

Accessibility over Appeal:

Developing Classical Music Audiences through Community

Introduction

Modern orchestras are experiencing a crisis of reduced funding and rising expenses. The unique audience for classical music has declined 13 percent since 2002, and although some organizations have maintained steady ticket sales, fewer audience members are returning (League of American Orchestras 11; Midgette). Rather than buying subscription tickets, people purchase tickets per concert with fewer purchases overall (Rosen 2011b). Broader trends over the preceding 20 years show a decline both in classical music subscription purchases and charitable donations. For an industry that has long depended on subscribers as the core audience, depletion of the subscription audience is troubling (Tommasini). The philanthropic support structure for orchestras, too, is losing stability, particularly for corporate donors (Fleishman 2015a). Performing arts organizations rely heavily on charitable donation in order to pay their workers a living wage, regardless of other necessary expenses, but donors have begun to question their continued funding of orchestras, if they have not stopped altogether (Botstein, Kennicott). According to the League of American Orchestras, the average orchestra deficit more than tripled over a recent five-year period, while the number of orchestras reporting deficits had reached two-thirds (Rosen 2011b). When the subscription rate decreases, costs to orchestras go up as they are forced to market concerts individually. This is most problematic when attempts to hold more concerts in the interest of reaching wider audiences have had the adverse effect of increasing costs without attracting and retaining more audience members (Kennicott).

A common response to this crisis is for orchestras to focus on appealing to broader audiences, either by changing concert formatting or by altering the type of music they perform. The League, which consists of more than 800 member organizations across the country, highlights the use of promotion efforts such as happy hours and networking events as ways to draw in

younger audiences. Organizations rebrand the concert experience in attempts to make it more palatable to mainstream concertgoers without necessarily trying to understand their audiences better first. They move into new venues, invite audiences to dress down, and program more modern pieces, all as ways to seem more familiar (Sigurjonsson 267). I argue that the downside of these efforts, however, is that changing the format of a concert or presenting a different set of repertoire solely for the purpose of filling seats can undermine the value an organization places on itself to the public. Although they are attempting to bring in more people with the attitude that these people will surely enjoy themselves once they attend, appealing to audiences with the part of a concert that has been changed makes it seem that it is that aspect which audiences should desire or that makes the performance worth attending, rather than the experience as a whole.

Further, the research guiding these changes in format approaches the issue with a preformed notion of what the classical audience is or should be. Often, researchers focus on demographical information about audiences, which, in some cases, leads to generalizations about concertgoers without considering their more individual needs for engagement. If an organization approaches potential audiences under the assumption that there is only one way they can experience music, it may further alienate those who need the concert experience to play a different role for them. Orchestras often try to be one thing for all people, not many things for many different people. A preformed image of audience does not take into account the range of roles which audience members might need the arts to fill, be it education or enrichment or mere distraction. The entire concert experience should function together as something that gives the audience a place to engage and explore how a concert may bring out a different side of them, but in order to do so, the emphasis must be on how the audience members can feel a part of the experience, not just on getting them to come.

The academic literature responding to this crisis largely researches audience members and their demographics. This approach both tries to understand audiences and what will bring individuals back, but it also comes from the perspective that it takes a certain type of audience to appreciate a classical performance. Rather than examining how the organization invites the audience to experience the concert and so better adjust their approach, studies look for what about people, not about the organization, causes them to feel that way. Regardless of the concert's format, offering only one way to experience it may result in neglecting other potential audiences, who may wish to participate in a different way or in a different environment. For example, a traditional classical concert—which we will take to mean one in which a person, dressed in formal attire, sits still and quietly out of respect for the music and fellow audience members—creates an environment of sacredness which may intimidate some audiences who would otherwise enjoy the performance (Kennicott). Likewise, updating the concert format for the sake of selling tickets does not take into account those who need a different form of contact with the music itself, not just the listening experience. It is for this reason that the concert should be considered holistically, to give the audience the chance to experience the performance and its environment together. Authors analyze their subjects in a way that tries to find why groups of people might not enjoy concerts in the current format, not whether changes to the overall experience could help them to feel connected to performances in the future. Existing studies explore the audience's level of exposure to classical music, their relationship to classical concerts, factors affecting musical preference, and the benefits audiences believe result from concert attendance. When assessing why only a small percentage of the population attends classical concerts, most studies conclude that there is a perceived barrier between the majority of people and the format of traditional concerts, which is often constituted by “the uneasiness which people feel who are not familiar with the situation and hence do not know their role” (de Jager 298, Richardson 90).

If people find performances to be inaccessible, one approach for organizations is to repackage their standard repertoire with new venues to become more similar to what audiences are used to or to place more emphasis on programming more modern pieces in hopes that more up-to-date concerts will be more appealing for a current audience (Midgette, Sigurjonsson 266). The problem with this is not that it deviates from the traditional concert, but that it is often done with the end goal of filling the house at a performance and that such an attitude misses the point that, as Jesse Rosen suggests, “Maybe the concert is not what it’s ultimately about” (Rosen 2011b). This is not to suggest that the concert is not a priority at all, as some of Rosen’s critics interpret, but that classical music performances can offer so much more than just a listening experience (Kennicott). They provide a way for people to connect with their culture or another one, to engage with history, or one’s spirituality (Brown & Novak 16). In these ways, classical music not only gives individuals a way to engage with the music, but also with their community. Performing arts organizations may be reliant on ticket sales for revenue, but they are also “in the business of transforming individuals and communities through arts experiences” (Brown & Novak 5).

Essentially, organizations believe the cause of decreased participation to be that the audience is not equipped to enjoy concerts as they are, so arts managers try to change their approach with the goal of bringing in more audiences and, seemingly, the belief that the experience they offer will be enough for them to return. On the one hand, organizations change the music, which ultimately has little effect but to stir up resentment (Tommasini). On the other, they alter the format so that the audience will come and experience the music as it is, but this does not take into account that the music itself is only one aspect of a concert, and this emphasis on selling the music while trying to make it seem more modern sends the message that there is only one way to enjoy concerts: by focusing solely on the music. It is not a question of appeal, but of accessibility to the audience and of allowing the concert to play for them whatever role it might. Updated repertoire

may not be what people want to hear; an audience that does not engage does not automatically want newer music. And maybe they do not need a more familiar atmosphere, maybe they just do not know where they fit into the current one (de Jager 298). An organization cannot make these generalizations about an audience based on empirical information about them simply because research says that certain demographics are less capable of understanding concerts. Instead, I argue that the audience is fully equipped to engage, just perhaps in a different way than classical organizations have in mind. This framework of expectations for audiences is set up and illustrated by academic literature on the subject.

In the following analyses, I will examine the attitudes of researchers as they approach audience development and then use the framework set up in the academic literature to study the actions of the top three American orchestras as listed in Gramophone's 2008 ranking of the top 20 orchestras in the world. Specifically, I will attempt to distinguish between measures that organizations take simply to increase attendance versus those that serve to develop the surrounding community. By studying what questions the authors ask about audiences, we may gain a degree of understanding about what ways of thinking about audience development and concert format are common among arts managers. The results of these studies, in this case, are not as relevant as the ways authors set themselves up to find certain results. Once the framework common across this academic literature is clear, I will compare it to how some of the most successful classical music organizations in the world operate to see if the distinction between the goals of reaching broader audiences for the sake of increasing ticket sales or to become something significant to the audience is a viable way of determining overall success.

Review and Analysis of Academic Literature

In the academic literature surrounding this topic, most scholars take a similar approach to trying to understand audiences. They tend to come from the perspective that the performing arts are somehow good for the audience, but most focus only on discussing what demographical information about the audience prevents them from perceiving the benefits of classical music or what benefits they do feel after experiencing a live performance and not what about the concert environment causes these feelings (Alpert; Brown & Novak; Foreman-Wernet; Troilo, Cito, & Soscia). Instead of seeking to understand the audience better, some concentrate on methods to appeal to them, simply trying to sell tickets and fill seats, without thought to how changes to the concert experience can affect the audience and make the performance more significant to them than a single concert (Crawford; Pompe; Vinay Kumar). These latter studies are done with an idea already in place of what a certain type of potential audience member must want, whether the type is based on age, race, or income, and so the results are influenced by the very questions asked due to preexisting ideas about how those types experience. I will here consider which of these categories the following authors fall into and what assumptions they seem to bring into their research.

While the primary distinction that guides research about understanding audience is age, socioeconomic information about audience members is a close second. Within studies of classical audiences exists an insistence on the significance of primarily educated middle- and upper-middle-class audiences, as in the work of Crawford and de Jager. Arts managers often see college students as a potential target audience because they will eventually constitute the over 45 years of age and educated portion of society that makes up the bulk of the classical music audience (Crawford et al 1073, League of American Orchestras 12). De Jager's study, "Listening to the Audience" organizes data almost entirely by age, level of education, and economic background, although his findings

regarding the audience's preference for composers are similar overall (296). These authors take empirical information about audiences—that they are primarily comprised of certain demographics—and, through their focus on this narrow view of audiences, convey an assumption that this information says something greater than itself, that it suggests the only way audiences can exist. For example, a continued focus on the preferences of educated audiences suggests that one must be educated in order to enjoy classical music. The assumption is that the existing demographic information about audiences is more important than other audiences that *could* be reached. It shows a belief that these are the ones who can understand classical music, but does not question the perception that it is something that must be adequately understood in order to be significant to an audience.

Within de Jager's exploration of how varying audiences feel about classical concerts, he also focuses heavily on how programming affects attendance and what repertoire brings in the largest audience. Jeffrey Pompe, professor of business and economics at Francis Marion University, shares this emphasis on programming's effect on audience. He compares standard repertoire to more modern selections, finding that audiences diminish in size when programs consist of newer pieces (Pompe 7; Tamburri & Munn 17). Meanwhile, de Jager compares audience preferences for composers based on level of education. He, too, finds that traditional repertoire is more effective at building audiences, concluding with the thought that people cannot enjoy art unless "they have been conditioned for it, that is, have acquired a musical frame of reference which enables them to appreciate fine music," (de Jager 299). While this information is helpful for the purposes of appealing to audiences, other studies suggest that programming alone is not enough to maintain attendance and that true connection is formed through overall experience and engagement within the concert (Sigurjonsson 5; Troilo et al 636). In order for a person to have a meaningful connection with an organization, the individual must perceive some intrinsic benefit

resulting from the performance and involvement with it. In other words, perhaps more preferred repertoire creates more positive emotions in relation to the concert, but the concert must also provoke a deeper response in order for audiences to return (Troilo et al 636, 642).

Judith Alpert's study examines how outside approval affects children's musical preferences and focuses on preferred music, but begins to explore causes for preference. The influencing factors highlighted in this study were radio DJs, music teachers, and peers. This study was not done for audience development purposes, but does begin to set up a framework for understanding young people's musical preference according to age and outside approval. This examination of the attitudes of children versus the feelings of older generations toward classical music suggests that younger age groups may be more dependent on outside approval for the types of music in which they engage. When Alpert opens by saying that "outside influences may surpass those of music teachers for certain types of students," she begins to create a way of understanding students that is dependent on their youth, rather than any other traits; it is not a way that adults can be studied, and so sets them apart as necessarily developing different preferences that are not based on how music can cause a personal response (Alpert 173). Despite much of classical repertoire originating far before the time of any possible member of the audience, this type of research as to the distinct feelings of youth toward classical music says that the way young people must experience music is based on outside authorities, not on any satisfaction they may derive from it (175). Further, this approach aids in the formation of a mindset that looks to the demographical information about audience members to explain why they may not participate in the arts, rather than the effects of the overall experience itself (174).

Young people are also set apart in discussions of one of the primary aspects of a performance that researchers consider to be a factor in diminishing audiences—engagement within the concert. Scholars believe this aspect is particularly relevant for young people, who, they say, are

used to instant gratification, short segments, and multitasking, so the traditional concert format in which one sits still and applauds only at specific moments causes them to feel discomfort and lack of connection (Foreman-Wernet 17; Richardson 88; Sigurjonsson 271). For example, Richardson recounts how students feel disconnected from the performing arts. His objective in this study was to discover how youth, with their constant immersion in technology and instant information, experience a live performance (Richardson 88). This framing of the relationship youth have to performing arts limits their experience to the one which they have with technology. When this is the case, it leads to the idea that students then cannot enjoy the performance without the aid of technology (90). He concludes that in order to help students enjoy the performance, they need to be further educated about its history, that this is what it takes for youth to engage (91). Once again, this idea focuses on the audience's youth and lack of knowledge without attempting to discover how they could engage with the performance as they are. For some, further knowledge about the subject may help them gain something from the experience, but this approach largely expects students to change what they think, experiencing the performance "on its own terms," without introducing them to a different perspective (91). It expects the audience to be a certain way so that they can enjoy a certain type of performance. Although the author offers measures for teaching students how to appreciate performances, he does not consider that perhaps the arts could mean something to these students other than what their significance has been for traditional audiences.

The idea that audiences—particularly younger ones—require a higher level of engagement with the performance structures a common mindset of researchers. Drawing on the concept that participation goes beyond attendance, Lois Foreman-Wernet and Brenda Dervin, in a case study of four young adults' relationship to the arts and how art has shaped their lives throughout youth, discover that each one finds different meaning in the arts (2). They explore the range of ways people engage with the arts, identifying trends from an impact on the audience's social judgment to

its sense of self-awareness (4-5). Although the main idea here is not the specific ways the authors categorize their results, the factor that distinguishes this study is that it deliberately does not focus on demographics, but that the authors approach their research with the belief that the relationship people have to the arts varies by individual, not just age or race (3). Ultimately, it is not that youth or anyone else needs a higher level of engagement, just a different kind from what some organizations expect.

Other studies, like Dr. C. M. Vinay Kumar's "Art of Theatre on New Media Platform & Audience Viewing Experience," or "Is there an app for that?" from Garry Crawford and his coauthors, also examine the changing relationship audiences have with performing arts. Vinay Kumar suggests that new forms of media, which give any person the capacity to be an artist and distribute their work, could provide a way to involve a wider audience for the performing arts (Vinay Kumar 16). He argues that traditional concert format enforces a distinction between audience and performer, but that youth need to see performers as accessible through other media and not as separate from themselves (8). By studying what potential audiences are most accustomed to, these studies are based on the assumption that performances would somehow be more accessible if presented through media outlets. The mindset he presents is that, because technology forms such a large part of what audiences are accustomed to, it is the best way for people to experience the arts (4, 16). This is a limiting view of audiences. Although it is possible that some people may engage more if performing arts incorporated more technology and effects, his assertion is that audiences can only experience according to what exists for them in everyday life. The change Vinay Kumar suggests is not because it could make performances more meaningful to audiences, but because it could be the easiest way to gain viewers (16).

To further explore the possibility of reaching more and younger people through the use of technology, Crawford and his coauthors present a case study of audience reactions to a symphony

orchestra using a mobile phone app to increase ticket sales. Part of the goal the producers of the app had was to provide a higher level of engagement to students who might not otherwise feel connected to a performance (Crawford et al 1073). However, the function of the app was to sell tickets to students and, although it did have several other informational features, was not used for any other way of engaging with the concert (1076). Driving the belief that any method of bringing people into the audience will make them return is the assumption that the existing concert environment gives them a way in which they would want to participate. Efforts at reaching new audiences should invite people to find their own significance in the concert experience and not introduce something to catch attention because it is trendy (1077). Although the app was an attempt to create more interaction with younger audiences, the interaction stopped at the ticket purchase.

The other issue with this demographically-focused approach to audience development is that forming generalizations of audience types can have the effect of increasing the disconnection between that group and the performance. In this case, the app was developed specifically to reach the student-age demographic, assuming that students are most easily reached through digital means (Crawford et al 1076). The app did help provide students with the opportunity to attend concerts, but did not ultimately succeed at creating higher levels of engagement. Students, it turned out, did not even know about the option to share information about the orchestra through the app, a result of presuming that young people are most effectively reached through technology (1078). Despite the attempt to facilitate greater engagement, appealing to audiences according to general ideas about them failed to engage them. The authors of this study conclude that “just because networked publics display particular features, it does not mean that these will be engaged in a way that was desired” (1083). Although this instance of attempting to engage new audiences did not have any great success, it could be a step in the right direction. The issue is that the organization developing

the app had certain expectations of a particular audience and so shaped a way to engage that would work only for an audience meeting those specifications. Despite this, it did succeed in drawing in new audience members; the challenge is to find out how to provide audiences with the experience they are looking for, whether it is a greater level of interactivity or a cheaper way to buy tickets (1083).

The primary issue with the approach most of these authors take is that they expect audiences to experience concerts in particular ways according to their perceived type, made up of age and income bracket. The authors then begin the discussion of how that type of audience enjoys classical music concerts and what benefits they believe the concerts to have. They present the ideal concertgoer and then show how fulfilled that individual feels, how enlightened, how enriched. Whether the audience member is a young adult or a person in the target audience range of 45 to 55, the subjects of these studies are presented as having their lives and ways of thinking reframed by the arts, but only once they approach the experience “properly” (O’Sullivan 217). The way this image is presented holds this feeling as the standard, offering it as an incentive for the “proper” audience. Authors show performing arts audiences as a community with shared traditions, observing unspoken dress codes and performance etiquette together (O’Sullivan 212). In a study measuring impacts of attending live performances, Alan Brown and Jennifer Novak support the belief that being in the audience provides cultural enrichment in the form of exposure to other cultures and one’s own heritage (16). This conclusion follows the portion of the study in which the authors measure participants’ responses according to a series of potential intrinsic impacts, including intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, and social bonding. Such a system of measurement serves as an example of how authors researching audiences contribute to a particular way of understanding the classical concert experience. By measuring according to this

sort of benefit, scholars set up a certain framework for understanding what a concert should be as one that offers this type of experience.

Ultimately, these authors present a narrative in which there is a barrier to becoming a member of the classical music audience which occurs because of feeling isolated from the performance and the concert itself. Audience development research says that people are more likely to become a consistent part of the audience if they feel engaged with the performance, feeling some lasting emotional or cultural impact (Troilo et al 637, 643). This concept of engagement guides the dominant perspective, but scholars focus on what characteristics within individuals prevent them from feeling engaged or how they must engage in a certain way. The narrative becomes one of people who are intimidated by performance conventions, but would otherwise attend concerts (Sigurjonsson 271). Perhaps these individuals would be able to appreciate classical music if they had only had the opportunity to be educated about it, a recurring theme in the literature; authors tend to believe that one of the things standing in the way of broader audiences is a lack of education about the arts (Richardson 90). These authors observe the diminishing audience numbers for classical music and set out to discover just what it is that prevents the audience from experiencing the concert in the same ways those who form the core audience do. Instead of asking what about a concert puts off audiences, researchers ask what about a person leads them to be put off at all. Whether it is age or economic background, the crisis of attendance is presumed to be the audience's fault for not having the proper way of experiencing concerts. Instead of developing ways of marketing concerts to audiences through generalizations about their background or age, a more fitting solution may be to try to find ways that give an audience an alternate frame to understand concerts. The "Jeans and Beer" series, in which performers wore jeans and beer was provided for attendees, could be an example of how to turn

the otherness of a concert experience into something more comfortable to audiences, if feeling out of place is the thing preventing them from enjoying concerts (de Jager 298; Sigurjonsson 267).

When the consistent questions featured in research regarding audiences revolve around education, age, economic status, and time period of compositions, researchers create an image of ideal classical music audience members. They are mature, educated people who can only approve of art once it has been in circulation for a century, and they enjoy traditionally formatted concerts. It is this image that structures much of the thought surrounding classical concerts and the impression people have of those who attend them. When the motivating questions behind research aim to discover what it is that audiences have in common, rather than how they experience differently, it creates the idea that there is a certain way of being a person must have that will allow them to enjoy some music and not others. On the other hand, when scholars do perform research that is based on understanding how audiences respond to the arts differently, it allows for there to be more than one way to experiencing them. The objective should not be to train audiences onto a “correct” way of experiencing concerts, but to provide them with opportunities to discover their own way.

Analysis of How Major Orchestras Reach Audiences

One approach to audience the academic literature offers is focused on bringing in an audience, on changing some aspects of classical concerts in an attempt to make them more palatable for larger audiences. The other tactic scholars use is to explore the individual relationship with the arts and experiment with providing audiences with new or supplemental way to engage in the concert. The main challenge facing orchestras is not a lack of interested audiences, but an expectation for audiences to relate to performances in the same way scholars and organization do and, consequently, a change in the philanthropic supporting structure of classical music, according

to Leon Botstein, Music Director and Principal Conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra. When orchestras focus more on selling tickets than on being significant to their audiences, they diminish their role to that of a business, not a community organization (Sigurjonsson 266). The removal of value from classical music as something that can play many roles has become so ingrained into cultural perspective that it manifests in a literal removal of value; those who have the financial means to support orchestras are ceasing to do so (Cooper).

To the end of finding how organizations could make themselves more accessible to the public, the following section consists of a case study of three of the top orchestras in the country: the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra. Recognizing that these organizations are some of the largest and most well-funded orchestras in the world and that they have the means to experiment with varying approaches, I propose that we study the ways they operate that do result in greater attendance and engagement. Specifically, I will examine whether their actions are more focused on bringing in audiences for the sake of selling tickets or on engaging them and establishing a lasting connection, as well as whether they offer a range of ways for audiences to participate instead of providing only one classical music experience.

Los Angeles Philharmonic

If this removal of value is at the heart of understanding audiences, in addition to the barrier to the audience incurred by a focus on any combination of youth, economic status, or education, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, or LA Phil, demonstrates how to overcome the challenges set up by the way of thinking about classical concerts. At number eight in the world ranking of symphony orchestras—so classified by a panel of top music critics from around the world—and an endowment of \$222 million, the LA Phil has the largest budget of any symphony orchestra in the US (Fleishman 2015a, Gramophone). More than 250 of its performances are held in the

organization's two primary venues, the Hollywood Bowl and Walt Disney Concert Hall (LA Phil). It is the parent organization of YOLA, Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, which offers free instruments and musical training to more than 700 students, most of whom are underprivileged (Fleishman 2015b).

The LA Phil does not fit into this framework that dictates how to and who should appreciate classical music. Deborah Borda is the president of the LA Phil and responsible for a significant portion of this organization's resistance to fade into the common perception of classical concerts and participants. Many of her actions as head have been an illustration of the organization's success and have shown a willingness to engage in new ventures, going against the idea that orchestras must be rooted in the audience type that some of the academic literature presents. Contrary to the standard of installing older and more experienced figures as the heads of orchestras, Borda hired Gustavo Dudamel when he was 28, following only a handful of guest performances, as music director for the orchestra, adding not only an element of youth, but also diversity to the organization (Sucheki). If the academic literature on classical audiences emphasizes cultural background as an element that prevents people from engaging in the arts, Dudamel's Venezuelan upbringing and experience conducting the country's national youth orchestra show such a barrier to be, if not nonexistent, then certainly one that can be overcome. Instead of balking at hiring someone relatively unknown as the director of one of the most renowned orchestras in the world, Borda saw someone who would reach out to youth and bring a fresh interpretation of the roles classical music plays to the organization.

In pursuit of increasing philanthropy, orchestras and even performance venues are taking steps toward reaching individual donors, since corporate philanthropy has declined (Botstein, Fleishman 2015a). For the LA Phil, this means being highly involved in the community, from pushing board members to increase their involvement to increasing community awareness via a

radio show (Fleishman 2015a). The significance of the radio show here is not that they are using technology as a way to boost audience numbers, but that they use it as a form of outreach. While such a measure would be comparable to the use of the app in Crawford's study if not accompanied by other ways to engage the audience, it is not the proxy through which the LA Phil wants audiences to engage, but a tool to help the organization be present in the minds of its community.

Continuing to be an example of ignoring the barrier that standard treatment of classical music creates, LA Philharmonic President Deborah Borda and Music Director Dudamel launched the Dudamel Fellowship, which allows young conductors to work directly with the Phil's music director. The two have also been developing YOLA as a way to serve youth and give them the opportunity to participate in an orchestra while simultaneously building a younger and more diverse audience (Fleishman 2015a). They do this not solely to build a younger audience, but to give young people in the community a chance to experience classical music. Instead of expecting an educated audience, the organization provides them with the opportunity to learn if education is how they wish to engage.

The academic literature reviewed here cites the overarching inaccessibility of classical concerts (Richardson 91; Sigurjonsson 271). The approach the scholarly authors take highlights a barrier which is difficult for potential audiences to overcome, but the LA Phil takes the aspects of this barrier and reaches past them to the audience. If the dominant perception is that traditionally formatted classical concerts cannot exist in an age of technology, Borda responds with the creation of the Philharmonic Digital Initiatives team, producing digital content, including virtual experiences of the concert venues, for mobile devices (Suchecky). The technology incorporated here serves to help audiences that might long for visual engagement and offers a different way to experience the concert if they wish to see more modern elements. Instead of being a measure merely designed to bring in crowds, the LA Phil incorporates technology to prepare audiences for the concert as well

as to give them another lens through which to view the performance. Its new series this year, “in/SIGHT,” is labelled on the website as “strictly for the sonically adventurous,” and features music from Edgard Varèse and his “modern masterpiece,” a version of “Alice in Wonderland” for orchestra, and also Beethoven’s “Missa Solemnis,” (Frank; LA Phil). This organization is presenting old and new classical music alongside each other while treating it as an adventure, not an enrichment exercise; it does not provide only one way for audiences to experience. Rather than expecting people to engage in one way, “in/SIGHT” invites the audience to experience the entire concert differently. Within the concert hall, too, the LA Phil is repackaging the traditional concert experience. While still being held in a traditional concert hall, the first concert of the “in/SIGHT” series comes with visual effects by video artist Refik Anadol (Frank). There will be no projection screen, instead using the entire space as a canvas.

Even while this season’s program boasts such traditional composers as Beethoven, Mozart, Vivaldi, and Handel, the LA Phil will be performing 13 world and US premieres (Fleishman 2015a). Despite the common mindset portraying classical music organizations as including only older audiences and being incapable of engaging only the one type, the Los Angeles Philharmonic overcomes each aspect of the social barrier to the classical music audience. As is fitting with Borda’s vision of the organization’s commitment to discovery and new art while “defining the social imperative of an orchestra,” this orchestra builds its identity around what its audience is, rather than dictating one experience (Fleishman 2015a).

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

By comparison, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, number five in the same world ranking of orchestras, has a much more directed focus on tradition and standard repertoire (Gramophone). The CSO, founded in 1891, is hailed as one of the “Big Five” orchestras in

America. Although this term is going out of style, as the landscape of symphony orchestras in the United States has changed drastically since the 1960s, when the Big Five gained broad recognition, the CSO is still noteworthy for holding such renown for so long (Oestreich). This orchestra holds more than 150 concerts per season in and around Chicago and has made 58 international tours since 1982 (CSO). The CSO has its own record label, CSO Resound, and has won 62 Grammy awards for its classical recordings.

Even with such vast acclaim, the average audience age for the CSO is over 52 (Suchecki). Although this is the more common audience demographic, the academic literature has shown that an audience cannot be judged by its generation alone (Crawford 1083). The web page for the orchestra proclaims “innovative approaches to develop new audiences.” One of the two programs the organization lists in this category, *Beyond the Score*, serves as an alternate concert format that provides more information about the music and its composer (CSO; Delacoma). As with *YOLA*, the CSO provides its audience with a chance to learn more in-depth about the music if that is what helps them to connect. The other program is a new-music series, *MusicNOW*, curated by composers-in-residence Anna Clyne and Mason Bates, for which it commissions new pieces (CSO). *Beyond the Score* is dedicated to deepening an audience’s understanding of a piece, using “theater, music and design to draw audiences into the concert hall and into the spirit of a work,” once again providing even a traditional audience with more options to connect with the concert (CSO).

The CSO also provides alternate concert formats for audiences not only to discover their place in the audience, but also to showcase and involve young musicians and other community arts organizations. For example, in the upcoming “Tchaikovsky Spectacular,” the orchestra will be pairing with guest dancers in order to give audiences a visual representation of the music expressed in Tchaikovsky’s music (CSO). Additionally for this set of performances, each one will be prefaced

by featuring local community music school students and composition and conducting activities from members of community orchestras. Through this type of concert series and the presentation of “Beyond the Score,” we see the CSO’s dedication to providing its audience with ways to feel included and belonging in the audience. The website also offers the “CSO Sounds and Stories,” in which members of the organization are featured and discuss their thoughts about the music the orchestra is playing, offering audiences an additional perspective on the concert. This organization does not necessarily expect an educated, upper-class audience, but creates an environment in which an audience can develop into a community through watching its youth and peers perform and by offering them new ways to understand classical music.

Just as the LA Phil’s hiring of then-28-year-old Gustavo Dudamel emphasized its priority on reaching and engaging younger and more diverse audiences, the CSO’s objectives are exemplified by their new president, Jeff Alexander. Joining the CSO after serving as president and CEO of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO) for the past 14 years, Alexander has had nearly 30 years of experience of leadership within orchestras (Burton). Aside from his experience within classical music organizations, Alexander has also achieved a budget surplus for the VSO for ten of the past 11 years as well as launching the VSO School of Music, a community music school that now houses 1,300 students (Burton). This list of accomplishments demonstrates the CSO’s dedication to a high level of musical excellence, education, and tradition. While some orchestras focus on bringing in a larger audience by changing the appearance of their performances, the CSO is highly transparent in its priorities through its actions and leadership. Despite its type of audience, the CSO does not expect the audience members already to be educated on the music and composers, but offers them the knowledge if that is a way that will help them engage.

Similarly, the recently announced 125th season for the CSO shows its heavy emphasis on widely-known traditional classical repertoire. The season will include a free concert of Beethoven

and Mahler, Verdi's Shakespeare opera "Falstaff," as well as the Berlioz "Romeo and Juliet," (Patner). The current schedule consists of such celebrated composers as Mozart, Mahler, Rachmaninov, and Chopin (CSO). The CSO's calendar is filled almost entirely with the works of some of the most famous composers in history, once again demonstrating a primary dedication to classical tradition and excellence. The orchestra is performing "only two" world premieres in its upcoming season, according to Chicago Tribune music critic John von Rhein, but even so, it seems that the CSO has determined what its focus is and what it does best—sharing classical music with its community through education.

Although faced with the dreaded aging audience of classical music, the CSO continues to be one of the most renowned orchestras in the world, so it would seem that there is a problem with thinking of the financial crisis of orchestras being rooted in the audience's age. The CSO may not offer the diversity of concert styles found with the LA Phil, but it offers music education for a range of ages and backgrounds, providing a place to engage and be a part of the music (CSO). The organization largely defines itself according to its prestigious musical partnerships—they work closely with acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma—but does not use this to define how an audience must be equipped in order to enjoy its music. Indeed, this financial stability and level of celebrity in the classical world shows that there are multiple ways a classical organization can go against the rhetoric of failure and uniformity that surrounds classical concerts.

Cleveland Orchestra

Yet another member of the Big Five and placing number seven among the world's orchestras is the Cleveland Orchestra (Gramophone; Oestreich). Founded in 1918, the orchestra has been performing in Severance Hall since 1931 and holding year-round performances since the 1968 opening of Blossom Music Center, boasting one of the "most beautiful and acoustically

admired outdoor concert facilities in the United States” (Cleveland Orchestra). Within the organization’s mission is a significant emphasis on education and active participation in the community, as well as collaboration with other sectors of the performing arts, such as ballet and opera (Cleveland Orchestra). Part of the orchestra’s degree of acclaim stems from music director Franz Welser-Möst, who also served as general music director for the Vienna State Opera until a sudden resignation in the fall of 2014 (Cooper & Schmid). The directorship of the Vienna State Opera is among the most coveted classical music positions in the world, dating back to the likes of Mahler and Richard Strauss (Cooper & Schmid).

In his time with the Cleveland Orchestra, beginning in 2011, Welser-Möst has initiated new community programs, including a series of “At Home” neighborhood residencies, in which the orchestra increases community involvement through masterclasses and special performances for schools as well as through community service in local organizations (Cleveland Orchestra). The music director has also instituted a biennial residency in Vienna for the orchestra and directed 15 US and 14 world premieres and annual opera performances. The Cleveland Orchestra strongly identifies itself according to its conductor’s prestige, giving the orchestra additional credibility as a classical organization and allowing its members to experiment with a variety of community outreach concerts. The Cleveland Orchestra focuses on reaching out to other arts organizations within its community, projecting value not just onto itself, but also its peer organizations (Cleveland Orchestra). This eagerness to partner with outside communities indicates confidence in having something to contribute, just as it is.

Just as the CSO presented many of its goals and priorities through the types of programs it has, the Cleveland Orchestra, too, shows some of its values through range of performance styles and extracurricular offerings. The organization highlights its series of free community concerts honoring various significant historical dates, such as 9/11 and Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday. It

also sponsors education programs in schools and music study groups for adults that meet to explore the history of the music presented in concert that week (Cleveland Orchestra). Student tickets are available and the website presents a series of ticket options to fit a range of audience members, from youth to entire families. The website also includes a “First Timers’ Guide” to a concert, providing information on aspects of a concert from how patrons tend to dress to when to clap. The Cleveland Orchestra is committed to giving audiences a comfortable experience in which they can easily find their role and experience the music on their own terms, whether it is in a concert hall or outdoors on a lawn. Some orchestras may not be able to provide the range of free or reduced cost options that this one does, but the main way that it reaches out to audiences is through a willingness to understand what they need from a concert.

The Cleveland Orchestra gives the impression of using Welser-Möst’s prestige to lend itself extra credibility on top of being in the top-ranked orchestras in the country and in the world. Rather than attempting to identify itself as a more contemporary structure, the Cleveland Orchestra embraces its classical music nature, its foundation in oldness, and uses that as a way to reach out into the community and provide music. Similarly to the CSO, the Cleveland Orchestra features a program that does not consist of much in the way of new compositions, which is done with an air of providing the classics to a somewhat underserved community; music for the people’s sake instead of a music for the sake of itself. The key here is that both orchestras succeed in what they do. They outline different goals through their actions, programming, and information presented on the organization’s website, and they fulfill them.

Once again, staffing choices show a bit of the organization’s image as a whole. If Welser-Möst provides prestige and significant classical experience, the orchestra’s assistant conductor and music director for the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra (COYO), Brett Mitchell, adds a younger face and a bit of levity to the organization. Mitchell, who is in the last year of a five-year

contract with Michigan's Saginaw Bay Symphony, is one of the most recent topics to appear in the news for the Cleveland Orchestra for being the subject of a released blooper reel from various promotional videos (Lewis). Although this was not released by the Cleveland Orchestra or necessarily related to them at all beyond the connection to Mitchell, the lighthearted nature of the farewell/blooper video conveys an image of the assistant conductor and, further, the organization as a whole—people who are having fun with classical music. Combined with other details, such as a recent April Fool's joke on social media directed at the Cleveland Browns and their very subtle logo change or a set of performances for children entitled "Vivacious Viola," the orchestra is able to have a reputation rooted in serious classical tradition and also have fun with its outreach and community connection (Cleveland Orchestra; Norman).

Discussion

For the three organizations featured here, there exist three different successful approaches for sharing classical music. They present music as a tool for outreach, as a way to bring change, and as an exercise in artistry. They do not provide a uniform concert experience, but rather offer multiple ways for audiences to learn and engage with the orchestra and its music. While some researchers indicate a type of audience best suited for appreciating classical music, these orchestras demonstrate that success and audience development come through establishing connection to the community and by being open to many forms of engagement. Audience members who believe that they do not have the capacity to enjoy a concert will likely not continue attending to the point of feeling some connection to the organization itself (Sigurjonsson 271). Instead, these orchestras reach out and establish that connection.

This is the crisis of orchestras in decline. When an organization focuses so specifically on a new audience's inability to appreciate the music as it is and so repackages it while maintaining

the same attitude—that there is one way to appreciate classical music—it communicates the idea that classical music should be consumed for the sake of the music itself. It is this attitude that overlooks the role that the concert experience plays for an audience member and any potential connection formed from it. These ways of thinking approach music with a view that essentially conveys, “You can be fun and engaged, or you can be classical.” I argue that this is the core issue in the ideas surrounding classical music; we must not approach it as only being able to be one thing to its audience. Instead of the primary goal being to sell tickets, the way organizations approach audience development should be to treat concerts as an opportunity to serve the community. The organizations reviewed here use their position as something of a public figure to reach out to those in the surrounding area and give them the opportunity to attend concerts, and to learn about and make music. It is a matter of giving people these chances to find how they can engage and gain new perspectives through classical music. An audience does not have to fit the description outlined in the academic literature or attend a performance with prior knowledge of the music or be most comfortable in a traditional concert format. They do not even have to like classical music. What is important is to give them the chance to discover whether classical concerts are a way they wish to be a part of something and provide enough opportunities to do so that the decision is not based on feeling out of place.

Beyond this significance of individual engagement, classical concerts can offer a place that individual audience members become a community, learning and experiencing together. As the Cleveland Orchestra says on its website, “Music has the power to unite communities. It brings us together in celebration, comforts us in loss, and surrounds us with joy.” The common denominator between these three organizations is their clear enthusiasm for establishing connections within communities. The goal is not just to fill seats and sell tickets, but to mean something to an audience. Together with their publics, these orchestras commemorate history,

celebrate culture, and provide education. The academic literature cites a feeling of separation from the performers as a reason audiences do not feel engaged with a performance, but it is this coming together in a single occasion with multiple ways of experiencing it that allows these orchestras to be part of the community and not separated by a stage (Richardson 19).

Whether communities are involved in performing or are a part of the audience, the important aspect is how the music affects them and how they wish to engage with it (Troilo et al 637). If sitting silently and taking in the experience makes the audience feel like a part of the traditional performance and is how they desire to participate, that should be an option to them, but the musical organization cannot dictate to the audience what to enjoy or how to be affected. I would argue that preference is not the same as inherent value, and we cannot isolate a genre of music that has the potential to provide an opportunity for more people to experience a new part of themselves on the grounds that we say one must have particular traits in order to enjoy it. There are so many ways to appreciate art; it is not necessary to prescribe a way of understanding. Rather than expecting people to appreciate the music by being more knowledgeable about it and treating it as a necessary dose of enrichment, why should organizations not embrace the chance to reach out to the surrounding community and seize the opportunity to play many roles for a range of audiences?

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