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An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music

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Propositions

1. Improvisation should not be understood as an isolated activity, separate from classical music as a practice, but as an integral aspect of music-making.
2. The fact that it has become a commonplace to compare music with language, does not imply that this parallel is meaningless.
3. There are good reasons to assume that in the nineteenth century, music-making was experienced as a rhetorical act.
4. Current improvisation courses for music students (other than organists) often put an emphasis on the collective aspect of improvising. This idea of improvisation stems from the world of (free) jazz, but fails to reflect the way *Fantasieren* was described in the nineteenth century and before.
5. Church liturgy shares essential elements with theatre performance.
6. Teaching music is a form of music-making. Therefore, the modern conservatory is not to be regarded as merely an educational institution, but rather as a reservation where music 'lives'.
7. The idea that music is a form of play is hard to reconcile with the pressure (and even stage fright) that many professional musicians experience on a daily basis.
8. Music theory as it has developed since the nineteenth century can be seen as Artistic Research *avant la lettre*.
9. In the programmes of large-scale public concerts, as they emerged in the nineteenth century, the aspect of entertainment was much more important than is often recognised today.
10. The fact that the development of musical literacy has played an almost negligible role in Dutch primary and secondary schools for decades, forms an even greater threat for music life in the Netherlands than the current pressure on art subsidies.
11. The use of the term 'culture' where 'art' is meant tends to blur both concepts.
12. 'Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point' (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* 1670). The belief that art is useful confuses things that matter with those that can be measured.