midwife. The music philosopher Lydia Goehr was the second one because of her great book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* where she dismantles and illuminates the concept of a 'musical work'.

The past decades I have been visiting several rooms of this Museum, again and again, with some pianos and many colleagues as companions. This lecture presents some experiences I have encountered during these visits with the Brendel-Goehr thinking fields in my mind. This presentation will offer you an overview of different ways to build concert programs in our contemporary context, trying to forge 'old' and 'new' in a virtual dialogue. Virtual indeed, while living in 2019 we can't talk with dead composers. The relation with our living composers remains as a consequence essential in this working process. The presented programs will cover a wide range: from pure interpretations to daring experimentations. And finally, I will have to problematize the very foundations of our traditional teaching in our most respected conservatory, being there a curator and midwife as well.

Heloisa Amaral, *touchez des yeux*: a reverse poetics of musical display

In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art (Susan Sontag).

In spite of a general turmoil around the death of the author in artistic fields such as cinema, theatre and literature in the second half of the 20th century, and of continuous attacks in musicological circles about the ruling of the work-concept after the publishing of Lydia Goehr's influential *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* nearly forty years ago, classical music aesthetics is still predominantly concerned with the meaning and intentionality of musical works, a concern which determines most aspects of the classical musical *dispositif* including musical performance and modes of presentation, or what I call *musical display*.

An alternative to the interpretive and work-centered approach to musical display would be a practice based one on the presentiality and materiality of musical performance hence its connection to the *here* and *now*. With the example of *touchez des yeux*, an artistic research project which combines performance, sound installation and a photo exhibition around Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata D960, I explore how curatorial strategies and media-archaeological insights may help highlight elements generally neglected in interpretive modes of musical display, such as space, movements and extra-musical sounds, thus allowing for new forms of affect to penetrate the performance situation.

Maarten Stragier, Shifting Cities

Promenade Sauvage (consisting of Luca Piovesan and myself) is currently working closely with composers Mauricio Pauly, Michelle Lou, and Santiago Diez-Fischer on the realisation of Shifting Cities.

Shifting Cities is an uninterrupted noise/glitch set for accordion, guitar, and DIY electronics. Central to the project is the theme of displacement: its challenges, the particular state of consciousness it occasions, and the flux it effects in our urban environments. The result will be a flexible musical set that can be adapted to a range of venues, and leaves the door open to cross-disciplinary collaboration.

In this lecture, I will give a musician's perspective on the conceptual development of Shifting Cities. In particular, I will focus on the fundamental importance of the collaborative framework in which this project is being created. Governing musical composition, decisions of thematic content, and even the choice of performance gear, comprehensive collaboration is the guarantor of Shifting Cities' aesthetic unity and practical flexibility.

Yiannis Efstathopoulos, HIPP and new aesthetics – creating and building over an original sound

Apart from the historical importance of approaching the early music on period instruments, the plurality of new sounds produced by the HIPP has brought a whole new world of performances against the uniformity of the "classical music".

Refreshing new recordings on "standard repertoire" make us rethink and re-evaluate works that have been marked by the legendary performers of 20th century. Moreover, in a deeper level, this kind of performers can arrive to critical questions over history topics not only in the musical part but also in a social level. As the search for authentic sound has been a rising tendency, the challenge now is to create performances that build bridges and merge different aesthetics and audiences.