

Can 19th century music performance practices enhance the experience of new audiences?



WRoCAH funded Collaborative Doctoral Award between School of Arts and Creative Technologies at the University of York and The National Centre for Early Music

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Project summary

The University of York's School of Arts and Creative Technologies and the National Centre for Early Music are looking for an outstanding musician to investigate whether 19th century performance practices can inspire new modes of interaction and engagement with the under-represented audience groups. Supported by the NCEM's Artist Development Manager, the Postgraduate Research (PGR) will develop their own artistic projects and evaluate their reception by audiences NCEM is trying to develop. They will be trained to use artistic, sociological and action research methods to develop their existing historically-informed artistic practice in dialogue with current scholarship and audience feedback. Their findings will feed into NCEM's future planning and sector-wide leadership role, engaging with current debates around the creative and social renewal of classical music performance.

PhD Project description



This project responds to ongoing debates among policymakers, industry and within academia about the future of classical music, debates that have a direct impact on both institutions such as NCEM and individual artists working within the sector. We start from the position that, if classical music is to 'diversify' in order to maintain its legitimacy as an

art form relevant for 21st century society, institutions and artists must be open to input from those they reach out to, not only about new types of programming, but the aesthetic conventions of the music itself.

Negative perceptions of classical music performance are frequently linked to the establishment of an elitist concert culture in the 19th century. Yet recent scholarship shows that C19th musical practices emphasised performer-audience interaction, collective emotional engagement, musical storytelling and improvisation, as well as stylistic approaches that prioritise spontaneity and individuality over fidelity to the musical score. These strategies, familiar from the C21st 'alternative classical' scene, are already being used in Historically Informed Performance (HIP) to reimagine approaches to core repertoire. However, there is currently little data to indicate how these practices might stimulate audience engagement with C19th music. Moreover, though audience feedback and evaluation are encouraged by major funders, many HIP artists work independently or in small collectives with little support in gathering and evaluating such data.

This project addresses these problems by incorporating audience experience research within the artistic process. The PGR will be an outstanding musician with experience in HIP research and practice as well as developing their own artistic projects. They will devise artistic projects inspired by C19th performance practices, supervised by the NCEM Artist Development Manager who will advise on the design, management and evaluation of musical engagement activity. The projects will be delivered in community venues in economically disadvantaged areas within York and across the East Riding of Yorkshire, earmarked by the Government for the socio-economic 'Levelling Up' programme, building on NCEM's ongoing pilot programme *Baroque Around the Books*. The PGR will design a study and gather data to evaluate audience experience informed by NCEM's ongoing work and by sociological approaches, together with self-reflection to capture the experience from an artistic perspective, and feed the data forward into the development of their work. The final submission will be a portfolio combining documentation of the artistic projects and a written thesis.

About the National Centre for Early Music

The National Centre for Early Music is based in the medieval, Grade I listed, converted church of St Margaret's which stands in the heart of the City of York in an attractive and spacious church garden. Its aim is to involve as wide a range of people as possible in the pleasure, enrichment and inspiration that music and music-making can offer, and we promote NCEM as a national and international exemplar of the highest possible standards of creative practice, artistic performance and public engagement.

The NCEM curates a season of concerts and events in diverse musical genres; three international Early Music festivals in York and Beverley; and a range of community music projects in York and the surrounding areas. NCEM is also a leading contributor to the development of artistic practice, audience development and cultural policy across Europe, through its involvement with REMA (the European Early Music Network), the UK historical performance concert promoters' 'Restoration Network', the large-scale EEEmerging programmes funded by Creative Europe, and the New Generation Baroque Ensemble scheme in partnership with BBC Radio 3 and the Royal College of Music. The National Centre for Early Music and the University of York have a longstanding relationship going back nearly 50 years, working together to further scholarly and practical activities in Early Music and related disciplines.

The NCEM already has established networks across both the East Riding of Yorkshire and the City of York upon which it aims to build. As an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation 2023-2026, NCEM is committed to delivering the Arts Council's Investment Principles, including Inclusivity & Relevance, and Ambition & Quality. NCEM has committed to engage with diverse artists in a range of genres reflecting the diversity of our community; to develop an inclusive mindset within our teams in order to welcome people from a wider range of backgrounds to the NCEM; to engage with new audiences by understanding perceptions from those outside our community; and to develop a cycle around our established evaluation process, setting ambitions, interrogating results and building outcomes into planning.

The WROCAH CDA will feed directly into these commitments. First, the performances curated by the PGR will help NCEM to develop a broader musical offering within its community programme in East Riding and economically disadvantaged areas of York through the use of 19th-century HIP. Second, the PGR's evaluation of audience experience through their use of enhanced evaluative methods and current scholarship will progress the NCEM's knowledge base and evaluation process beyond current models.

Simultaneously, the CDA will reflect NCEM's commitment to artistic excellence and supporting the career progression of performers specialising in early music. The supervisory team will work together to help the PGR evolve strategies for evaluating and incorporating audience experience data into their

own artistic practice, providing a model that can be adopted and developed by other artists and ensembles in future.

The PGR will have access to office workspace at NCEM throughout the CDA and will be based there for intensive periods during the delivery, evaluation and public engagement activities. The CDA offers the PGR the opportunity to develop their research skills, artistic practice and professional network within a flagship arts organisation with an international profile and position them as a future artistic leader within the sector.

Engagement, outreach, dissemination and impact initiatives

Engagement and outreach activities addressing the NCEM's audience development aims are at the core of the research. In Years 2 and 3 of the studentship, the PGR's artistic projects will bring C19th HIP research to new audiences in an expansion of the NCEM's current pilot programme 'Baroque around the Books', with impact being measured during and after the project. Beyond these performances, the PGR will take part in the public dissemination of their C19th HIP research through the NCEM's three early music festivals, either presenting talks, running an engagement activity, or curating an exhibition as part of the Beverley Early Music Festival, the Christmas Festival, or the York Early Music Festival over the three years, with the opportunities tailored to the PGR's interests.

The PGR will also be invited to undertake visits and meetings as part of the NCEM delegation to partner organisations and/or networking events (REMA conferences, Restoration Network meetings), using NCEM's prominent position to disseminate their audience experience insights to the international community of artists, promoters and arts managers. Finally, the PGR's interdisciplinary action research approach will be disseminated through the NCEM's Young Artist development programme, for example by leading mentoring and knowledge exchange sessions with participants of the International Young Artists Competition and Young Composers Award.

Financial support

Studentships for doctoral research are 40 months in duration for full-time study. Awards are subject to satisfactory academic progress. Awards must be taken up in October 2024; no deferrals are possible. Awards will comprise fees at Research Council rates and a maintenance grant (£18,622 in 2023/24). The grant pays the fees at the Home/UK rate; international students are, however, eligible to apply for this Studentship and the difference between the Home/UK and International fee will be met by the University of York for a successful international applicant. Awards may be taken up on a part-time basis if a student is eligible to undertake part-time study; international applicants may be required to study full-time by the terms of their visa.

Qualifications

Strong applicants will have a good first degree in an appropriate subject, as well as a Master's degree and a strong professional artistic portfolio relevant to the focus of the project.

Requirements of the Studentship

WROCAH students are required to undertake a bespoke training package and to complete a Researcher Employability Project of at least a month, a Knowledge Exchange Project, and to engage with Internationalisation.

All WROCAH students must submit their thesis for examination within the funded period. This is a requirement of the Arts & Humanities Research Council, which provides the funding for WROCAH, and is a condition of accepting a Studentship.

Before applying for any WROCAH Studentship, please first ensure that you have read the WROCAH webpages about the WROCAH training programme and requirements, as well as other funding opportunities

<http://wrocah.ac.uk/>

How to apply

By 12 noon Wednesday 6 March 2024, applicants are required to submit to WROCAH an Expression of Interest, which should include:

1. A CV with details of academic qualifications, plus two references (one academic and one artistic/professional). The CV and reference letters should be combined into one pdf document.
2. A covering letter comprising a two-page statement to convey your motivation and enthusiasm for the project, and to demonstrate your suitability for your intended PhD studies with the University and Project Partner.

The covering letter should specifically highlight the following:

- Your interest in the project and details on why you have chosen that University and Project Partner.

- How you will apply your current skills, knowledge and experience to undertake a PhD and the approach you would take to develop the project.
- How the project fits into your career plans and ambitions.
- A link to an audio or video recording giving an example of your artistic practice in an area relevant to the application

Applications must be submitted via [this Expression of Interest form](#).

- 15 March 2024: decision on short-listing. The short-list of candidates to be invited for an interview will be announced on Friday 15 March 2024.
 - *Short-listed candidates must complete a PhD programme application before interview.* If you are short-listed for an interview you will be sent details of how to apply for a place at the University of York. At that point you will need to submit the names and contact details of two referees, copies of transcripts of your academic qualifications and (if applicable) an IELTS certificate.
 - Interviews: Friday 12th April 2024

Interviews will involve the academic supervisor, Project Partner supervisor and a member of the WRoCAH Studentships Committee. They will be conducted online.

For more information about this project contact

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