

(Re)Sounding Archive: Rediscovering Forgotten Music

How does history sound? And what happens when old scores come back to life? The Research Center for Music and Gender (fmg) is bringing hidden musical treasures from its archive back to the stage. With the Klingendes Archiv – the (Re)Sounding Archive – forgotten works find a voice in the present.

Led by Junior Professor Dr. Maria Behrendt, the project is part of the HMTMH initiative “The Well-Tempered University,” which is funded until September 2030 with resources from the program “zukunft.niedersachsen” of the Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture and the Volkswagen Foundation.

From historical source to living sound

At the project’s heart lies the question of what it means to make a historical source audible. To explore it, the (Re)Sounding Archive brings together musicological research, editorial work, and artistic practice. Its starting point is the printed and handwritten sheet music held in the fmg archive, records of musical history that have largely fallen silent. Connecting research with performance, each team of scholars and musicians works together to study a piece, explore its history, and bring it to life with a scholarly essay and a first recording.

Participating teams will be supported through the different phases of their work with guided access to the fmg archive, exchange with other teams, and workshops with invited experts. The recordings, scholarly essays, and networks that grow out of each collaboration lay the groundwork for this music to be performed, studied, and heard for years to come.

(Re)Sounding in research, classrooms, and performance worldwide

So that this work continues to resonate, an online database is being developed in cooperation with the HMTMH Central Library, designed to provide future researchers, teachers, and performers with long-term access to digitized historical sources and scholarly texts, as well as edited scores and audio and video recordings. In addition, selected works will be published by the music publisher Breitkopf & Härtel. The (Re)Sounding Archive will thus give these works new opportunities to find a lasting place in classrooms and concert halls around the world.

Get involved and help (re)write music history

The (Re)Sounding Archive is coordinated by Dr. Meredith Nicoll in close collaboration with the fmg’s library, archive, and research team. A call for contributions is planned for the end of 2026. Scholars and musicians are welcome to apply individually or as a team. Interested? Please contact Dr. Meredith Nicoll.