

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

AN EXPLORATION OF THE ORCHESTRA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to research and explore some of the challenges that the orchestra has faced since the turn of the century. The orchestra is one of the most recognized musical organizations in western culture. Even still, recent statistics show that orchestra audiences are dwindling. There are many ways in which orchestras have attempted to curb these patterns, including new concert models, new organizational structures, and new educational programs. All of these methods and more have been met with varying degrees of success.

INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of musical institutions in a community, the chances of the local orchestra being one of the first organizations to come to mind are probably fairly high. For decades, orchestras have in many ways been the leading musical organizations in cities across Europe and the United States. In cities across the world, orchestras often have their own concert halls, creating a kind of “home” for the organization,¹ which then gives it a more visual identity in the life of the community.² Orchestras across the world have made names for themselves not only regionally, but globally. The Berlin, London, and New York Philharmonics are three examples of orchestral institutions that are almost universally recognized not only among musicians, but of non-musicians as well. While the prominence of these cities no doubt contributes to the status of their orchestras, the principal phenomenon of interest is that it is the orchestra as an *institution* that is so well recognized around the world.

Throughout history, music has been written and formed for many different combinations of instruments. The orchestral instrumentation is just one of many standardized combinations of instruments. Solo sonatas, string or brass quartets, piano trios, etc. are all examples of musical forms that have similarly become their own genre. Many of these combinations have come to be recognized as standardized genres. As these genres have been established, the creation of institutions based on the genres have been created.

¹ As will be explored later, concert halls and buildings tied to a specific orchestra are becoming increasingly rare and orchestras are having to compete for space and time in the limited options.

² Stephen Cottrell, "The Future of the Orchestra," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 253.

According to Spich and Sylvester, the classical music industry is comprised of musical institutions to form a “culture of organizations.” These organizations (e.g. Opera companies, orchestras, ballet, etc.), are often necessarily connected to a specific genre. They have the capability of collaboration, and do in many cases, but often quietly compete for the same funding sources at the same time.³ They all seek relevance in their given communities, but many seem to find themselves increasingly short-changed and wanting for larger audiences.

Music, specifically “classical” music such as orchestra music and opera, is an expensive endeavor. The number of arts organizations, combined with dwindling funding sources provide many challenges. One factor that Knussen cites is the influx of diverse cultures in cities. Multiculturalism in European and American cities creates a more diverse pool of artistic organizations. As people from cultures other than Western European assimilate into Western European society, they bring with them their own arts culture and music practices. With the increasing number of arts organizations seeking funding, the pool of money available to specifically western arts education is diminished.⁴

Orchestras around the world have been fighting for funding for a long time, not only in matters of finances, but in cultural relevance. An acute decline in concert attendance by younger audiences has been recorded and is the primary cause for concern

³ Robert S. Spich and Robert M. Sylvester, "The Jurassic Symphony: An Analytic Essay on the Prospects of Symphony Survival," *Harmony*, no. 6 (April 1998): 6, accessed February 5, 2016, http://www.polyphonic.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Jurassic_Symphony1_Spich.pdf.

⁴ Sue Knussen, "Educational Programmes," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 240.

among orchestral institutions.⁵ In addition, according to the 2008 *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, “we cannot assume that people will attend more as they enter the 45+ age group,” due to a general decline “between and within generations” since 1982.⁶ These are sobering statistics, however, the same survey also concluded that more Americans are listening to classical music through electronic resources than ever before.⁷ In essence, it would seem that the live “classical music” experience is what is declining. This leaves the orchestra as an institution in a difficult place, as their inherent business model is centered around live performance.

There is conclusive evidence that classical music around the world is experiencing a drop in concert attendance, in addition to financial strain. It is the goal of this thesis to explore some of the challenges facing orchestras today and the methods and strategies that have been using to combat them. Through exploring the origin of the orchestra, the evolution of its historical place in society, and recent commentary on the current situation, I seek to provide a survey overview of the state of the orchestra since the turn of the century. Its conclusions are not meant to be comprehensive, but rather a building block to a foundational understanding of the present issues.

AN ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF THE ORCHESTRA

The first documented use of the word “orchestra” to designate a large body of musicians is when Johann Mattheson, a German composer of the early eighteenth

⁵ Jesse Rosen, "New Audience Research Findings," NEA_Memo.pdf, section goes here, accessed April 18, 2016.

http://www.americanorchestras.org/images/stories/knowledge_pdf/NEA_memo.pdf, 13.

⁶ Rosen, 10

⁷ Rosen, 14.

century, referred to what was in effect the opera pit as the “Orchestre,” in 1713.⁸ At that point it only referred to the body of musicians by implication,⁹ but the term would become the word to describe what would become what may be the most recognized musical genre for centuries to come.

The early 1700s may have been when the term “orchestra” first appeared, but the idea of instrumental consorts was common well before, during the period of the Renaissance. Instruments would be grouped together based on the function for which they were playing. For example, brass and reed instruments would be used for outdoor engagements, due to their loud volume and sonority, while strings and flutes, with their softer timbre, might be used indoors.¹⁰ This began to change with the introduction of what Monteverdi called “Seconda prattica,” which later became known as *stile moderno*, as opposed to *stile antico*. *Stile antico* valued contrapuntal motion and the interaction of two or more lines in counterpoint. *Stile moderno*, on the other hand, valued a homophonic texture which accompanied an embellished soprano line. With its inception in the world of vocal music, notably opera, *stile moderno* allowed for instrumentalists to accompany and embellish vocal lines in ways that they never had before. Instrumental music was largely considered less aesthetically valuable prior to the late 17th century, but

⁸ George B. Stauffer, "The Modern Orchestra: A Creation of the Late Eighteenth Century," in *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Joan Peyser (New York: Scribner, 1986), 38.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰ Tim Carter and Erik Levi, "The History of the Orchestra," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

that began to change with the newly accepted possibilities for coloristic embellishments from instruments.¹¹

Purely instrumental music began to become valued and appreciated by itself, independent from the influence of text. Music devoid of text or the human voice had of course been written and was common during the Renaissance, but it was not considered to be a high style, “appealing to the senses rather than to the intellect [...]”; an imperfect representation of some harmony of the spheres.”¹² Instrumental music was mostly relegated to functional purposes, largely deemed unworthy of intellectual consideration on its own. However, as Baroque ideas and philosophies began to take hold, so did differing ideas concerning music. The possibility of music communicating ideas and specific emotions without the aid of text became more and more recognized.

One of the ways in which instrumental music began staking its claim as a “high form” was the creation of recognized patterns and motifs that connoted specific emotions. Carter and Levi use a common example of a descending step-wise motion suggesting “lament” as one of many such emotional associations to musical idioms. A listener could derive meaning from the music without text, simply by deciphering what patterns and techniques the composer used. This made music a kind of language unto itself, and instrumental music began to become popular in higher art functions.¹³

At the same time instrumental music was rising in prominence, the size of functional ensembles was increasing. It was common for the continuo part to be played by a violone or other such bass instrument, with a keyboard instrument (harpsichord,

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

organ, etc.) or lute harmonizing according to the figured-bass; all accompanying the vocal soloist or choir.¹⁴ These ensembles were found most commonly in the church and the opera house.¹⁵ In both of these settings, it became increasingly common place to expand the continuo parts, doubling the bass line and adding instruments to realized figured-bass parts. The increasing size of ensembles eventually grew to where there was a need to distinguish between the “concertino” (small group) and the “ripieno” (large group).¹⁶

The new found appreciation for instrumental music, coupled with the growing practice of larger instrumental forces in the church and opera house, are two important reasons for the invention of what we today call the “orchestra.” Other important influences beyond the philosophical and practical, is the development of orchestral forms. For example, the evolution of opera overture, sonata, and dance suite forms both have roles in the development of the symphony, a form of music for which the orchestra is most well known.

Stauffer contributes three major factors in the rise of the orchestra in the last eighteenth century: The standardization of the instrumentation, the evolution of public concerts and music printing, and the establishment of the “classical style.”¹⁷ Music printing had a direct impact on the standardization of the orchestra as it became possible to mass produce and export compositions across Europe and the “New World.”¹⁸ This

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷ Stauffer, 37-8.

¹⁸ Carter and Levi, 2.

mass production forced composers to be more consistent with their instrumentation, and made orchestras maintain a more consistent core group of musicians.

The major tenets of the classical style that were in contrast to those of the Baroque caused some of the instrumental changes that allowed for the standardization of the orchestra. For example, the homophonic textures and importance of the soprano line, characteristics of the classical style, were not conducive to the timbres and specialties of certain Baroque instruments. As such, the instruments that were conducive to contrapuntal playing became more obsolete in orchestral writing, replaced in favor of instruments that were less distinctive in color and more easily blended.¹⁹ In addition, the new emphasis on the soprano-line in the classical style, as opposed to the bass-line in the Baroque style, was a factor in the slow elimination of the basso continuo.

The symphony orchestra experienced growth in terms of size, popularity, and importance in the nineteenth century. The standardized instrumentation of the orchestra during the classical period was quickly expanded upon, as instrument technology became more advanced. Keys and later valves were added to brass instruments, allowing them to play chromatically and woodwind instruments became more flexible in what they could accomplish technically. Although composers were creative within the limitations of brass instruments, the role of brass in classical and early romantic symphonic music was largely percussive and harmonic. Prior to the introduction of valves, brass instruments were limited to the harmonic overtones of whichever key to which they were “tuned.” For instance, the orchestration of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 in G minor includes two horns, one in the key of G and one in the key of B-flat. If Mozart had written both parts

¹⁹ Stauffer, 39.

in G, then options for writing harmony in the horn parts would have been limited.

Having the two parts written for horns tuned a minor-third apart allowed for written harmony. The new chromatic and technical possibilities allowed composers to use the brass and woodwinds in ways never before possible. Brass and woodwinds could now carry melodic material.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century and the transition to Romanticism came new ideals. These new ideals heavily influenced the development of the orchestra during this period. Music's purpose was no longer to represent the perfection of nature,²⁰ but the reality of human emotion. It was a time of rebellion against the established aristocracies around the world and through the many societal changes of the time, music's purpose and direction changed. For many musicians, their living was made through the employment of wealthy benefactors, often serving in royal courts. Without that patronage, composers had to earn a living writing for the public ear and for the public interest. Therefore, priorities in composition began to change.²¹

Beethoven is recognized as the leading figure in ushering in the romantic period in music. His symphonies are a steady progression of innovations, which left formidable impressions on composers for the next century. After Beethoven, the symphony as a genre went through an identity crisis. Composers felt that after the expansions of his ninth symphony, there were few places that the symphony could go. Some composers reacted by backpedalling to more traditional uses of the form, while others sought to create new forms entirely.

²⁰ Or the "perfection" of the aristocrats for whom much of it was written.

²¹ Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 4th ed. (New York: Norton, ©1988), 661-4.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ORCHESTRA

Burkholder contends that the orchestra has become merely a museum, showcasing musical artwork written in the past. The orchestra's use to society is, like a museum of ancient relics, relegated to the preservation of ancient artifacts in the form of music. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of the "classics" (Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven being the most obvious) was not a general understanding.²² Music was written for its particular function and purpose and then discarded from regular performance, with something new to take its place.

There seems to be a parallel development of the "modern orchestra" (out of the "classical orchestra") and the Orchestra as Museum concept. The evolution of the orchestra as an institution, separated from an opera house, a church, or another institution for which it played a functional role, meant that the orchestral experience itself was the primary focus. It was the music itself that made orchestras worth their audiences' attention and funding, so a canon of "classics" began to be catalogued and performed.²³ One might imagine how this, in turn, made the orchestra, concert experiences, and repertoire performed a reflection of the benefactors' tastes. Those who hold the purse-strings have the most influence in how the coins will be spent. It is no different in the music world and even as the orchestra and concert experience became more 'public,' the majority of funding still originated from wealthy private benefactors.

²² J. Peter Burkholder, "The Twentieth Century and the Orchestra as Museum," in *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Joan Peyser (New York: Scribner, 1986), 409.

²³ The practice of which will become our modern understanding of "standard repertoire."

There are three primary models in which orchestras are structured. Civic orchestras, run by “civil servants or staff,” are the first model that Cottrell delineates. A common model in the UK, the civic orchestra receives the majority of its funding from the government. The BBC in London is one example of such an orchestra.²⁴ The second model is a musician’s co-operative, in which the musicians own and manage the orchestra, often, but not always, with professional management help. The Vienna Philharmonic is an example of such a model. Privately funded non-profit orchestras are the most common model in the United States. In this organization model, “non-professional boards [oversee] professional managers who run the day-to-day affairs.” They are almost exclusively funded by private benefactors and ticket buyers, but will often receive some government funding as well.²⁵ Each one of these models has pros and cons, but the third model has provided some unique challenges for orchestras in the United States.

Cottrell cites an example of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra in California, which faced endowment issues and projected bankruptcy. Even though the public expressed through polling that the symphony was a crucial part of the community, the money needed to sustain the organization could not be raised when needed. More funding went to the local football team, than was willing to be given to the orchestra.²⁶ Orchestras everywhere are facing budget cuts, even in cities such as Berlin, known for their support for the arts.²⁷

²⁴ Cottrell, 252.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 252-3.

²⁷ Ibid., 253.

Orchestras don't seem to know where they belong in today's society. With interest in the music that they offer apparently declining, many orchestras are left wondering how to adapt. Having become a kind of museum for ancient musical art, orchestral institutions are not always prepared for current and future challenges. They tend to deal with crises as they arrive, instead of anticipating and addressing the crises of the future.

The Floundering Orchestra

“Thinking ‘outside the box’ occurs infrequently in reactive organizations.”²⁸

When any organization reacts to challenges, as opposed to dealing with them proactively, there are serious repercussions. In 1999, Spich and Sylvester believed that the orchestra would need to undergo a complete restructure of itself in order to survive. Built on the European model, Spich and Sylvester believed the American orchestra was quickly becoming an impossible model to maintain in the projected cultural climate. They warned that no orchestra or institution would be immune, “no matter the glory of their traditions, the quality of their products, their associations with former success, or the rightness of their intentions.”²⁹ Citing examples such as the telephone industry's rebrand as “information and communications services companies,” they propose that American symphony orchestras must go through a similar transformation. Orchestras must carefully evaluate the status of society and make calculated adaptations to ensure the success of the institution.³⁰

²⁸ Robert S. Spich and Robert M. Sylvester, “The Jurassic Symphony: Part Two Taking On the Dinosaur: Strategic Options for Symphony Organizations,” *Harmony* 8 (1999): 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30

“Full adaptation to the “New World,” with all of its contradictory forces and energetic impulses, might be that next challenge.”³¹ However, the orchestra is one of the largest musical institutions in the “culture of [music] organizations” in the world. This, combined with its strong roots in tradition and history, make it slow to change³² and reactive, when it must change. Unfortunately, being reactive does not produce a long term solution, because organizations that are not proactive in their planning simply turn to what is familiar to them, even if it is not the best solution. They miss out on strategies only possible through careful analysis and design.³³

Spich and Sylvester treat the orchestra as any other niche market in need of redirection. Ultimately, orchestras are institutions like any other for-profit or not-for-profit that is fighting for a share in the music industry market. And, like many organizations, the challenges orchestras are facing are matters of Human Resource Management. In the world of business, there are two different approaches to human resource management categorized into either a “hard approach” or a “soft approach.”³⁴ Because of the reactionary tendency of orchestras observed by Spich and Sylvester, this often means that their approach is a hard one. However, as they have observed, reactionary tendencies often have unfortunate consequences.³⁵

The Orchestra’s “Image Problem”

Phillip Clark, in an address at the 2015 Sansea International Festival, asked the question: “If classical music does indeed have an image problem, what image ought it

³¹ Ibid., 18

³² Ibid., 17

³³ Ibid., 19

³⁴ Riley Website

³⁵ Spich and Sylvester Part II, 21-23

adopt? What must classical music now pretend to be?”³⁶ These provocative questions tap into the heart of the current debate in the “classical music” industry. Are the challenges the orchestra faces today related to the orchestra’s inability to adapt to a changing culture, or are the challenges related to the changing culture’s incompatibility with the historical ideals of the orchestra? The overall mindset in orchestras today seems to be that audience members “need to be enticed into the concert hall.”³⁷

In much of the commentary and research on the orchestra, within the last 20 years, the topic of the orchestra’s “image” is usually mentioned. It is usually done so in the context of diminishing and aging audiences. The conclusion of the report is usually that the orchestral institution’s image is one of elitism and unapproachability. As demonstrated by Dobson’s survey, this is not entirely untrue. Participants of the survey, “non-attenders” as Dobson called them, clearly expressed that they felt alienated by “their perceived ignorance through assumptions of prior knowledge.”³⁸ They felt excluded from a special club, in which a level of appreciation for and understanding of the music being performed was expected of all in attendance.

The ritualization of the concert experience is one area in which Cottrell believes turns some people away. The formal dress and demanded silence can be difficult for new concert-goers to understand.³⁹ Of course less formal concerts have been programed in which audience members are allowed, if not encouraged, to make no special effort to

³⁶ Philip Clark. "What's Wrong with the Classical Concert Experience in the 21st Century?" *Gramophone*. N.p., 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 23 Oct. 2015.

³⁷ Stephen Cottrell, "The Future of the Orchestra," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 257.

³⁸ Dobson, 123.

³⁹ Stephen Cottrell, "The Future of the Orchestra," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 253.

maintain silence. The challenge is that some people prefer silence in the concert hall. So orchestras must try to balance these two preferences. Cottrell lists a number of ways in which orchestras have tried to overcome these challenges. The program being introduced from the stage by either the conductors or guest artists, less formal attire (in both the orchestra and audience), and performance venues being somewhere other than the traditional concert hall. All of these attempts have had their own level of success and difficulty. There are always two extremes between those who value formality and respect and those who appreciate more relaxed environments. Ultimately, Cottrell's analysis is that the difficulty is finding "a balance [...] between tradition and change."⁴⁰

For years, orchestras have been exploring ways in which to bolster attendance at their concerts. Most of the methods address the idea that audience members feel "distanced" from the music. Regardless of whether the music is 200 years old, or 2 weeks old, many concert-goers do not feel connected to the music being performed. People are all conditioned from a young age to understand and appreciate certain things and not others, based on the environments and circumstances in which they grow. If the process of listening to and appreciating orchestral music was not a significant part of a child's upbringing, there might not be an innate appreciation for orchestral performances.

Contemporary Music

Another issue that orchestras are facing is that of new music; or, more specifically to this discussion, music that does not fit a certain tonal and rhythmic ideal that matches one that is familiar to the listener. As a general rule, music that is not readily pleasing to the ear is unpopular with the mass orchestra audience. However, most arts funding

⁴⁰ Cottrell, 254.

organizations require a commitment to new art and music by the organizations they fund.⁴¹ Some of the ways that orchestras have tried to counter the unpopularity of new music is through pre-concert talks, chamber concerts featuring the new music, and “composers-in-residence.” Relationships with audiences is important in developing appreciation and understanding between the public, the composer, and her music.⁴²

The idea of sitting through an unfamiliar piece of new music may be unappealing to today’s concertgoer, but the need for contemporary music is essential for the future relevance of the orchestra in today’s society. “Clearly, if the tradition of symphonic orchestral music is to move forward, it cannot rely on a relatively small number of works endlessly reconstituted for a devoted but diminishing audience.”⁴³ This quote by Cottrell captures the dichotomy that the orchestra faces. The orchestra, as Burkholder outlines, represents an institution of history and the presentation of historical art. However, part of that history is the cultivation of new art.

Collaborations between the traditional orchestra and “outside” musicians, ensembles, instruments, etc. is another issue that needs to be addressed. More traditional musicians tend to be apprehensive of sharing their stage with non-classical/orchestral musicians. Even still, they do draw “popular attention.”⁴⁴ Some orchestras, like the Boston Symphony, rebrand themselves (i.e. the Boston Pops) in order to separate the different music they play. Cottrell believes that orchestras have to be more enterprising in developing audiences.⁴⁵ Audience members “need to be enticed into the concert hall.”

⁴¹ Cottrell, 255.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 256.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ It's no surprise then, that orchestras are spending more and more money on hiring marketing professionals to promote their organizations.⁴⁷

METHODS AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

The issues discussed above are a fraction of the many challenges that orchestras are facing today. For the most part, orchestras have taken these challenges seriously and have worked to combat them through creative means. Areas of reform range from the concert experience to the organization's structure. In the course of this paper, the roles that new concert models and educational programs will be explored. In addition, Ernest Fleischmann's "Community of Musicians" concept will be examined, as well as the unique ways in which Leonard Bernstein used the technology of his day to combat some of the same challenges the orchestra is facing today.

New Concert Models

Dobson conducted an experimental study where participants not regularly accustomed to attending classical music concerts went to three different concerts. Out of the three concerts, the concert that most resonated with the case-study participants was the 2nd, which consisted of a more relaxed environment and more performer/audience interaction.⁴⁸ There are three factors that Dobson attributes to a higher level of enjoyment of this second concert: "Understanding, communication, and inclusion."⁴⁹ Two sentiments shared by most of the participants after the 1st and 3rd concerts was that they felt isolated from an exclusive "club" and unintelligent to what was happening on

⁴⁶ Cottrell, 257.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Dobson, 119.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 118.

the stage and around them.⁵⁰ In the second concert, participants in the case-study appreciated that the conductor encouraged a more relaxed listening environment, prefacing the music with the understanding that in the composer's time (in this case Mozart) the orchestra operated more like a modern-day band, bringing energy to the party. Before this, the participants were under the impression that the main purpose of the performance was to execute the written notes perfectly,⁵¹ but the preface allowed them to relax into enjoying the music for what it was intended to be.⁵² Audience members were encouraged to talk, walk about the auditorium, or applaud at any point.⁵³

Richard Dare challenged the traditional concert model by citing accounts of riotous cheering (or jeering) from concert audiences in the nineteenth century. Even in the early twentieth century, it was common place for audiences to react to music in the moment, either positively or negatively. Dare is convinced that Beethoven would be appalled to discover that there is no applause between the movements of his symphonies, that an excited outburst in reaction to his music is not tolerated, and that audiences generally sit in deaf silence. He goes so far as to compares the traditional model of reverential listening to a dictatorship, challenging the "listeners" and "citizens" to "reclaim [their] music" from the critics and snobs.⁵⁴

The New World Symphony is in many ways leading the way in redefining the orchestra concert experience in the United States. In 2013, they released data collected

⁵⁰ Ibid., 117.

⁵¹ Ibid., 118.

⁵² Ibid., 120.

⁵³ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁴ Richard Dare, "The Awfulness of Classical Music Explained," The Huffington Post, May 29, 2012, section goes here, accessed April 24, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-dare/classical-music-concerts_b_1525896.html.

by WolfBrown that showed specific audience demographics from each of their concert experiences. There were four concert models that the New World Symphony offered and polled: Mini-Concerts, Encounters, PULSE, and Journey Concerts. Each one of these concert experiences were very different and garnered interesting data from audience members.

The Mini-Concerts were only thirty minutes in length and cost only \$2.50. Out of all the concert models offered, these concerts drew the most first-time attenders, with almost 50% of audience members being in that category. Post-concert, audience members exhibited a “strong emotional response” to the music that was performed. The survey says nothing about the specific music programmed, but the positive response to the short length and the fact that almost 25% of attenders decided to attend the same day of the concert, suggests that the music programmed had less to do with audience member’s decision to attend, than the shorter length.

The New World Symphony’s “Encounters” were sixty-minute education concerts designed for those with little classical music experience, and/or those who wish to learn more about the art. The audience’s previous education and knowledge of classical music was much more diverse than the Mini-Concerts. Their survey findings suggested that the majority of those who attend these concerts are those interested in the specific “genre” of Education Concerts, regardless of how much they know already. This provided a unique challenge for this format, because the educational material had to be accessible to a wide range of prior knowledge.

With a hired DJ, combined with a live orchestra, PULSE “was designed to engage a young and wired demographic by redefining the concert experience.”⁵⁵ The idea behind PULSE is to create a night club environment in the concert hall. With a combination of orchestral music and a live DJ, attendees are encouraged to eat and drink, dance, and socialize. PULSE is a mixture between a concert and a party, mixing together multiple forms of music and technology into one event.⁵⁶ Based on the survey results, the median age of audience members being 38, which is much younger than the average age of Encounters (65) and Journey Concerts (68).⁵⁷

The Journey Concerts were the longest and most intensive concert model that the New World Symphony offered. They exclusively featured the works of one composer and attempted to give an in-depth look into historical and personal backgrounds. Also the lengthiest of the four, Journey Concerts lasted a total of three hours, including two intermissions. Some of those in attendance said that the length of the program was not communicated very well before, but the majority of attendees knew what was involved and were eager for the extended learning opportunity.⁵⁸

These examples set by the New World Symphony were used because of their contemporary relevance through their location in a diverse community (Miami, FL) and how recently the data was collected. They provide a look into an orchestra that was created with the purpose of experimenting with new concert models and has been

⁵⁵ "New World Symphony 2010-2013 New Concert Format Assessment – Preliminary Research Findings," Nws-final-assessment-report-on-new-concert-formats.pdf, June 2013, section goes here, accessed April 24, 2016, <http://cuttime.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/nws-final-assessment-report-on-new-concert-formats.pdf>, 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 8

⁵⁸ Ibid., 9-10.

flourishing since its creation. What is exemplified through these diverse models is that each one catered to a unique audience base, whether it ended up being the one it initially targeted or not.

Waleson notes that today's audience base, particularly when it comes to Millennials, want personally curated concert experiences. She believes that the old subscription model of ticket sales, where buyers receive a pre-designed set of concerts, is becoming unsustainable in the current cultural climate of "customization." Ticket buyers want the ability to customize their orchestra experience and Waleson recommends developing ways to allow buyers to personalize their subscriptions.⁵⁹ The New World Symphony, in the findings of their survey, come to the same kinds of conclusions.

The importance of "audience members not only [to] learn more but feel a sense of accomplishment and validation afterwards" is highlighted in the WolfBrown's survey conclusions. At the time of the survey, patrons had an abundance of concert options, ranging in intensity and previous knowledge expected, but there is no direction or proposed path through the offerings. The patrons were responsible to be entirely "self-directed" through the concert offerings. In other words, the ticket buyer was responsible for curating their own experience from the available options. A next step for orchestras with such diverse offerings could be the creation of "Concert Collections" that are specifically catered to certain audience demographics. This would simultaneously provide a more personalized "subscription" experience, while at the same time taking the responsibility of self-direction off of the audience member.

⁵⁹ Heidi Waleson. "Reimagining the Orchestra Subscription Model." *Symphony* (Fall 2015), 35.

Fleischmann's "Community of Musicians"

“Ladies and gentlemen, the orchestra is dead—long live the Community of Musicians.” These words, spoken by Ernest Fleischmann in his 1987 commencement address to the graduating class of the Cleveland Institute of Music, were spoken after expressing his belief that the orchestra was “burnt out.” He believed that in order to carry on the music we love through history, it was time to replace the orchestra with a new model; a model he referred to as a Community of Musicians.⁶⁰

Fleischmann advocated this new model because he believed they would be more flexible in their musical functions by having more musicians and resources at their disposal. Because of their diversification and untraditional structure, a “community of musicians” would not be constrained to specific musical forms or genres. His view comes from seeing the frustrations of orchestral musicians in feeling stuck, uninspired, and unable to develop as a musician or person in the institution of the orchestra. Musicians need to be able to exercise their individual and creative spirit more than he saw as being allowed through the traditional model.⁶¹

It was twenty-three years later that his ideas were brought to wider attention, through the Detroit Symphony musicians’ strike in 2010. The orchestra faced bankruptcy and proposed restructuring to a model like Fleischmann advocated. The Memphis Symphony was seen as an effective model of such a restructure, paying a base salary with the option of participating in other community outreach/educational/administrative

⁶⁰ Paul R. Judy, "Pure Gold: The Fleischmann–Lipman– Morris Debate of 1987-89," *Harmony*, no. 2 (April 1996): 56, accessed February 2, 2016, http://www.polyphonic.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Pure_Gold_SOI.pdf.

⁶¹ Cottrell, 258.

engagements for more pay. Operating on only \$4,000,000 annually, the symphony was used as a positive example for the new model.⁶² For years, the Detroit Symphony was recognized as one of the United States' top orchestras. When they faced bankruptcy in 2010 and proposed drastic pay cuts and restructuring, the musicians repelled the idea.

It was what became coined as the “top-down’ community” that gave orchestra musicians concern. To them, a system that “imposes [extra] duties” and responsibilities, that aren’t driven by the musicians themselves, is not very appealing.⁶³ Many musicians, particularly long standing orchestra members, wish that their only responsibilities would be performing subscription concerts at the highest level possible. To them, the best quality of performance is the primary mission of an orchestra. To accept cuts in wages and to have extraneous musical expectations placed upon the musicians would place the orchestra at a lower level of performance. Without competitive wages, the orchestra would not attract the talent needed to maintain the same standard of performance.⁶⁴

In opposition, the Detroit Symphony’s president of the board stood firm. With the possibility of high profile players leaving the orchestra, she addressed the question of whether they could be replaced by saying: “I would have to say sadly: ‘I don't want to do this but there are talented players out there.’”⁶⁵ Implied in her response is the fact that the

⁶² David H. Thomas, "Evidence of a Changing World for Performers Revealed in Detroit Symphony Negotiations." *David H Thomas Clarinet Classical Music* (blog), September 21, 2010, accessed April 05, 2016, <http://blog.davidhthomas.net/2010/09/evidence-of-a-changing-world-for-performers-in-the-detroit-symphonys-negotiations/>.

⁶³ Ibid..

⁶⁴ Barry Johnson. *If the Cellist's Salary Declines in Detroit, Does the Music Sound Less Sweet in Portland?* August 30, 2010, accessed April 06, 2016, <http://artsdispatch.blogspot.com/2010/08/if-cellists-salary-declines-in-detroit.html>.

⁶⁵ Ed Pilkington, "Top Players Fall Silent as Detroit Symphony Orchestra Fights for Survival," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2010, section goes here, accessed April 05,

ratio of conservatory graduates to available full-time orchestra positions does not lend itself in favor of orchestra musicians threatening to leave.

Even still, it is indisputable that there are connections between the top orchestras and their higher salaries. Back in 2010, Johnson believed that if Detroit dropped their base musician's wage, that it would have a ripple effect on orchestras at the same "level" as them. It would set a new standard; one that would not be conducive to drawing higher levels of talent to the orchestra.⁶⁶

Is all of this grounds to dismiss Fleischmann's idea that "the orchestra is dead?" It is all a matter of perspective. If one calculates the success of an orchestra based on its critical ranking among the world's orchestras, then that will influence decisions in a certain way. Similarly, if one calculates the success of an orchestra based on the impact it has within its local community, a different decision will be reached than if global rankings are a priority. It would seem that this apparent conflict of interests sums up what many orchestras within the United States are facing today. How does an orchestra of international renown and historical standing stay true to their commitment to excellence, while struggling to survive in conditions that would seem to demand actions that would oppose their first purpose? How could the Detroit Symphony even consider enacting new wages that could possibly threaten their global ranking; and yet how could they have survived if they didn't?

This struggle seems to give rise to a separation of interests between the musicians and administration. On the one hand, the administration holds the responsibility to keep

2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/19/detroit-symphony-orchestra-strike>.

⁶⁶ Johnson.

the orchestra funded and successful, walking the line between keeping both the patronage and musicians satisfied. On the other hand, the musicians wish to perform the music that they know and love at the highest level possible, while making a competitive wage. Often times, both sides have legitimate, but seemingly conflicting interests, which only makes negotiation that much more difficult. But the question of whether Fleischmann's model should be dismissed still remains. Each orchestra must answer for themselves, evaluating their own priorities, and what their mission is as an organization, in relation to their given community.

Non-competition

Another method of survival for arts organizations in general is a silent pact of no competition between the groups. The idea is to stand in solidarity together against the challenges faced by all members of the arts community. Orchestras in the same community work hard to either work around each other or form collaborations with each other. When orchestras go on tour, they are sure not to interfere with the resident orchestra's schedule of performances⁶⁷ It is all done with the well intentioned purpose not to undermine brother and sister organizations in a universally challenging cultural climate, however, Spich and Sylvester argue that it might be slowing, if not prohibiting, healthy institution-wide innovations.⁶⁸

According to them, a natural and important part of institutional adaptation is competition. Organizations must be able to challenge each other and push one another to incite change. They must be able to take risks contending with each other to discover

⁶⁷ Spich and Sylvester, 10

⁶⁸ Ibid., 11

innovations necessary for the survival of them all. Competition would ultimately strengthen the whole institution, according to Spich and Sylvester.⁶⁹ By constantly buying into silent no-competition agreement, orchestras are merely helping to keep everyone at the status quo.

Nonetheless, in such a small global community of musicians, it could be nigh impossible for orchestras to engage in serious competition with each other, nor is it convincing that it would ultimately be healthy. It does not take one long working as a musician to be quickly realize the smallness of the music world. To narrow the field from the musicians of the world to orchestral musicians in particular would drastically reduce the size of that world even further. There is a very strong sense of comradery among musicians and an even stronger one among orchestral musicians. For two orchestras to engage in overt competition with each other would be to compete against good colleagues and friends. In such a challenging cultural climate for orchestras today, its hard to imagine much competition beyond friendly rivalry.

Educational Programs

Educational programs have been an important part of the orchestral institution for nearly a century. The fear caused by dwindling and aging audiences has caused orchestras to put a strong emphasis on educating the next generation. In 2003, Knussen wrote that the “proliferation of pop culture” would continue to be one of the greatest influences on depreciating arts education. In a culture of mass communication that has only increased since 2003, people have access to more “manufactured ‘art’ or ‘culture’”

⁶⁹ Ibid.

than ever before.⁷⁰ This, Knussen believed, was a key factor in depreciating value and understanding placed on the classical arts.⁷¹

At the same time, arts funding in public schools was either being cut or redirected to the three Rs (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic). Standards in schools were diminishing and United States public schools began devaluing arts education through altered budgeting priorities. The number and quality of instruments needed for a successful band and/or orchestra program can become very expensive. Cutting budgets to instrumental music programs was a quick way to save money.⁷²

With the increase of these migrant cultural influences recreating their Arts in Western society, the pool of money available to western arts education decreased. The twentieth century saw a surge of immigration around the world, which influenced cultures in major cities. Also, with more emphasis on liberal teaching methods, the discipline needed to succeed as a musician was not emphasized. Knussen believed that there was a turning point in schools that disallowed to a large extent the kind of instruction needed to reach a high level of musical achievement.⁷³

The devaluing of music in schools created a vacuum for arts education and many orchestras stepped up and attempted to fill the void with their own programs. However, there was hesitation because of all the variables. Budget demands, content of education programs, evaluation of the programs and how they would fit into school curriculum already offered, etc. There were three prevailing concerns: The need for educational

⁷⁰ Knussen, 239.

⁷¹ Ibid., 240.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

programs and a desire from communities for them, the fear of what might happen if there was no arts education, and a desire by musicians to provide such programs.⁷⁴

In short, the goal of education programs should be to create experiences that inform those who have had no previously positive history with classical music of the “deep connection with music as an emotional and creative outlet.”⁷⁵ For those who have dedicated their lives to the art, we can take the power of music for granted. Musicians are ultimately the best advocates of their music, having the deepest connection with it as anyone.

The musician’s role is essential to any thriving educational program. The musician’s primary role is in creating a relationship with students, which in turn gives students a personal connection in the concert experience.⁷⁶ To that end, many after-school programs feature musicians interacting directly with students. Improvising, composing, and other activities that give students direct connection with music making are often included. However, many of these after school programs are unsustainable because of other public-school programs. Knussen believes that the cause is “proliferation of standardized testing,” which requires students to be present for more after-school hours.⁷⁷

Orchestral institutions have historically put considerable value in their educational programs,⁷⁸ providing in and out of school opportunities for young people in an attempt

⁷⁴ Ibid., 241

⁷⁵ Ibid., 250

⁷⁶ Ibid., 246.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 247.

⁷⁸ In many cases combating difficulties that will be explored later.

to bolster music appreciation.⁷⁹ Henry Fogel, former President of the Chicago Symphony and consultant to orchestras around the world, said that the one question conducting candidates can definitely expect in an interview is how they will bring in new and younger audiences.^{80, 81} It is a concern that has plagued orchestras for decades and has been the subject of concern.

Building Music Appreciation through Technology

Technology has always had an important role in the development of classical music. Throughout history, technology has helped to drive innovation in music, and vice-versa. Many of Mozart's piano concertos were not only written to show-off his own virtuosity, but to display the capabilities of the relatively new "pianoforte." As seen in the development of the orchestra, the newest technology of brass and woodwinds instruments created new directions for orchestral music. The early twentieth century experienced huge technological advancements that allowed for a surplus of exciting possibilities for music. New forms of electronic music developed, along with new ways in which people could interact with "old" music. The presence of live musicians began to become unnecessary to the experience of listening to music.

Maintaining authenticity of the recorded medium was important to the first sound engineers. The more natural the recording sounded, the better it was considered. For example, the distance between the listener and the performing ensemble was important to

⁷⁹ Knussen, 239.

⁸⁰ Henry Fogel et al., "Conductor Hangout: Episode 3 - Conducting Searches - What Works!," YouTube, March 28, 2016, section goes here, accessed April 04, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rr-2UtJq9M#action=share>.

⁸¹ He also quipped that orchestras were asking that 50 years ago too, and the younger people just grew up and started coming to concerts.

capture in the recording.⁸² Therefore, if one is listening to a recording through speakers, the aural effect is still that of sitting in a concert hall, at some distance to the orchestra. It is important to remember that the impetus of recording technology at its inception⁸³ was to provide as authentic a reproduction of the “real” thing as possible. Inherent in that idea is the understanding that a recording is neither an equal representation, or a worthy substitute for the “real” experience.

Even still, technology was and continues to be a powerful asset to the future of “classical” music. With the advent of recording technology, music could reach people and places in ways it never could before. Records allowed musical enjoyment at home to extend beyond the skills and instruments immediately available. A performance of Mahler’s Second Symphony, with its hundreds of performing personnel required, could now be enjoyed at any time from the comfort of one’s living room, for example.

One of the most inspiring uses of technology to garner attention for classical music was through Leonard Bernstein’s Omnibus, Young People’s Concerts, and Norton Lectures series. Each one of these programs used the new technology of the day to tap into a unique and marketable interest of their specific audience.

The Omnibus series was Bernstein’s first appearance on national television in the role of educator. Sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the Omnibus series was a weekly show that sought to educate the American public on cultural topics. According to the official website of Bernstein, he appeared a total of ten times on the show, with topics

⁸² Lawrence Kramer, "Classical Music for the Post Human Condition," in *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, ed. John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman, and Carol Vernallis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 44.

⁸³ At least as pertains to live performance mediums, such as the classical music tradition up to that point.

ranging from broad styles of music, to very specific academic interests. Through his personality and clear communication, he garnered interest and understanding of an art form that is often left shrouded in mystery for many people.

Bernstein was not the creator of the Young People's Concerts, but he was their director during the years for which it is remembered. It was begun by conductor Ernest Schelling and only continued by Bernstein. It was one of his responsibilities as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic that he valued most greatly. When he took a sabbatical leave from the orchestra from 1964 to 1965, his appearances on the Young People's Concerts program was one responsibility he maintained.⁸⁴

There is one major principle behind both the Omnibus and Young People's Concerts productions that should be highlighted: Education through technology. Electronic media, particularly television, is often taken for granted today, but there was a time when the proliferation of mass media into private homes was a new phenomenon. What Omnibus and the Young People's Concerts exemplify is the classical music industry capitalizing on the innovations of the day. Both programs used new and exciting mediums to advance the education and appreciation of an art form with an antiquated reputation.

The last example of Bernstein is his Norton Lectures. The official website of Leonard Bernstein describes the lectures as being "lavishly multi-disciplinary long before it was fashionable, they provided a fresh way to analyze music and interpret musical history." The lectures were the culmination of Bernstein's tenure as the Charles Eliot

⁸⁴ Brian David Rozen, "The Contributions of Leonard Bernstein to Music Education: An Analysis of His 53 Young People's Concerts" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1997), 53

Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University and represent some of his greatest, most academic work. It is the intellectualism of these lectures, in contrast with the fundamentalism in *Omnibus* and the *Young People's Concerts*, that demonstrates the genius of Bernstein.

In addressing the Harvard audience through his Norton Lectures, he was addressing a very different audience than the ones through *Omnibus* and the *Young People's Concerts*. The importance of speaking knowledgably and pointedly to your given audience is exemplified through Bernstein's example. He was able to navigate many different demographics and knowledge level to effectively teach music appreciation to his specific audience. The Norton Lectures also demonstrate the use of the day's technology, as *Omnibus* and the *Young People's Concerts* did, to disseminate the lectures to as many people as possible through video.

DISCUSSION

So, what can be learned from this brief survey of the orchestra leading up to today and the challenges it has faced? I believe every person's experience and situation will affect the appropriate answering of that question. For example, administrators, musicians, and the gamut of music lovers and audience attenders will all have different responses to the same information. As such, I can only accurately and effectively speak to my own experience, my own analysis of this information, and what I personally take away from my discoveries.

"People are listening to classical music, they are just not paying money to sit in a concert hall and listen to it live."⁸⁵ I think that this sums up the the challenges of the

⁸⁵ Waleson, 33.

orchestra in the United States today. Research data shows that more people are actually listening to classical music, but through electronic mediums.⁸⁶ In other words, it would seem that classical music appreciation is actually rising, while at the same time orchestras around the world are struggling to survive. This is an uncomfortable paradox to explain, but given my research, I believe a number of factors are responsible.

As discussed earlier in this paper, Dobson's study demonstrates a few interesting points related to the current concert experience. Firstly, it confirms the fact that many people feel isolated from a perceptual snobbery in the classical music world. Participants who expressed personal enjoyment of classical music, indicated that the feeling of unintelligence at concerts was enough to deter them from attending.⁸⁷ I believe that this perceived snobbery is a significant factor in diminishing audiences.

Effort should be made to make audience members feel at home in the concert hall; they should not be made to feel unwelcome based on their lack of knowledge. However, I think that some efforts to appease those who feel out of place come across as apologetic to the art form. In an effort to "fix" the orchestra's image, a new image is sometimes adopted in the name of the old, mischaracterizing what the orchestra stands for.

One of the most unique aspects of the traditional orchestral experience is that they are exclusively acoustic. As recognized through the contributions of Bernstein, technology can be used to further music appreciation and education; however, I believe it can be misused. Kramer, in his article "Classical Music for a Post Human Condition," explores the psychological and societal effects of increased connectedness to technology.

⁸⁶ Rosen.

⁸⁷ Dobson, 116.

He believes that our connectedness to our phones, the internet, etc. is turning us into a different kind of being than “Man.” We are, so to speak, “Man” plus Technology. In the words of Kramer: “The classical figure of ‘man’ has perished, or rather morphed, above all because of technological change and its effects on the perceptual apparatus.”⁸⁸ Our consciousness no longer lies exclusively with our bodies, but can virtually exist in multiple places at the same time.⁸⁹

Kramer quotes Hayles, when she says that “the post-human view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending...the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born.”⁹⁰ In other words, through early exposure to phones, tablets, computers, etc., children learn to function with them just as they learn to function with their own limbs. The technology becomes a part of a person as part of themselves. Termed “The Google Generation,” it is the first that has grown up with an existence co-dependent with technology to this extent.⁹¹ If one accepts the premise of this “post human condition,” Kramer brings it to some interesting conclusions in relation to classical music.

Prior to the ability to record sound, music existed solely in the natural world, in natural acoustics, regardless of where it was heard. With the dawn of recording technology, music could now be reproduced, or copied, through electronic means. As noted in *Education through Technology*, in its early stages, recording technology sought

⁸⁸ Kramer, 44.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁰ Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.

⁹¹ David Nicholas, "The Google Generation, the Mobile Phone and the 'library' of the Future: Implications for Society, Governments and Libraries" (address, International Conference on Libraries, Information, and Society 2014, Kuala Lumpur, April 26, 2016).

to mimic the natural experience as closely as possible. However, as things progressed, recording practices began to place microphones closer, in-ear headphones brought the listening experience as close as the ear canal, and the distance usually associated between performer and listener decreased.⁹² Kramer coined the word “audiofigural” to describe this new digital space in which music can now be experienced.

When classical music is presented in this framework, in the medium of the audiofigural, the music loses its audience, not in the sense that fewer people listen to it, but in the sense that the figure of the human, the fiction of ‘man,’ to which the music is addressed has become vestigial.⁹³

Kramer puts great value on “Man” as the being to which classical music has historically been addressed. Therefore, the presence of both listener and performer in the natural world is paramount. Without that, classical music is something else. Recording technology began as a way to mimic, but not replace, that experience. I think Kramer would argue that recordings have now become widely accepted as a comparable replacement to the natural experience. This, in turn, creates a marketing challenge for orchestras. Not only do they have to “sell” classical music, but they have to sell the experience.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

My conclusions thus far have been speaking mostly of the top orchestras in the country; the symphonies and philharmonics globally representing and bearing the name

⁹² Kramer, 44.

⁹³ Ibid., 45.

of their city. Regional and community orchestras could have a slightly different, but no less important role in the “culture of [musical] organizations” that Spich and Sylvester write about. I imagine that small chamber orchestras have enormous potential in the current cultural climate. While adopting a “community of musicians” type model, a chamber orchestra could have more flexibility and survive on less funding than a traditional unionized orchestra. It could have a more specific targeted audience and therefore better serve the needs of its patrons. The impact of chamber and regional orchestras is one possible area of further study.

As someone with little practical experience in the topics being researched in this paper, I recognize that the breadth of this subject is endless and ever-changing. The feeble attempts of this paper merely scratch the surface of all the research and commentary on the challenges of the orchestra today. Further projects could include interviewing professional leaders in the field. A more comprehensive survey of audience bases could garner interesting results related to preference, commitment, and appreciation. A clearer picture of the diversity of a community could provide further insight into how to address specific challenges.

CONCLUSION

I agree that the challenges facing orchestras today have deeper psychological and societal causes than are often recognized. I believe that technology can and should be used to strengthen appreciation for classical music, but we need to be wise in our use of it. Data showing an increase in the listening of prerecorded classical music could demonstrate a devaluing of the live concert experience. Kramer’s ideas, tested against my own experiences, offer a convincing hypothesis as to why that might be the case. I

believe that orchestras in the twenty-first century will be divided in their response to this issue. Some will embrace whole-heartedly the cultural winds, seeking to appease targeted markets, while others will insist that to be countercultural is the only way of staying true to the art form.

According to Philip Kennicott, chief Arts and Culture critic of the Washington Post, orchestras today seem to differentiate their audiences into two broad categories. The first is “made up of younger, adventurous listeners willing to try anything, and the other composed of older, problematic ones, who want only Beethoven’s Fifth night after night.”⁹⁴ Audiences are much more diverse than that, but a season’s programming often reflects such a simplified view. As such, the “serious listener,” the one who enjoys to be challenged through a variety of works, is left wanting.⁹⁵

I believe the debate in the orchestral world today is one of fashion. Is the orchestra fashionable? And if not, how do we make it so? Should it be made fashionable to video gamers and movie buffs? Should it be made fashionable to traditionalists who attend to hear something familiar? Should the orchestra pander to the so-called “serious listener,” by playing nothing that is too mainstream, but instead, music that challenge the mind and ear? These musical tastes and many more are all real and relevant, but incredibly ambiguous. I think the general audience is so diverse that it is impossible to fashion the orchestra to appeal to everyone. I believe that the most successful orchestras today will either be funded well enough to produce numerous programs that attract as many “groups” as possible, or be very pointed in targeting a specific demographic.

⁹⁴ Philip Kennicott, “America’s Orchestras Are in Crisis,” *New Republic*, August 25, 2013, accessed April 24, 2016.

⁹⁵ Kennicott.

Through this study, I have gained a better understanding of the over-arching issues related to the field in which I am about to enter. I was unfamiliar with many of the issues that I stumbled upon and found the varied attempts at solutions fascinating. The continuation of this learning process is something I look forward to as a life-long study.

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