

‘POST-HIP’: NEW MUSIC FOR OLD INSTRUMENTS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract: This article explores an emergent vanguard of the ‘historically informed performance’ (HIP) movement in the twenty-first century, focusing on new music written for, and performed on, historical instruments. Drawing on musicological and journalistic writing, as well as first-hand interviews with artists working in the scene, discussion is centred around the work of three key practitioners: the lutenist Jozef van Wissem, gambist Liam Byrne and baroque violinist Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir. Finally, an attempt is made to situate the scene, both in relation to earlier revivalist practice and to broader cultural trends, drawing, in particular, on notions of ‘retromania’, post-internet and post-postmodernist practice.

The ethnologist Owe Ronström wrote, ‘there are revivals not because there has been a past, but because there is a future to come’.¹ This futurity, I argue, is what characterises an emergent vanguard of the ‘historically informed performance’ (HIP) movement in the twenty-first century. Broadly speaking, of course, the popularisation and proliferation of HIP in the twentieth century led, as Tamara Livingston notes, to the ‘end of the revival as an oppositional, anti-establishment “movement” and its transformation into an accepted current in the musical mainstream’.² Assimilation invariably diminishes something of the potentiality of the assimilated. However, I argue that HIP (like any scene) was more rhizomatic and multifaceted (and therefore robust) than this broad ‘outsider-to-accepted-current’ trajectory allows. Indeed, twentieth-century period-instrument pioneers from Frans Brüggen to Elisabeth Chojnacka evidence a vibrant experimentalism within, and beyond, the mainstream. As with many of those pioneering instrumentalists, the focus of the twenty-first-century scene I describe is new music written for, and performed on, historical instruments. This article, then, is an attempt to delineate something of this

¹ Owe Ronström, ‘Traditional Music, Heritage Music’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, eds Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 44.

² Tamara Livingston, ‘Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory’, *Ethnomusicology*, 43, No. 1 (1999), pp. 66–85, here p. 77.

scene, which I call ‘post-HIP’.³ I use this term not so much as nomenclature, but for its denoting both a turn away from history as primary instigator, and the scene’s relation to broader ‘post-revival’ movements in which, as Caroline Hill and Juniper Bithell note, ‘spin-off traditions... break free from the restrictions imposed by the purist arm of the revival and develop practices more apropos to their own contemporary reality’.⁴

What follows is a discussion centred around the work of the lutenist Jozef van Wissem, gambist Liam Byrne and baroque violinist Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir (along with her ensemble Nordic Affect). Drawing on musicological and journalistic writing, my own interviews with these artists (and others)⁵ and my experiences as a composer working in the field, this discussion will seek to understand both what characterises ‘post-HIP’ and in what ways ‘post-HIP’ might be considered the corollary to earlier revivalist practice and ideology. Further, I aim to situate ‘post-HIP’ within wider pop and non-classical frameworks, drawing – in particular – on notions of ‘retromania’, post-internet and post-postmodernist practice.

The lutenist Jozef van Wissem describes his compositional approach as ‘medieval sampling’.⁶ New music emerges from, and in dialogue with, the lute’s historical repertoire; he notes, ‘I just play music for a while and listen to classical pieces, and then there’s a theme that sort of stands out for me’.⁷ This approach, I argue (borrowing from John Butt),⁸ is an example of David Lowenthal’s concept of ‘heritage’, as distinct from ‘history’. Where history belongs to the past (‘inaccessibly alien’),⁹ heritage is active within, and upon, the present, uninhibited by history’s need for objective ‘truth’; ‘heritage is sanctioned not by proof of origins but by present exploits... The worth of heritage is... gauged not by critical tests but by current potency’.¹⁰ As heritage, van Wissem’s ‘medieval sampling’ blurs the boundary between interpretation and composition, imposing twentieth- and twenty-first-century performance (and listening) practice on to historical repertoire both as a means of revivification of the historical, and as generative.¹¹ Citing his interpretation of the Renaissance song ‘You

³ The term ‘post-HIP’ is used elsewhere by the conductor Andrew Manze. In the booklet text to his recording of the complete Brahms symphonies, he writes: ‘The present version might be described as post-h.i.p., in that many of the performance decisions have been taken with a background awareness of appropriate historical evidence and practice but the instruments used are conventional (i.e. ‘modern’ rather than ‘period’)’ (Andrew Manze, liner notes for *Brahms: Symphonies*, Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Manze (CPO, 777 720-2, 2012)).

⁴ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, ‘An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, pp. 28–29.

⁵ These interviews were completed as part of my radio show *Future Renaissance*, broadcast weekly on Resonance FM: <http://benjamintassie.com/future-renaissance-on-resonance-fm> (access date 21 May 2021). Naturally, this scene extends beyond the artists discussed here; other ‘post-HIP’ musicians include Mark Summers, Christoph Schiller, Stef Conner, Lucia Mense, Sarah Angliss and Rob Bental.

⁶ Steve Dollar, ‘Jozef van Wissem Wants to Make the Lute “Sexy Again”, and Jim Jarmusch Is Helping Him’, *Washington Post*, 11 April 2014: www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/jozef-van-wissem-wants-to-make-the-lute-sexy-again-and-jim-jarmusch-is-helping-him/2014/04/10/5b9734f2-be92-11e3-bcec-b71ee10e9bc3_story.html (accessed 16 December 2020).

⁷ Series Two, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 20 October 2020.

⁸ John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 15.

⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 122.

¹⁰ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, p. 127.

¹¹ Van Wissem’s approach is similar to what the American oboist and musicologist Bruce Haynes called ‘style-copying in composing’ (Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A*

Know I Love You and Adore You',¹² for example, van Wissem notes, 'they asked me to perform it in just a standard classical way, but sometimes it doesn't really come across very good if you do that to an audience, if there's a big audience, so I sort of make a drone out of it – put an open string under it, under the melody, so it becomes a bit more stronger [sic] and a bit more – I would say – more of a live experience'.¹³ Van Wissem's approach challenges ideas of authorship and the immutable historical (canonical) work and is therefore clearly counter to much mainstream concert music performance practice, which is based, still, in the *Werktreue* ideal.¹⁴

This, then, is a defining characteristic of 'post-HIP': a deconstruction and re-assemblage of the historical within the generative, liminal space of 'heritage'. Applied to instrumentation as well as repertoire, this approach is more broadly freeing; van Wissem is 'not only liberating the lute... but also asking his audience to liberate themselves from accustomed approaches to music'.¹⁵ Elsewhere, the Canadian composer Sarah Davachi notes, 'I think there's this taboo of "oh, you can't record a harpsichord and then cut it up and do things with it"; of course, you can. You can do whatever you want. If it sounds good, why wouldn't you do it?'.¹⁶ Indeed, I argue it is historical instruments' discontinuity of practice that facilitates a creative freedom beyond that of their 'mainstream' counterparts. The composer and hurdy-gurdy player Stevie Wishart notes, for example:

[the] word 'baggage' is a word that I use a lot... I love it. The hurdy-gurdy is a social and historical nomad. It's just wandered around history, it's never been able to be pinned down whereas with the piano, or when I play the violin, people think they know what you're going to play... they come with *baggage*.¹⁷

Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 209–10). However, the approaches have an important difference: van Wissem privileges a fidelity to context (what Haynes calls 'chronocentrism') that Haynes sees as unnecessary or inhibitive. Haynes instead calls for 'newly composed Period music' in which 'the particular work is quite original, but the vessel in which it is contained – that is, both the genre and the style – is fixed and constant [in the baroque style]' (Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, p. 210). This approach risks, I argue, what the anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls 'folkloric performance': historical re-enactments in which 'performances can become like artefacts. They freeze. They become canonical. They take forms that are alien, if not antithetical, to how they are produced and experienced in their local settings' (Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 64).

¹² Composed by Jacques Arcadelt (c.1507–1568), a fragment of the song (in French: 'Vous savez que je vous aime et vous adore') is depicted in Caravaggio's painting, *The Lute Player* (1596). Van Wissem was commissioned by the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, to perform the piece for an event celebrating the painting's restoration in 2018. A recording was released on Jozef van Wissem's album *We Adore You, You Have No Name* (Gent: Consouling Sounds, SOULCXIX, 2018).

¹³ Series Two, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 20 October 2020.

¹⁴ Georgina Born concisely summarises the values central to the *Werktreue* ideal that I allude to here: 'the self-expression of the individual composer-genius... finished and "untouchable" [musical works]... the vesting of unprecedented authority in the score... [and] hierarchical relations between composer and interpreters' (Georgina Born, 'On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology and Creativity', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 2, No. 1 (2005), pp. 7–36, here p. 8). In prioritising his own interpretations above fidelity to the 'work', van Wissem is perhaps the corollary to Richard Taruskin's 'crooked performer' (in twentieth-century HIP), one who is driven by 'highly specific, unclassifiable, personal and intensely subjective imaginings' rather than slavish devotion to the historical (Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 317).

¹⁵ Dollar, 'Jozef van Wissem Wants to Make the Lute "Sexy Again"', and Jim Jarmusch Is Helping Him'.

¹⁶ Series One, Episode Four, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 4 June 2020.

¹⁷ Series One, Episode Twelve, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 30 July 2020.

While van Wissem's compositional technique is based in the pre-classical repertoire, his aesthetic is rooted firmly in plural twentieth- and twenty-first-century traditions. His use of drones and distortion, and the lute's association with the guitar (no matter how spurious), situate his music in the realm of 'rock' (as does his appearance – the journalist Steve Dollar notes that he 'could easily pass for a Nordic metal overlord, with thigh-high black leather boots and long, dirty-blond hair'¹⁸). The focused, sparing repetition of his material, however, is perhaps closer to the minimalism of his fellow Hollanders, Louis Andriessen and Simeon ten Holt. Where van Wissem uses electronics, the 'retro', analogue and granular are emphasised.¹⁹ All in all, an eclectic, pluralistic approach emerges. Indeed, this eclecticism and stylistic plurality (working 'post-genre') is, I argue, a further defining characteristic of 'post-HIP' and situates the scene within a wider twenty-first-century cultural shift.

Here, I draw on ideas in Simon Reynolds' *Retromania*. Reynolds' argument, broadly put, is that the ubiquity of the internet in the new millennium, and in particular what he calls the 'crisis of overdocumentation triggered by digital technology' (YouTube, he says, 'serves as both major player and potent symbol'),²⁰ has engendered a saturated state of referentiality and, consequently, a dearth of originality in pop music. He writes, 'the 2000s has been about every other previous decade happening again all at once: a simultaneity of pop time that abolishes history while nibbling away at the present's own sense of itself as an era with a distinct identity and feel'.²¹ While Reynolds undoubtedly identifies a profound cultural shift, I am inclined to agree with Michael Waugh, who refutes Reynolds' pejorative diagnosis, suggesting instead that what Reynolds laments is the destabilisation of hegemonic systems (including the role of the critic) associated with 'the progressive linearity of the canonical historiography of popular music'.²² Post-internet cultural production is, in other words, unoriginal only when applying a rather outmoded Whig-historiographical reading, one that preserves old divisions and hierarchies and misunderstands (or simply does not recognise) the centrality of the network in 'post-internet' art.²³ Reynolds' focus is pop music, but I argue that 'post-HIP' artists also engage with 'retromania', both by virtue of their living in the (inescapably) 'post-internet' era and because their instruments demand it, at once overtly signifying their historicity and, because of those instruments' aforementioned discontinuity of practice, affording negation of it. We

¹⁸ Dollar, 'Jozef van Wissem Wants to Make the Lute "Sexy Again", and Jim Jarmusch Is Helping Him'.

¹⁹ See, for example, Gregg Kowalsky and Jozef van Wissem, *Movements in Marble and Stone* (Amish Records, AMI 034 R/W, 2012).

²⁰ Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), p. 56.

²¹ Reynolds, *Retromania*, pp. x–xi.

²² Michael Waugh, "'Music that Actually Matters'? Post-internet Musicians, Retromania, and Authenticity in Online Popular Musical Milieux' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Anglia Ruskin University, 2015), p. 37.

²³ Karen Archey and Robin Peckham's essay on 'post-internet' art (disseminated for free as a pdf) is foundational on the topic: Karen Archey and Robin Peckham, 'Art Post-Internet: INFORMATION/DATA' (Beijing: Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, 2014: <http://post-inter.net> (accessed 14 October 2020)). As well as noting aesthetic commonalities in art made 'post-internet', the essay foregrounds the centrality of the network both as tool for dissemination and as informing the construction of the artwork itself. In *Retromania*, Reynolds also notes the importance of the network, although more pessimistically: 'digital culture's hallmark [is] rapid movement within a network of knowledge as opposed to [an] outward-bound drive' (Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. 428).

could go further: the predominance of retromania in pop suggests that revival, as productive mode, has permeated the wider culture, a symptom, perhaps, of a shift originating in postmodernism that has, in the post-internet twenty-first century, transcended it to become what has variously been called 'post-postmodernism', 'post-irony' or 'new sincerity'.²⁴ While this is undoubtedly a vast topic, beyond the scope of the current article, considering 'post-HIP' in this context is, I believe, central to an understanding of the scene.

Whereas postmodernism²⁵ facilitated a levelling of the cultural landscape, negating modernism's hierarchies, post-postmodernism (as I use the term here, in the context of Reynolds' 'simultaneity of pop time') utilises diverse reference points both as resource (anything, still, is available) and as signifiers of their referentiality. The cultural critic Steven Shaviro explains:

[in the twenty-first century] citations and remediations and so on and so forth are themselves altogether real, part of The Real. The exacerbated irony of the 'postmodern' 1990s eventually imploded into what we can see today as a multifaceted immanence... Irony is dead, not because of some supposed 'new sincerity,' but because all the hierarchies of reflection have collapsed. Today, there can be no ontological privileging of referentiality and self-referentiality.²⁶

'Post-HIP' engages with this 'multifaceted immanence' in numerous ways. Van Wissem's stylistic plurality, for example, engages a listener attuned both to the signifiers of the genres he samples and the *mode of sampling* itself. When the vocalist and composer Marianne Schuppe resonates her lute using an electric guitar EBow, she treats the instrument ahistorically (outside its playing tradition, already *re-constructed*) and, in doing so, *signposts* the historicity she negates.²⁷ By 'hacking' a harpsichord for her *Orpheus Machines* project,²⁸ Patricia Alessandrini reconfigures manifold associations and expectations around both the harpsichord (in particular) and the category of 'instrument' (more broadly) in the digital age.²⁹ In *Dual Synthesis*, Tristan Perich melds

²⁴ Again, here, I am building on ideas in John Butt's *Playing with History*, in which he explores HIP's position in relation to both modernism and postmodernism. Briefly, Butt challenges Richard Taruskin's view that HIP is, in fact, an example of modernist practice. Instead, drawing on Georgina Born's notion of 'populist postmodernism', Butt argues that 'Taruskin's modernist definition of HIP is misplaced. He may be quite correct in perceiving modernist elements, but these are reused and realigned in a way that is typical of the postmodernism that Born outlines' (Butt, *Playing with History*, p. 129). Interestingly, van Wissem's approach could be said to reappropriate elements closer to modernism. In playing historical music in retrograde, for example, his technique nears the score and process focus of modernism; van Wissem notes, 'when I started to think about new compositions for lute [I] made the decision to perform the classical lute repertoire backwards. From this mirror image writing followed the idea to compose in layered palindromes' (Jozef van Wissem, 'Fifteen Questions with Jozef van Wissem', *Fifteen Questions* (no date): <https://15questions.net/interview/fifteen-questions-jozef-van-wissem/page-1/> (accessed 16 December 2020)).

²⁵ Here, and when I use the term elsewhere, I have in mind Butt's three, interrelated definitions of postmodernism: as 'specific style or form of cultural production' (usually associated with irony and the dismantling of cultural hierarchies), 'cultural discourse and academic procedures' and a 'wider cultural phenomenon involving both lifestyle and economics'. Like Butt, my focus is the third of these definitions, 'suggesting as it does a fundamental change in the global situation of which the other two categories are symptomatic' (Butt, *Playing with History*, pp. 147–48).

²⁶ Steven Shaviro, 'Detention' (17 July 2013): www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=1149 (accessed 9 November 2020).

²⁷ See, for example, Marianne Schuppe, *Nosongs* (Edition Wandelweiser Records, EWR 1802, 2018) and *Slow Songs* (Edition Wandelweiser Records, EWR 1509, 2015).

²⁸ Briefly, the visual of the harpsichord's mechanism is captured and translated into an audio signal which is then diffused through the body of the instrument.

²⁹ The harpsichord, reconfigured, becomes 'a unique artefact which both contains the potential of a given musical utterance and physically renders it itself' (Patricia Alessandrini, 'Resisting Reproduction in the Digital Age: Notes on a Sonic Arts Practice', *Nutida*

the harpsichord's timbral 'flatness' with '1-bit electronics' ('every value is either zero or one. There is no volume control, there's no timbral adjustment'³⁰); consequently, the homogeneity of harpsichord-computer sound contains the collapsed totality of *Dual Synthesis'* reference points – eighteenth-century repertoire, American minimalism, consumer electronics and so on.³¹ Unlike in postmodernism, however, references and referentiality are here played with unironically, not a negation of the absolutes of modernism but a sincere reaction against (or perhaps, more accurately, an extension of) postmodernism as the dominant cultural mode. In 'post-HIP', this is inescapable; put plainly – using an historical instrument (to perform new music) in the twenty-first century almost invariably involves utilising the referentiality with which it is inexorably bound.

Engagement with the ecology of the performance space is another defining characteristic of 'post-HIP'. Thought of within the post-postmodernist framework, alternative performance spaces mediate their meanings within broader referential networks, including in relation to that which they negate; a carpark-within-which-an-orchestra-plays is now not only a carpark but also *not-a-concert-hall*.³² Liam Byrne's 2015 performance series for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, *Inside Voices*,³³ is a useful example of this, particularly as concerns the importance of the viol's historicity in activating these meanings. Consisting of more than 300 one-to-one performances inside a Victorian plaster-cast column, the series, according to Byrne, is a 'kind of Marina Abramović knock-off viola da gamba installation'.³⁴ For Byrne, the column's interior was the nexus for plural meanings, not only in relation to performance-art traditions, but also the viol's historical contexts and the live musical experience more broadly – what Christopher Small formulated as 'musicking': music as verb (something done between people) rather than noun (as in the mainstream classical tradition).³⁵ Byrne explains, 'in the baroque period, live music happened in a varied assortment of domestic, institutional, public and private spaces. Nowadays, baroque music is performed almost exclusively in concert halls, which creates a rather one-way relationship between musicians and their audiences'.³⁶ The viol is crucial in accessing these meanings, activating a kind of criticality in its unbelonging: it is an outsider and therefore apt to facilitate interrogation of both space and related performance traditions. Byrne notes that:

Musik (20 December 2016): <http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/19336>, p. 5 (accessed 16 December 2020)).

³⁰ Kurt Gottschalk, 'Tristan Perich', *The Wire* 297 (2008), p. 18.

³¹ Elsewhere, Charles Kronengold explores the unique power of the harpsichord as an object mediating plural meanings in the twentieth century: Charles Kronengold, 'Harpsichords (and People) at the Limits of Mediation Theory', *Contemporary Music Review* 37, Nos 5–6 (2018), pp. 575–605.

³² Slavoj Žižek explores this idea in his reading of a joke in Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka*: a character asking for 'coffee without cream' is told that the café has run out of cream; only having milk, he is instead offered 'coffee without milk'. Žižek maintains, 'what you don't get is part of the identity of what you do get. In what sense? Because if you bring this logic to its extreme you can also see how with a double negation... the result is not zero' (Slavoj Žižek, *Slavoj Žižek on Coffee: From His IQ2 Talk*, YouTube, 5 July 2011: https://youtu.be/_WHdAKfNnA (accessed 16 December 2020)).

³³ The series was revived in 2017 for the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

³⁴ Series One, Episode One, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 14 May 2020.

³⁵ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, London: University Press of New England, 1998).

³⁶ 'Inside Voices by Liam Byrne', V&A (no date): www.vam.ac.uk/articles/inside-voices-by-liam-byrne (accessed 16 December 2020).

for me, it's not a narrative of contrast, it's not a narrative of taking something out of one environment and inserting it into another. . . It's not kind of like I'm trying to displace a practice into a different structure. It's more that I'm wandering around and enjoying the freedom and flexibility that the instrument has.³⁷

Elsewhere, the baroque violinist Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir explores space through her 'ecological sound art' pieces in which the listening experience of one space is activated within another.³⁸ She notes, 'we are wired to listen in a very different way to the world, and it's about bringing those abilities into different environments and seeing what that will reveal'.³⁹ Stefánsdóttir's 2017 installation at the Harpa concert hall in Reykjavík, *I Play Northern Lights*, for example, formed 'a critique of classical concert hall culture. . . [and] the emergence of a concert tradition that diminishes the possibilities for participation'.⁴⁰ Stefánsdóttir, like Byrne, challenges the one-way relationship between listener and musician in the concert hall,⁴¹ using installation and movement to 'reveal the elephant in the room which is the space itself'.⁴²

Of course, since the mid-2000s performance of classical music outside the concert hall has become increasingly commonplace. Thom Andrewes notes that non-classical⁴³ performance methodologies '[unsettle] both the music and the space, restoring to that music some of its most attractive difficulty'.⁴⁴ The institutionalised performance space, by contrast, stifles its repertoire: 'closeted away in a university or recital room, there can be a sense that this music is neutralised, always already included in a discourse of sounds and pitches, rather than fore-grounding its challenge to the world'.⁴⁵ Here, non-classical and post-internet practices align, post-internet art also emphasising a 'shift against the hermeticism of the art world'.⁴⁶ In engaging with these trends, 'post-HIP' artists are not only participating in a wider cultural shift but responding to something fundamental about their instruments. Having been revived, historical instruments are inexorably bound up with institutions of history (museums, conservatoires and so on).⁴⁷ 'Post-HIP' artists must

³⁷ Series One, Episode One, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 14 May 2020.

³⁸ www.hallasteinunn.com/ (accessed 16 December 2020).

³⁹ Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

⁴⁰ Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir and Stefan Östersjö, 'Participation and Creation: Towards an Ecological Understanding of Musical Creativity', *Online Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2019), p. 377.

⁴¹ Here, again, Christopher Small's ideas in *Musicking* are pertinent: he notes that the concert hall gives rise to 'a dissonance between the meanings – the relationships – that are generated by the works that are being performed and those that are generated by the performance events' (Small, *Musicking*, p. 16).

⁴² Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

⁴³ I use 'non-classical' here to describe a practice rather than an aesthetic. 'Non-classical' practices involve the 'transplantation of contemporary classical vocabularies and practices into what you could call the "listening situation" of indie rock, electronic, and dance music' (Thom Andrewes and Dimitri Djuric, *We Break Strings: The Alternative Classical Scene in London* (London: Hackney Classical Press, 2014), p. 81). The London-based concert series Nonclassical is perhaps the most famous example of this approach (and my reason for using the term 'non-classical'); others include Multi-Storey Orchestra, 840 Series, Classical Remix, Filthy Lucre, Bastard Assignments and the London Contemporary Music Festival. Writing on the topic includes Andrewes and Djuric, *We Break Strings*; Johan Idema, *Present! Rethinking Live Classical Music* (Rotterdam: Music Centre Netherlands, 2012); and Chris Haferkamp and Julia Dromey, eds, *The Classical Music Industry* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁴⁴ Andrewes and Djuric, *We Break Strings*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ Andrewes and Djuric, *We Break Strings*, p. 54.

⁴⁶ Archey and Peckham, 'Art Post-Internet: INFORMATION/DATA', p. 9.

⁴⁷ Of course, it can be argued that historical instruments were not always 'institutionalised'. Bruce Haynes, for example, notes that conservatoires seemed to him 'a profoundly

therefore challenge the institutional space in order to resonate meaningfully in the contemporary world – as van Wissem notes, ‘you want to remove the dust!’.⁴⁸ Further, some residue of the original revivalists’ outsider status remains;⁴⁹ ‘post-HIP’ practice is therefore both anti-institutional and institutionalised, a paradox that demands engagement with the classical/non-classical dichotomy.

Perhaps the defining characteristic of historical instruments, and certainly the creative impetus for much of the ‘post-HIP’ practice I have described, is their timbre, which tends to be granular and analogue, and which mediates something of the instrument’s physicality, its having been *made* and *handled*. Davachi notes, ‘they retain this sort of instability... especially the older back you go’;⁵⁰ Stefánsdóttir describes the baroque violin as having ‘a certain graininess to it’;⁵¹ Wishart says of the medieval violin, ‘the gut strings have this hidden timbral quality’.⁵² Implicit, perhaps, in this focus on timbre is a negation of harmonic drive. Certainly, harmonic stasis is common to the ‘post-HIP’ aesthetic. Anna Þorvaldsdóttir’s *Shades of Silence*, for example (written for Nordic Affect in 2012), ‘begins with droning strings and with barely audible sounds produced by plucking, brushing, and rubbing the strings of a harpsichord. Eventually, chiming figures emerge from the cloud of timbre’.⁵³ Wishart’s *Out of the Mists*, for harpsichord and piano, similarly explores ‘timbre in its own right’; she explains, ‘so often I’ll really simplify music... because then you can just hear timbre’.⁵⁴

Relatedly, recording technology is central to ‘post-HIP’ practice insofar as the microphone facilitates a different listening experience, magnifying or affording transformation of these timbral qualities.⁵⁵ Stefánsdóttir’s collaboration with the composer Mirjam Tally, *In the Bottomless Hollow of the Winter Sky*, was, for example, ‘a process of field recording the [baroque] violin’, approached as one might a landscape, in order to capture the idiosyncrasies of its sound.⁵⁶ In making their album *Raindamage* (‘an exploration of the studio environment and the collaborative possibilities’ therein), Nordic Affect were always careful to ensure that the ‘graininess [was] let through’.⁵⁷ Valgeir Sigurðsson encouraged Byrne to ‘explore the extremes of [his]

dubious place to study Rhetorical [Early] music... Institutionalising HIP in the twentieth century has influenced us all into thinking of it as a department of classical music rather than a bloc with distinctly different principles’ (Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, p. 76).

⁴⁸ Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

⁴⁹ Bruce Haynes wrote, ‘we defined our movement in opposition to the classical establishment’ (Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, p. 41).

⁵⁰ Series One, Episode Four, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 4 June 2020.

⁵¹ Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

⁵² Series One, Episode Twelve, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 30 July 2020.

⁵³ Alex Ross, ‘The L.A. Philharmonic Celebrates Iceland’, *The New Yorker* (24 April 2017): www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/01/the-la-philharmonic-celebrates-iceland (accessed 17 December 2020).

⁵⁴ Series One, Episode Twelve, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 30 July 2020.

⁵⁵ Nick Wilson discusses the importance of recordings as a catalyst for the ‘professionalisation’ of HIP from the early 1970s – for example, Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music’s relationship with Decca’s L’Oiseau-Lyre label, or The English Concert signing to CRD Records. Counter to ‘the perceived division between art and commerce’, Wilson recasts ‘some of Early Music’s pioneers... in the guise of cultural entrepreneurs’ (Nick Wilson, *The Art of Re-enchantment: Making Early Music in the Modern Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 11). Elsewhere, Bruce Haynes notes, ‘There was a time when “AUTHENTIC” sold records like “ORGANIC” sells tomatoes’ (Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, p. 10).

⁵⁶ Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

⁵⁷ Series One, Episode Seven, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 25 June 2020.

instrument's tonal palette' when making *Dissonance*,⁵⁸ sounds which were then 'sculpted... and curated'⁵⁹ in the studio, 'routing the signals back out to amps, speakers and effects before recording the entire thing back to tape'.⁶⁰

Electronic composition and studio techniques allow for a direct handleability of sound. For the percussionist and writer Chris Cutler, the studio therefore offers a way back to what he calls the 'folk form', which favours the primacy of sound, a collectivised aesthetic, resistance to the 'definitive' work and a synthesis of the roles of composer and performer. This aligns entirely with the definition of 'post-HIP' I have begun to trace. By contrast, notation (and by extension mainstream classical music-making) has engendered a paradigm in which

the primacy of the ear [has given way] to the primacy of the eye, a sense of the whole to a concentration on the particular, the unity of composer and performer to an almost complete functional separation of the two roles. Improvisation [has been] replaced by calculation or following a score, collective cultural expression by commodity: music is no longer something produced organically by a community of people, but rather speculatively, for a market.⁶¹

This leads me to my conclusion: 'post-HIP' is a political imperative in the twenty-first century. In his book *Post-Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism*, Jeffrey Nealon attempts a 'periodization' of our current epoch just as Frederic Jameson 'periodized' the 1960s,⁶² framing it using broad cultural trends rather than calendar years. The 1980s, Nealon argues, ended on 11 September 2001. Gone, in our present, is the optimism of Jameson's 'late capitalism', replaced by neoliberal "'new economies"' (post-Fordism... and their complex relations to cultural production'.⁶³ Consequently, Nealon argues, 'the cultural rebellion narratives of the '60s... can now officially be pronounced dead'.⁶⁴

In this context, 'post-HIP' is vital insofar as it mediates something of heritage, the analogue, the intersubjective and the emancipatory. In enacting history in the present as heritage, historical instruments dismantle and repurpose something of their associated cultural hegemony; their timbral instability is imbued with a sense of physicality, engendering liveness and in-the-moment musicking; their Otherness to mainstream classical traditions (no matter how diminished in the wake of assimilation) affords stylistic plurality and a challenging of the ecology of the concert hall; alignment with post-genre and non-classical scenes, as well as a broader post-postmodernist turn, punctures something of the hermeticism of the classical music world. Finally, in existing within what Nick Prior calls our 'hypermodern moment', in which the digital helps 'loosen, soften and make malleable contemporary social, cultural and economic forms... [changing] our

⁵⁸ Released in 2017, *Dissonance* slows the Mozart *Dissonance Quartet* to create new music based on a microscopic reading of its harmonic progression: Valgeir Sigurðsson, *Dissonance* (Reykjavík: Bedroom Community, HVALUR28, 2017).

⁵⁹ Series One, Episode One, *Future Renaissance*, Resonance FM, 14 May 2020.

⁶⁰ Steindór Grétar Jónsson, 'Mozart in Slow-Mo: Valgeir Sigurðsson's "Dissonance"', *The Reykjavík Grapevine* (4 April 2017): <https://grapevine.is/icelandic-culture/music/2017/04/04/mozart-in-slow-mo-valgeir-sigurddssons-dissonance/> (accessed 17 December 2020).

⁶¹ Chris Cutler, 'Technology, Politics and Contemporary Music: Necessity and Choice in Musical Forms', *Popular Music*, 4 (1984), p. 285.

⁶² Frederic Jameson, 'Periodizing the 60s', *Social Text*, 10, No. 9 (1984), pp. 178–209.

⁶³ Jeffrey Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 15.

⁶⁴ Nealon, *Post-postmodernism*, p. 21.

expectations about what belongs in music, what music consists of, who is making music and how',⁶⁵ 'post-HIP' is able to utilise creative technologies for their liberalising effects. In short, 'post-HIP' is uniquely placed to build Ronström's 'future to come'.

⁶⁵ Nick Prior, 'Software Sequencers and Cyborg Singers: Popular Music in the Digital Hypermodern', *New Formations*, 1, No. 66 (2014), pp. 81–99, here p. 95.