

Statement on the Preservation of Technical Living Heritage || Keeping the Past Playable

Early and classical western art music has an Outstanding Universal Value and, though shared worldwide, it is an inseparable part of the European identity. Keyboard stringed and wind instruments are an *indispensable element* of this living musical heritage and yet they risk becoming inanimate museum objects. The preservation of historic instruments is necessary not only for research purposes, but also for the living musical heritage continued by performers and creative makers today and in the future.

The mechanics of semimobile early keyboard instruments are intricate. Those technicians who have mastered these complexities and who understand the functionality of creating the sound so loved by musicians of historically informed practice, are indispensable for keeping these instruments playable.

The research, historically correct restoration, regular revision and tuning, as well the building of exact copies, are crucial for the preservation of the living heritage of music.

The skills and experience of specialised technicians is as important as the professional education of musicians for the future of our sound heritage. It will require an effort by both musical and historical institutions to provide a stable foundation on which this craft can be carried over to future generations.

Suggested solutions

1. A central site to share best practice || Research, record and publish on a public, central European website: examples of best practices in scientific research, tuning, revision, restoration and making (copied) parts or complete copies. While the museum standard for conservation and restoration serves as a starting point, the preservation of the living intangible musical heritage is taken into account.

2. European standards guidelines for instrument maintenance || Develop European guidelines for maintenance, tuning, overhaul, restoration and research of specific instrument groups. In doing so, a balance must be sought between the preservation of the material and the living intangible musical heritage. Promote public awareness of these guidelines so that private owners become aware of the usefulness of applying them for the preservation of their musical heritage.

3. European official quality label || Develop a procedure for awarding a European quality label for qualified technicians and conservators for scientific research, tuning, overhaul and restoration, based on the aforementioned guidelines. Publish the list of qualified technicians and restorers in a publicly accessible European website and ensure targeted public awareness of it.

4. European vocational training scheme || Develop a European vocational training for piano technicians and specialized conservators, in which the acquisition of knowledge and experience at a European network of qualified companies and knowledge institutions occupies a central place. Encourage this development through subsidies for assignments and apprenticeships.

5. European database for research || Develop a European database in which researchers, technicians and restorers can record their findings and restorations per instrument. This database can be linked to other databases, such as MIMO.

6. European standards guidelines for collection maintenance || Develop European guidelines for museum preservation and collections of historical musical instruments. Provide professional training courses with the opportunity to use objects from the collection instead of their acquisition. Recognise the side of intangible cultural heritage that clings to these instruments.

7. Recognition and Funding || Provide national recognition and legal protection of the tangible and associated intangible musical heritage, as well as sufficient funds to make this possible.

8. Collaboration between disciplines || Break through the walls between disciplines so that heritage institutions, such as museums, collaborate with institutions in the field of music. Engage a wide audience for the preservation of living musical heritage. For example, the Faro Convention may provide guidelines for this.

A new generation of young professional musicians has shown a growing interest in the individual sound and special musical technique associated with historical instruments, both original and in copy. For this interest to be grown, stimulated and fulfilled, the instruments must of course be playable! Influential organizations such as, but not limited to, the Beethovenhaus Bonn, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Mozarteum University Salzburg and Chopin Institute in Warsaw are committed to research and performance on historical instruments. These remain playable, as original and in copy.

In conclusion:

Recognition of the craft is key. Protection, research and retention of technical knowledge of the playable instrument are a requirement for this. It is vital to keep these instruments playing, not only for the musicians, but also for our pan-European heritage, and to keep the past playable.