ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the close relationships between the visual arts and music and the implications of curatorial practice upon the work of conductors. While some conductors consider suitability the prime (or only) factor in determining which music to perform, curators use many more criteria.

Five elements of exhibition design are particularly germane to musicians including setting, subject matter, visual weight, compositional direction, and narrative. Each of these five elements is discussed in terms of its impact on concert design with a goal of providing additional criteria to the conductor when planning concerts. Three concert experiences, designed with these principles in mind, are presented as examples.

Upon consideration of the elements of exhibition design separately and corporately, one arrives at a new appreciation of the concert as a unified experience—capable of being much more than the sum of its parts. The aim of effective concert design is to eliminate unintentional communication—to present music in the most complimentary manner possible. To this end, this study has implications for conductors at all levels.
This paper is lovingly dedicated to my wife, Lori, and my son, Benjamin.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is a product of many fruitful discussions with colleagues and friends. First, I must express my gratitude to my major professor and advisor Gary W. Hill. His writings and teachings concerning the future of music and music education largely influenced my pursuit of this topic. Thank you to Wayne A. Bailey for the countless impromptu advising sessions and practical advice. I am grateful for your guidance.

John Q. Ericson, Sabine M. Feisst and Timothy W. Russell offered crucial help in shaping the overall form and content of the paper and helped me to see my work in a larger context.

I also wish to thank my wonderful teachers and colleagues at the University of Colorado and the University of Tennessee, especially Allan R. McMurray, Gary D. Sousa, and the late Calvin L. Smith. Thank you to the extraordinary music teachers of the Maryville City Schools, where I first began musical study over twenty years ago.

I am blessed with a wonderful family. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for starting me on my musical journey, for never once doubting my choice to make music my life's work, and for your enduring love and support.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicians on Programming</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curators on Exhibition Design</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SETTING</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 NARRATIVE</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Narrative</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curatorial Statement</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SUBJECT MATTER AND MUSICAL CONNOTATIONS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Connotations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 SOUND WEIGHT</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 COMPOSITIONAL DIRECTION</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space is Silence</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming with Compositional Direction in Mind</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Arts Participation Attendance (Percent of U.S. Population)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arts Participation Attendance (In Millions of Adults)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Compositional Direction (Explicit)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Compositional Direction (Balanced)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Compositional Direction (Implicit)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The belief that art music is losing its audience because society no longer connects with the music is, in this author’s view, an error of attribution—the content is not the problem, but rather the delivery. Much has been written about developing and attracting new audiences for professional orchestras, principally through extra-musical means such as marketing, ticket promotions, and the like (again, focused on substituting, altering, or enhancing musical content).

On a frustratingly small scale, to some extent these efforts have succeeded. The Search for Shining Eyes, a report commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, provides insights into why certain initiatives have succeeded and others failed. It also points to important systemic problems which hinder more dramatic results. Among the obstacles, the most striking is the lack of cooperation and/or flexibility on the part of music directors in the programming process. The current paper takes this as its central issue—to reshape the concert experience by expanding the criteria used by conductors as they design concert experiences.

To paraphrase the business maxim, a happy customer is a repeat customer. Stated another way, an unsatisfied customer finds satisfaction elsewhere. In cultural venues such as the museum much work has been done to track visitor habits, analyze attendance trends, and achieve physically accessible and mentally stimulating exhibits.

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1 Thomas Wolf, The Search for Shining Eyes: Audiences, Leadership and
2 Ibid., 7.
Conductors and leaders of musical organizations have also pursued such research. Murray Sidlin, Frederick Starr, and Leon Botstein have all written and spoken about the future of music (especially in the case of professional orchestras). Much of what they have written involves challenging conventional practices which limit the impact or reach of music. The current paper continues in this vein by viewing the criteria and methodology used by museum curators through the lens of a conductor as he/she designs a concert experience.

A central tenant of this document is the belief that musical performances take place within a context, and this context is critically important to the reception of the overall concert experience and the individual pieces themselves. Venue is a key component, be it in a concert hall, school, church, outdoor venue—or via an internet connection.

The issue of suitability, and its impact on programming, has received much attention from music educators. Instead of why music should be performed, much focus has been centered on prescribing what music should be performed. “Quality” is a commonly used, though perilously subjective, term. The current paper builds on this work while challenging conductors to reexamine the criteria used to design concerts.

Very little has been written about the how of concert design. The organization of the repertoire presented creates added layers of context that interact with one another. These interactions arise from elements within the music itself such as subject matter, musical connotation, sound weight, and compositional direction.
A final consideration is that of narrative. In a society increasingly concerned with story,\textsuperscript{3} audiences seek to be their own story-tellers. Thus, the issues of authorship and agency arise. Events with effective design consider these issues and create a compelling (though sometimes invisible) narrative.

Artists in other fields, especially visual artists, have dealt with issues of context extensively. Curators share several significant responsibilities with conductors—namely, planning and executing exhibitions, care and maintenance of the art, and to a lesser extent commissioning and championing artists. Through the study of another field we more clearly perceive our own. It is therefore advantageous for musicians involved in designing concert experiences to study the large body of literature written about the curatorial process and exhibition design.

\textsuperscript{3} Dan Pink, \textit{A Whole New Mind} (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006): 103.
CHAPTER 1

EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM

The relationship between culture and society is constantly changing, evolving and devolving. Participation levels at live classical music events in the U.S. have declined steadily for the past thirty years, and arts organizations with cultural relevance as a goal seek opportunities in which to develop. In music, many of these efforts have concerned altering content—programming pops concerts, movie music, guest artists, and/or eliminating "thorny" contemporary music in favor of "the classics", as if the sole reason concert attendance is declining is lack of interest in the music itself. This author believes that the path to cultural relevance can only begin once this error of attribution is corrected.

There are numerous factors at play, not the least of which is the remarkable societal transformation as a result of technological developments—from the cordless telephone to the iPad. The means of access to music have undergone a series of shifts as a result of the increasing sophistication and use of technology. In the past five decades the dominant form of music media has shifted from the vinyl LP to the cassette to the CD and, most recently, to the

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5 Wolf, The Search for Shining Eyes, 30.

6 It is also true that some musicians and ensembles have experienced growth and success over this period. Even given their (in some cases) tremendous success, the overall trend remains dire.
digital audio file. Whereas in previous technological eras it was necessary to own a physical copy of the music in order to play it, now it is quite common for music to be accessed for free through the internet.\(^7\) One need only search using Google, YouTube, or use music-specific resources such as Pandora or Spotify.

An argument might be made that this increased ease and speed of access together with music’s now infinite portability should directly lead to diminishing audiences at live music events—one mode of listening replacing another. According to statistics published in 2010 by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), however, the use of technology appears to be a “gateway and not a barrier to greater arts participation.”\(^8\) Attendance at live classical music events was increased among those who also viewed content online/listened digitally.\(^9\) This dual mode of participation suggests audiences appreciate the differences between concerts and recordings.

NEA Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts and other related reports identify seven benchmark arts activities: Classical Music, Opera, Jazz, Musical Plays, Non-Musical Plays, Ballet, and Art Museums/Galleries. These seven categories are helpful when examining participation levels.

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\(^9\) Ibid, 14.
Table 1: Arts Participation Attendance (Percent of U.S. Population)\textsuperscript{10}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>-18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Music</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>-28.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Plays</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-10.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Musical Plays</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>-21.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-30.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Museums/Galleries</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>2.71</td>
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As is seen in Table 1, the percentage of adults in the U.S. engaging in these activities has declined in the period from 1982 to 2008 with only one exception—Art Museums/Galleries.\textsuperscript{11} Although the increase in attendance is slight (.6%), when compared to the declines in Ballet, Opera, and Classical Music it takes on a much greater significance. Indeed, the average percentage of decline in Jazz, Classical Music, Opera, Musical Plays, Non-Musical Plays, and Ballet was 23%.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Williams and Keen, 2008 Survey, 18.
Table 2: Arts Participation Attendance (In Millions of Adults)\textsuperscript{12}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Music</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>-1.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Musical Plays</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>8.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Plays</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Museums/Galleries</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>41.16%</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2 identifies the total number of U.S. adults engaging in arts activities. At first glance, the numbers are encouraging. With exceptions of Ballet and Classical Music, all other benchmark arts activities have increased participation from 1982 levels. However, one must consider that the total U.S. population increased 31.26% over the period\textsuperscript{13}, negating the gains in all arts activities save one—Art Museums/Galleries.

The current study of curatorial practice is undertaken with the knowledge that among the seven benchmark arts activities, Art Museums/Galleries have clearly outperformed peer arts institutions. Rather than assuming a defeatist posture upon reviewing such lopsided data, it is hoped that conductors can adopt/adapt the best practices of museum curators for their own local situations and contexts. In the future it is hoped that the percentages for all arts activities will be much improved.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

The question arises—“What’s the difference?” Further, why do Art Museums/Galleries continue to draw an increasing amount of visitors while all other arts activities are in decline? Are there other factors which influence these trends? The full exploration of these questions lies outside the scope of this paper, but the questions are important and deserve exploration. What remains is that the experience of visiting an Art Museum/Gallery is growing more popular and is therefore worth study.

The elements of exhibition design used by curators are the focus of this paper. The following is an exploration of each of these components in the context of its assistance to the conductor during the programming process.

**Definition of Terms**

The terms used in this paper should be read in proper context: it is not the author's intention to force an apples-to-apples comparison between disparate art forms. Rather, it is the author's intent to engage with the elements inherent in music using a similar approach to that of an artist. In order to make this possible a lexicon must be used, and it is convenient to adapt visual art terminology for this purpose.

Additionally, terms used to describe art are often frustratingly difficult because of the subjective nature of art itself. Just as art is continually evolving, so must the terms. Indeed, in the 21st century we are faced with not one art movement but with a plethora of movements. This necessitates that terms be understood in the particular context in which they are currently in use.

*Composition*
For the purpose of this paper, composition refers to the use of various elements within an artwork. These elements are line, shape, form, color, value, texture, and space. The various elements, and especially line, create an observable phenomenon, compositional direction.

*Compositional Direction*

This term refers to the manner in which the eye is drawn in a particular direction when viewing visual art.15

*Line*

Line, a basic element of art, is a “mark with length and direction(-s).”16

*Visual Weight/Sound Weight*

Visual weight refers to the degree to which an area is shaded or colored. The intensity level of color and the choice of color add or diminish visual weight. The visual weight of an artwork is analogous to the loudness of music. Perceived loudness is a product of pitch (frequency), intensity (amplitude), and timbre (wave form).17 Although there are differences between actual loudness and perceived loudness of sounds, this distinction lies outside the scope of this paper.

*Self-curation*


Self-curation as a concept derives essentially from the level of choice one has during a given artistic experience. A typical concert, with its set program and strict rules of etiquette would rank rather low in this regard. An art museum, with its multiple galleries, freedom of choice, and multiple levels of engagement allows for much higher levels of self-curation. Those with autotelic personalities seek to engage in such events.

18 Of course, for those who seek more structure and guidance, supplementary materials such as audio guides and printed literature are provided.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature reviewed for this study included sources written by artists, musicians, and scholars each directed toward their respective fields. But while the two art forms share strong connections, the *Cambridge Guide to Conducting* remains the sole source of musicians explicitly connecting the roles of conductor and curator. Bramwell Tovey and Leon Botstein both link conducting and curating. Botstein goes so far to argue that the “Future of Conducting” lies in programming concerts with a more curatorial approach.\(^\text{20}\)

**Musicians on Programming**

Two books were particularly engaging and insightful in regards to thinking contextually about concert design. Elizabeth A.H. Green’s *The Dynamic Orchestra* and Dianne Wittry’s *Beyond the Baton* provide clear explanations of various programming concerns such as repertoire selection, length of performance, and the importance of making concerts memorable experiences. The Green book gives timeless advice to the reader on a variety of topics. The Wittry book is comprehensive, and its section on scripting provides excellent guidance for conductors who wish to speak cogently to the audience during a performance.

An engaging text by William Weber examines historical concert programs from 1750 to 1870. According to Weber, it was during this period that concerts

separated into distinct categories: classical (serious) music and popular. This text is particularly valuable, as it shows that the current gulf between serious and popular music has not always existed.

Articles written in the 1980s by Allan Kozinn, Thomas Morris, and S. Frederick Starr give some of the more recent history behind the changing natures of professional orchestras and music directors. Morris, writing in 1989, says, “Symphony concerts have become dull and predictable; musicians and audiences are suffering from repetitive routines and formula-type programming.”21

Music educators have written prodigiously on the subject of programming for school ensembles. The nearly sixty articles on this topic written for *The Instrumentalist* and other such periodicals since 1960 reveal interesting biases and trends. Many of these articles equate “good programming” to programming “good” music. The authors then describe to greater or lesser detail what they believe “good” music is and/or prescribe which music teachers should select (Maccabee 2001; Camphouse 2001; Begian 2002; Doty 2003; Spradling 2003; Ellis August 2004; Ellis November 2004; Bordo 2005; Stoffel 2010). The sudden outburst of articles of this kind in the past ten years is notable.

Some sources attempt to treat concerts more holistically and offer suggestions regarding the order of pieces on a concert (Hare 1960; Harlow 1969; Hunsberger 1980; Ellis 1997; Foster 1998; Barton 2001; Feldman 2003; Fiedler 2005; Modell September 2005; Modell October 2005). In each case, these

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sources speak in generalities without mentioning specific concerts as examples. Donald Hunsberger’s article regarding the genesis of the “Prism Concert” format is particularly important as this remains a viable and widely-utilized alternative to traditional concert formats.

Among American musicians, especially band directors, John Phillip Sousa’s programming model remains popular (Bierly 1973; Reely 2002; Brion 2004). The “Sousa Concert” format involves quick transitions between pieces, alternation between serious and lighter works, and the use of encores such as marches to keep the energy level high.

Much has been written about themed concerts. Most authors are decidedly pro-themes (Fonder 2003; Blaufuss 2006; Contorno 2007; Oliver 2007; Pettit-Johnson 2008), citing concerts grouped by nationality of composer, holiday celebrations, and historical or anniversary commemorations. “Pops” concerts are also highly recommended for the purposes of audience development. Ironically, former Cincinnati Pops Orchestra conductor Erich Kunzel argued against themed concerts on the grounds that they are too limiting.22

Many of the above mentioned articles mention variety or contrast among pieces as a desirable factor. Some go as far as to suggest that modern audiences cannot be expected to sit through, let alone enjoy, a long concert without a constant stream of variety, action, and non-musical diversions (Stella 1985; Doty

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22 Heather Pettit,” Erich Kunzel's Programs Feature Works from Rossini to Disney," *The Instrumentalist*. 56, no. 6 (January 2002), 13.
2003). The tacit assumption is that singular compositions of (band) music are easily distillable to monochromatic labels such as light, heavy, fun, or serious.

Although dated, Robert Hare’s 1960 article “The Art of Programming” speaks of truths unaffected by the passage of time. “There are three major qualifications that a conductor or any other interpretive artist should possess: (1) a sound technique, (2) an understanding of nuance, and (3) the ability to construct a good program.”

Hare writes about types of listeners and the psychology of listening. Throughout the article a thread is woven which connects audience enjoyment of a concert with the level of musical sophistication of the conductor. Elitism and alienation is to be avoided, however, and Hare suggests introducing contemporary music to audiences slowly, rather than suddenly.

When the average listener is confronted by musical forms and styles that are foreign to his habits of perception, cultural experiences, and social situation, he is likely to find himself unable to appreciate such music. In this case objective knowledge such as may be supplied by program notes serves to aid understanding and reinforce the act of listening.

Gary Hill, Professor of Music and Director of Ensembles at Arizona State University, has written several interesting articles highlighting the importance of context, reflexive thinking, and sustainability, particularly in the area of wind band programming. Hill’s article in the 2009 WASBE journal advocates for a

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24 Ibid., 27.
less narrow approach to music education—a “continuum of options”25 approach that is entirely dependent upon the community that each school serves. “Creating Concerts”, featured in the Bands of America magazine prevails upon school music teachers to think creatively about concert design—as creatively as they think about marching band show design. “By asking salient questions and thinking creatively about all that we do, we can begin to move toward a vibrant future.”26

The 1938 publication Getting Results with School Bands is important in that it gives the modern conductor some perspective on the thought processes of professional and school band directors at the early stages of the band movement. The chapter on “Concert Program Building” is of particular use. Importantly, the chapter begins with a discussion of planning concerts with a certain purpose in mind. “…for the school band, entertainment for the audience and education for the participant must be considered.”27 A model program framework is given at the end of the chapter, and though it is vague, the variety of music and shape of the concert experience would be pleasing even to modern audiences.


Curators on Exhibition Design

Art Museum/Gallery curators have written a large body on the curatorial process ranging from basic how-to volumes to profound tomes considering the fundamental nature of art and aesthetic experience. An easily accessible book on the elements of art that contribute to effective exhibition design is James K. Reeve’s *The Art of Showing Art*. Reeve uses a clear writing style and visual examples to explain the basics of composition, how the elements of composition help determine proper placement alone and within a group, and even provides practical advice on such topics as lighting, framing, and storage. Simple line drawings demonstrate clearly the concepts as they are discussed.

A 1963 publication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions* offers basic information on the transportation and care of artworks, standard methods of exhibition construction, materials, and principles. For musicians, the crossover applications are many, and perhaps the most apparent are in regards to communication. Conductors who work often in new music and with living composers will appreciate the section “Precautions to Keep in Mind”.

The constant work of rethinking the nature of curatorial practice is a common theme in the literature. Graham and Cook’s 2010 *Rethinking Curating* considers the evolving methodology of presenting new media such as video and performance art. They argue that “curating has changed from one of specialism—

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expert knowledge about a specific type of art or time period—to general knowledge of the process of making exhibitions.”

Several volumes of collected essays offer various points of view from individual curators including: What Makes a Great Exhibition?, Curating Now: Imaginative Practice/Public Responsibility, Under Construction: Perspectives on Institutional Practice, Looking, Encountering, Staging, Contemporary Cultures of Display, Designing Exhibitions, and Thinking About Exhibitions. The vast number of curators writing about curatorial practice stands in stark contrast with the relatively small number of musicians writing about programming, to say nothing of the depth of thought present in so many of the essays.

One area of concern trending in the curatorial practice literature has been that of authorship. With the status of the “celebrity curator” on the rise, art is being seen as a means to an end rather than an end unto itself. Fascinating questions such as “Who determines meaning, the artist, the viewer, or the curator?” and the context(s) applied by venue and placement are addressed in the Victoria Newhouse’s monograph Art and the Power of Placement.

Authorship and the curator’s growing influence is also addressed in David Dernie’s Exhibition Design. Also explored is the notion of the function of an object relating directly to its potential exhibition. The example Dernie uses is Winston Churchill’s teaspoon. It “is just a dumb object when placed casually, but


30 Newhouse, Art and the Power of Placement, 142.
when reconstructed it can become an emotionally engaging fragment of history.”31 This source also contains an effective chapter concerning narrative. “Just as a good story captivates an audience, so an exhibition conceived of as a narrative is considered to be an effective form of communication and learning.”32

Two books by Stephen E. Weil, *Rethinking the Museum* and *Making Museums Matter* together with Dave Hickey’s *The Invisible Dragon* represent the growing movement on the part of artists and art institutions to question traditions, be more culturally relevant, socially engaged, and democratically minded. Art critic Dave Hickey begins his collection of essays by recalling his statement that the art issue of the 1990s would be “beauty”. The ensuing public debate regarding Robert Mapplethorpe’s controversial photographs is related with passionate conviction, and the reader is empowered to make aesthetic judgments for himself/herself apart from the pressures of society and government.

As Hickey indicts the old guard, Weil suggests a new path forward. Citing statistics for the rapidly expanding number of new museums and artists at work in the United States, Weil describes how these institutions are free from the constraints of older museums and might consider new means to reach new audiences. Weil’s ideas in *Rethinking the Museum* are continued in *Making Museums Matter*. The chapter “Twenty-One Ways to Buy Art” is especially applicable to the question of how best to make programming decisions over the course of several concerts or seasons.


A unique and handy resource reviewed for this paper is Beverly Serrell’s *Judging Exhibitions: A Framework for Assessing Excellence*. The objective level of excellence of an exhibition, she argues, might be assessed by using a framework which the book outlines and explains in detail. Whether or not this framework has objective validity is beside the point, but it does provide a potentially useful method for self-assessment in the design phase of planning a concert. The comprehensiveness of the framework assures that few, if any, details will be overlooked. A post-concert review using the framework, especially involving several third parties might provide valuable insights and improve future events.

The literature surveyed showed a strong trend for musicians of school ensembles to discuss suitability as the prime (or only) factor when making programming decisions. Professional musicians were somewhat more likely to suggest contextual thinking during the programming process. Curators were more apt to discuss issues of venue, proper display (both in technical and aesthetic terms), and the impact of the curator’s voice on the overall reception of the art.
“The Chapel of Saint Louis at the Invalides is a vast domed building which on the day of the funeral would be filled by many hundreds of people. The windows were to be blocked and the walls draped in black. On December 5 at noon the service took place before the royal family, the diplomatic corps, and all the fashion, power, and frivolity of Paris. Around the coffin flickered six hundred candles and incense boats. Four thousand other pinpoints of light dotted the gloomy shell. Major Lehoux headed the cortege with twenty-four muffled drums beating in the name of the twelve Paris legions, and Séjean played the organ for the service. When all this had been seen and felt and heard came the Requiem music…”

The setting of a performance, much like the setting of a play, impacts the reception of music by a listener in powerful ways. The above description of the premiere of the Berlioz Grand messe des morts reveals what must have been a striking pre-performance ritual, especially in the context of 1837 Paris. This concert is but one example of how the various aspects of setting can conspire to enhance the concert experience.

**Venue**

Among the most important of these aspects is venue. The building itself can have profound contextual implications for performances. Simply performing at Carnegie Hall has the potential to establish a performer’s career (or even genre), and cultural milestones are measured by the first Carnegie Hall performance. Such include James Reese Europe and the Clef Club’s pioneering

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“Concert of Negro Music” on May 2, 1912, or Benny Goodman’s January 1938 concert. Other venues confer differing contexts to a performance. Le Poisson Rouge (LPR) in New York offers traditional and avant-garde classical music alongside a menu of food and beverages. The number of reputable artists and ensembles who perform here regularly suggests the relaxed setting is ideal for certain concert experiences. LPR’s success with the mixture of food, drink, and classical music has also found success in other parts of the country.

The U.S. Marine Band might perform Sousa’s *The Stars and Stripes Forever* in such diverse venues as a famous concert hall, school gymnasium, public park, or via webcast, each to a different effect. In the concert hall, the work might be appreciated more for its inherent musical properties whereas in a school gymnasium or public park the work could tend towards a form of musical cheerleading for civic values and patriotism. Via a webcast, the work might take on additional meaning—perhaps celebrating the tradition of advancements in American technology.

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34 Badger, *A Life in Ragtime*, 64.


As the New York Philharmonic demonstrated in 2008, what might be a typical program in New York takes on much political significance when performed in North Korea. In a carefully planned program that featured both countries’ national anthems, the orchestra aimed to form a cultural bond through a performance of quintessentially American music. The interconnecting layers of meaning inherent in the concert experience were innumerable, but the effect of displaying American cultural (and therefore political) dominance was clear.

Liturgical music is especially affected by venue. Performed in a cathedral, the music takes on a functional role that is lost in the concert hall. Performances in civic venues, depending upon the region, might be troublesome due to “separation of church and state” concerns.

Performing outdoors presents challenges not experienced in the concert hall, even beyond weather concerns. Use (or not) of a shell or amphitheatre provides a measure of control of the environment in that the audience is directed toward a central point. Performing in gazebos or bandstands, however, one might find audience members seated so as to completely surround the ensemble. The problems of balance in such cases can be extreme, drastically altering the perception of music by the listener. The benefit of such a location could be marketed as the “insider’s” point of view of the ensemble. For some, this might be an enlightening and enjoyable way to enjoy a concert.

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Acoustics

The construct of a venue is far more than simply its geographical location. Perhaps the most important characteristics of a venue are the acoustical properties of the performance space as defined by the design of the structure. Composers from the Gabrieliis in 16th century Venice to contemporary composers such as John Corigliano have exploited venue design in their music.

The acoustics of a particular hall affect the performance of the music itself in significant ways ranging from tempo to articulation. Depending upon the amount of resonance in a space the performance time of a piece might vary significantly. In reverberant spaces, tempi might be slowed to improve clarity. In especially dry spaces, tempi and articulation might be adjusted in an attempt to produce more resonance.

In extreme cases, the resonance of the hall may limit the effective performance of certain music. For example, Stravinsky’s Octet is ideally suited for a small recital hall with little or no reverberation. Excessive reverberation, in effect, would lengthen and round out the sounds Stravinsky has so carefully marked short and dry. In the end, a listener would not hear Stravinsky’s music as the composer intended. For conductors who value composers’ intentions, a prime criterion for programming a piece becomes having access to an appropriate acoustic.

Audience

Venue is an important aspect of setting, but the two are not equivalent. An equally important aspect to consider is the composition of the audience. If this
can be known ahead of time (such as is the case when performing at an academic conference) the implications for programming are heightened. College Band Director National Association (CBDNA) conference performances are tailored to the members of that organization and typically include a mix of band classics and world premiere performances in keeping with the tradition of innovation endemic in that organization. Similarly, the best programs for young people’s concerts, holiday concerts, and memorial concerts reflect the markedly audiences.

Technology has been used in the concert hall to enhance the experience of the listener for decades. Increasingly, technology is making it possible to bring the concert to the audience in new locations. Author Richard K. Hansen notes that in November 1999 one of the earliest concerts to be webcast took place at Arizona State University under the direction of Gary W. Hill.39 ASU’s Gammage Auditorium had been the site for a presidential debate and therefore had the necessary technological means to make such an event possible. Thirteen years later, it is common for concert events to be webcast using YouTube.com and ustream.tv (and at no cost).

The steady march of progress in this area points the way forward for an increased role in the incorporation of technology in the planning and design of concert experiences. The venue for such performances becomes the choice of the listener, and while the conductor may have no influence over this aspect of venue it is important to use high quality video and audio equipment to transmit the finest

quality possible. The Metropolitan Opera is a leading figure in this new age, and their broadcasts in movie theatres across the country transmit in HD video and Dolby 5.1 audio.\footnote{“FAQs Live in HD”, http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/liveinhd/faqs.aspx (accessed March 13, 2012).}

Setting has always been important in the reception of music. Returning to Berlioz, the anniversary of the 1830 revolution combined with the death of General Damrémont was a particularly appropriate time for the Requiem, and the military nature of the event extended to the very instrumentation of the piece, which includes large wind and brass sections. Thus, the “military” nature of the instrumentation reinforced the original purpose for the Requiem, and the setting of the Chapel of St. Louis at the Invalides, windows blocked, provided the ideal setting in which to experience the music.
According to author Dan Pink, narratives are increasingly important to contemporary society. By offering such information, both for the connoisseur and novice, museums are responding to the needs of 21st century visitors. The notion of narrative in the context of concert design lies in both the internal narrative(s) of each piece of music and in the manner in which the pieces are connected. Thus, narrative takes two forms: Concert Narrative and the Curatorial Statement.

**Concert Narrative**

In Art Museums/Galleries, written labels and signs which are critical to understanding and/or navigating the exhibit are included as part of the exhibit itself. These might include posted signage, audio prompts, videos, and/or docents. Although (in this author’s opinion) great music needs no explanation, some music is aided by background information, especially in the case of a world premiere or an older, more obscure piece. Concert Narrative is important for the audience—it guides the listener in how to hear the music during a concert experience just as written guides inform visitors how to navigate an exhibition. Often, this guidance takes the form of program notes or spoken announcements.

It is important to consider the experience of the novice when building concerts designed to attract new audiences. The culture of performer/audience

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interaction at art music concerts has, for many years, been understood among the initiated. Little to no human interaction is expected, outside of applause following the conclusion of the work (and thank you for not applauding between movements).

Seen from the viewpoint of a first-time concert attendee the structure is far from welcoming. Since communication between audience members during the performance is strictly forbidden, the only external source of information available is that which is printed in the program. There is little recourse but to read the program quickly before or during the performance, which is made more difficult by the dimming of the lights. In contrast to the Art Museum/Gallery experience, where visitors can interact freely, the concert experience can feel especially claustrophobic.

Concert Narrative is beneficial to the audience because it provides context for the flow of the evening. This strengthening of the concert experience by means of context can be seen in the following example.

Suppose one was to attend a concert with the following program:

Mozart Serenade No. 10 “Gran Partita”
Riegger Nonet for Brass
Hindemith Symphony in B-flat for Concert Band

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42 This narrative can be presented in numerous means: spoken, video, audio guide, etc.
For the connoisseur, this program is striking because of the different genres involved. The musical differences between the pieces would seem to be at odds with one another. For the novice, perhaps only the name Mozart is recognizable.

However, if the concert were described as a recreation of the first program of the Eastman Wind Ensemble the evening takes on additional meaning. The audience perceives that it is experiencing a recreation of a significant event whose purpose was to establish a new genre: the wind ensemble.

Indeed, Fennell's goal was not simply to give a concert. Fennell stated, "this program argues strongly against the old complaint leveled against wind instruments that there is no music written for them which is of sufficient interest to make anyone care to hear it performed."\textsuperscript{43}

There are several points to underscore. First, Fennell understood that this program was concerned mainly with making an argument for the establishment of a new genre--albeit a flexible genre--which could change from piece to piece. His choice of music illustrated the wide variety of wind music available for performance. The choice of composers, an unquestioned master, an American writing in the then-en-vogue serial style, and an American émigré, says "There are and have been major composers who have written for winds in many combinations, from harmoniemusik to the concert band. The new genre of the wind ensemble is continuing a long tradition."

\textsuperscript{43} Fennell, \textit{Time and the Winds}, 56.
Without the narrative, the above program might be as successful artistically, but it would certainly be less connected to history. With the narrative, the program achieves much more than the sum of its parts. Perhaps most importantly, it offers the novice and the connoisseur the opportunity to derive satisfaction from the event.

Books contain lists of concert programs, but not "why" the works were programmed, miss the point. What is the glue which holds the program together? Or, perhaps the omission of a curatorial statement implies there is no glue at all. Perhaps each work is intended to be "heard" separately. Perhaps this is indeed how people hear concerts, but what time interval assures a truly "separate" hearing?

**Curatorial Statement**

The Curatorial Statement is a written description of the purpose of an exhibition. Often, they are included in marketing publications or in literature provided to visitors at the event. Curatorial statements provide a narrative which explains the rationale behind the curator's decisions—*which* art is being presented and *why*. The simplest form of such a statement is a title.

Writing a Curatorial Statement is *de rigueur* for the curator, but it is rare for a conductor to offer a public justification for a program. For the school music teacher, “Music We Can Play Well” might often be a sufficient title, albeit

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artistically insufficient. In the professional realm the corollary might be “Music That Sells Tickets.”

In the absence of an explicit Curatorial statement, one might be assumed. This might prove perilous, as in the following example.

Wagner  Overture to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*
Beethoven  Symphony No. 9 (Choral)

Sample titles might include “19th Century Masterworks”, or, potentially, the incendiary label of a cynic, “Music Hitler Loved.” If the conductor does not wish for this title to be considered, then he/she should supply one.

Composers spend years developing the craft of composing and deserve to have their music heard in appropriate environments. Conductors who neglect to consider the context(s) they put around the music do a disservice to both the music and the audience. If for no other reason than respect of the composer and his talents, conductors must in turn devote their energy to assuring a proper hearing of the music. To give an audience a powerful experience, not only does the music have to be meticulously prepared, but it must be meticulously presented.

Appendices A and B contain example programs and their respective curatorial statements. These programs are intended to be examples of contextual thinking and the dual forms of narrative. Each of the three concert experiences was presented in different venues, for different kinds of audiences, and thus required differing formats.
CHAPTER 5

SUBJECT MATTER AND MUSICAL CONNOTATIONS

“All art is at once surface and symbol.”

Oscar Wilde’s warning from The Picture of Dorian Gray takes on new meaning in the context of a discussion on subject matter.

To describe the subject matter (or ‘the subject’) of an artwork is to describe its content in a literal sense. The subject of da Vinci’s Mona Lisa is Lisa del Giaconda. The subject of the Last Supper is the final meal shared between Jesus and His disciples. Like all great works of art, there is much substance beyond the literal level. This will be discussed later in the paper under the heading Musical Connotations.

In many cases, the function of the music is equivalent to its subject. For example, Copland’s Fanfare for the Common Man is a fanfare. It shares a literal connection to the Josquin des Prez fanfare Vive le roy written 400 years earlier. The serenades of Mozart, Elgar, Strauss, and Carter Pann vary in many ways but are united in subject.

Subjects in sacred music are often identified through text. The literal subject of a mass setting, provided a similar text is used, is the same regardless of composer. Contrasts begin when differing texts are used, such as in the requiem settings of Brahms, Mozart, and Verdi. On a functional level, however, these works are all requiems.

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45 Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray, 6.
Music with nondescript titles, such as Symphony No. 1, benefit from explanation especially if the composer is unknown or the piece is brand new. Other pieces, such as Ein Deutche Requiem, have more descriptive titles, but may still benefit from added information such as contained in program notes. Composers recognize the significance of annotations and often specify themselves the information to be included in concert programs.

Composers have increasingly used titles to designate subject matter. Descriptive titles, such as Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique, Liszt’s Totentanz, and Handel’s Music for the Royal Fireworks, help to self-identify their inspiration or intent. The use or avoidance of descriptive titles is an important insight into a composer’s style. Stravinsky’s Octet, for example, typifies the composer’s belief in the work’s musical absolutism by using the number of players as a title rather than an affectation.

Additional (and quite often problematic) “gray areas” arise when annotators separate from the composer fail to limit themselves to a discussion of subject matter and delve into the subjective. Some argue that the readers of program notes appreciate the guidance provided by keywords such as "trembling," "furious," or "beautiful".

Some will argue that music cannot be described in words, and therefore only offer background information regarding the compositional process, date of the premiere, etc. They let the listener decide upon the meaning.

An intriguing example of the ambiguity of subject matter can be seen in Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings. While the subject matter is unknown, it has
come to have a very clear meaning for Americans, having been used in countless memorial services and in response to national tragedies, including the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Does performing this music out of its original context change the “meaning”? If so, is this to be avoided? Should we only perform music within its original context?

Doesn’t every person decide for themselves what “meaning” is? Or, should the listener subjugate their feelings in deference to the composer? Do conductors ask this of listeners, too?

**Musical Connotations**

“Whether in a museum or otherwise, objects only have meaning for us through the framework of the concepts and assumptions with which we approach them. We see things, as the anthropologist David Pilbeam has observed, not as they are but ‘as we are.’”

Although in many instances composers specify a narrative or indicate a problem as the inspiration for a particular piece, this is not always the case. This paper does not assert that all music carries explicit meanings. Rather, the term ‘connotation’, as used by Leonard Meyer, seems more appropriate.

Connotations are associations, and as such they are not universal. The connotation of a piece of music is a construct of several parties, progressing from the composer to the performers to the audience. Each party brings, consciously or not, his or her own biases to the final product. Over time, music can become

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linked with certain holidays, venues, events, and/or performers. These extra-musical ties can be more important to the reception of the music than the music itself.

For instance, a concert on the 4th of July might be said to be incomplete without *The Stars and Stripes Forever* by John Philip Sousa. While this may be true for U.S. citizens and a concert in Arizona in a different location the implications might be serious. Such a concert in Taiwan or Nepal might be seen by the Chinese government as provocative. For expatriates living abroad it might stir feelings of homesickness.

A more subtle example of how musical connotations affect the reception of music might include programming Frank Ticheli's *An American Elegy*. This piece is accessible to moderately advanced bands and might fit the need for a "slow piece". Aiming to pair it with something else "American" one might decide on a Sousa march such as *Bullets and Bayonets* or *The Rifle Regiment*.

Until one understands the subject matter and connotations of the Ticheli (the 1999 Columbine school-shooting disaster), such an egregious error in programming might go unnoticed. Without program notes or an explanation to the audience, many or most would be unaware of the problem. In an increasingly interconnected world, however, it is likely that the problems of conflicting musical connotations will be noticed—it may only take one tweet or status update on Facebook.

Although some connotations take place within cultures, as in the examples listed above, many are more private affairs. The connotation-less concert,
therefore, is a highly improbable act. Conductors must manage these
connotations to the extent that is possible.

If it is important to the conductor that the audience actively perceive
his/her own connotations of a piece, then the music should be presented in a way
to make this clear. Direct, verbal communication from the conductor to the
audience would be effective and appropriate. Such instances might include
tributes or memorial performances. In the absence of such communication each
audience member will, according to his/her own means, respond accordingly.
CHAPTER 6
SOUND WEIGHT

Artworks with great visual weight, such as those of Ellsworth Kelly or of Mark Rothko’s late period, attain their remarkable impact principally through size and intensity of color. Rothko, in particular, had as his goal immediate and direct communication with the viewer. His paintings were frequently large, with the largest occupying several hundred square feet. The line drawings of Picasso, by way of contrast, have little visual weight.

For the purposes of comparison, the elements of size and intensity of color can be linked with the elements of time and loudness. The combination of these two elements will be termed ‘sound weight’.

Both visual weight and sound weight create an imposition on the audience, and it is this imposition that one must manage throughout the course of a concert to avoid the following:

A 700 seater concert hall is not a 70,000 seater football stadium, and the decibel level of some of the performances became seriously unpleasant, and very tiring. A rampant percussion section or a testosterone-fuelled brass department can blot out the colours of the woodwind and harp, and I often emerged shell-shocked, wondering why the bassoons bothered to turn up. And once again I wonder how some of the programmes are constructed; ninety minutes without an interval may be all right for a symphony by Mahler or a one-act opera, but for a noise-fest it is too much.\(^{48}\)

Noted British conductor Tim Reynish’s statements are especially telling considering that he is a member of an audience of experts primed for the concerts

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of which he speaks (2009 CBDNA National Conference). That he could be
distracted by what he feels are excessive sound pressure levels (SPLs) reflects the
-growing concern among musicians about excessive sound weights at musical
events.\(^{49}\)

To the uninitiated, this line of thinking might arouse suspicion. Should
conductors concern themselves with SPLs, decibels, and the like? Don’t
audiences come expecting to hear a concert? Certainly, sound levels at rock
concerts and sporting events can be excessive, but surely this isn’t the case at
classical music concerts. Or is it?

The world is getting louder, and this is causing harm to society.
According to the Occupational Safety and Health Organization (OSHA),
“approximately 30 million people [per year] in the United States are
occupationally exposed to hazardous noise”.\(^{50}\) Construction workers and those
working in manufacturing form the largest portion of those affected, but other
professionals, including music teachers, have been shown to have increased risks
of noise induced hearing loss (NIHL).\(^{51}\)

While excessive visual weight creates a tiresome effect on the eyes, one
can always choose to look away or leave the venue. Excessive sound weight can

\(^{49}\) Although some (Kell 1960) have long considered this issue.

\(^{50}\) http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation/ (accessed March
12, 2012).

\(^{51}\) Royer and Cutietta, Analysis of Band Directors Exposed to Sound
Pressure Levels Roebuck
produce lasting harm, and the choice to leave during a performance is more difficult in a concert setting.

It would seem antithetical for a conductor to knowingly harm the audience’s hearing during the course of a concert, just as it would be to harm an art gallery patron’s eyesight. With this in mind, an awareness of basic acoustics and aural health best practices seems advisable, as they relate to producing a healthful, and ultimately pain-free, musical experience.

In the realm of art music, musicians unions have begun to insist that guidelines be established and met by professional ensembles and venues. Sound protectors, acoustic treatments, and ear plugs are increasingly finding their way into the oldest and most hallowed institutions. Recently, the general public has begun to become more aware of issues such as NIHL, often in the aim of protecting children.

Maintaining healthful SPLs is an important consideration in planning programs, not only for the musicians in the ensemble, but also for the audience. In the case of John Corigliano’s Symphony No. 3 “Circus Maximus”, a shotgun blast ends the work. Notwithstanding the rest of the thirty-five minute work—much of it is quite loud—by itself the gunshot exceeds the OSHA standard for Time Weighted Average (TWA) daily sound allowance. This means that even if

52 Popular musicians have long dealt with this well-documented issue.


54 Ibid.
the ensemble, conductor, and audience had spent the day silently in a soundproof chamber, then the OSHA allowance would be exceeded. The problem, that is to say NIHL, is exacerbated by the rest of the program, not to mention the daily sound exposure one experiences from young children, driving in noisy traffic and eating in a busy restaurant.

The Corigliano is an extreme case, but how loud are ensembles generally? Donald Hall investigated by measuring SPLs at a live orchestra concert, saying:

Sound levels below 50dB are seldom useful in music, because they require that background noise (from adjoining rooms, audience movement, or ventilating systems) be kept even lower. Levels above 100dB are not only unpleasantly loud, but also damaging to the ear, which progressively worsens with prolonged exposure. When 90dB was attained, it was unquestionably fff. I believe the orchestra is capable of producing 95 or even 100 dB at my seat (although they never did in that particular program), but that happens rarely and would be considered ffff. Similarly, only a soft passage by a solo instrument was as low as 50dB, and that was definitely ppp; 40 dB would be so nearly inaudible as to be practically useless.  

The implications of the OSHA standards for the conductor include limiting the exposure to dangerous noise levels (such as Corigliano’s shotgun) and considering the total length of performance relative to the loudness of the music programmed. In extreme cases, calculating the TWA for noise exposure is suggested.

Perceived loudness and actual loudness differ. The perceived loudness of a sound is a construct of the physical variables intensity (actual loudness), frequency (pitch) and wave form (timbre).

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Each of the instruments is capable of a different range of loudness measured in SPLs. Thus, a rough estimate of the TWA in a work can be determined through instrumentation and length: a Romantic Era-sized orchestra of 100 musicians will produce more sound than a string quartet. This may seem intuitive, and it is, but the implication is that to maintain a healthy TWA the Romantic Era-sized orchestra should give shorter concerts. The implication goes further for the wind conductor. Large symphonic bands with consistent, full ensemble scoring will by necessity give shorter concerts than wind ensembles with flexible instrumentation.

Many of the sources reviewed for this paper advocate beginning concerts with a lively, full-volume piece. The goal is to energize the audience, and indeed in the past this might have been effective. At least one conductor has advocated the opposite.\textsuperscript{56} Carl St. Clair’s approach to programming Bruckner’s \textit{Symphony No. 9} involved a small choir of Catholic monks singing Latin chant in the lobby prior to the concert. This served as a kind of buffer between the outside world and the symphony, calming the audience down so as to be “in a proper state to receive Bruckner.”\textsuperscript{57}

While not all concerts begin this way, the most direct means by which to lessen SPLs at concert events is to program works with fewer players. Works


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
with extreme SPLs should be preceded and followed by extended periods of relative quiet, either through silence or an intermission.

It is clear that in the 21st century noise pollution and other increases in ambient sound levels have implications for the aural health of society not experienced in previous generations. Taking the above into consideration, it is hoped that the conductor will be mindful of SPLs while designing concert experiences.
CHAPTER 7

COMPOSITIONAL DIRECTION

Compositional direction refers to the manner in which the eye is drawn in a particular direction when viewing an image. This is achieved mainly through a manipulation of line. Perhaps the most basic form can be observed in the symbols in Figure 1. The arrow, a basic symbol, derives its meaning through its compositional direction. Other arrows of differing shapes and sizes will still be functional to the viewer to a greater or lesser degree based upon their inherent ability to direct the eye.

Figure 1: Compositional Direction (Explicit)

Artists are conscious of direction in their compositions, and the manner by which line is controlled is as fundamental to art as counterpoint is to music. Compositions, naturally, fall along a continuum of directions. These might be explicit or more subtle. If a composition has no such direction then it is said to be balanced. The example below illustrates this concept.

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58 Reeve, The Art of Showing Art, 4.
The viewer's attention is pointed upward as a result of a form of visual empathy with the wolf.

**Grouping**

The phenomenon of compositional direction is useful to the curator as he/she organizes an exhibition. With rare exceptions, art is viewed in conjunction with other art present nearby. The various works are arranged in a group so that their individual compositional directions are in harmony (directions reinforcing the group) or in discord (directions pointing outward from the group). Unifying
the group through compositional direction reinforces the whole. This can be accomplished on a portion of a wall, the entire surface, or indeed within an entire room. In a concert, music might be arranged in one of several groups, with the entire concert being thought of as a group.

Grouping art has been a common practice for centuries, as the earliest exhibitions were not the mostly-blank walls with single works hung at eye level they are today. Rather, art was hung from ceiling to floor with no space between frames. The import was less on the favorable viewing of the art and more on displaying the wealth and stature of the owner. Additionally, it was customary for a viewer to remove a painting from its place on the wall to inspect it more closely.

Dissatisfied with this cluttered manner of display, artists in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries began to organize their own exhibitions. This tradition has continued and evolved, with varying levels of experimentation and conformity. Since the 1950s, curators have increasingly violated traditional “rules” for an intended purpose—often creating humorous or thought-provoking results.

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59 And in this way, the curator is truly the counterpart of the conductor, making “programming” decisions with art.


61 Ibid., 23.
Space is Silence

The unused space around the frame of an artwork is analogous to the silence before and after a musical performance. Edward Cone’s fascinating comparison is clearly pertinent to the current discussion of art groupings and the implications of compositional direction.

Silence is a useful tool to a conductor. It has a dual nature in the context of musical performance. Before the music begins, silence is anticipatory. The listener readies himself/herself for the music which is about to begin. Following the music, the listener reflects on what he/she has just heard. The effective control of these moments of silence, while difficult, is crucial to achieving a captivating musical performance.

Too much silence (especially between movements in a single work) has the effect of isolation; the audience grows restless and the ensemble nervous. Too little silence can blur the architecture of a piece.

Programming with Compositional Direction in Mind

In music, the concept compositional direction can be of great value to a conductor as he/she assembles a program. Inevitably, the impact of each work is changed as one experiences the pieces in turn.

The dominant seventh chord is a prime example of an element with forward compositional direction. The listener’s attention is focused mainly on

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what is coming next, as the dissonance needs resolution. Fanfares, marches, or other light, lively music might be said to have forward compositional direction. *The Star-Spangled Banner*, often performed at the beginning of sporting events, has a similar effect.

Balanced compositional direction might include a perfect authentic cadence or another point of rest. The listener is content to focus on the present moment and the resolution of tension implicit in such a cadence. Often, major compositions such as symphonies or tone poems have a balanced compositional direction.

Backwards compositional direction in music requires the listener to reflect upon what he/she has just heard. This might be achieved through a sentimental text, a lament bass line, or other such musical connotation. Such direction has the effect of stopping any forward direction. Since concerts have a historical precedence of ending “up”, such pieces are rarely used to conclude a concert. A notable exception is in the case of H. Robert Reynolds’ retirement concert at the University of Michigan in April 2001. Following a long and well-balanced concert, he chose to perform last Grainger’s *Irish Tune from County Derry* in memory of his mother. This music, combined with Reynolds’ spoken commentary, served to illustrate that the concert experience was meant as a wistful reflection of his twenty-six-year tenure.
CONCLUSION

The declining audiences in classical music concerts over the past thirty years are unfortunate, but they may not be permanent. What is needed is a new approach of building concert experiences modeled after the best practices of the most successful arts organization over this period—Art Museums/Galleries.

Conductors must take the responsibility for their art and its continued sustainability. The professional tendency towards programming, largely based upon marketing, is lamented by Botstein. “Concert programming must change. The assumption needs to be abandoned that any three works go together.”

The academic view of concerts as strictly educational events serving only the needs of the students is equally narrow-minded. The educational needs of students are indeed important, and this paper encourages a broader view of these educational objectives. In so doing, students are prepared to think contextually and create effective concert experiences which best serve their local communities.

To solve the problem of declining interest in attending classical music events, this paper identifies music as the solution rather than the problem. In an effort to best present music to an audience several criteria for concert design are considered: setting, subject matter, musical connotations, narrative, sound weight, and compositional direction.

Through an examination of these elements, conductors gain a new, curatorial perspective through which to examine traditional limits. Performing in only one venue, one type of music for only one type of audience has proven to be

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unsustainable. Changing venues allows an organization to expand their repertoire
and audience, and in the 21st century this versatility is essential to cultivating
relationships with new audiences. The future lies in these relationships.

**Directions for Further Research**

Beverly Serrell’s *Judging Exhibitions: A Framework for Assessing Excellence* is a fascinating exploration of the effectiveness of exhibitions.
Serrell’s Framework would be an ideal point of departure for a similar rubric
which could be used to describe the effectiveness of a given concert. Perhaps
most importantly, this rubric could be used in the design phase of a concert
experience rather than as an assessment tool.

Methodologies used by conductors to design programs vary widely, but
perhaps through a large-scale examination commonalities could be found between
them. This study would be enriched by examining the practices of conductors of
community, school, professional, military, and/or religious ensembles.

Direct communication with curators and conductors regarding their
methods would be prudent. This study has relied upon printed source materials
exclusively, but no doubt much creative work in this area goes undocumented.
As society continues to change the context(s) surrounding exhibitions and
performances will require ongoing consideration.
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APPENDIX A

THREE PROGRAMS
**Three Octets for Winds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Gabrieli (1554/7-1612)</td>
<td>Sonata VI: pian e forte à 8 (alla quarta bassa)</td>
<td>1597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Sacrae Symphoniae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)</td>
<td>Serenade in E-Flat K. 375</td>
<td>1782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Stravinsky (1882-1971)</td>
<td>Octet (1923/52)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Connections: Music We Love to Play

March, El Capitan                John Philip Sousa/K. Brion and L. Schissel

First Suite in E-Flat Op. 28 No. 1 Gustav Holst/C. Matthews
  I.  Chaconne
  II. Intermezzo
  III. March

Memphis Blues                  William Christopher Handy/J.R. Europe

ASU Social Engagement Project Band

Charleston Rag                  James Hubert “Eubie” Blake
Star Dust                      Hoagy Carmichael
Take the A Train               Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington

The Swinging Resorters

Beguine for Band                Glenn Osse

Two American Hymns
  The Promise of Living          Aaron Copland/K. Singleton
  O Magnum Mysterium            Morten Lauridsen/H.R. Reynolds


ASU Social Engagement Project Band
Two Exhibitions: A Curated Concert Experience

James Reese Europe: A Tribute

“Arizona” (1904)
Andrew Briggs, Baritone
Liz Ames, Piano

Castle Walk (1914)
Castle House Rag (1914)
ASU Exclusive Society Orchestra

“On Patrol in No Man’s Land”
Andrew Briggs, Baritone
Liz Ames, Piano
ASU 369th Infantry “Hellfighters” Tribute Band

St. Louis Blues (1919)
Memphis Blues (1919)
ASU 369th Infantry “Hellfighters” Tribute Band

Schubertiade 2012

Marche Militaire D. 733/1
Professors Walter Cosand and Russell Ryan, piano

“Gretchen am Spinnrade”
“Auf dem Wasser zu singen”
Andrea Flores, Soprano
Professor Russell Ryan, Piano

(pause)

Vier Ländler D. 814
Professors Walter Cosand and Russell Ryan, piano

“Viola”
Mallory Roberts,
Professor Russell Ryan, Piano

(pause)
“Der Tod und das Mädchen”
“Geheimes”
“Der Wanderer”
   Samuel Kreidenweis, Tenor
   Professor Russell Ryan, Piano

Marche Militaire D. 733/2
   Professors Walter Cosand and Russell Ryan, piano

uConduct!

This interactive exhibit gives visitors an opportunity to conduct a small group of live musicians. No experience is necessary, and conductor Carrie Pawelski will be on-hand to deliver helpful suggestions and to answer questions. [Music includes Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star and Happy Birthday]
“Three Octets for Winds” (February 15, 2009)

This concert was designed to highlight each work by placing it in chronological relation to others. The works presented were Giovanni Gabrieli’s *Sonata VI: pian e forte*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Serenade in E-flat Major*, and Igor Stravinsky’s *Octet*.

These three works, all by acknowledged compositional masters, remind us that composing for eight winds was not limited to the harmoniemusik ensembles of the Classic Period. After hearing the Gabrieli, we see that Mozart was continuing a long-established tradition of art music (and in the case of Gabrieli sacred music) written specifically for winds. By ending with the Stravinsky, we see that his choice of instrumentation is itself an evolution—a continuation of composer experimentations. Indeed, when the program is taken as a whole, we see how each composer was at the forefront of musical experimentation—Gabrieli with dynamic contrast and orchestration, Mozart with increasing technical demands, and Stravinsky with timbre and form.
Connections: Music We Love to Play (November 20, 2011)

Social Engagement concerts are a new initiative of the ASU Instrumental ensembles. In the 21st century, it is imperative that musicians interact within their local communities and create socially engaged performances—social, in that music is inherently a shared activity, and engaged, that is, an experience in which both performer and listener are actively participating. Bringing music to audiences, rather than the less-responsive practice of performing on-campus, is an additional goal. An ideal East Valley location for such an event was The Resort in Mesa, Arizona, a retirement community.

In creating a concert for the residents of The Resort, there were many factors to consider. The average age among residents is the upper 60s. A musical community, the residents have formed a chorus and big band in addition to sponsoring several concerts of outside performers throughout the year. The time and date of the concert were carefully selected as to not coincide with games of the Green Bay Packers or Minnesota Vikings, as many of the residents maintain a close affinity with these teams.

With the goal of creating synergy between the ASU students and the existing musical groups of The Resort, the “Swinging Resorters” big band was invited to perform. They quickly accepted, though stipulated that their rehearsal schedule would allow them only enough time to prepare a few favorite selections, mostly from the swing era.

64 The chorus had yet to begin its season.
The author’s current research in early 20th century music led to the curatorial premise behind the program in which the “Swinging Resorters” would be appropriately featured and seamlessly integrated. The goal of the concert was to trace chronologically the development of the big band genre from the military band, and show how the band tradition had continued to flourish in the 21st century.

The concert began with John Philip Sousa’s march *El Capitan*. The eponymous operetta, from which the march is derived, was the first successful Broadway show written by an American citizen. The length and spirit of the music are ideally suited to the beginning of such a concert.

Second on the concert was Gustav Holst’s *First Suite in E-flat*—the landmark composition for “military band” that helped establish the wind band medium as artistically viable. The piece’s popularity and familiarity made it an ideal choice for inclusion.

The third piece on the concert was a calculated risk, and in this author’s view, is the “missing link” between military bands and the big band genre—W.C. Handy’s *The Memphis Blues* as recorded by James Reese Europe and the 369th Infantry Regiment “Hellfighters” Band.

*The Memphis Blues* demonstrates several jazz style traits, including “growling,” brief improvisational solos, and a loose ragtime feel. These characteristics provided an ideal gateway for the “Swinging Resorters” set of swing era favorites, which included “Star Dust”, “Take the A Train”, and
“Charleston Rag”. The inclusion of the Eubie Blake standard is all the more meaningful given his close partnership and friendship with James Reese Europe. Following the “Swinging Resorters”, the ASU band performed Glen Osser’s Beguine for Band, a once-popular novelty number written in the 1950s by Paul Whiteman’s former arranger.

In a tip-of-the-hat to The Resort Chorus, the next two selections were vocal in origin. Presented together as “Two American Hymns”, Aaron Copland’s “The Promise of Living” from *The Tender Land* and Morten Lauridsen’s *O Magnum Mysterium* were meant to embody American optimism and hope.

The concert ended with a Sousa march, this time *The Washington Post*. The popularity of the two-step in the 1890s made this march one of the most popular pieces of music of its time. As a concert bookend, it served to remind the audience that the band and its musical descendents have deeply influenced American culture and embody its national spirit.
Rituals have long been part of the human experience. From ancient prehistory to the present we have sought to bring order to our existence. Like other rituals (think worship services and/or sporting events), the concert program has developed over time to such a degree that there is considerable uniformity in performance rituals (concerts) throughout the world.

One might expect a lively opening number followed by a contrasting selection or a concerto performance. An intermission follows which precedes the main work on the concert—usually a symphony or other large-scale work. In all cases, the theatre is darkened save for the stage, where the performers are highlighted. No talking, please, and you may clap only at the end.

After many decades of such concerts one has to ask—is this really the best way to present music to an audience? If not, what other ways are there? In the case of “Two Exhibitions” we replace the standard classical music concert ritual with that of the Art Museum/Gallery.

Three events are presented simultaneously, allowing the audience to move about the performance spaces at their discretion. It is hoped that each event might be stimulating enough to receive some attention from each audience member, but no compliance with this wish is required. Indeed, the choice(s) offered to the audience is the *raison d’être* for the evening.

The first of the concert exhibitions is a tribute to the (largely forgotten) early jazz transitional figure James Reese Europe. Through an exploration of his myriad musical activities (musical theatre, the blues, high society dance music)
the audience gains an appreciation for the pioneering career of this American musician. The event is supplemented with video introductions, and lasts for thirty minutes. Two performances will be offered, at 7:30pm and at 8:05pm.

The second exhibition is a modern recreation of the 19th century *Schubertiade*. Set in the intimate acoustic of the ASU Organ Hall, Schubert-lovers can experience favorite lieder sung by members of the vocal studio of Carole FitzPatrick. As a special treat, ASU piano faculty members Russell Ryan and Walter Cosand perform four-hand arrangements. The event is co-curated by Russell Ryan, former faculty member of the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien and accompanist of the Wiener Singverein.

The visit to the museum is made complete through an interactive experience entitled “uConduct!” This installation gives visitors an opportunity to conduct a small group of live musicians. No experience is necessary, and a variety of familiar music is available to conduct. Should there be any questions, conductor Carrie Pawelski is on-hand to deliver an expert solution.

In one night, and in one location, the audience member is offered vastly different musical experiences. For the musical omnivores of the 21st century it is hoped that such an event might provide *both* the thrill of live performance *and* the diversity of an iPod.