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2. Classical Music has a Diversity Problem

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A recent profusion of statistics on classical music repertoire, performers, and education from across several countries have produced quantitative evidence confirming that it is primarily a musical tradition where white, middle-class European cis males succeed. This chapter examines how improving the inclusivity and equality of participation in classical music conflicts with its ideological investment in meritocracy and high musical quality. It argues that giving up on a belief in classical music's universalism and exploring instead the many situated entanglements and infrastructures that enable it to exist would allow for a new approach that does not fall back on the exclusionary categories that have historically supported classical music, while offering forms of engaging with it that better align with contemporary values of inclusivity and equality. I also argue that sustained statistical work is crucially important in continuing to address classical music's exclusions, but that in order not simply to facilitate surface changes to a problematic system (engaging in what I call a reformist critique), the goal must be to confound existing categorisations and help usher in new perspectives on the classical music tradition (a radical critique), which in turn requires statistical categories to be readapted. While structural problems will not disappear overnight, such an approach will reveal how classical music has always been entangled with its surroundings and been the site of many experiments and interactions with other musical genres, which it has marked as 'other' and has either forgotten, omitted or purposefully discarded.

Statistics

The following is an overview of recent statistical reports that have been produced about the lack of diversity in the institutions of classical music. Most statistics focus on the number of female composers who have been programmed in a particular orchestral season or at a specific festival over the course of its history. Some projects have been able to compile statistics at the national level, assembling data from several different kinds of institution, from chamber ensembles to symphonies, while others, in particular the DONNE Foundation report, have concentrated instead on

international groupings of similar institutions, such as major symphony orchestras. Many of the studies only look at two gender categories, though some (increasingly) are including a third gender category, a race/ethnicity perspective, or an intersectional perspective. I have also included statistics on classical music education and working conditions, where statistics presenting intersectional relationships between categories of gender, race/ethnicity, class, and ability seem to be more common. The widespread production of statistics on this issue has only begun to take place in the past several years, though now that the picture has started to fill in, it is remarkable to see how pervasive the disparities are in the institutions of classical music.

The DONNE Foundation reported in July 2021 that among its sample of 100 orchestras across the world, 'only 747 out of the 14,747 compositions scheduled […] throughout the 2020-2021 season, were composed by women – a total of 5%.'[1] Furthermore, 'only 1.11% of the pieces were composed by Black & Asian women and only 2.43% by Black & Asian men.'[2]

Panlasigui's 2021 research on professional German orchestras (*Berufsorchestern*) found that in the 2019/2020 performance season, only thirty-six female composers were performed, making up just 1.9 percent of works overall, with sixty percent of orchestras programming no works by women whatsoever.[3] Among contemporary music concert series, only thirteen percent of works were by women.[4] In institutions for contemporary classical music (*Neue Musik*, a classical music sub-genre), research conducted in 2016 by Ashley Fure on the Darmstadt Summer Course archive found that ninety-three percent of compositions performed at the event between 1946 and 2014 were by men.[5] Statistics made by Gender Relations in New Music reported similar situations at other German contemporary classical music festivals: at the MaerzMusik festival in Berlin, from 2010 to 2018, just twenty-eight percent of pieces were by women, transmasculine or non-binary people, while at the Donaueschingen Musiktage between 2011 and 2017, this was only eighteen percent.[6]

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[1] Gabriella Di Laccio and others, *Equality and Diversity in Concert Halls* (DONNE: Women in Music, 2021), p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Melissa Panlasigui, *Women in High-Visibility Roles in German Berufsorchester* (Munich: musica femina münchen and Archiv Frau und Musik Sonderveröffentlichung), p. 11.

[4] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[5] Ashley Fure, 'GRID: Gender Research in Darmstadt A 2016 HISTORAGE Project Funded by the Goethe Institute' (2016), https://griddarmstadt.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/grid_gender_research_in_darmstadt.pdf

[6] Gender Relations in New Music, 'Donaueschinger Musiktage Statistics' (2017), http://grinm.org/20171020%20-%20Donaueschinger%20Musiktage%20Statistics%20GRiNM.pdf

The Danish Composers' Society's 2019 repertoire statistics report examined music played by symphony orchestras, opera houses, ensembles, and music festivals in Denmark in the 2015/16, 2017/18, and 2018/19 seasons. It found that, measured in minutes, 99.9 percent of the music that had been performed overall was composed by men. When limited to music composed after 1985, the figure was eighty-six percent.[7] A recent follow-up examining the period between 2020-2022 added categories for non-binary composers as well as collective compositions, and showed a small but significant improvement, with 9.5 percent of works performed by women, 0.12 percent by non-binary composers, and 2.22 percent by collectives.[8]

Two reports by Sweden's KVAST in collaboration with the Swedish composer's society FST (in 2015 and 2019) also examined the gender breakdown of repertoire statistics. The 2019 report found that across all music institutions in Sweden between 2016-2019, only 6.32 percent of works played were by women.[9] According to Norway's Balensekunst, 'only 2 percent of the music played by Norwegian orchestras is written by women'.[10]

Finally, George Lewis has observed that until 2020, the prominent Donaueschinger Musiktage festival for new music in southern Germany had not programmed a single Black composer.[11] He has also pointed to what he calls the suspicious absence of Afrodiasporic composers in histories of twentieth-century modernism, a view that has led him to compile playlists of long-ignored music by these composers.[12] Agawu has also recently argued that scholarly work on African

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[7] Andreas Hastrup and Sine Tofte Hannibal, *Repertoirestatistik for danske symphoniorkestre, operaer, ensembler og musikfestivaler* (Dansk Komponistforening, 2018), p. 14.

[8] Michelle Demant and Sine Tofte Hannibal, *Repertoirestatistik for danske symphoniorkestre, operaer, ensembler og musikfestivaler* (Dansk Komponistforening, 2023), p. 7.

[9] Swedish Association of Women Composers (Kvinnlig Anhopning av Svenska Tonsättare – KVAST); Swedish Society of Composers (Föreningen Svenska Tonsättare); Martin Jonsson Tibblin and others, (Föreningen Svenska Tonsättare and Kvinnling anhopning av svenska tonsättare, 2019), p. 14.

[10] Balansekunst, 'What does Norwegian cultural life look like?,' https://www.balansekunstprosjektet.no/statistics

[11] Kendall, Harald Kisiedu, and George Lewis, 'There are Black Composers in the Future,' in *Dynamic Traditions: A Text Collection on Behalf of Donaueschingen Global*, ed. by Elisa Erkelenz, Katja Heldt (Donaueschingen: Südwestrundfunk, 2021), pp. 143-157 (p. 143).

[12] George Lewis, *African American Music after 1960*, 2018, mixed media installation, Darmstadt Summer Course (Schader-Forum), *Darmstadt*.

music tends to ignore art music on the continent, though he has not taken a statistical approach to do so.[13]

Looking at working conditions in classical music, Christina Scharff has examined the professional inequalities present in UK and German classical music, highlighting that 'the subjectivities required to work and succeed in the classical music profession are gendered, classed, and racialised.'[14] She has compiled studies showing underrepresentation and pay gaps for women, BAME, and working-class musicians active in the field.[15]

Scharff also highlights gender and racial inequalities in UK music education, showing classical music education in the UK as being mainly for middle-class people and conservatoires as having significant underrepresentation of BAME people on staff.[16] A study of two Swiss music schools from 2016 showed how class-based exclusions were produced, as well as how the concept of diversity was understood only as equal opportunity within already-universalised categories, namely the specific technical virtuosity of (re)producing an uncritically reproduced white Eurocentric canon.[17] In her 2019 book on music education in the UK, Bull argues that this kind of boundary-drawing and exclusivity is actively fostered in music education to preserve middle-class spaces, while the discourse of classical music's autonomy is used as a way of camouflaging this exclusivity behind musical rationalisations and classical music's narrative of excellence.[18]

When taken together, these statistics demonstrate that classical music is shockingly misaligned with notions of gender equality and the inclusion of minorities across its various institutions and in many different national contexts. The growing body of statistical work on this topic will continue to produce a clearer picture of this situation. Its increasing prevalence also means that future studies can build on existing work and focus on producing higher-quality data, as well as put its methodologies and results in dialogue with existing international counterparts. Lastly, the existence

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[13] Kofi Agawu, 'African Art Music and the Challenge of Postcolonial Composition,' in *Dynamic Traditions: Global Perspectives on Contemporary Music, A Text Collection on Behalf of Donaueschingen Global*, ed. by Elisa Erkelenz, Katja Heldt (Donaueschingen: Südwestrundfunk), pp. 179-187 (p. 180).

[14] Christina Scharff, *Gender, Subjectivity, and Cultural Work: The Classical Music Profession* (London: Routledge), p. 23-24.

[15] Ibid., pp. 43, 50-57.

[16] Ibid., pp. 45-48.

[17] Philippe Saner, Sophie Vögele, Pauline Vessely, *Schlussbericht Art.School.Differences: Researching inequalities and Normativities in the Field of Higher Art Education* (Zurich: Zurich University of the Arts, 2016), pp. 290-301.

[18] Anna Bull, *Class, Control, and Classical Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 5-6.

of this work will also make it easier to make the argument that statistics are an important tool for making inequalities visible.[19]

There remains, however, the question of how classical music should respond and move forward in light of these disparities of gender, race/ethnicity, and class. With the rest of this chapter, I want to sketch out an outline of what such a response could look like. In order to do this, I will first explore some of what I see as the key resistances to diversification reforms that exist in the classical music discourse.

The Myth of Meritocracy

The first resistance that must be addressed is classical music's *myth of meritocracy*. This myth stems from some key beliefs that are deeply ingrained in classical music education and professional life. The most fundamental of these is the belief that classical music is ultimately a meritocratic system where everyone gets a chance to participate, but where the best musicians are rewarded for their skill and talent by rising to the top. Underpinning this is the belief that classical music is based on values of artistic excellence, and that achieving a high quality of musical production is the pinnacle of achievement. Removing any and all obstacles standing in the way of creating high-quality music is seen as the focus of much professional musical activity, from specialised education and rigorous auditioning requirements to reminding patrons to turn off their cell phones before a concert.

To suggest that creating high-quality music should not be the number one priority, or that additional, 'extra-musical' factors, as they are called, must also be taken into account, is seen as the ultimate betrayal of the classical music tradition. It is viewed as an affront to all the practice, hard work, money and sacrifice that has been invested in the pursuit of high-quality musical creation. Interventions in this system, for example through programming quotas, or blind-audition recruiting in orchestras, is viewed as potentially endangering the high-quality end product that elite orchestras strive for, a risk that, when put in these terms, simply cannot be tolerated by these organisations.

In short, resistance to change comes in the first instance from a framing of the debate as being about *diversity vs. high quality*, a false dichotomy that goes to the heart of classical music's self-understanding. To tackle the issue, we need to look at how classical music has come to focus on a specific definition of quality, one that is limiting, outmoded, and a central obstacle to change. Looking at its dictionary definitions, there are two: the first is 'the standard or nature of something as measured against other

[19] Christina Scharff, *Gender, Subjectivity, and Cultural Work,* p. 42.

things of a *similar kind'*.[20] This is how quality is understood in classical music: there exists the notion of a clearly defined scale upon which music can be ranked using a standardised set of categories. This is seen for instance in the concept of *Werktreue*, where aspiring to achieve a musical result that is as close to the composer's intentions as possible creates an asymptotic but generally standardised set of ways to understand musical production.

The second definition of quality is 'an attribute, property; a special feature or characteristic'.[21] According to this second definition, quality no longer refers to a position on a predefined scale; rather it is a unique characteristic that is incomparable with anything else, at least along a clearly-delineated range. Whether banal or life-changing, such a quality is characterised by its singularity.

Classical music as a musical tradition focusing on notions of excellence lays prodigious value on the maintaining of a standardised framework by which high or low quality can be measured. Wrong notes, 'bad' style and unfaithful interpretations are therefore all foundational to classical music's self-understanding and the subject of meticulous discussion, justification and correction. This framework is constituted through its elaborate system of established tests that inculcate what these rights and wrongs are. Among performing musicians, these include tests to progress in music school, such as fluent knowledge of scales, arpeggios and a preselected musical repertoire, as well as determining orchestral hiring through auditions of orchestral excerpts and selected solo repertoire. Similar challenges face aspiring composers, though with the challenge of having both to succeed within the established system as well as write works that 'correctly' transgress its rules.

Another way classical music undermines an understanding of quality as singlular and unique is through the work-concept as well as a musican canon, meant to stabilise its meaning across performances.[22] Because the canon is limited, it also functions as a standardised, common point of reference. Thus, the statistics above create discomfort because they confront classical music with facts that force it to acknowledge that its definition of 'high quality' is not universal. It points out that classical music's meritocratic system clearly does not give equal opportunities to everyone and, perhaps even worse, that *addressing* such statistics to make the genre

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[20] Emphasis mine. 'Quality,' in The Oxford English Dictionary [online], https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/155878?rskey=6PUTFJ&result=1&isAdvanced=false

[21] Ibid.

[22] See Kirby's account of the attempts to exhibit music as part of 19th century international exhibitions for a very literal example of this stabilisation. Sarah Kirby, '"A mystery, and viewless / Even when present:" Exhibiting Music at International Exhibitions in Nineteenth-Century Britain,' in *Institutionalization in Music History*, ed. By Saijaleena Rantamen and Derek B. Scott (Helsinki: DocMus Research Publications 19), pp. 107-126.

more equal might entail adapting the emphasis on high quality, or revisiting classical music's self-image as universal all together.

What makes doing this so difficult is the persistent belief in the universality of classical music itself: that it is somehow able to transcend the social context in which it is produced and exist as something beautiful for people of all different cultures around the world. This belief is maintained by de-emphasising the realities of working in and producing classical music. These are swept under the rug and are meant to fade into the background as the listener focuses on pure, acousmatic sound as detached as possible from any physical source.

Since how it is created is of secondary importance as long as it is of 'high quality', classical music erases the fact that success is gendered, raced, and classed, and then denies that this erasure has taken place, holding up the meritocratic values it promotes as universal and valid within any and all contexts. This is seen in the old joke where someone asks for directions to Carnegie Hall, and is told to 'practise, practise, practise'.

When these specific circumstances are taken to be natural and universal, then any argument about how they are situated, specific and trained, as well as how the conditions for success are tailored to white, middle-class European cis males, is construed as an attack on the core belief in the universality of classical music. This is the source of the fundamental resistance to addressing these statistics.

Corrective vs. Radical Changes

Despite the challenges just outlined of addressing social issues in a field focused on ignoring them, there have been many recent attempts to address gender and diversity issues in classical music, including increasing calls for gender-equal programmes in many countries, or, in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, orchestras trying to find ways, as Mitchener has put it, 'to present work that reflects the rich and varied musical voices in classical music today'.[23]

Now that the problem of the belief in the universality of classical music has been discussed, the second kind of response to statistics on the lack of diversity in classical music can be explored, namely attempts at changing and reforming the system. These responses can be broken down into two general approaches, *corrective* efforts and *radical* ones, borrowing from the terminology of Boltanski and Chiapello,

[23] Elaine Mitchener, 'How to Remove Earwax,' in *Dynamic Traditions: Global Perspectives on Contemporary Music, A Text Collection on Behalf of Donaueschingen Global*, ed. by Elisa Erkelenz, Katja Heldt (Donaueschingen: Südwestrundfunk), pp. 169-178 (p. 171).

who develop a theory of critique and its relationship to capitalism. While their categories could generally be applicable to many concepts, classical music's intertwinement with processes of capitalist extraction make the comparison all the more fitting.[24]

Corrective critiques are those that accept the underlying premise of the system, but demand reform because tests of the system's legitimacy are seen as imperfect or still unjust. This could, for example, involve measures such as enacting quotas to increase the number of female composers that are programmed in a given year and country, or changing aspects of how conservatory or orchestral tests are done in order to include more women and minorities in the sector. Such measures do not call into question the underlying notion of high quality; they only seek to adapt how that existing measure is achieved through concessions meant to increase the fairness of the current system.[25]

Radical critiques, also called revolutionary critiques, are by contrast those that call the fundamental principles of the system into question, here classical music and its normative canon, culture and performance practices.[26] A radical critique would address classical music's focus on high quality as a primary source of resistance by proposing to replace this paradigm with one focused on relativising classical music as one musical tradition among many, and one whose notion of high quality can be better understood as a 'distinctive attribute' of this tradition, rather than a universal truth.

For Boltanski and Chiapello and their project of understanding critique in relationship to capitalism, what cuts across both approaches is that critique has accompanied the history of capitalism like a shadow.[27] They explore how adept capitalism has been at addressing and integrating critiques of its functioning into itself, arguing that this ability to adapt is why capitalism has succeeded in remaining a dominant force in our lives. Continuing the extended comparison between capitalism and classical music, criticism can be recontextualised as an act of support, and an expression of a will for classical music to continue in some form into the future. For this to happen, it must adequately address its critiques and integrate them into its functioning if it is to survive. Against this backdrop, I will present the case for both corrective and radical critiques. While corrective critiques are important in raising the

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[24] Christina Scharff, *Gender, Subjectivity, and Cultural Work*; Marianna Ritchey, *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

[25] Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso), pp. 32-33.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 36.

issue of diversity within classical music, I argue that only a radical change presents a coherent way of responding to classical music's 'statistics problem,' but that this can be achieved while preserving much of what remains important to people who love and identify with this musical genre, and even reveal the works of many fascinating composers from around the globe and throughout history.

Critiquing Classical Music

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Keychange Initiative began in 2015 in the popular music sector as an attempt to address gender equality problems in that sector by having organisations pledge to have 50:50 gender-equal programming by 2022. Since its founding, the number of organisations that have taken the Keychange pledge has rapidly grown to over 500, and the initiative's demands have accordingly become more differentiated. Their manifesto now makes a series of broad recommendations to the music industry, national governments, the European Parliament and the European Commission about how to systemically tackle gender equality by addressing working conditions for women in the music industry, investing in their empowerment, doing research to better understand the nature of the problem, and educating their workforce about how to make the industry gender equal.[28]

While the initiative started with popular music festivals, its rapid growth has also attracted classical music institutions to take its pledge and join in its lobbying efforts. According to its website, the initiative now claims thirty-seven concert halls, eight conservatoires and thirty orchestras and ensembles as signatories, including major institutions like the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony, and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.[29]

Examining Keychange's manifesto, it is a clear example of a corrective, reformist approach to classical music. In addition to its central focus on a 50:50 gender balance within concert programmes, it recommends reforms that do not call into question the underlying legitimacy of the classical music system, suggesting, for instance, changes to the testing process: 'anonymise recruitment processes e.g. blind auditions in the classical sector, removal of gender/name information on job applications'.[30]

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[28] PRS Foundation, *Keychange Manifestio: Recommendations for a Gender Balanced Music Industry* (London: PRS Foundation, n.d.), p. 6, https://www.keychange.eu/s/1052-keychange-A5-v15-web.pdf

[29] Keychange, *Music Organizations*, https://www.keychange.eu/directory/music-organisations

[30] PRS Foundation, p. 6.

The reformist approach taken by Keychange is a form of popular feminism as defined by Banet-Weiser, especially when its size in the music sector is considered. Barnet-Weiser identifies three characteristics of popular feminism, defining it 'as media visibility and accessibility, as popularity, and as a struggle for meaning'.[31] Keychange is a coalition of 500 signatories in the music sector, run by the UK's PRS Foundation and supported by an EU Creative Europe grant, all representing a high degree of media visibility due to the institutions' influential role in the media industry, as well as popular support among a large group of people. Finally, in its core goal of gender equality, as well as its programmes empowering minority musicians, Keychange aligns with the struggle for visibility as a priority of this definition of popular feminism.[32]

Banet-Weiser argues that the problem with reformist critiques such as this one is that this form of empowerment is often based on a bare politics of visibility that does not challenge deeper inequities, nor offer a critique of the neoliberal thinking that produced the problems in the first place, contrary to classical liberal feminism.[33] The reformist critique addresses second-order effects and makes them instead into its primary concern. As she writes,

> Political categories such as race and gender have transformed their very logics from the inside out, so that the visibility of these categories is what matters, rather than the structural ground on and through which they are constructed.[34]

Looking at classical music and the example of participation in Keychange through the lens of this critique, we can see that further work to understand the nature of the problem and to educate people about it, or to adapt tests and working conditions for minority artists, are all measures that can take place without fundamentally addressing classical music's normative categories for success, or its fixation on high quality. The focus is instead on lowering barriers to entry to an existing labour market and thus increasing competition (and by extension raising the level of quality), or otherwise, as Banet-Weiser suggests, making categories such as race or gender into easily marketable visibilities for advertising departments. This illustrates how such a corrective critique is able both to demand reform, but still maintain support for the underlying system.

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[31] Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Mysogyny* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), p. 6.

[32] Ibid., p. 1.

[33] Banet-Weiser, pp. 11-12.

[34] Ibid., p. 23.

Due to the failure of this approach to address the fundamental causes of classical music's diversity problem, it should not be seen as an adequate response to the statistics that opened this chapter. As Charton has argued in relation to contemporary classical music (CCM), the work that must be done is rather to 'reflect on what is an unmarked default and what is a marked other in [CCM's] inherited infrastructures and institutions'.[35] In the best case, this more fundamental category work can avoid turning diversity initiatives into simple exercises in shifting visibilities that do not question underlying power structures. Instead, such reflection on defaults can bring awareness to the historical and situated reasons for assumptions, and open the door to these being changed.

Despite these shortcomings, it is crucially important to acknowledge the importance of the work of Keychange, and of similar organisations engaged in awareness-raising and change. Activist work such as theirs, as well as that of creating statistics to quantify the dimensions of the problem, brings awareness and change to the lives of many who have been excluded from various forms of participation in classical music. Such activities also apply pressure and shift conversations happening among classical music's decision-makers. It would therefore be naïve to argue for some kind of idealised radical alternative to the real-world reformist example of Keychange.

Instead, I argue that diversity statistics and pledge initiatives are important tools that can form part of a radical critique of classical music provided they are properly framed. Rather than thinking about them as small correctives to restore the perfection of an otherwise unproblematic system, they must be understood as part of *ongoing* initiatives to situate classical music in relation to the social processes that maintain and underpin it, and that also underpin its musical neighbours entertaining audiences in other genres. Instead of continuing to chase a problematic notion of purity through superficial reforms, this reframes the debate on tracing the myriad ways that classical music has historically asserted its position as a universal music, erased the labour involved in producing and maintaining it, as well as demeaned the other musics of the world with which it co-exists, while continuing to extract ideas and inspiration from them.

Confounding Categories

[35] Anke Charton, 'Diversity and New Music: Interdependencies and Intersections,' *OnCurating*, 47 (2020), pp. 5-15 (p. 11).

To illustrate how statistical work can be part of a process of radical change, I will briefly discuss a data-harvesting workshop I organised as part of the activist group Gender Relations in New Music (GRiNM) in 2018 at the MaerzMusik festival in Berlin. The goal of the workshop was to produce data on the number of female and non-cis-male composers programmed at the MaerzMusik festival, the results of which have been included as part of the opening of this chapter.

The collective produced these statistics through crowdsourcing, inviting festival attendees to sit together with their laptops and go through old festival programmes together, entering data on a shared Google Sheet. The workshop thus produced a numerical percentage that was used to express inequality within a larger societal context focused on the language of statistics as 'the default code for being a serious person.'[36]

But in addition to making the very blatant inequalities in this field visible and sayable, providing quantifiable evidence of the problem in order for it to be taken seriously (which was not the case in 2018), there was great significance in *doing* these statistics collectively as an embodied and group practice. The data-harvesting activities gave a straightforward, informal, monotonously boring goal that led to people chatting, getting to know each other, and expressing their frustration as they entered row after row of male names over the years of the festival's existence.

Discussions speculating about root causes gave way to inevitable questions of categorisation such as assuming gender based on names, how to deal with composer/performers, collective compositions, or other non-standard or murky categories. These in turn led to equally productive discussions about the challenges of categorisation, intersectionality, and the nuance and complexity associated with achieving equal representation under real-world conditions. In many cases we were able to rely on the community's collective pool of knowledge about festival artists' self-identification to fill in (in terms of both gender identity and the spectrum between composing and performing). In others, we used the close collaborative situation to decide together on rules of thumb to apply consistently across the dataset.

The data unsurprisingly showed the severe lack of women and non-binary people in festival programmes in earlier years, but also that as the MaerzMusik festival (in part I believe thanks to earlier actions by GRiNM) made its programming more diverse and included different kinds of people and concert formats, the categories and tables we began with (female/non-binary/male composer) became less

[36] Ben Davis, 'How We Ended Up in the Era of "Quantitative Aesthetics," Where Data Points Dictate Taste', *Artnet News*, 30 March 2023, https://news.artnet.com/opinion/quantitative-aesthetics-2276351

relevant, or otherwise no longer adequately reflected how the festival was programming music.

With this example in mind, the distinction between a reformist and radical critique could be connected to how we approach statistics about classical music's diversity problem. In a reformist approach, statistics are supposed to gradually change until they reflect the intended target that has been set out, as in the management adage 'what gets measured gets done', where deeper inequalities are allowed to go unmarked. However, in a radical approach, statistics could become the site for examining what is measured (and what is not), but also as the beginning of a collective conversation on how, together, we can confound existing categories, create new ones, and redefine the paradigms within which we operate.

Conclusion

Creating statistics about classical music's omissions will not be an immediate fix for its structural problems, as these are deeply rooted in beliefs about high musical quality and excellence. Statistics can however spark debates about classical music's exclusions, as well as demonstrate that the numerous in- and ex-clusions of the musical genre are the result of continually reaffirmed collective choices, not due to external, objective or material reasons that can be fixed through superficial reforms. But because of their ability to make visible the results of complex social patterns, statistics can be used as the beginning of a radical critique. Such a critique might begin with this making visible through numbers and charts, but must be carried out through collective dialogue and debate in order to address the underlying structures of inequality, rather than through a superficial politics of visibility that sidesteps engagement with underlying structural issues. What any such investigation of classical music would reveal is the thick web of entanglements with infrastructures that sustain and reproduce it. These connections are to individual people, but also to scores, instruments, conservatoires, events, concert halls, recordings, streaming music and to all the other ways in which 'the music itself' circulates.

Divestment from classical music's universalism is not a speech act or a pledge, it is a change in perception, one that involves no longer subordinating the role of contexts and infrastructures in producing music that claims to transcend them. Diving into interconnections, telling their stories, even simply investigating the ways in which classical music interacts (in the past, present, and future) with history, politics, or current affairs is how the deep inequities classical music has produced can be challenged. One such investigation could be into the globalised composition and

distribution of art music since the twentieth century, or into art music in Africa, as mentioned in the introduction.[37] Another could be through critical explorations of classical music's role in colonisation, presenting artists who participated in the resistance to such processes but who have since fallen into obscurity, such as Ladislao Bonus' composition of the first Tagalog opera, intertwined with Filipino nation-building, or explorations of the specificities of Iberian (musical) colonialism and their appropriations by South American composers over the centuries.[38]

Doing so will reveal the many minorities that work in classical music today, and who have been central to the field historically, but whose stories are ignored or forgotten, as well as open up rich new possibilities for classical music programming and education. Such a shift would fundamentally transform many of the categories and statistics that opened this chapter, but would become the occasion for new statistics, new problems that must urgently be addressed, that must again be reconsidered by the entire community, and which will in turn lead to its transformation.

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