



## Transforming Nineteenth-Century Historically Informed Practice (Transforming C19 HIP)

'Transforming Nineteenth-Century Historically Informed Performance' (HIP) is a five-year research project hosted by the University of Oxford Faculty of Music and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It brings together leading performers and academics to investigate the differences between modern and contemporary performance styles, and to seek to change the way professional performance of nineteenth-century compositions is approached, particularly by 'period' instrument orchestras.

For decades 'period' orchestras have been producing performances and recordings of nineteenth-century repertoire that arguably do not demonstrate the characteristics of nineteenth-century style in a meaningful way: many aspects of that style do not sit comfortably with the expectations of modern-day performers and audiences, conservatoire training and methods of performance preparation. The aim of this project is to engage performers and audiences in a reinvigoration of the ways in which nineteenth-century music is performed.

*Transforming C19 HIP* has two partner organisations: the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE), a leading ensemble in nineteenth-century 'period' performance; and the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), a prestigious conservatoire. This practice-led project brings together a variety of approaches including historical research into nineteenth-century pre-performance practices, empirical investigation of rehearsal methods, performance studies, the study of performance creativity, and the dynamics of leadership and collaboration.

HIP research is at an exciting crossroads. Existing scholarship has struggled to make an impact on the professional sphere, remaining largely focused on the analysis of treatises, and the performance styles of a handful of famous soloists. A number of scholars are now starting to develop new approaches to HIP research, and this project, with its unique interdisciplinary approach and innovative research methodology, will be at the forefront of a new wave of historical performance research.

The research and its dissemination will be targeted at professional and student performers, industry professionals and audiences, as well as academics, creating a real opportunity to effect change and open minds to radical new interpretations of nineteenth-century repertoire.

**For more information about this project, contact [c19hip@music.ox.ac.uk](mailto:c19hip@music.ox.ac.uk)**

## Rationale

Currently, performances of nineteenth-century repertoire by HIP ensembles reflect little of what is known about historical style. This has for many years frustrated historical performance scholars, and is increasingly making it difficult for period performers to establish a distinct identity in a marketplace where they are in competition with 'modern' orchestras, often playing the same repertoire with the same conductors and soloists in a similar style.

A number of factors currently impede the impact of scholarship on the HIP industry: 1) not enough research has been practice-led, leading to outputs which are not easily accessible, relevant, or serviceable to performers; 2) HIP groups are cautious about changing an aesthetic that has been popular with audiences and is now the expected norm. Little has been done to facilitate aesthetic experimentation amongst HIP professionals in a non-commercial environment, and there have been no significant attempts to engage audiences in knowledge exchange about nineteenth-century performance style; 3) existing research has been overwhelmingly performance centred (as the terms 'performance practice' and 'performance studies' suggest), despite the fact that performance is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the process that leads from initial preparation through rehearsal to public presentation. Transformation of performance is impossible without first transforming 'pre-performance' - the rich and complex set of practices that precede performance. The development of a performance consists of much more than rehearsal, and we use the term 'pre-performance' to recognise that there are many other factors, processes and interactions involved that take place beyond the practice room and away from the instrument (e.g. selection of performance material, personal practise and preparation); 4) some historically evidenced characteristics of nineteenth-century style are fundamentally at odds with modern day performance training and methods of performance preparation:

- Unified/synchronized ensemble was not a priority for nineteenth-century performers, and being 'untogether' was deliberately used as an expressive device (as was hand asynchrony in keyboard performance). This kind of expressive approach is not likely to be achieved using exclusively modern rehearsal practices even if ensembles accept non-alignment as an artistic objective.
- Rehearsing without a full score or bar numbers (as performers before the mid-C19th would have done of necessity) significantly affects inter-player dynamics and leads to a different awareness of the music's structural and expressive profile
- The use of metronomes, and (over) familiarity with modern recordings contributes to an aesthetic in which rhythmic precision is inappropriately overvalued, contributing to a lack of tempo fluctuation and expressive interpretation of rhythmic notation in professional HIP.

*Transforming C19th HIP* will address each of these factors with a combination of scholarly research; empirical investigation; and practical enquiry and experimentation, combining historical performance and performance studies scholarship for the first time in a significant long-term research project. Centred on rigorous academic research, this integrated approach offers the possibility of far greater impact and influence than that of a traditional musicological approach alone. The research team brings together experience and knowledge of nineteenth-century performance practice, professional performance, psychology of performance, empirical musicology, performance studies, the study of creativity in performance, and HIP artistic direction.

## Objectives

1: To effect a step change in the historically informed performance (HIP) of nineteenth-century repertoire by addressing the disparity between the practices of HIP ensembles and their artistic objectives, and by transforming the pre-performance practices (rehearsal, preparation, planning, working with scores and parts) of HIP practitioners at conservatoire and professional level. We will explore, through practice-led research (including experimental workshops with partner organisations), the most effective approaches to enhancing existing pre-performance methods and developing new ones. This project takes a holistic approach to performance development and presentation, demonstrating that meaningful transformation of performance can be achieved via a re-evaluation of pre-performance.

2: To shed new light on the development of orchestral and chamber performance and pre-performance in the nineteenth century, critically contextualising current HIP practices, and informing the development of innovative, yet historically aware, approaches to performing nineteenth-century repertoire. We will use historical evidence of nineteenth-century performance and pre-performance practice as a reference point that serves to 'anchor' the project. The objective is not to promote re-creationist or positivistic attitudes, but to inform the development of new practices that are compatible with twenty-first century circumstances, and which enable more radical realisations of C19th style than is currently the case.

3: To undertake an empirical study of current pre-performance practices by HIP professionals and students in nineteenth-century orchestral and chamber repertoire, and to design and conduct studies with innovative performance development methods intended to engender cultural changes in professional HIP. The aim is to bring together performance studies and historical performance in a ground-breaking collaborative research project that will bring new empirically-based understanding of pre-performance practices.

4: To identify and assess developments in HIP practices from the 1980s to the present. During this 30+ year period the evolution of HIP practices has been dramatic. These changes tend to be viewed positively by performers, audiences and the media, but while many developments (such as improved technical standards) have contributed to HIP's commercial success, some (e.g. reliance on mainstream, contemporary rehearsal methods) have led to an ossification of pre-performance practices that were formerly more flexible. Similarly, the development of specialist conservatoire training has been significant in the development of HIP practices during this period, but has arguably contributed to the process of standardization. Greater understanding of the evolution of professional practices, and of the relationship between conservatoire provision and professional HIP will enable the project team to explore innovative approaches with partner organisations at both professional and conservatoire level intended to rejuvenate current practices.

5: To transform audience expectations of nineteenth-century period instrument performance. The project will engage in a sustained dialogue with HIP audiences, with a progressive series of engagement activities aimed at informing audiences about nineteenth-century performance and pre-performance practices, and facilitating the sharing of audience attitudes, expectations and experiences. Since audience expectations are identified by both scholars and HIP organisations as a barrier to the adoption of more diverse nineteenth-century stylistic characteristics, this aspect of the project has significance beyond public dissemination and impact, and is integral to the project's transformational aim.

## Intended Outputs

### **Academic:**

- a co-edited book
- five peer-reviewed journal articles
- a three-day international conference in Oxford

### **Industry management and HE professionals:**

- a one-day symposium for HIP management/promoters/programmers, conservatoire educators and creative industries scholars to discuss the 'industry' perspective, including audiences, marketing, repertoire, the relationship between education and pre-performance/performance

### **Performers and performer scholars:**

- a series of chamber music and orchestral workshops held with OAE. These will examine pre-performance practices and facilitate experimentation with characteristics of historically evidenced nineteenth-century style in a non-commercial environment
- two chamber concerts in Oxford will facilitate the development of performances reflecting historically informed nineteenth-century style from the earliest pre-performance stages (e.g. programming, arranging rehearsals etc.) to public performance and will provide data for the research team as well as engagement with professional performers and audience knowledge exchange
- an International performance symposium which will be cost free to professional performers and conservatoire students
- a series of termly workshops held at the RAM throughout the project to explore nineteenth-century performance and pre-performance practices

### **Audience/public engagement:**

- a YouTube channel will present interviews, and performance videos highlighting the project aims, disseminating research, and inviting comments and interaction with audiences. A regular ongoing social media profile will be established and maintained to stimulate audience engagement
- podcasts
- video screenings, public lectures, pre-concert talks in London and Oxford, post-concert interactive events and chamber performances will all contribute to audience development and engagement

## Research Team

### **Claire Holden (Principal Investigator)**

Claire Holden joined the University of Oxford Music Faculty as an AHRC Research Fellow in the Creative and Performing Arts in October 2014 and was awarded an Albi Rosenthal Visiting Fellowship at the Bodleian Libraries 2015-16, and an Association of Commonwealth Universities Early Careers Grant. Prior to joining the Faculty at Oxford, Claire was a Research Fellow at Cardiff University where she also lectured on HIP.

Claire is a professional period instrument violinist and has been a member of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) since 2000, performing and recording a vast range of Baroque, Classical and Romantic repertoire. Claire has taught Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and has given lectures, workshops and masterclasses and coaching projects in many UK universities and conservatoires, as well as at the Koninklijk Conservatorium, Den Haag, Universität der Künste Berlin, and L'Université Paris-Sorbonne. She has presented pre-concert talks at the Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, and on the radio for the BBC Proms; and is in demand to provide advice and coaching to soloists, orchestral leaders and professional ensembles on nineteenth-century string playing.

### **Eric Clarke (Co-Investigator)**

Eric Clarke held posts at City University (1981-93), and Sheffield University, where he was James Rossiter Hoyle Professor of Music, before being appointed as Heather Professor of Music at the University of Oxford in 2007. He was an Associate Director of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) from 2004-2009, and was an Associate Director (2009-2014) of the AHRC Phase II Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (CMPCP). He has published on topics including ecological approaches to music perception, musical meaning, music and empathy, the analysis of pop music, expression in performance, and distributed and collaborative creativity in music. His publications include *Empirical Musicology* (2004), *Ways of Listening* (2005), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (2009), *Music and Mind in Everyday Life* (2010), *Music and Consciousness* (2011), and *Distributed Creativity* (forthcoming). He was elected to membership of the Academia Europaea in 2009 and was made a Fellow of the British Academy in 2010.

The Research Team will be completed by two post-doctoral Research Assistants still to be appointed.

## Advisory Board

The Research Team are grateful for the expertise and support of the following members of the *Transforming C19th HIP* Advisory Board: Prof Christina Bashford (Illinois), Prof Mary Hunter (Bowdoin), Sir Nicholas Kenyon (Barbican Centre), Prof Sir Curtis Price (Oxford), Prof John Rink (Cambridge), Prof Robin Stowell (Emeritus, Cardiff), Prof Laura Tunbridge (Oxford), David Watkin (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).



# FACULTY OF MUSIC

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[www.music.ox.ac.uk](http://www.music.ox.ac.uk)



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