

What do we know about how music and audiences meet?

Heather Maitland

Is music social?

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There are opposing theories about music:

No, it's not social:

- Music is an idea, separate from society
- The meaning of music is inside the music itself

Yes, it is social:

- Music helps us define who we are
- Music helps tell other people who we are
- Music helps us feel we belong
- Music is a link to who we were in the past
- Live concerts help forge social bonds

What makes memorable music?



What happens when we listen live with others?

 Our movements express our involvement with the music

We match our movements to other people

We have a more intense response

We feel a bond with the group

Happens with children too

Happens regardless of musical knowledge

De Bruyn, L., Leman, M., Demey, M., Desmet, F. & Moelants, D. *Measuring and quantifying the impact of social interaction in listeners' movements to music.* Accepted for publication in Springer Verlag Lecture Notes in Computer Science.

De Bruyn, L., Leman, M. & Moelants, D. *Quantifying children's embodiment of musical rhythm in individual and group settings*. Accepted for publication in Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition. Sapporo, Japan, August 25-29 2008

Desmet, Frank et al, 'Statistical Analysis of Human Body Movement and Group Interactions in Response to Music', A. Fink et al., (eds.), *Advances in Data Analysis, Data Handling and Business Intelligence, Studies in Classification, Data Analysis, and Knowledge Organization*, Springer-Verlag, Berlin Heidelberg 2010





But it also happens at classical concerts.

For some, live music is about a shared experience

"I think if I'm going to the live music I tend to want to go with somebody else, so I'll suggest something and if they're keen that will point me towards one concert rather than another

'Exploring musical tastes in contemporary classical and experimental music', Audiences London, 2011

Being with like-minded people

 "That's part of the delight of it, you know; it's kind of that community of it and I guess, similarly, with actually going to concerts, if you're part of a community, and especially if the music is very contemporary or is difficult...

Other people's reaction:

 My memory of that work is a lot of the images are about people that I saw kind of turning the corner and getting the hit that I just had, or having a completely different reaction."

But it's not social for everyone

Contemporary music is seen as different

- "A lot of times it will be by myself, whereas going to [mainstream] gigs is different. There'll be three or four sitting there drinking"
- "For this sort of stuff I always go on my own. You know, for me it's a spiritual experience; it's like going to a cathedral or a mass."

We've got a problem!

"I'm interested in the music and I don't want somewhere that's filled with people who ... just want to drink. I want people there who are interested in the music. But what I don't want is to go somewhere it feels like 'Oh, we're going to church now'."

Maitland, H., The Jazz Services Guide to Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz, Jazz Services, 2011

Two sorts of festival attender

- Fans: 'the music really does matter'
- Tribal socials: seeking an experience beyond the music being played on stage

Henderson, S. and Wood, E.H. (2009) Dance To The Music: Fans and socialites in the festival audience. Academy of Marketing Annual Conference. Leeds, July 2009

So how can we be social without annoying our fans?

What makes a social experience?

Some social groups are warm and welcoming ...





But other social groups exclude people – we need to make sure that first time attenders to our concerts feel welcomed into the group.









- Interaction with the people you came with:
 - commenting about the music and the musicians
 - sharing an emotional response
 - strengthening the relationship
- Interaction with other audience members
- Interaction between the musicians and the audience
- Food, drink and an informal atmosphere help



So how can help our audiences interact with us and each other?

Anticipation

- 'Readiness to receive' makes a big difference to a concert's impact:
- How do audiences feel before the concert : distracted? Focused?
- How excited do they feel about the concert before it starts?
- How confident are they that they will enjoy the concert?

Brown, A, Major University Presenters' Value and Impact Study, Wolf Brown 2008

This great leaflet tells parents and children exactly what the concert experience will be like. Even people who don't go to concerts will understand it.

Peter and The Wolf

Performed by the WhistleBlast Quartet

Find out about their instruments

Hear the Story

Listen to the Music

Recognise the different animals through the music that represents them

Wear your favourite animal mask or Slip on your paws and come to the NCH Family Concert!



Also...

Audience participation - Gartoon Tunes
and other music to enjoy.

So how can we use our marketing and communications to create excitement, focus and confidence?

Does it matter who you go with?

- People who go to concerts with people like themselves feel more:
 - Intellectual stimulation
 - Emotional response
 - Spiritual value
 - Social bonding
 - ... and they are more satisfied with the experience
- It's possible that just having people like them in the audience has the same affect
- Going with someone they are related to reduces the impact of the music
- It doesn't matter how many people they go with

Rose, T, Social Influences on Intrinsic Impacts f Performance, WolfBrown, 2008

Couples

- Couples influence each other's arts attendance
- If your partner is from a background where arts attendance is frequent, you attend the arts more often, even if you don't go with them
- People enjoy being introduced to new music by their partners ...
- ... even music they believe they wouldn't enjoy

But we've got a problem!

 It's more difficult to persuade people to do something different:

"As a single person, that's the problem with getting other people to come with me. I don't know what it's like so they say let's go to the cinema."

So how can we help people persuade their friends?

How do groups of friends decide what to see?

Factors in deciding what to see

- How the group wants to be seen
- How familiar each member is with the music
- Their musical tastes
- Their perceptions of the music
- The role of music in the group

Larsen, G., Lawson, R. and Todd, S., 'The consumption of music as self-representation in social interaction', <u>Australasian Marketing Journal</u>, 2009, <u>17, 1</u>, pp. 16–26



Influencers use new discoveries in music to gain social power

Influencers and followers

 Half of arts attenders wait for a friend or family member to invite them before they will attend an arts event



How can we help them influence?

- Let them interact with you how they want
- Build a relationship based on trust
- Help them ask their friends
- Give them the information to persuade their friends

Brown, A., *Initiators and Responders: A New Way to View Orchestra Audiences*, 2004, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

What kind of concerts are social?















What works

 The evaluation of these concerts revealed the social experience is as important as the music but not more important

So how can we make sure we create the right balance?