

**Cultural Heritage as a Source of Creativity  
Exploring the Intersection of Tradition and Creativity in Artistic Music Practice**

Our cultural heritage in Western Classical Music (WCM) is intensively studied for its historical significance and artistic excellence. Contemporary classically trained musicians uphold the technical and artistic skills of WCM during their performances, remaining 'faithful' to the musical work and composer. The entrenched ideology of WCM tends to prioritize conformity to traditional practices, leaving little room to explore musicians' personal creativity, interpretation, and experimentation. Performances that deviate from established norms<sup>1</sup> are often seen as 'incorrect' by musicians who strictly adhere to those norms and traditions of the twentieth century. Musicians who strive to find their own voice may face resistance and negativity within the culture. Within higher music education, artistic research actually seeks to explore and try out alternatives, which often clash with cultural venues who adhere, just like their audiences, to traditions. However, by breaking away from contemporary norms and embracing experimentation, student musicians can delve into their creativity and uncover possibilities for performances and personal growth. They make 'old' work meaningful again through contemporary contextualization linked to aesthetic and social positioning.

How can the establishment of nonconformist music learning spaces, with accountability guidelines for musical learning (entangled with the framework of artistic research), encourage young classically trained musicians to explore their own creativity and interpretation within Western Classical Music?

During practice-led artistic research at the Fontys Academy of the Arts in Tilburg (The Netherlands), master students focus on exploring personal interpretation and discovering finding one's own voice within contemporary WCM. Musicians are exposed, during so-called Music Labs, to artistic experimentation and teaching strategies that emphasise the importance of creating nonconformist music learning spaces with accountability guidelines for musical learning, encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, relational dialogue, contextualization and self-expression. By fostering an environment that values tradition, creativity, and engagement, musicians can explore new ways of performing classical works outside of standard interpretive forms, thus creating new performance opportunities for the audience.

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<sup>1</sup> This performance of the Prokofiev Piano Sonata No. 7 (III. Precipitato) by Kathia Buniatishvili is considered unconventional due, among other things, to a faster tempo of this third movement and her way of communicating with her audience.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS0MbJNbX5k>

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Parallel Session



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As an experienced musician, educator, and researcher, Sophie de Ruijter has an entirely unique perspective on the world of music and music education. With her extensive knowledge and dedication to exploring new ideas, she exhibits expertise and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Sophie's penchant for thought-provoking "why" questions reveal her inclination to explore the underlying reasons behind musical practices.

Currently, she is actively engaged in practice-led artistic research at Fontys Academy of the Arts, where she focuses on investigating the relationship between tradition and personal interpretation in Western Classical Music. Sophie completed two bachelor's degrees at the Maastricht Conservatory (The Netherlands): Bachelor of Arts (Classical Flute) and Bachelor of Arts in Education. She continued her journey with a Master of Arts in Education, which took her even deeper into the world of music and art education.

