Listening to audiences:

A critical analysis of participation in classical music education and outreach projects

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The last four decades have been characterised by a growing discussion in the orchestral sector regarding modes for overcoming barriers to classical music attendance. Such discussions reflect funding bodies' growing requirements for initiatives capable of broadening and diversifying audiences and being meaningful for participants, whilst maintaining artistic excellence.

This research investigates the extent to which education and outreach projects offered by two classical music organisations allowed or inhibited participation in, and engagement with, classical music and opera. Whether through a single attendance at a performance of the Whistle Stop Opera project, or by taking part in the Hallé Inspire programme, a long-term creative music-making programme, the research aimed to investigate the value attributed to classical music by participants and its place in their lives.

Drawing on an ethnographic approach, underpinned by observations and conversations *with* participants, this study examines individuals' experiences of interpreting, expressing and attributing meaning to their encounters with classical music and opera. By placing participants' voices at the heart of the inquiry, it reveals the variety of participants' expectations, responses, emotions and relationships to the artforms, making an original contribution to the fields of audience research, music education, arts management, and cultural policy. The research also provides an in-depth analysis of encouragements and barriers to participation that may inform organisational policies and practices.

The findings of this study highlight the role of spaces and the relationship between participants and performers in influencing audiences' enjoyment and in fostering life-long engagement with classical music, both for new audiences and for regular attendees. This study reveals the lack of a concise alignment between arts organisations' missions with the goals and outcomes envisioned by projects dedicated to broadening and diversifying audiences, highlighting the need for clearly focused aims and objectives in education and outreach projects.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The last four decades have been characterised by a growing discussion in the orchestral sector regarding modes for overcoming barriers to classical music attendance. Reaching new audiences whilst cultivating existing ones, as well as remaining relevant in society, are also paramount concerns on the agenda of the orchestral sector today. Such discussions reflect the governmental funding bodies' growing requirements for initiatives capable of including and diversifying audiences and being meaningful for participants, whilst maintaining artistic excellence.

Among the reasons found for audience absences from the concert hall, it is worth taking into account the arguments around exclusivism, elitism and formality of classical music environments (Small, 1995; Baker, 2000; Kolb, 2001; Johnson, 2011), the lack of a welcoming feeling in traditional classical music venues (Small, 1987; Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Conner, 2013), the predictability of classical music events and musicians' behaviour, as well as the lack of a modern proposal in terms of repertoire (Sloboda and Ford, 2012; Sloboda, 2013). In addition, ticket costs, venue accessibility and distance are among the factors that contribute to keeping people away from classical music concerts (Baker, 2000).

Faced with such a scenario, classical music organisations have been pursuing innovative ways to connect with their communities and remain relevant beyond the concert hall. Among such initiatives, a variety of educational and outreach initiatives have been developed as a key element to enhance listeners' participation whilst strengthening the orchestra's connection to its audiences – such as a cross-arts approach in the educational sphere, the growing use of digital learning resources, innovative approaches to health and wellbeing programmes, as well as an extensive number of community engagement activities designed according to each community's economic, cultural and social context.

Exposing audiences to new experiences can reveal original forms of participation in classical music. Adopting different artistic languages in order to challenge

traditional concepts of presenting classical music concerts – such as including elements of audience interaction in the performance, presenting a performance in a non-traditional venue where proximity with the performers and the physicality of the artform can be differently experienced, as well as involving participants in a creative music-making project – are among the strategies developed by orchestras to attract new audiences, deepen their connection with existing ones, and diversify the profile of those who participate in classical music initiatives.

The extent to which such educational and outreach initiatives are capable of fostering audiences' engagement with classical music and opera, as well as how participants express and attribute meaning to their experiences, is investigated though the **main research question** of this study:

> *RQ 1:* How do educational and outreach programmes with a focus on audience engagement enable or inhibit different forms of participation in classical music and opera?

The overarching aim of this study is to investigate different forms of participation (or lack thereof) in classical music and opera and the extent to which such forms of participation stimulate further engagement in these artforms. Whether through a single attendance at a short version opera concert, or by taking part in a long-term creative music-making project, this study explores the forms in which participants articulate and attribute meaning to their experience. In this sense, participants' verbal language, written feedback, drawings, gestures, reactions and emotions are explored in order to understand the place and meaning of classical music and opera in participants' lives. Such aims will be supported by the following **sub-questions**:

> *RQ 2*: To what extent can such forms of participation stimulate new and existing audiences to talk about and engage with classical music and opera?
>
> *RQ 3:* What can observing and analysing different forms of participation tell us about the effectiveness of these projects in engaging their audiences?
>
> *RQ 4:* To what extent do audiences' responses inform organisations' educational and outreach work?

By exploring how participants talk about, interpret and share their experiences of attending an opera concert or by taking part in a creative-music-making programme, this study also aims to explore to what extent such activities allow participants to reflect critically on their own experience or whether they reinforce the patterns of exclusion, elitism or cultural control still perceived in classical music and opera environments.

1.1 Research Context

This investigation has emerged from my six years' experience as the Educational Manager of the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra Foundation, as well as my role as a music education practitioner for more than two decades. Throughout this period, I have had the opportunity to develop, produce, observe and, to a certain extent, document projects conceived under the premises of supporting participation in, access to and engagement with classical music.

Although the understanding of these theoretical concepts between those involved in such programmes was not homogeneous, a similar focus was observed in the majority of the projects. That is, the aims of reaching new audiences and diversifying the profile of attendees by offering a wide range of opportunities to participate in classical music, particularly to those who were somehow considered 'deprived' of such a scenario (i.e. people living in areas where access to music education and to opportunities to participate in classical music), were not commonly available or even non-existent.

Both my immersion in the organisation and my experience of witnessing an internal management crisis – compounded by challenges presented by fluctuating levels of funding – were ideal conditions for me to see how these projects were perceived by the organisation as essential to attract new sponsors and increase fundraising. In addition, the discourse focused on artistic excellence combined with the perception expressed by some members of the organisation staff, musicians and conductors – that such audiences require 'mediation' through educational support in order to effectively appreciate the repertoire and actively participate in classic music – has shown me that perhaps one of the major barriers

for classical music attendance might be the different ways in which distance is created between the orchestra, individuals and classical music itself.

Such distancing could be perceived through different forms and practices, such as the formality of most of the concert series, the conservative curatorship centred on Western classical music, the academic nature of language and design of advertising materials and the etiquette conventions still expected from the audience. There was a misleading perception that audiences were the only ones responsible for finding enjoyment in classical music (or not) thus neglecting the organisation's responsibility to consider what postures musicians, conductors and staff should adopt in order to better connect with different audiences. Such perceptions echoed the so-called cultural deficit model, also known as 'cultural disadvantage', 'cultural underclass', 'cultural poverty' and 'culturally deprived'. According to such a perspective, the cause of an individual lack of cultural achievement or failure is directly associated to their deficient cultural group background, rather than to individual characteristics or social interactions (Silverman, 2008, p.216).

The perspective which attributed to the individual's cultural background the level of their engagement in classical music and which detracts the organisation's responsibility in finding authentic ways to be relevant to the community they serve was a constant object of questioning throughout my working experience, and it has continued to be a motivation to undertake this doctoral programme of study.

Such perceptions described above resonated during my fruitful working experience with the orchestra, both in the experience of listening informally to audiences and observing their behaviour during the concerts, and was confirmed through the results of an analysis of responses from general audiences – people of all ages with different cultural and social backgrounds – that were collected during part of the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra's chamber music series.[1] These concerts

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[1] The results of a questionnaire answered by 448 participants during five concerts performed in 2015 showed that 57% of the audience members were neighbourhood residents or from the surrounding areas in the West zone; 38% had never been to a chamber music concert before; and 51% did not know the music that was being performed. However, 73% of the participants considered the programme, the

were held in Barra da Tijuca, a neighbourhood located in the West zone of Rio de Janeiro, where attending classical music concerts was pointed out as the less frequent cultural activity among its residents (Datafolha, 2013). From this analysis I observed that, although participants were keen to take opportunities to engage with classical music, and acknowledged the informality of the series, which was held in a small venue and permeated with the musicians' testimonies about the pieces performed, some barriers for attendance are still evident in the Brazilian classical music scene. These barriers include: the perception that classical music is not for all; elitism – somewhat prevalent in the sector; and the lack of a welcome feeling within a traditional concert hall.

The label of sophistication and exclusivism, still perceived today in Brazilian classical music environments, is closely related, as in Western classical music tradition, to the interests and control of the Catholic church, the court and the aristocracy. The presence of European colonizers in Brazil, their influence in spreading church music repertoire as well as their impact in shaping Brazilian music education, dated from 1500, the date that history books commonly denominate as the discovery of Brazil. Despite the existence of indigenous communities in the territory before the Portuguese ships landed on the coast, traces of their music and ritualistic practices had come to the colonizer's attention[2], yet were not acknowledged as a legitimate form of musical expression (Perpetuo, 2018).

In the Brazilian slave society (which included indigenous people and Africans), which was officially abolished in the country only by the end of the Eighteenth century, participation in classical music activities was restricted to a select few, as such music was considered superior in terms of quality. Therefore, to be included in it was a means of stressing the dominance of the aristocracy. The segregation included slaves as well as women, whose participation was only allowed in theatre

informality of the concert settings and the host interaction to be excellent ways to involve the audience.

[2] Chroniclers from the Colonial period related the colonizer's discrediting of natives' musical manifestations, describing it as "shouts" and "guttural sounds from savages" (Perpetuo, 2018, p.22).

and not in musical performances. As a consequence, music-making, as well as making a living from its practice, was a means of social ascension and a form of distinction in Brazilian colonial society (Perpetuo, 2018). In fact, what would later be coined by Mario de Andrade, one of the founders of Brazil's modernist movement, as '*pianolatria*' – an exaggerated national taste for playing the piano and listening to its repertoire, understood herein as the Western traditional one – also represented a means of cultural ascension for the dominant Brazilian bourgeois class (Martins, 1993).

The superiority and perpetuation of the Western classical music repertoire brought by the European colonizers is still evident in Brazilian classical music environments, as well as in the structure of the curriculum, in teaching methodologies and in music training approaches adopted by conservatories and universities today (Queiroz, 2020). In such multicultural, social and economically unequal society as in Brazil, classical music struggles to find a place of relevance both in people's common perceptions, as well as in its representation in the sphere of public policies, making the future of national orchestras very uncertain to predict.[3]

The decision to undertake this doctoral research in the UK was therefore based firstly on its tradition and legacy in the field of public cultural policy, the international acknowledgement of the country as a point of reference in this area (Upchurch, 2016), and the role played by Arts Council England in the distribution of funds and policymaking, which differs from the Brazilian model of funding the arts. Arts Council England is a non-departmental public body which is responsible for the distribution of grants received from the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), the Department of Education, as well as from funds raised by the National Lottery. It also acts as a development agency for the sector, championing and promoting the arts in the country (ACE, 2017). In Brazil, on the other hand, there is no such representative agency for the sector. The Brazilian public model of

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[3] A study conducted by Bomfim (2017) pointed out the closure of 41.67% of publicly funded professional orchestras' activities in the state of Sao Paulo between 2000 and 2016.

funding the arts is mostly reliant on national and local mechanisms based on fiscal incentive, which allow individuals and businesses to invest portions of their Income Revenue Tax as forms of donation or sponsorship towards direct support of cultural programmes. The idea behind direct participation of citizens and private initiatives in supporting the arts is to promote and simulate individuals' appreciation of regional cultural manifestations and artistic productions, to decentralize financial resources which are often allocated to traditional large arts organisations, to enable the work of independent artists and producers, and to foster the financial sustainability of the sector (UNESCO, 2016). Although the Brazilian and British forms of funding the arts function in distinct ways, both models aim to increase individuals' participation in subsided arts, to address issues of access to and inequity in the cultural sector, and to increase public recognition of the value of the arts for society. Such similarity of aims informs and shapes cultural policies in both countries, allowing a correlation of this study's findings for both cultural contexts.

A second consideration in my decision to undertake this research in the UK was due to the critical group of researchers in this field, as well as the body of knowledge diffused by three international peer-reviewed journals focused on the arts and cultural sector (*Cultural Trends*, *Arts and the Market* and the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*). Ultimately, but not least important, this study also draws on the positive impact that I have experienced as a result of engaging in a professional exchange programme between Brazil and the UK. The proposal of the 'Transform Orchestra Leadership' project included a series of conferences as well as an exchange placement within arts organisations in both countries between 2014 and 2016. The main aims were to promote a dialogue between Brazilian and British orchestras, to identify and share innovative approaches in the orchestral sector in terms of education, audience engagement, the use of technology and modern management practices. This experience has shown me that, despite having educational and socio-economically distinctive realities, orchestral professionals from both countries shared a concern about the relevance of orchestras for their communities and the value community members attribute to them. Furthermore, seeking authentic ways to promote equal access to classical music activities whilst provide an authentic artistic experience to individuals were among the concerns

highlighted throughout the several formal and informal discussions between orchestral professionals throughout this exchange programme, suggesting the applicability of this research findings for Brazilian arts managers, policy makers, educators, and artists.

In light of the above, it is worth investigating what the orchestral sector understands by participation, to what extent these organisations are providing wide access and opportunities for all to exercise their right to participate in classical music, and how such opportunities "fit in to the wider context of people's cultural lives" (Sedgman, 2016, p.8).

1.2 Research rationale

Although there is a significant volume of literature focused on the barriers to classical music attendance, there is a gap in the literature in terms of an analysis of the effectiveness of educational and outreach projects developed by classical music organisations to reach new audiences and deepen relationships with existing ones. Furthermore, there is little academic literature that explores participants' perceptions regarding their artistic experiences in such programmes.

Investigating participants' understandings and interpretations of their own experiences in classical music education and outreach programmes offered by publicly funded organisations can be justified from two perspectives. Firstly, by placing the participants' voices at the centre of the inquiry, this research highlights participants' motivations and anxieties when taking part in such initiatives whilst exploring the extent to which organisations' approaches to overcoming barriers in classical music engagement are effective from the participants' perspectives. Secondly, approached from an ethical stance which takes into consideration the proportion of public subsidy provided to classical music and opera[4] on the condition of organisations' commitment to offer educational and outreach projects (Winterson, 1996) – as well as the expenditure on such programmes which often

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[4] According to Monk (2014), 57.9% of the National Investment Portfolio (NPO) funding for music from 2015 to 2018 was allocated to opera and musical theatre, and 24.8% to classical/orchestral music.

accounts for a small part of the organisation budget[5] – investigating participants' experience is legitimate to understand who is taking part and how participants are benefiting from such programmes. Ultimately, investigating participants' perceptions of the value of such initiatives supports a deeper discussion which can redirect decisions of funding allocation.

Thus, Brown and Novak's (2007; 2014) approach is a relevant framework as it stresses the intrinsic values that might be produced by an arts experience. Classified into five groups – 1) captivation; 2) intellectual stimulation; 3) emotional resonance; 4) spiritual value; and 5) aesthetical growth – the intrinsic values proposed by Brown and Novak (2007; 2014) will be detailed in the Methodology chapter of this study.

By listening to how participants articulate, interpret and value their experiences, whether by attending a short version opera concert or by participating in a long-term music-making programme, this study also offers new points of entry into the discussion of participation in classical music, as well as challenging the contentious dichotomy between active and passive forms of participation in the arts.

Nonetheless, hearing how participants feel about the programmes offered by the organisations can be seen as a source of reference for how organisations are perceived by their local communities and provide solid indicators that can support organisations to review current managerial methods and implement meaningful projects in order to remain representative for their communities. This study therefore offers a richer comprehension of the relative effectiveness of arts organisations' socio-cultural impact, while also contributing to the debate around which existing values and behaviours should be maintained or abandoned by classical music organisations in order to continue to be relevant in modern society.

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[5] According to Opera North reports in 2016, 2017 and 2018, from the organisation's total income, expenditure on educational projects accounted for 5.5%, 5.4% and 5.7% respectively. Arts Council England grants represented respectively 59%, 54% and 57% of the organisation's budget (Opera North, 2016; 2017; 2018).

The outcomes from this investigation will highlight the extent of the effectiveness of the audience engagement projects analysed, as well as provide evidence to stimulate the debate on public policies developed for this specific area.

1.3 Defining key terms and concepts

In this study, the term 'participant' refers to all those involved in the activities comprised in the two case studies encompassed by this research. Therefore, musicians, singers, audiences, teachers, pupils, parents, school staff and other staff involved directly in the performances are considered to be participants in this research analysis. Such a notion builds on Small's (1998) concept of 'musicking'. The verb 'to music' means "to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing) or by dancing" (Small, 1998, p.9). In addition to these, but no less important, Small's concept of 'musicking' also considers the work of all those involved in a musical event, such as lighting and sound engineers, marketeers, roadies and cleaning staff, as part of the complex set of relationships that occur during a musical performance and might therefore affect it.

By arguing that the primordial nature and meaning of music lies not in musical works (objects) but in the variety of human interactions and activities involved in a musical performance, Small's concept is valuable for this research as it expands and challenges the traditional notion of what is commonly described as active and passive forms of participation in arts.

The collective elaboration of meaning is also echoed in the perspective of Nicholas Bourriaud. By assuming that "art is a state of encounter" (2002, p.18) the author draws attention to the social dimension of arts participation. Bourriaud's relational concept of art is an activity that consists of producing relationships with the world, with the support of signs, forms, gestures and objects suggesting that the work of art, artists, spaces and spectators coexists in a symbiotic relationship rather than one being at the other's service. Such an approach is relevant for this investigation as it considers the relationships between artists and participants, as well as

between participants and the artform itself in the process of meaning making of an artistic experience.

As for the term 'participation', this study does not assume a single conception for the act of taking part in an artistic experience. As will be described in Chapter 3, the term is fairly broad and involves a complex set of issues to be unified in an unequivocal definition. However, it takes as a premise the concept stated by Article 27 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in which 'everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits'. The study is therefore underpinned by the premise that participation in the arts, and access to it, is first and foremost a cultural right.

Intertwined with such a concept, the notion of cultural inclusion is an important theoretical approach that needs to be defined, as it directly correlates with the conceptions of equal participation, access and diversity in the arts. The definition adopted in this research considers Sandell's (1998) approach in which cultural inclusion is defined as the equal condition to participate in and have access to the opportunities included in the three dimensions of culture: representation, participation and access. Representation is related to the degree that someone's cultural heritage is represented within the mainstream culture arena, whereas participation and access dimensions are directly connected to individuals' opportunities to be part of the "process of cultural production" as well as the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate such production (Sandell, 1998, p.410). The importance of exploring the notion of cultural inclusion as described above lies firstly in questioning the extent to which someone's cultural heritage is represented within what is understood as the 'mainstream culture arena'. As will be described in Chapter 2, the classical music concept has been underpinned through a logic of exclusion, as it refers to dominant groups' vision and heritage of a specific concept of culture. Ultimately, this reflects the premise that the arts can only really impact individuals who are given the real means to access, express and interpret culture.

On a similar note, the term 'cultural control' draws on the language adopted in the cultural policy realm. In the mechanism of national cultural policy, the level to

which the government owns and controls the means of cultural production and distribution reflects the extent of its interference in deciding "what counts as legitimate culture and what does not" (Hesmondhalgh, 2015, p.10). In this sense, at an institutional level, when questioning whether classical music organisations are reinforcing forms of cultural control, I intend to investigate the extent to which their initiatives and artistic decisions, such as those related to programming, reinforce or challenge discourses which legitimate the value of certain forms of art over others.

Relating to the term 'engagement', a starting point for building the discussion that sustains this thesis is based on the conceptual framework first highlighted by Tepper and Gao (2008). According to the authors, 'engaging', as a verb, suggests individuals' active connection to art by discovering new meanings for it, by appropriating those meanings for their own purposes, by creatively combining different styles and genres, offering their own critique, and making and producing art themselves (Tepper and Gao, 2008, p.363). In addition, such an experience of meaning making, as highlighted by Conner (2013), is significantly enhanced when made through social interaction, rather than through an individual process. Such premises represent a shift in the participants' role: from 'passive' agents, who are driven into standardised models of thinking and behaving, to 'active' agents, who are able to talk, analyse and be critical in an intelligent form through a democratic space created by dialogue.

From a strategic management perspective, the term 'engagement', as highlighted by Ashley (2014), refers to a process of "generating, improving or repairing relationships between institutions of culture and society at large" (p.261). Commonly employed by arts organisations to explain their work to "occupy attention, to involve, participate or establish meaningful contact" with their audiences (Ashley, 2014, p.262), engagement activities, however, might also risk reproducing relationships of power, subordination or control if participants are not given the opportunity to "assert their own agency, and to make their own choices in the way they use culture and heritage as a resource" (p.263).

As summarised by Walmsley (2019), the understanding of engagement is therefore plural, as it relates both to a "strategic management process (or a psychological

manipulation)", and a "sociocultural benefit" for participants (p.12). The theoretical definition of the term engagement also adopted by this research considers therefore an integrated notion of engagement as:

> a psychological process, which aims to develop intimate, meaningful, converged and enduring relationships with audiences by involving them in interactive, immersive and hermeneutic experiences. This in turn emancipates and empowers audiences and generates deep connections by enabling audiences to become an invaluable part of the art-making process (Walmsley, 2019, p.12).

1.4 The structure of this thesis

The organisation of this thesis has been tailored according to my experiences throughout the fieldwork. The topics covered and the resultant structure of the literature review build on research findings which emerged from the fieldwork, informing, directing and sometimes redirecting my process of reflection on the theme and sub-themes that form the focus of this study (cf. Mackieson, Shlonsky and Connolly, 2019).

Thus, Chapter 2 is dedicated to investigating the perception of elitism and exclusivism of classical music settings, and the feeling that classical music and opera are not for everybody, expressed by several participants I encountered throughout this study. As a result of those conversations and participants' perceptions when talking about the potential barriers to opera and classical music concerts attendance, I begin the literature review by exploring the functions and values of music in different times and for different societies. Such an investigation is intertwined with accounts of the culture surrounding arts participation and its contribution for understanding the role of audiences over time, as an attempt to find correlations with participants' feelings of inadequacy that are still attached to traditional classical music settings.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of what forms of art have been legitimised over others, Chapter 2 moves on to examine the premises behind the foundation of the Committee for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). By investigating the origins and aims of state arts patronage in Britain, and the ideas and

frameworks delineated by those involved in the foundation of CEMA, this section aims to explore how the concept of 'outreach' has been shaped in the British culture sector. It does so by taking into account examples of education and outreach practices, such as those embraced by Dartington Hall and the work of British composers Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett in contributing to understanding the roles of places, artists, and audiences beyond the 20th century.

Taking into consideration the rationale behind how the arts became subsidised in Britain, as well as political and cultural transformations in Europe, particularly from the 20th century onwards, and their influence on the educational sphere, the final section of Chapter 2 explores the changing place and status of music in British schools throughout the 20th century. By offering a brief historic context of the learning practices adopted in schools, this section brings to light the challenges and mismatches of working with classical music in state schools that have also been observed during my fieldwork conducted in a primary school classroom during the Hallé Inspire programme.

Having identified the issues around the perception of elitism and exclusivism still attached to classical music and its secondary place in the school curriculum, as well as the intentions and aims that shaped the development of cultural policies for the arts in Britain, Chapter 3 moves on to explore the different approaches to participation in classical music and opera found in a preliminary investigation of British orchestras' websites, which I conducted prior to the beginning of fieldwork.

Such an investigation was critically oriented towards identifying the place of education and outreach programmes within classical music organisations' structures, and to establishing correlations and discrepancies in the language adopted by such organisations to describe the aims of their programmes. This preliminary content analysis leads to a broad reflection around the common assumptions and expectations related to the act of participating in the arts, highlighting the intentions of inclusion in and access to the arts, as discussed in the first section of the chapter.

Having pinpointed such common perceptions, I return to the premises which oriented the foundation of CEMA, as well as the forms to which cultural policies were delineated in Britain, in order to establish a correlation between these

frameworks with current discourses and practices of arts organisations in relation to participation in the arts. The section continues by exploring the common belief about the arts in promoting change, and the value attributed to the arts by those involved in an artistic experience. The aim is to shed light on the variety of concepts, ideas and assumptions which converge to justify public expenditure supported by a narrative based on the capacity of the arts to address social and economic agendas, rather than for their own value as authentic forms of expression. Such a discussion reveals issues related to participation in culture as a human right, and participation as a strategy of arts organisations to promote what is considered 'high' forms of culture. Both analytical perspectives are further explored in this section of the chapter in order to investigate how classical music organisations respond to issues of access to and equal participation in classical music and opera.

In the last part of Chapter 3, I investigate the profiles of those who participate in classical music activities, as well as the body of literature which highlights the barriers found in classical music and opera concert attendance. By identifying the challenges of articulating policy requirements with organisations' efforts in maintaining artistic excellence while supporting public involvement, promoting equitable access to their initiatives and providing meaningful experiences to their participants, the last section of this chapter ends with a discussion around arts organisations' missions and visions in relation to the aims and outcomes of educational and outreach programmes. Ultimately, the section highlights arts organisations' challenges in combining quantitative and qualitative forms of evaluating their education and outreach programmes.

Taking into consideration both the reflections that emerge from the relevant literature proposed in Chapters 2 and 3, and my ethical stance as a music educator, Chapter 4 describes the methodological approach and my position as a researcher. The criteria of choosing the case studies and participants in this research, as well as the methods of collecting and analysing data adopted to support answering the research questions, are also detailed in Chapter 4. Finally, this chapter considers the limitations of this study and the possible ways to overcome such limitations, as well as the ethical principles which guided the research process.

Chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to describing the empirical findings that emerged from my investigation within the Whistle Stop project and The Hallé Inspire programme. In these chapters I reflect on the correlations and divergences of such findings with those found in the relevant literature in the fields of audience research, music education, arts management and cultural policy. Given the implications of this research to the two partner organisations, the last sections of both Chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to putting forward recommendations to Opera North and The Hallé Orchestra, in relation to the projects analysed.

Chapter 7 of this thesis describes the conclusions drawn across the study's research questions. The chapter also focuses on theoretical and practical implications and contributions of this study to the cognate fields of knowledge. Finally, a reflection about the advantages and limitations of the methodological approach and methods chosen to conduct this study is described in Chapter 7. In the last section of this chapter, I reflect on my motivation to undertake this research, on the correlations between the British and Brazilian cultural and education sectors drawn from the findings of this research, and how I envision my way forward after my PhD study.

Chapter 2
'Not for us'

This chapter emerged as a result of a recurrent situation I encountered throughout the extensive fieldwork of this study. Not infrequently, during the several conversations I had with participants of different ages and music backgrounds, the perception of disconnection between many people and classical music and opera was articulated with a notion of exclusivism, sophistication or elitism attached to these artforms. Curiously, however, such a feeling of disengagement was neither related to the interlocutor's dislike nor attributed to any particularity regarding the form, structure or language of classical music. It was evidenced by a feeling of not belonging to a culture which requires a level of intellectual authority that many people believe they do not possess.

As a result of those conversations, this chapter investigates why the label of exclusivism and elitism regarding classical music still echoes in people's justifications when attempting to explain their relationship with the artform. To do this, the chapter begins by examining the meanings and functions of music in different societies and at different times. Such an investigation is permeated by the political, educational and cultural transformations in Europe and their impact in shaping audiences' experiences, as well as in influencing modes of school music teaching.

Despite the risks that broad generalizations might raise when the effort of narrating the social history of Western classical music[6] is being made, it is legitimate to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the changes that occurred in musical practices throughout time, what is denominated as 'classical' music has always served the interests of those who held the power to influence the modes of composition, to shape performances, to define the taste in repertoire, as well as to decide the route of music patronage. Investigating such elements is relevant to this research to the extent that they highlight the mechanisms with which classical

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[6] To address the aims of this thesis, the investigation concentrates on Western classical music due to the solid documentation available about its tradition, heritage and large influence on musical teaching and learning practices in other continents.

music can perpetuate discourses of social differentiation, preserve dominant forms of culture, challenge the traditional notion of good versus poor taste,[7] and can ultimately provide the researcher with rich insights for examining the components that can both influence and impact participants involved in a classical music experience.

The last section of this chapter provides an account of the place of music in British schools throughout the 20th century to illuminate some of the constraints encountered today by both participants and classical music organisations when developing projects in partnership with state schools.

2.1 From Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century: A dive into the classical music tradition

As ancient as humanity's own history is the presence of music in everyday life. Music historiography in Antiquity accounts for the relationship of ancient civilizations with music, drawing special attention to its ritualistic functions, the belief in its capacity to communicate divine messages, to convey civic values and to shape human thought and conduct. In Greek and Roman societies, musical learning was considered an integral component to build the basis of individuals' education and a tool for moral improvement, rather than being a source of entertainment and pleasure for players and listeners (Burkholder, Grout and Palisca, 2006; Goehr, 2007; Blanning, 2008).

Indeed, Sophocles was considered a teacher rather than a playwright due to his public explanations of the ideas and themes conveyed in his work. Such an effort was the integral part of a considerable learning process, which consisted of offering the audience key information for the ensuing performance, believing that such complementary information would assist attendees' perceptions and meaning attribution (Conner, 2008; 2013). Furthermore, audiences' perceptions and judgments of an art object or event were considered to be part of the meaning-

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[7] The connection between music taste and class is paramount in Pierre Bourdieu's thinking. According to the author, "nothing more clearly affirms one's class, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.18).

making process, and this in turn was viewed both as "cultural duty and cultural right" (Conner, 2013, p.107).

If on the one hand the ritualistic character of music has unified and justified the culture of members of a certain group through the dramatization and reaffirmation of shared values (Small, 1987), on the other hand, the heritage of ancient civilizations delineated the concept of what we understand today as classical music. The establishment of rigid rules of musical theory towards the correctness of musical execution, as well as the pursuit of skilled performances with the purposes of mirroring the state's moral values, defined the place of subordination of this kind of music to the interests of dominant groups (Goehr, 2007). Such aspects would be crystallized over the following centuries, dictating the ways in which musical practices would serve as a vehicle to mediate the ideas of the world envisioned by such groups, as well as regulating the relationship with audiences and musicians with classical music itself.

With the rise of Christianity during the Medieval and Renaissance Christian church periods, the rapid expansion and stabilisation of the liturgy as well as the central position reached by the Papacy established a new parameter for musical activities, whose function should echo the doctrines of a church which aimed to be universal (Goehr, 2007). A vocal repertoire represented chiefly by plainchants, hymns and masses elevated the voice to the sole appropriate vehicle to transmit the 'Word of God' during services (Goehr, 2007, p.133). The monophony of chants and prayers dismissed any individual worshipper's voice in order to affirm Christian dogma. Apprentices and performers continued to occupy the place of servants of God, mediums of the divine message (Raynor, 1972). As for audiences, a reverberating 'Amen' was the only participative form reserved for those comprising the church congregation (Small, 1998).

In terms of musical learning, patterns of imitation were the primary method to transmit the vocal repertoire. Due to the advent of musical notation, however, church music acquired another level of literacy and intellectualization. It became possible to record the nuances of a performance, to diffuse the church repertoire widely, as well as to learn new ones (Jorgensen, 2003). The association of music with disciplines based on theoretical speculation, such as mathematics, physics

and astronomy, rather than with painting and sculpture, which aimed to promote the effective construction of a concrete product, would later be reflected not only in the process of music as an independent art – valuable in its own right and not for extra-musical functions – but also in the development of a modern music education curriculum underpinned by creative learning (Goehr, 2007), which I return to in section 2.3.1.

Regardless of the decentralization of the Roman Catholic Church's authority in Europe due to the Protestant Reformation and its consequent impact on sacred music, the main different church denominations – Lutheran, the Church of England, and, to a lesser extent, Calvinist[8] – have continued to rely on music as an important vehicle to convey ethical values, and to affirm doctrines and faith during its services (Burkholder, Grout and Palisca, 2006). Similarly, Blanning (2008), observes that "while music remained part of the immutable divine order" (p.11), music practitioners and worshippers still remained its servants.

Notwithstanding the changes brought to music activities within the Renaissance court throughout the 16th century, such as the regulation of the composer's profession,[9] the role of music in adding grandiosity to ceremonies as well as in civic celebrations contributed to cultivate the general labelling of music as a form of ostentation, the function of which was both socially necessary and educationally advantageous (Raynor, 1972).

Regarding the composer, the responsibility of acting as gatekeepers of the monarchy and religious interests conserved the premises of exclusivism initiated by ancient civilizations – a certain kind of music made under strict rules and conventions was a fundamental tool to shape human conduct according to specific groups' ideas and demands. Such a premise, as highlighted by Goehr (2007),

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[8] Jean Calvin was hostile to the idea of music powers. According to him, music could divert from God's word, could lead to "unbridled dissipations", "immoderate pleasure", "lasciviousness and shameless". Only congregational singing of psalms, with no instrumental accompaniment, was allowed in the Calvinist church (Blanning, 2008, p.10).

[9] Composers' services were now remunerated, and they were well travelled men whose responsibility was to 'guide and influence the moral character of society' (Goehr, 2007, p.131).

continued to be paramount until the 18th century and, as will be discussed later in this study, remains discernible in some of today's classical music educational projects, since such initiatives can serve the vested interests of organisations, commissioners or funders, rather than participants' yearnings (Winterson, 1996; Price, 2015).

Although some of the 17th century's important musical innovations endured until the 18th and 19th centuries, such as the consolidation of opera as a genre, as well as the emphasis on the dramatic effect and emotional expressivity of music, therefore allowing a certain extent of self-expression in music practices, performers and composers remained subordinated to the interests of the main agents of patronage: the church, the court and the preeminent aristocratic families, who supported music as a way of gaining prestige in society (Burkholder, Grout and Palisca, 2006).

Nonetheless, what we call today commercially managed concerts – the practice of selling tickets – had its origins in late 17th century mercantile English society. Such practice reflected the cities' process of urbanisation and the rise in domestic consumption brought about by bourgeois acquisitive power, boosting the interest for public concerts, published music, music lessons and instruments (Burkholder, Grout and Palisca, 2006).

It is worth noting that the 17th century also marked the expansion of Europeans overseas in search of lucrative products such as sugar and tobacco. Through the establishment of colonies in North America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and South America, European colonizers brought a repertoire of church music alongside their other cultural traditions (Burkholder, Grout and Palisca, 2006). Regardless of the uniqueness of every colonization process, the extent of its influence in shaping cultural identity as well as the different forms in which colonizers' cultural contributions were assimilated in each part of these continents, the tradition of Western repertoire comprised predominately by what would later be called the classical music canon[10], as well as the structure of performances and staging, are

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[10] Weber (1994) identifies three types of music canon: the scholarly, the pedagogical and the performed canon. For this research, attention will be given to the performed

still cemented in today's classical music concerts. Such conservativeness in orchestras' programming and practices contributes to today's audiences' perception of elitism and exclusivism in classical music, as acknowledged by many participants interviewed during this study.

2.2 Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries: an attempt to shift classical music function and audiences' participation

It was only in the 18th century that a major shift in the arts function began in Europe, releasing music from the ties of the church and the court. Leveraged by the principles of Enlightenment, the influence of a romantic conception of fine arts, as well as the interest in the aesthetic experience,[11] the modern notions stressed both the interest in the capacity of imagination in replacement of the traditional principle of imitation[12] as well as the notion of the beautiful (or sublime), which separated the value of art itself from its moral, rational and scientific ones. Hodge (cited in Cook, 1998, p.76) stresses that the role of the arts through the aesthetic lens is "to make available new ways of constituting our sense of reality", instead of reproducing an external, pre-existing one. As a consequence, the spectator is no longer viewed as a separate part of the artistic experience, but as an important element who adds their own perception on it.

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canon, described by Weber as "a repertory of old works that had a common identity – indeed, a name– and were presented on a conventional basis, though in varying combinations in different places" (p.490). First comprised by the repertoire of ancient music (music of Antiquity), the performed canon gradually incorporated music of the 16th and early 17th centuries. Today's conception of canon in classical music and opera is more complex, as it can also relate to the commercial appeal gained by certain musical pieces, such as opera titles, for instance (Cormac, 2019). Furthermore, the term 'canon' also articulates a determined "system of cultural upbringing" for both performers and concert-goers, as well as the preservation of particular musical settings (Parakilas, 2004, online).

[11] The term 'aesthetics', according to Goehr (2007), was first used by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartnen in the 1750s "to refer to the scientific study of the formal, deductive, and a priori principles of sensory cognition" (p.146).

[12] For Goehr (2007), in music imitation refers to the replication of form through imitating the verbal intonation or structure of a text. Also, imitation can be understood as the exemplification of a model of rhythm, melody or *motif* (p.142).

In the education sphere, the Enlightenment reformulated the conception of liberal education that first originated in ancient Greek and Roman societies, which aimed to distinguish not only men from animals, but also segregate the human race between noble and dedicated citizens and the "vulgar and barbarians" through a process of feeding the intellect over the "lower faculties of appetites, emotions and imagination" (Aloni, 1997, p.90). Although the division based on intellectual skills continued over the Renaissance period, evidenced mainly by the assumptions of the so-called 'humanists', to whom direct engagement with the traditional works of literature[13] represented a means to achieve high human faculties (such as freedom, dignity and truth), throughout the Enlightenment the idea of liberal education acquired a new form. As described by Aloni (1997), the aspiration for human equality and respect expanded the idea of liberal education for everybody. With an emphasis on autonomy and analytical and critical thinking, the model of liberal education represented an effort to place all individuals in a position of active participants, able to argue and question traditional conventions, individualism and authoritarian domination (Aloni, 1997; Nussbaum, 2004).

If on the one hand the shift in the arts and education concepts brought about by the Enlightenment highlighted the pragmatism of the practical mind in opposition to religious or physical conjectures, hence stimulating the popular interest in exploring the scientific knowledge, on the other hand, such innovations set the cultural tone and needs "of a large, wealthy and pretentious middle-class" (Langford, 1984, p.62), a class who owned and controlled the economy, clearly driven by the commercial logic of capitalism. In the face of the solidification of consumerism over the mid-18th century, the continuous demand for public concerts for those who could afford the tickets, allied to the proliferation of concert halls, boosted a growing market for music while amplifying the activities comprised by the sector, such as music editing, publishing and selling affordable instruments to the middle-class (Raynor, 1972; Blanning, 2008).

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[13] "The best way to a liberal education in the West is through the greatest works the West has produced" (Hutchins, 1945 cited in Aloni, 1997, p.91).

Following the European trend of literature clubs, regular concert series and concert societies were created by amateur musicians and music lovers with the aim of performing together, as well as sharing their perception about the quality of composers, musicians and the repertoire (Conner, 2014). However, even with the incremental rise in musical events, halls and music associations, a significant part of the population was still excluded from the experience of attending a concert. The Society of Antient[14] Music, founded in 1776 in London, was an example of such segregation. With the aim of elevating musical taste by revering the repertoire of the past[15] while protecting audiences from the popular influence of Italian opera, the Society largely comprised upper-class members, who were proud to look back to 'old' music as a way of maintaining the tradition and value of such repertoire, as well as to affirm their own social status (Weber, 1992; Kolb, 2001).

Although it was expected that by the end of the 18th century music should transmit fewer extra-musical values and encourage enjoyment fostered by the imagination, instrumental music struggled to grasp the new parameter of art for its own sake. Due to its lack of words, it was barely accepted that instrumental music could convey beauty and pleasure, as well as transmit a message of individual liberty. In this sense, vocal music continued to occupy a position of privilege, while the prestige of instrumental music and composers reached its apogee only in the Romantic Age (Goehr, 2007). A change in this scenario was only seen during the 1840s and 1860s due to industrialization and, consequently, the growth of the working-class in number and income. As a response to this, a variety of musical events and repertoires, ranging from opera and burlesque to patriotic and traditional songs was offered to this group of new consumers. Audiences who occupied the cheapest seats in the pits and gallery – regular working-class people–

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[14] According to Small (1998), the old spelling signalized the conservatism cherished by the Society.

[15] The early decades of the 18th century and the repertoire of the Elizabethan age (Weber, 1992).

were not afraid to share their perception of the event, shouting their approval or disapproval directly from their seats[16] (Blanning, 2008).

Despite the vibrancy of cultural life and audiences' interaction in the theatres over this period, the middle years of the 19th century also raised some contradictions which are worth mentioning, as some of the elements connect directly to audiences' feelings of exclusion from a classical music setting today. Firstly, the categorisation of high and low arts came to light, and with it, the new artists' status of incontestable authority and the establishment of rules and etiquette inside arts spaces contributed to a distancing between artists, audiences and the arts itself. Secondly, the advent of electrical light placed audiences in the dark for the first time and allowed artists to pre-determine certain foci of attention, thus 'disciplining' the audience and controlling their perceptions (Conner, 2008; Kattwinkel, 2013). Thirdly, music halls' structures were clearly divided to separate the public from the artists, as well as the outside world from everything else (Cook, 1998; Small, 1998). Blanning (2008) stresses the similarity between German concert halls built at that time with an ante-chapel, adorned with busts of figures of the past, where music could be revered with no distractions "so that its redemptive purpose could be realised" (p.141). Ultimately, the idea of "sacralization of the arts" (Levine, 1986, p.130) emerged, a term employed to describe an ideology of artistic purity as an attempt to mystify the creative activity by attributing divine elements to the artwork and artists, and by disregarding any interference from the audiences or performances that could mar the experience. According to Kolb (2001), the effort of what was considered an appropriate manner to enjoy a concert – by contemplating it in a quiet and private way – should not be viewed as an attempt to prevent audiences from attending concerts, but as a way of civilising the emerging middle-class by using culture as a way of achieving personal improvement for "sober and hard-working citizens" (Kolb, 2011, p.4), which I return to later in this chapter.

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[16] The enthusiasm of audiences is also depicted inside 19th century Brazilian theatres. International soloists came to demonstrate virtuosity through performing a repertoire mainly dominated by French and Italian pieces, to which the public expressed their enjoyment (or lack thereof) with no inhibitions (Perpetuo, 2015).

In light of the above, it can be argued that despite the efforts in placing analytical and critical thinking at the centre of an educational model, what occurred inside theatres reflected an opposite intention of directing how audiences should experience and respond to the arts experience. Such control moves away from the very first attempt to encourage individuals' imagination and autonomy to attribute meaning to an artistic experience, as envisioned at the beginning of the 18th century. Such a consideration is valuable for this research as it encourages reflection about the extent to which audiences' spontaneous self-expression and subjective freedom in attributing meaning to an experience still remain related to predetermined conditions and expectations of participation inherited from the attempt to 'discipline' the audience and direct their perceptions.

2.3 The new millennium

Despite the attempts to disempower audiences, another great transition in the arts began in the 20th century, boosted by the US's new cultural industry. Technological advances stimulated a high consumption of phonographs, radios and films, ushering in a new era of cultural consumption (Ivey, 2008). Participation in the arts was transformed and traditional activities considered to be part of everyday life during the 19th century, such as playing the piano, drawing, writing, singing, acting, reciting and sewing, were replaced by casual forms of interaction, such as buying a record, joining a guided visit to a museum or attending a narrated concert (Ivey, 1944). It is also worth mentioning the role of cinema in opening new possibilities to include music in leisure time. Live music accompaniment was used to provide the atmosphere for silent movies, as well as to conceal the noise of projectors (Blanning, 2008).

In the musical education context, US schools started to shift their curriculum towards what became known as music appreciation – a critical enjoyment of music, rather than the practice of music-making. According to Ivey (2008), the musical appreciation trend "advanced the notion of literacy in or fluency with the history, practices, standards, and personalities of different artforms as a distinct form of arts participation" (p.5). Paradoxically, the idea of relying on words (commonly by using metaphors) to explain the meaning of a musical piece

contrasts with the efforts of searching for abstraction, imagination and subjectivity to relate to music on its own terms (Cook, 1998).

If on the one hand arts participation was undergoing a process of private contemplation with participants encouraged to consume rather than produce, on the other, after the end of the Second World War, the growing urbanisation phenomenon, allied to telecommunications and transportation progress, allowed greater social exchanges as well as enhanced artist mobility. The "urbanization of the artistic experience" (Bishop, 2006, p.160) signalled the shift from the false notion of aristocratic arts ownership to the possibility of contemplating the arts in different spaces and with more proximity, and, as a consequence, through a more interactive form (Bourriaud, 2002).

The changes in the arts brought by the Second World War also had a significant impact in Britain, with special interest for this study in the process of how arts became funded by the government. The intentions that lie behind state intervention in arts funding, the extent to which cultural policies have been created to effectively make classical music accessible to the wider audience, rather than reproduce cultural and social exclusion, and ultimately how such policies have been impacting orchestras' decision-making in funds allocation are key elements in the analysis proposed by this research.

State arts patronage in Britain finds its origins in the successful "missionary journeys" (Upchurch, 2013, p.619) of musicians and artists among the public with the aims of boosting civilian morale and providing employment to artists during the Second World War. Rapidly, the government assumed responsibility for such initiatives, originally funded by the philanthropic organisation Pilgrim Trust, founding in 1940 what was known as the Committee for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).

Upchurch (2004) draws attention to the Bloomsbury Group's[17] influence on the thinking of economist John Maynard Keynes, not only a member of the Group but

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[17] A group of artists, writers and intellectuals whose influence was reflected not only in policy issues, but also in economic matters and developing the basis of the modernist arts movement in Britain. Among the group's values were the conceptions of

also the chairman of CEMA at that time. The Bloomsbury Group's criticism of British societal conventions, their aversion to state bureaucracy, as well as their conviction that arts, science and literature were essential elements that constitute the notion of a civilized society, found adherence in Keynes' convictions. Such a notion brings with it a clear division of classes as well as a belief in meritocracy as a means for social mobility, as it relies on a well-defined way of life, hence the production of a specific citizen, as a tool to measure a civilized country. In other words, the privilege to develop creativity and to cultivate the pleasure in arts appreciation were related to a class whose income were granted, rather than a class of people who was supposed to work in order to meet the basic necessities of life. Therefore, the aspirations of some members of working classes to entering a class which was viewed as the model of civilized and healthy citizens is closed connected to the use of culture as a way of achieving personal and social improvement. In addition, the idea of civilization delineated by the Bloomsbury Group relied on the proportion of investments in museums, arts education and applied arts as a tool to measure the reputation and prestige of a nation, as well as a way to improve artists' employability, welfare and the quality of life of its citizens (Upchurch, 2004).

Another significant aspect that influenced the thinking of those involved in the foundation of what would later become Arts Council England (ACE), was the idea of liberal education. If behind the effort of investing in the arts lay the intention of educating committed citizens and "future aesthetes" (Upchurch, 2004, p.208), whose arts appreciation differs from ordinary individuals due to a deeper and clarified sense of perception, it is logical to expect that the forthcoming policies would be elaborated considering the school as a key organism to shape artistic preferences and to cultivate "good citizenship" (Guthrie, 2014, p.594).

The practice initiated by the 'music travellers' of amplifying classical music by performing it as a form of entertainment for the armed forces, as well by reaching those who were in remote areas of the country, continued after the end of the war,

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"pacifism, feminism, friendship, creativity, free expression and mainly, reason" (Upchurch, 2004, p.204).

boosting audiences' interest for orchestral music (Rainbow, 1989, p.309). Full-time symphonic groups were established for the first time, initiating the orchestral tradition in Britain (Rainbow, 1989). Echoes of such a new interest in orchestral music were felt in schools, both in the interest of parents towards pupils' music learning, as well as in the provision of music teaching for children and adults (Rainbow, 1989; Pitts, 2000a), as described in section 2.3.1.

Although the liberal approach had an impact on British education as a whole, it is also worth mentioning other ideas about education which contested the establishment of a culture based on the parameters of liberal education training, as well as on the imposition of a high-brow determined cultural taste.

Among such initiatives, the Dartington College of Arts, formalised in 1932 through the creation of the Dartington Hall Trust,[18] was an organisation that emerged within the public sector, yet funded by private philanthropy. It sought to combine instrumental learning with a way of perceiving the world in which historical, cultural and economic processes permeate reflexive and critical practices (Murray and Hall, 2011). Drawing on his own experience at Dartington, Strickson (2018) describes the "pedagogy based on practice" approach in students' daily activities (p.347). Bodily and reflexive practices were both implied in a cyclical process during students' activities, in which physical explorations of different techniques of dancing and acting, for instance, derived from a discursive analysis of previous students' experimentation. On the basis of Dartington Hall, a combination of Rousseau's 'progressive' model of education allied to globally inspired ideas of rural development, arts, science and experimental education (Upchurch, 2013) provided a fresh approach to arts education in which the community occupied the focus of attention. By considering the arts as a vehicle capable of developing the locality and fostering community wellbeing, the Dartington experiment devised opportunities to participate in the arts which reflected (formally and informally) in artists' practices, as well as in further cultural policies debates and implementation (Upchurch, 2013).

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[18] According to information provided by Dartington's website (https://www.dartington.org/).

The presence of artists in teaching positions at Dartington, and their community commitment, added to the value of arts education as a way of spiritual enhancement, personal growth, development and "free creative expression" (Murray and Hall, 2011, p.64). This finds a correlation in the work of some British composers before the First World War, whose social and political associations challenged traditional notions of performance spaces, as well as the role expected from artists and audiences beyond the 20th century.

The involvement of Gustav Holst with the socialist movement, his work as a conductor of the Socialist Choir in 1897, his pioneering teaching work with women's music education at St Paul's Girls' School and for adult working class students at Morley College, and ultimately his community work in the rural village of Thaxted, provide solid indicators of the composer's view of the role of music in the modern world. Scheer (2010) highlights Holst's belief of art as a "means of communication" (p.114) allied to an aesthetic view in which the terms 'beauty' and 'eternity' were detached from everyday associations, emotions, pre-prepared representations and morality. From this perspective, the meaning of an artwork lies in the 'juxtaposition' of its formal elements (p.113), rather than in subjective meaning construction. Such an approach raises different considerations in light of the current debates surrounding audience participation. Firstly, the emphasis on 'beauty' as an abstract value that can be articulated in words is highly contentious. Moreover, relying on formal elements to convey such a value implies that audiences possess, at the very least, some prior objective knowledge to recognise these elements in order to further decode its meaning. Secondly, it disregards the relational aspects of art, in which meaning is revealed within the variety of relationships that audiences and artists create during an artistic experience (cf. Small, 1998; Bourriaud, 2002). Ultimately it suggests that arts appreciation evokes 'passive' responses, rather than stimulating different forms of participation.

Undoubtedly, Holst's community work, particularly during wartime, and his socialist and Buddhist inclinations provide valuable material to contextualize his work and to situate his contribution to the English Nationalist Music movement. What remains uncertain, however, is the ability of his approach to challenge traditional conventions of how classical music actually functions in society.

On a different note, Michael Tippet's and Benjamin Britten's artistic articulation with politics, and with pacifism, offer an understanding of what would be later be known as 'music for all'[19] in British schools, as well as the potentiality of artists' community work in promoting social change.

Among several activities both composers undertook, Tippet's and Britten's direct involvement in making music in rural communities deserves special attention in this research as it anticipates some tensions that are still central to current cultural policy debates. The relational aspect in both composers' approaches can be observed through the experimental compositions written by Tippet in cooperation with unemployed miners at Boosbeck village, right after the Great Depression in the early 1930s. Similarly, Britten's deep and long-lasting involvement with the community of Aldeburgh from 1963 denotes both composers' commitment to an aesthetic that attributes music function within the articulation between the composition, the composer and audiences (Bullivant, 2013; Kildea, 2013). Such an approach amplifies its relevance as it refers to times of violence and destruction caused by the imminence and consequences of the World Wars. Within this context, the role of artists dedicated to the pacifist cause, as pointed out by Bullivant (2013, p.80), was "to promote human imagination as the necessary spiritual balance" to contend with violence and the division caused by progress and the material world. This approach is valuable for this research as it reflects an attempt to legitimise all voices involved in the musical experience whilst challenging the social role of artists, as well as the extent to which the artistic experience can foster social change.

In this regard, echoes of liberal and progressive education resonated inside the 20th century British schooling system, shaping practices, directing behaviours and postures, as well influencing public education policies. Music, in its turn, struggled to find its place inside a system constantly experiencing change, due both to the

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[19] According to Guthrie (2015, p.579), what would become Britten's lifelong campaign to increase the provision of music for children began in 1935 with the composition of a collection of songs entitled 'Friday Afternoons', dedicated to the boys of Clive House. It is also worth mentioning a published article written in 1940, in which Britten urges American composers to write more music for schools, an experimental opera for high school students, and a school film: 'Instruments of the Orchestra'.

lack of a common acceptance and clear understanding of its functions, as well as the gap in teachers' skills and, to a considerable extent, their willingness to keep up with the evolution of music teaching itself.

2.3.1 The place of music in British schools

Relevant literature in the history of school music in Britain throughout the 20th century accounts for the changes in music education, highlighting the shifts in musical practices from the dominant paradigm of music appreciation to the integration of composing and improvising, as well as the influence of modern music educators' thinking and composers' work in curriculum-making. Furthermore, the establishment of evaluation systems, as well as the introduction of new technologies and resources which have impacted both teaching and learning processes are considered in the debate about the educational purposes of music and its place in British schools' curriculum during the 20th century.

Throughout the first three decades of the 20th century, the practice based on the concept of music appreciation – the cultivation of listeners' critical taste rather than the acquirement of instrumental proficiency – has predominated in British schools' music education (Pitts, 2000b). Despite the new conceptions of education underpinned by the 'learning through experience' approach (cf. Rainbow, 1989), such as the Dartington experiment described earlier in this chapter, as well as other influential contributions in the field of education,[20] school music education continued to emphasise the acquisition of critical skills rather than provide opportunities for children's imaginative abilities and creative responses to be developed (cf. Paynter, 2002; Ellison and Creech, 2010).

If on the one hand the effort in providing sight-singing, rhythmic and aural training was seen as a vehicle to educate all school children, regardless of their inclination and talent for music, on the other hand, music remained circumscribed in the intellectual domain of a subject that was to be appreciated, not performed. Thus,

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[20] Such as the contribution of the Swiss pedagogue J. Pestalozzi in demonstrating that a child's education "depended less upon memorizing facts than on the provision of opportunities to make factual discoveries for himself" (Rainbow, 1989, p.135).

the benefits of music instruction were attached to its influence in supporting other academic subjects and personal faculties, rather than in the acquisition of musical skills themselves (cf. Paynter, 1982; Pitts, 2000b; Guthrie, 2015). Learning an instrument, in its turn, continued to be a possibility reachable mainly outside of school by those who could afford private tuition to acquire the necessary skills to perform the classical works comprising the canon (Pitts, 2000b; Sloboda, 2001).

Despite some attempts to incorporate elements of instrumental learning in school music education, such as the introduction of percussion bands, and later in the 1930s the recorder-playing and bamboo pipes, music did not thrive in guaranteeing its place within the curriculum, nor in reaching the majority of pupils (Paynter, 1982). The model of developing theoretical knowledge directed towards the training of 'intelligent listeners', by its turn, endured until almost the middle of the 20th century (Rainbow, 1989; Pitts, 2000b). The practice of adopting percussion instruments and recorder-playing allied to music literature lessons in school music teaching is still found in many schools, as will be later exemplified by this research.

Echoes of the so-called 'music appreciation movement' in schools (cf. Paynter, 1982; Rainbow, 1986; Pitts, 2000b,) reflected in the work of symphonic groups during the 1920s and 1930s, sheds light on the origin of some practices adopted by several orchestras today. As a result of the acceptance of music listening as a "classroom skill" (Rainbow, 1989, p.292), interest in providing live orchestral concerts for large audiences of children became more solid[21] (Rainbow, 1989). The practice of verbally introducing the concert to the audience, as well as charging a symbolic ticket price in order to "encourage children to value the experience and to accustom them to buying concert tickets later in life" (Rainbow, 1989, p.293) became a trend that still permeates many classical music organisations' practices to attract first-time attendees.

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[21] According to Rainbow (1989, p.292), as early as 1890 a series of 'Young People's Orchestral Concerts' was held in London, conducted by the German conductor George Henschel.

It is also worth mentioning two other important events which impacted school music teaching during the 1920s. Firstly, the role of the gramophone as an "educational medium" (Rainbow, 1989, p.290) amplified the reach of recorded classical music repertoire in British classrooms and homes, encouraging music listening and promoting children's familiarity with classical music pieces. Secondly, the establishment of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the development of its weekly radio broadcast of music lessons dedicated to schools[22] expanded listeners' opportunities to learn and enjoy a variety of musical repertoires, thus transforming the standards of musical awareness across the nation (Rainbow, 1989; Pitts, 2000a.). Despite making music listening more widely available, the 'revolution' in school music expected by the adoption of the gramophone and radio broadcasts did not occur due to financial restrictions of several schools in acquiring those equipment, as well as the reluctance of many teachers who felt reticent about the nature of the learning experience and teaching assistance the use of such resources could provide for both children and themselves (Pitts, 2000b, p.34).

On the other hand, as highlighted by Cox (1996) in his analysis of school music broadcasts between 1924 and 1947, despite the criticism about the conventionality of music programmes' language and format, as well as their effectiveness for music teachers, the contribution of the different programmes developed by the BBC[23] in disseminating new ideas of tune building, singing and body movement allied to music-making in schools deserves to be acknowledged. Moreover, the debate around 'popular' versus 'high' culture in the curriculum generated by the presence of radio broadcasts in schools (Cox, 1996, p.371), as

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[22] A parallel can be found with the 'NBC Music Appreciation Hour', a broadcast developed from 1928 to 1942, which aimed to supplement music appreciation teaching in American classrooms. Despite the critiques around the programme's aims and outcomes (see Adorno, 1994), such an initiative is worth mentioning due to its intercontinental diffusion. The programme's manuals and broadcasts were embraced by many countries around the world, spreading the idea of a standard music listening experience in music education (cf. Howe, 2003).

[23] For his analysis, Cox (1996) considered three series of music programmes: 'Elementary Music', 'Music and Movement' and 'Singing Together' (p.363).

well as the BBC's aims to increase classical music listening among the public as part of a deliberate attempt to elevate audiences' tastes and to bring high-brow culture to its listeners (Cox, 1996; Kolb, 2001; Guthrie, 2015; Price, 2017) are relevant elements for this study, as the longstanding discussion around 'good music' still divides schools' leaders' and teachers' opinions.

The effort of 'educating' audiences through radio broadcasts went hand-in-hand with the changes in British society that resulted from the disruptions of the Second World War. As previously mentioned, the appropriation of music to promote 'community spirit' initiated during the war and that continued afterwards by the newly founded CEMA contributed to raising the nation's awareness of the importance of the arts (Pitts, 2000b, p.40). Allied to this, a discourse intended to rebuild the nation, in which access to 'high' arts was connected to the emergent ideal of citizenship, supported the arguments for a more participatory approach to culture (Guthrie, 2015).

In the educational sphere, the growing interest in orchestral music led to an increase in both instrumental activities in schools and peripatetic instrumental teachers in classrooms. Similarly, the foundation of the National Youth Orchestra in 1947 expanded the opportunities for young performers (Rainbow, 1986; Pitts, 2000b). On the one hand, the growing interest in offering performance opportunities for all, both in schools as well as at adult evening classes, has amplified the recognition of amateur music-making and increased the number of performers during the 1940s (Pitts, 2000b, p.41). On the other hand, the role of music as "a means of forging a collective identity" (Pitts, 2000a, p.35) of ideal citizens whose appreciation of high culture was indicative of a civilized society initiated during the pre-war years continued to permeate the intentions and directions of music education defended by many music teachers throughout the 20th century.

The shift in school music practices, from the 'academic side of the curriculum' to a 'practical' activity, became more solid between the 1960s and the1980s (Pitts, 2000b, p.41). Although attempts to include music composition can be found earlier

in the history of music education,[24] improvisation and creative composition gained force inside classrooms boosted by the establishment of liberal education, in which the curriculum included extra-curricular activities available to all children to prepare them both for work and a fulfilling life balanced by leisure and employment (Pitts, 2000b; Sloboda, 2001). In addition, the increasing interest of another genres such as pop, folk music and jazz, among the 'new consumer society', required a different approach towards pupils' musical preferences and learning (Rainbow, 1986, p.347).

It is worth mentioning the contribution of teacher-composers in British classrooms from the early 1960s and the interest that such a collaboration engendered in education as a whole (Hallam and Rogers, 2010). Although new initiatives in music composition were seen in many primary schools, at secondary level, due to practical issues of lesson length and timetabling, as well as teachers' resistance to changing their practices, such initiatives generated controversy among professionals, resulting in an imbalance in opportunities for progression (Pitts, 2000b; Hallam and Rogers, 2010). With the implementation of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in 1986, however, the official recognition of composition as a central element in the curriculum activity not only modified the traditional conception of 'musicianship' anchored in the model of appreciation and performing, but positioned music in the "realm of arts education, where pupil-centred learning, creative work and problem-solving techniques in other arts disciplines had been the norm for decades" (Odam, 2000, p.111).

During the 1980s and the 1990s, some important attempts to find a model of music curriculum capable of matching children's "practical involvement with a structure of learning"[25] reflected music educators' concern to assert a status of music in the curriculum which could be "evaluated according to a well-developed rationale" (Pitts, 2000b, p.164). Ultimately, with the establishment of the National

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[24] "In the mid eighteenth century, composition had been advocated as an essential element in basic music education" (Paynter, 2002, p.220).

[25] Such as Keith Swanwick's model, represented by the mnemonic 'CLASP': composition, literature studies, audition, skills acquisition and performance (Pitts, 2000b, p.72).

Curriculum in 1992 the inclusion of music as a statutory part of the school curriculum for all pupils aged 5-14 complicated the debate around the purposes, value and recognition of a subject in which parameters of measurement and evaluation differ from the so-called 'core' academic subjects such as English, maths and science (Aróstegui, 2016; Bath et al., 2020).

The lack of consensus in the aims and purposes of music in British schools described in this section impacted not only on school staff's recognition of the value of music as a core component of the curriculum, but was also reflected in pupils' perceived relevance of the subject itself. Such a perception still echoes in the absence of a music culture – not only a culture of classical music, but of music in general –in some schools today, as will be later demonstrated by this research.

The challenges of evaluation of a subject which shifted from the 'prescribed' approach (Paynter, 1982, p.216) of listening and appraising to a creative and participatory activity provide indicators to analyse the constraints encountered by classical music organisations when developing a project in partnership with schools today. Similarly, investigating the resistance of some teachers to abandoning traditional parameters of music appreciation and embracing new ideas and methods of composition and improvisation is valuable to understand the remaining belief that music needs to rely on written words, images or other supporting explanations in order to be understood by its listeners (cf. Painter, 1982). Here, the criticism lies not in adopting appreciation as a legitimate form of engaging with music, but as a practice that reinforces the idea of intellectual elitism of classical music by listening to a predetermined repertoire without engaging listeners' criticality. In other words, as a decontextualized way of teaching music which disregards the fact that all individuals have a previous and often rich and diverse cultural background that is brought into play when appreciating a musical piece.

This chapter has highlighted the social history of classical music as a tool to shape both the 'ideal' individual and society, as well as efforts towards 'educating' music listeners through an appreciation which implied the 'passive' reproduction of a repertoire which brings with it an idea of intellectual superiority. Such a background finds a close correlation with the ideologies of those involved in the

foundation of CEMA in Britain, flagging how and by whom future public policies for the arts would have been shaped.

Considering the framework adopted by this study to investigate the perception of elitism and exclusivism attached to classical music and opera environments vocalised by many people when talking about these artforms, it can be argued that such elements emerged from a social construction which was, in the UK, paradoxically endorsed by a public organisation which aimed to erase this perception by offering the opportunity to participate and experience the arts to as many people as possible.

Having pinpointed the social, political and educational mechanisms with which the intellectual authority of classical music was engendered in society, this study moves on to explore how the term 'participation' has been framed by British classical music organisations as well as considering who is taking part in the activities offered by those organisations. Chapter 3 begins by identifying the common assumptions around the act of taking part in an arts experience, whilst acknowledging the broad implications inherent in the term. The chapter continues by examining the rationale which underpins arts organisations' discourses and initiatives focused on access to classical music. In so doing, Chapter 3 brings to light a reflection around the distinct approaches in addressing the issues of access to and participation in the arts. Ultimately, the chapter investigates the profile of classical music audiences, as well the barriers still encountered particularly by first-time attendees. The chapter ends by investigating the place and challenges faced by education and outreach departments in articulating the outcomes of their programmes with the language and criteria of evaluation required from funding bodies.

Chapter 3
Towards an understanding of participation in arts

A preliminary content analysis involving 57 British orchestras' websites showed that in order to describe the work orchestras are doing with their audiences, 'participation', 'engagement' and 'development' are used interchangeably without a clear definition or distinction between them.[26] Furthermore, additional terms are employed that compound the confusion regarding how organisations define their work in maintaining regular audiences, to reach new ones and deepen their relationship with classical music, such as 'enrichment' (Academy of Ancient Music, London Mozart Players, Ulster Orchestra), and 'holistic development' (Orchestra of the Swan). Although the lack of uniformity reveals one of the many challenges of finding a single definition of the work orchestras are doing to address issues of participation in and access to classical music, some consensus can be perceived among the polyphony of voices.

First, the large number of educational and outreach programmes offered by the majority of British orchestras, the proportion of funds[27] dedicated to these activities, and the presence of specialised staff that provide strategic leadership in this area all suggest that the relationship between classical music and general audiences (people of all ages with different cultural and social backgrounds) is definitely a strategic element of orchestras' work. Besides that, it is apparent that many arts organisations are seeking to involve both existing and new audiences in a more participatory way to deepen personal musical experiences. This can be observed by analysing the broad range of activities developed under the premise

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[26] The analysis was carried out in November 2017 by using the Association of British Orchestras' members database as a primary source. The number of websites consulted and considered in the analysis reflects the information available at the time.

[27] According to the Association of British Orchestras, private contributions have grown by 44% over the period from 2012 to 2013. Although this number represents almost a fifth of orchestras' overall funding, around two-fifths was restricted to be spent on specific initiatives, such as educational programmes and building projects (ABO, 2014). According to the survey carried out in 2016, the proportion of outreach work (educational and community programmes) increased by 35% in comparison with the previous years. (ABO, 2016).

of 'active' music-making such as playing, singing, composing and expressing musical perceptions through informal conversations with the musicians, for instance.

Additionally, within the discourse of participation in classical music lies a shared assumption that education and outreach projects can do good and bring positive outcomes to people of all ages and in all contexts. Such an orientation can be perceived through the wide use of a combination of affirmative verbs and terms found on some of the consulted orchestras' websites such as: "to bring the musicians directly to participants in their local environment, nurturing musical skills while also encouraging development in other areas, such as confidence, team-building, leadership and creativity" (Scottish Ensemble); "to improve lives across cultural education and health & social care" (Manchester Camerata); "to enhance cross-curriculum study whilst supporting and encouraging the holistic development of healthy individuals" (Orchestra of the Swan).

Ultimately, this analysis shows that orchestras' efforts to reach new audiences whilst providing meaningful experiences to existing members are permeated by a lexicon which stresses the logic of inclusion in and access to classical music as key elements to justify their initiatives.

In light of the above, this chapter begins by exploring the core concepts around the term participation. It does so by discussing common assumptions about participation in the arts, as well as by exploring the broad variety of forms of participation encompassed by an artistic experience. Here, the focus is not on delineating a single definition for the term itself, but on highlighting the complexities involved in the act of taking part in an artistic experience.

The second section of this chapter moves on to explore the origin of what is commonly understood as 'high' forms of art, as well as the extent to which public policy legitimates such artforms over others. In light of this discussion, the section moves on to explore the extent to which the approaches of cultural democracy and democratization of culture have been effective in addressing issues of access in the arts.

The third section of this chapter moves on to investigate the profile of who is taking part in classical music opportunities, as well the potential barriers still encountered particularly by first-time attendees when deciding whether to take part in an opera concert or in a classical music programme. This section ends with a reflection about the place of educational and outreach programmes with classical music organisations and the mismatches of objectives and forms of evaluation among organisations' departments when the aim of reaching out and diversifying audiences are in place.

3.1 The common assumptions, many interpretations and lack of consensus in arts participation

There is a common assumption that participation implies a level of action and therefore that participants might be driven from a certain passive state to a more active attitude (Pitts, 2005; Conner, 2008; Price, 2015). However, a more complex process of audience interaction and reception can occur before, during and after a performance attendance which subsequently challenges the notion of active and passive forms of participation.

Although concert attendance does not involve the production of a concrete work (such as a music composition or a performance), audiences empathetically engage by decoding the elements contained on stage and producing mental images, feelings, memories and anticipations and responding emotionally to them (Konijn, 1999; Reason, 2010; Juslin and Sloboda, 2010). They also engage kinaesthetically through their body by dancing, clapping their hands and tapping their feet in response to a musical rhythm (Sloboda, 1985; Reason, 2013; Bennett, 1997).

Reason (2010) argues that whilst watching a performance, audiences engage in a "kind of doing" (p.19), in which body and mind, conscious and unconscious, are actively involved in perceiving and attributing meaning to what is seen, heard and felt. Thanks to the contribution of studies in cognition, Reason explains that the audience experience emerges from an intricate and complex relation between three forms of 'doing':

> It might be considered a kind of imaginative doing, as audiences
> suspend disbelief, or an emotional doing, as spectators invest sympathy

with the characters or performance. The audience experience might
also be considered an intersubjective doing, through kinaesthetic
empathy with the movement of people in the space (Reason, 2010,
p.19).

Nevertheless, an artistic experience might continue to resonate in audiences'
memories for a long period of time, suggesting that engagement is an ongoing
experience which also occurs after an event, rather than a momentary involvement
(Bennett, 1997; Radbourne, Glow and Johanson, 2013; Reason, 2013; Walmsley,
2016).

White (2013) expands the understanding of what the term 'participation' can
encompass by considering that, in addition to the subjective emotional and
kinaesthetic responses of audiences when experiencing an artistic performance,
participation in the arts also involves the more prosaic activities of buying a ticket
and turning up to the event.

A common feature of Reason's and White's approaches described above is that
they move away from any idea of 'passivity' attached to the experience of a live
performance, by considering the physical, cognitive and kinaesthetic responses of
audiences before, during and after a performance as legitimate forms of
participation. Such an approach is valuable for this study as it allows for an
analysis that goes beyond the limits of what can be visible in audiences' reactions,
but what is implicit also in people's expectations, frustrations and memories
attached to their experience. Nonetheless, it allows for a more nuanced perception
of the various nonverbal forms of articulating meaning to the artistic act.

Conner's (2013) approach to participation reveals that audiences expect to be part
of a meaningful artistic process and the pleasure in arts participation is intimately
related to the opportunity to formulate, interpret, share and attribute meaning to
an artistic event or object. Similarly, Pitts' investigation (2005) also challenges the
concept of audience passivity, whereby participants are grateful for what is offered
and demonstrate enjoyment only through applause and loyal attendance. By
analysing audiences' behaviours, trends and attendance at two musical festivals,
Pitts (2005) observed that, away from the formality of the concert setting and
closer to performers, audiences describe themselves as "participants, rather than

onlookers" (p.95). Sedgman (2016) draws attention to what she calls "strategic passivity", that is an audience's self-conscious way of engaging in intricate strategies used to manage pleasure and disappointment (p.14). Different people perceive a performance in distinct ways; therefore, it is important to examine different kinds of participation to widen the definition of the term itself as well as to avoid a narrow understanding of passive versus active participation in the arts (Sedgman, 2016).

Another shared perception found in the literature, and confirmed in the analysis of British orchestras' websites, considers that participation in the arts can positively impact those who are involved in such experiences, regardless of age, artistic background, gender or race. Among the positive outcomes of participating in artistic activities it is worth mentioning a variety of personal and community benefits, as described below.

According to Williams (1997), the arts can mediate human interactions and promote social cohesion by creating a sense of place and belonging, which enables people to affirm their values and express their differences and aspirations. Keaney (2006) corroborates this perception by pointing out that collaborative arts projects can help communities to shape "positive and 'secure' identities" (p.27), by fostering a feeling of belonging, ownership and pride among its members. Involvement in the arts is a powerful tool for educational development, as it requires a high complexity of intellectual mechanisms – from technical skills and physical abilities to expressions of feelings (Hargreaves and MacDonald, 2011). Participating in the arts can enhance self-esteem, confidence, personal wellbeing and can also be a source of pleasure and enjoyment (Keaney, 2006). In this sense, the artistic experience can also represent a means of withdrawing from the oppressions of daily life, increasing happiness and creating a sense of spiritual fulfilment (Pitts, 2005; Belfiore and Bennett, 2008). Ultimately, it has been argued that the arts can fight social exclusion by offering a democratic space for individuals' and communities' competence building, expression and social change (Matarasso, 1997). Hence, engagement in the arts can represent a path to achieve social equality and citizenship, as well as strengthening democratic processes and community empowerment (Tepper and Gao, 2008; Price 2015).

Although according to some authors, social impacts as well as personal and community development are an inherent part of the arts experience, it is also important to underline that such impacts and outcomes might not always be positive. Matarasso (1997) observes that negative outcomes, such as damaging personal and community confidence, can come from badly designed and executed projects. Therefore, projects involving audience participation will succeed if organisations are authentically committed to their audiences and have a deep understanding of who they are, their habits and traditions – added to a joint effort in developing projects with the involvement and support of artistic, education and marketing staff (Maitland, 2000; Walmsley and Franks, 2011) – and, ideally, with the collaboration of some potential audiences (Matarasso, 1996). Furthermore, participation in the arts is not cost-free as it can involve participants' personal and economic resources, which could present certain risks, such as time availability, the feeling of social inadequacy or lacking the requisite intellectual skills to enjoy a performance, and occasionally the feeling of wasting money as a result of the gap between expectation and the real perception of a performance (Matarasso, 1997; Baker, 2006; Radbourne, Glow and Johanson, 2013; Jancovich and Bianchini, 2013). Ultimately, participatory arts projects can serve the vested interests of organisations, commissioners or funders rather than participants' needs and yearnings (Winterson, 1996; Price, 2015). Therefore, as reinforced by Jancovich and Bianchini (2013), to better understand the issues around participation and engagement in culture, an approach that considers different groups and their cultural practices is the most adequate to analyse the nuances encompassed by each context.

Despite these potentially negative aspects of arts participation, for this research, which investigates the extent to which educational and outreach projects allowed or inhibited different forms of participation in classical music and opera, it is relevant to question which arts activities have been considered in the participation debate, as well as the different forms of arts participation.

Although there is no consensus on precisely which activities should be embraced in arts participation, there is a general agreement on the so-called classic arts,[28] whilst popular artforms,[29] and amateur arts and crafts are still not equally comprised in the same list (McCarthy and Jinnet, 2001). On the other hand, Walker, Scott-Melnyk and Sherwood (2002) consider the broad understanding of creating, witnessing, preserving and supporting artistic and cultural expression in what they define as participation in culture. The authors also describe three forms of participation: hands-on participation (singing and painting, for instance); events attendance; and participation through the media (listening to the radio or CD, or watching TV). However, these activities are not equally relevant in organisations' efforts to increase audience involvement in their programmes.

Similarly, with the aim of mapping participants' involvement with different arts activities, Brown (2004) expands the concept of participation in the arts by depicting five modes in which audiences can take part in an arts experience:

1) Inventive: the action of creating art which engages body, mind and spirit;
2) Interpretative: performing and interpreting pre-existing works that can be made individually or in groups;
3) Curatorial: participation in arts by selecting, organising and collecting art;
4) Observational: attending a chosen art event that can be motivated to a certain expectation of value;
5) Ambient: random arts events attendance.

In addition to Brown's modes of participation, Tepper and Gao's (2008) spectrum of cultural participation includes three other forms of participation that are important indicators for revealing how individuals relate to arts, how they identify themselves with different experiences and to what extent arts are recognised and valued in their communities. According to them, donating to or supporting an organisation (membership and giving) and participating through an intellectual

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[28] Opera, ballet, dance, theatre, classical music, painting, literature and sculpture. (McCarthy and Jinnet, 2001, p.7).

[29] Rock, hip-hop, film, radio and TV (McCarthy and Jinnet, 2001, p.7).

involvement in order to acquire skills and knowledge on a subject (literacy) are also important forms to consider in the multiplicity of individuals' experiences within the arts.

Based on the above considerations, it can be argued that the way in which people take part in the arts cannot be understood as a single phenomenon, as participation varies according to social, economic and cultural contexts, as well as individuals' multiple motivations and experiences (Ostrower, 2008; Tepper and Gao, 2008; Walmsley, 2013). Hence, a single conceptualisation of participation in the arts will remain elusive, as it involves an intricate web of relationships. As summarised by Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride (in Walmsley, 2013, p.6):

> The terminology surrounding arts participation is in a state of flux. There is no generally accepted set of terms to describe arts participation, but an evolving lexicon of words and phrases that describe how people encounter and express their creative selves and share in the creativity of others.

Schuster (2008) adds another layer in the complex debate about arts participation by acknowledging the intimate relationship between the term's definition and structural conceptions such as art and culture themselves. Furthermore, such conceptions vary among organisations and countries and, as a consequence, reflect on how projects are differently conceived and executed in different cultural contexts.

The emphasis which each government places on culture, the development of public policies for the area, as well as the rationale behind public expenditure for the arts is carried within the long-established discussion around the different understandings of culture, which kinds of arts have been considered legitimate to be preserved, as well as the expected contribution they might bring to society. Investigating the rationale that underpinned the elaboration of public policies for the arts in the UK, as well as attempts to define culture and arts, contributes to a deeper understanding about the ways in which classical music education and outreach programmes have been shaped, communicated to their potential participants, and evaluated and reported by publicly funded organisations.

3.1.1 Great arts for all

If on the one hand the corollary in which the arts should be for everyone –
emphasised in the national document 'Achieving great art for everyone' published
by the Arts Council England in 2010, and which has been consolidated by two
subsequent ten-year strategic visions for the arts sector[30] – is hard to contradict,
on the other hand questioning which kind of arts the term 'great' embraces, as well
as which organisations reflect such a high standard reveals important issues about
who actually has access to public funded activities and why these activities would
be expected to be transformative. Such questions can be understood by
recapturing the cardinal 'arts for all' aim which informed the foundation of CEMA
during the 1940s, as highlighted in the previous chapter, and continued to be
paramount during the New Labour administration.

Bennett (2017) draws attention to what the Arts Council has traditionally been
establishing , since its foundation in 1946, as 'professional artistic work of the
highest standard'. Symbolized by what would later be known as "few but roses"
(Kelly, 1984, p.17), organisations such as the Royal Opera House, the Royal
Shakespeare Company, the major symphony orchestras and repertory theatre
companies, represented examples of artistic excellence centres, which in turn have
been historically maintaining their positions in the regular nationally-funded
portfolio (Jancovich, 2011; Bennett, 2017; Stevenson, 2019).

The mechanisms adopted by distinct states to support and diffuse culture define
their role in the arts, as well as the extent of their intervention in cultural
production. Represented in the UK by the 'arm's-length' principle, in which the
government assumes a distance in funding allocation by delegating it to relevant
agencies, such an approach suggests that these funding bodies are "quasi-
independent" (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2015, p.8) from the government, and,
therefore, should reflect equity in funding allocation as well as diversity in the
subsided activities. However, it has been argued that decision- making in the arts,

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[30] 'Great art for everyone', which ran from 2010 to April 2020 and 'Let's Create', currently
in place until 2030.

as well as the kinds of artforms that have been funded, has continued to be controlled by a cultural elite (Jancovich, 2011; 2015).

It is worth mentioning, however, the important attempt to shift the mainstream conception of culture delineated by the community arts movement in the late 1960s. By presenting art in alternative places and through creative forms in opposition to what was commonly seen in traditional arts spaces, community artists "were engaged in trying to subvert established notions of what the term 'culture' signified, what forms of art should receive public funding, where arts activities should take place, who should have the opportunity to take part in the process of creation" (Moriarty, 2017, p.67).

In opposition to the 'few but roses', which implied the priority of excellence, rather than an equitable distribution of public funds (Jancovich, 2017) community artists proposed a more inclusive and equal participation in funds provision and cultural production, reflected under the slogan "let a million flowers bloom" (Kelly, 1984, p.18). Behind such a statement lay the belief in collective creativity in contrast to the dominant Romantic view of the artist as a genius, detached from ordinary life (Kelly 1984). The term 'collective' is also key to understanding the dynamic and subjective concept of community embraced by the movement, in which the individual participant plays a fundamental role in sharing, shaping and embodying activities and goals. Under such a political framework, the autonomy, sovereignty and freedom of reaching individual and collective needs lies with participants, rather than being guided by analytic elements, such as communities' geographical locations, and controlled by the bureaucratic mechanisms of the state or any other institution (Kelly, 1984).

The extent to which such a point of view relates to the work of orchestras today can be seen in the somewhat persistent idea of developing communities (and its members) through outreach and educational programmes. By assuming that a community needs to be developed through participation in certain activities run by knowledgeable professionals – and in which participants are often peripheral pieces who would benefit from pre-determined projects – hampers the possibility of a true collaborative community work in which its members are encouraged to

find their voice, to express and co-create their culture and ultimately, to choose their own cultural options.

Although the community arts movement has raised some inconsistencies regarding the profile of the communities it was supposed to serve – some might argue it was centred on disadvantaged groups while others might attribute it exclusivity to the working-class' interests (Bennett, 2017) – it amplified the debate around the concept of community beyond its demographic aspects. The lack of a clear definition of arts, what kind of activities it encompassed, as well as how such activities were developed within communities, are inherent to the history of the movement (Kelly, 1984). However, it does not exclude the movement's contribution to encouraging a broad reflection on the extent to which the arts can affect social and cultural changes; in questioning the role of subsided arts, it foresaw the challenges of combining democratic and equitable access to the means of cultural production and consumption in a capitalist society, in which arts organisations are seen as 'service providers' rather than 'guarantors of rights' and audiences as consumers, rather than participants (cf. Hesmondhalgh et al., 2015). Within this context, social inclusion and value are key terms in understanding how the following policy agenda would have been shaped, as described in the next section.

3.1.2 Arts as a means of social, personal and community change

The potential of the arts in promoting social change[31] was investigated by Matarasso (1997) and reported in his influential work: 'Use or ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts.' The survey, which included 60 projects from arts organisations across England, was underpinned by six thematic areas to evaluate the impact of participatory arts programmes: 1) personal development;

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[31] Although social change is a slippery term and cannot be defined by using a single framework, for the aims and context of this thesis it is important to acknowledge its relation to social exclusion and social justice, to patterns of poverty and disadvantage and New Labour's political programme in addressing such issues through the contribution of the arts.

2) legal image and identity; 3) health and wellbeing; 4) community empowerment and self-determination; 5) social cohesion; and 6) imagination and vision.

The report provides a list of 50 effects that participating in the arts might bring, highlighting their social benefits and educational outcomes as well as employability and health developments. However, the report lacks a clear analysis of how such effects change participants' daily lives, especially those deemed to belong to underprivileged or socially excluded groups. In this sense, the list of 50 effects might be read as a guideline to convince arts organisations to take a more participatory approach to project development, as the emphasis on art in 'doing good' is paramount throughout the document. Such an assumption echoes the traditional premise of the arts in conveying civic values and shaping human thought and conduct, thus reinforcing the use of the arts as an instrument of control. The study is also lacking in participants' profiles, remaining uncertain about which groups the results refer to. The study has been criticised for its methodology as it relied on participants' ideas and inputs, rather than providing results based on a long-term monitoring process capable of assessing the arts' effects in participants' lives. Consequently, the argument that the arts have promoted the impacts implied in the study, and not other activities or forms of entertainment, remains fragile (Belfiore, 2002; Merli, 2002). Nevertheless, it is worth noting Matarasso's thought-provoking contribution to the arts sectors, as well as to inform forthcoming polices which sought to address social exclusion through arts, sport and neighbourhood renewal (Price, 2015).

In a different direction, the value people attach to their participation in culture was the focus of the five-year project 'Understanding everyday participation: articulating culture value'. By identifying everyday formal and informal modes of cultural participation and the value people place on it, particularly on the social sphere, the programme sought to shed light on the significance of cultural preferences and activities in British contemporary society. The programme draw attention to the importance of everyday forms of participation, such as community festivals and hobbies, as well as their potential in "developing social capital and sustaining social networks", and for "defining the parameters of community" (Miles and Gibson, 2016, p.151). The preliminary study results corroborated the

latest report of the Taking Part Survey, which demonstrated that people take part in many arts activities, such as embroidering, crocheting, knitting, painting, drawing, and playing an instrument for own pleasure, among others (DCMS, 2016). However, those activities are normally outside of the traditional opportunities offered by organisations that maintain the status quo of 'high' arts. Such reflections are valuable for directing the work of academics, policymakers and organisations' work, as they reveal that different forms of participation present in people's everyday life can generate a more ample engagement not only with cultural opportunities but also with other spheres of social life (cf. Keaney, 2006).

The ways in which people value the arts were also investigated by Keaney and colleagues (2007) through a national consultation, 'The arts debate', launched by ACE in 2006, which sought to understand not only the value people place in the arts, but also how respondents perceived the role of public funding. One of the key findings of this study relates to people's broad perception of the power of the arts to enhance their experience of the world. Respondents highlighted the contribution of the arts in fostering both individual and collective identities, by acknowledging the arts' ability to contribute to an understanding of who people are, the world surrounding them and their role in it. The arts was also valued for its ability to challenge those involved in it. In this sense, respondents pointed out the political, educational and spiritual role of the arts in encouraging them to question stereotypes and to think about different approaches to controversial issues. Respondents also identified the value of the arts in enriching their experience of life by "bringing colour, beauty and enjoyment" (Keaney et al., 2007, p.25) to it. Finally, the value of arts in educational, social, economic and community contexts was equally recognised by respondents, evidencing their awareness of how individuals and societies might benefit from experiencing the arts.

Other examples of academic investigations – focused on the value people place in the arts, its impacts on their lives, and how such impacts can be measured – have proliferated and their importance for the sector has being recognised by both

public and private funders.[32] By exploring methodologies capable of questioning the claim that the arts can positively operate in personal and community development, academic researchers provide arts organisations with fresh inputs that can inform inclusive practices. On the other hand, the risk in presuming that the arts brings about social change exposes long-established assumptions and judgements which permeate a logic of cultural control that can still be recognized within arts sector rhetoric.

Belfiore and Bennett (2007) summarize some of these assumptions, and for this thesis' aims, two are of especial interest as they highlight the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the arts. First, as implied in the sentence 'Arts and Culture' found in policy documents and official communications, there is a misleading consensus of what precisely the arts comprises. Although the authors acknowledged that parameter based on European high art is "no longer as hegemonic as it once was" (p.136), the idea of cultural diversity which underpins contemporary governmental discourses is also flawed as it specifies forms of ethnicity, thus it is still a selective form of determining what should be considered (and funded) as 'arts'. Ultimately, the lack of consensus in defining what 'the arts' actually means hampers a deep understanding of its value as well as its potential impacts (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007). If the arts sector is concerned with promoting inclusion, cultural diversity, being more relevant and attracting new audiences it should be expected from its members to foster a pluralistic understanding of arts, rather than being dictated by governmental agencies standards and funding rules.

The second assumption refers to the belief in which the positive social impacts produced by the arts experience are superior to the negative outcomes it might produce. Belfiore and Bennett (2007; 2008) deconstruct this argument by

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[32] Such as the recently created Centre for Cultural Value, based in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Arts Council England and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The Centre reflects the movement towards an "evidence based-approach to cultural policy and planning, and to impact and evaluation" (University of Leeds, 2019). The Centre's broad activities include the investigation of arts and culture with other themes, such as health and wellbeing, community regeneration, conflict resolution and education.

accounting for the historical positive and negative traditions of the arts, demonstrating that both perspectives were equally present in human history. The predominance of the arts' positive impacts rhetoric reinforces the unique power of the arts in being transformative. In so doing, it places the value of the arts in its processes and outcomes, rather than in its aesthetic values. As a consequence, the artistic experience is viewed as a means to an end, rather than a valuable experience in its own right. Ultimately, it reinforces arts organisations' behaviour in taking for granted the educational, personal, cognitive and humanising power of the arts and individuals' predisposition to take part in it, even when the option of not doing so is apparent, particularly by those stigmatized as 'cultural non-participants' (Stevenson, 2019). Such a definition is attached to a discursive identity created by arts organisations that typically refers to less privileged and more economically deprived groups, whose lower levels of cultural participation is justified by demographic, social and economic barriers, rather than by simply acknowledging the lack of interest or alternative choices of such individuals in not participating in culturally subsidised activities (Stevenson, 2019; Erickson, 2020).

At the heart of both assumptions described above lies the tension of two paradigms in cultural participation: participating as a democratic precept versus participating as a result of policy strategies and goals (Price, 2015). Both approaches can be recognized within the aims of educational and outreach projects offered by orchestras today, implying different ethical, political and practical aspects in organisations' processes of broadening audiences.

3.1.3 Cultural democracy and democratisation of culture

Centred on individuals' free choice in taking part in subsided arts activities, the approach known as cultural democracy seeks forms of participation in which the production and communication of culture is generated by communities themselves (Price, 2015). The state role in this context is to support such processes by providing regulatory policies which guarantee the structure necessary for that to occur, rather than interfere both in the process and in the cultural content. This paradigm is in line with the arm's-length principle whereby minimal intrusion into culture is expected from the government (Evrard, 1997). In contrast, the approach

known as democratisation of culture relies on policies focused on the wide dissemination of the "official culture" (Price, 2005, p.23), particularly to those who have limited or no access due to a lack of financial conditions or knowledge resulting from low levels of education (Evrard, 1997).

At first glance, the approach of cultural democracy appears to be most adequate to address issues of inclusion in the arts, as it is centred on individuals' active participation in culture production and diffusion. However, reversing the logic in which culture is received by individuals with one which legitimises the diverse forms of community cultural creation neither guarantees the interest of the majority in taking part in arts activities nor ensures high levels of arts participation.[33] Additionally, as highlighted by Price (2005), it is hard to guarantee participants' autonomy and freedom of creation when commissioners' expectations and results prospects are intertwined within the process.

Similarly, democratisation of culture approach is problematic in the work of organisations that are traditionally maintained by public funding, and which generally preserve the idea of universal norms of culture. They are more concerned with the value of the work of art itself rather than the relationships individuals can establish with it. As a consequence, the relative success of policies based on democratisation of culture is measured by the results of addressing the cultural deficit of a specific demographic (Evrard, 1997) and not by creating meaningful forms of participating in the arts.

It has been acknowledged by ACE itself that, although initiatives which seek to hand power to communities are widening the range of participants engaging with public funded cultural activities, such as the 'Creative People and Places' programme, running since 2013, these initiatives are still not implemented on a significant enough scale to affect previous national statistics (ACE, 2018), which reveals that large proportions of the population are still not participating in publicly funded arts and culture, and that this is often reflective of social and

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[33] Taylor's (2016) analysis of the national large-scale 'Taking Part Survey' shows that current policies which aim to increase participation in subsided arts are likely to target individuals who are already highly engaged.

economic status (Jancovich and Bianchini, 2013; ACE 2014; Jancovich, 2015; Neelands et al., 2015).

In light of the above, both democratisation of culture and cultural democracy paradigms can represent a tool of cultural control if the interests of organisations are above the interests and needs of the community they serve. Both can reinforce decisions made by groups who are in charge of cultural policy development as well as reflect organisational managers' and funders' priorities, rather than participants' preferences and objectives. As stressed by Price (2015), participation in itself is not "a sufficient indicator for a truly democratic process" (p.23). For that to occur depends on the integrity of the process in which participation takes place, as well as the intentions of who is involved in designing and delivering the projects – policymakers, managers and artists. If organisations truly want to promote change in their relationships with the communities they serve, they need to be prepared to rethink and change their own processes. Price (2015) acknowledges the difficulties and implications in promoting participation and community involvement faced by organisations seeking to be agents of social change. To implement an organisational structure capable of offering a variety of activities that matches different community groups' choices requires not only costs related to professional training, but above all, a delicate balance between organisations' missions, artists own principles and inclinations and funders expectations.

Ensuring participation in and access to culture is a responsibility of publicly funded arts organisations (Keaney et al., 2007). How British orchestras, the primary object of this study, are promoting participation in and access to classical music and opera through their educational and outreach initiatives, as well as the extent to which the "participation agenda" (Jancovitch, 2015, p.2) has impacted organisations' missions and their operational structures are discussed in the next section.

3.2 British orchestras in context

According to the latest survey published by the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) in January 2019, British orchestras are reaching more people, delivering more concerts and expanding their presence in communities more than ever

before. Statistics between 2016 and 2019 show that British orchestras have increased their audiences by 1% and the number of concerts performed inside the UK by 3%. The results also highlight the rise in education and community activities in relation to the previous result, showing that 11,570 education sessions and community outreach programmes were delivered by orchestras during the three years in which the survey was conducted. The results suggest that, despite challenges of public funding cuts and orchestras' decreased income, the sector continues to flourish. The optimistic scenario evidenced by the ABO's recent reports reflects the substantial effort that British orchestras have been making to find innovative ways to connect with their communities and remain relevant beyond the concert hall.

Despite the orchestral sector in Britain achieving positive results in terms of reaching new audiences, there remains much more to do in terms of access to and equal participation in classical music.

Results of the latest Taking Part Survey (DCMS, 2018) highlight that attending a classical music or opera concert were not among the preferred arts activities related by respondents who chose their preferences from a list of 21 different arts activities considered by the survey. Opera was one of the least attended activities, whereas classical music appeared in eleventh position of the cultural opportunities surveyed.[34] However, other musical activities, such as taking singing lessons, playing a musical instrument or singing for someone's own pleasure or rehearsing for a performance, were highly rated by respondents, suggesting that engagement with music often occurs in different forms and outside traditional venues. The result highlighted by the Taking Part Survey that is most relevant for the present research is the confirmation of the findings of the previous years' report: the highest proportion of people engaging with arts are white, middle-aged adults,

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[34] In comparison with other European countries, the results of a survey which investigated participation in cultural activities of citizens across 27 Member States of the European Union and Croatia revealed similar trends. Opera was also the least popular cultural activity attended by respondents, whereas classical music concert attendance appeared in sixth position of nine preferred cultural activities reported by EU citizens participating in the study (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2013).

who come from upper socio-economic groups, with no long-standing illness or disability and who live in less deprived areas across England.

Regarding the age range of who is taking part in classical music, results of the latest survey conducted by The Audience Agency between 2014 and 2016 highlighted that in Greater London, 41% of classical music audiences are likely to be aged between 41 to 60 and 37% are aged over 61. The proportion of audiences aged under 31 accounted for only 7% of the survey respondents. Outside Greater London, classical music audiences are older than the national estimate. According to the survey, 40% are likely to be aged over 61 and a lower proportion, 18%, aged under 40 (Bradley, 2017, p.10). In addition to evidencing the low proportion of young audiences for classical music across the country, the survey results also demonstrated that 67% of those who attended a classical music or opera concert booked only once, highlighting that the barriers of classical music attendance might be related to the perception of the artform itself (cf. Baker, 2000; Bradley, 2017).

In order to investigate Britain's perception regarding the 'posh' characteristic of some cultural activities, a recent survey published by the online platform YouGov UK (2018) showed that that among 13 forms considered by the study,[35] opera was perceived as the most elitist artform by 76% of respondents. In total, 1,642 participants aged 18 to 65+ years, from low to high education levels and personal income ranging from under £10,000 to £50,000+ were interviewed across the country. Such research shows some limitations, as the highest proportion of respondents had an income ranging from £10,000 to £19,999 and thus cannot represent the reality of the wider country.[36] Also, the reasons why some activities

[35] The activities included in the questionnaire were: going to the opera, cinema, museum, art exhibition, ballet, live music gig, going to a bingo game, a meal at a restaurant, a meal at a pub, going to see a stand-up comedy, going to a casino, and going to a spa (YouGov UK, 2018).

[36] From April 2018 to March 2019, the hourly rates for the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage was £5.90 for an 18 to 20 year-old and £7.83 for people 25 and over (GOV UK, 2019). However, according to estimates, in 2018 22.4% of the population in Great Britain had an income below the Living Wage rates (Office for National Statics, 2018).

were considered more posh than others and why other classical music forms such as chamber music, symphonic and choir concerts were disregarded are not provided. However, the study confirms an important result to be considered in the analysis of barriers to classical music attendance, as it suggests that perceptions of elitism regarding opera are most strongly perceived by young respondents.

Baker's (2000) investigation into the real and perceived barriers encountered by classical music audiences suggests that the nature of the artform, the social factors of a concert experience, and the expected knowledge that some audiences related to the experience are relevant factors that affect audiences' decision when considering attending a classical music or an opera concert. According to Baker (2000), the level of human interaction that a traditional classical music concert provides is limited and the content presented is far from what first-timers can relate to are important factors that contribute to putting potential attendees off the concert experience.

In addition to the personal and introspective nature of traditional concerts, Baker (2000) stresses the role of electronic media in providing listeners with an enjoyable experience of listening to high quality recorded music in the comfort of their homes, thus contributing to make a live concert experience less appealing to audiences. Baker (2000) reflects on the argument about elitism and exclusivism in classical music by correlating two factors. Firstly, audiences – particularly first-time attendees – might lack knowledge about what to expect not only in terms of the concert's content, such as knowing the conductor, the soloist, the language and the musical pieces presented, but they might also face issues associated with the venue itself, such as where to sit and the price to pay for a ticket. As a consequence, first-time attendees can feel vulnerable or excluded by not knowing the 'protocols' (Baker, 2000, p.44) involved in a concert experience, such as when to applaud and what to wear. Indeed, as highlighted in the previous chapter, some authors compare the traditional concert hall to an atmosphere of a sacred place (e.g. Cook, 1998; Small, 1998; Blanning, 2008; Johnson, 2011). Due to its rituals and formalities, Small (1998, p.24) defines a traditional classical music concert as a "very sacred" event in Western culture, a perception which certainly underlines the distance between audiences' daily lives and the classical music setting itself.

Findings from the literature shed light on some important elements that are key to constructing the feeling of belonging between audiences and the classical music setting. The informality of a venue and its possibility in creating a sense of 'intimacy' between audiences and performers, as well as between members of the audience themselves, was highlighted by Pitts and Spencer (2008) in a study which sought to investigate audiences' perceptions of a chamber music festival and its changes over three years. According to Pitts and Spencer (2008), physical and psychological closeness to performers and other members of the audience, enabled through the 'round' configuration of the stage, played a critical role not only in listeners' enjoyment, but also in fostering a sense of community between like-minded people who shared similar interests. Such a sense of community and 'friendliness' felt by audiences in relation to performers increased audiences' loyalty both to the festival and to the performers. A similar result was found by Dearn (2017), who investigated the influence of venue on the concert experience. Feeling close to the performers, experiencing their "liveness" (Dearn, 2017, p.247) and being able to see their facial expressions or hear their breathing allowed audiences a greater sense of being immersed in the performance, reinforcing the significant importance of venue, as well as of the interaction between performers and audiences in affecting audiences' enjoyment. Nonetheless, the results found by Dearn (2017) also revealed the role of the venue in promoting social integration, bonding and cohesion between audience communities.

Similar, in their study on jazz audiences, Burland and Pitts (2012) highlight the impact of venue on audiences' experiences of live music. The intimate atmosphere of a small jazz club allowed audiences to see performers "up close and personal" (p.528), to experience the music being created "in the moment" (p.527) and to respond to it immediately, enabling audiences to feel connected with the performers, with other members of the audience and to feel immersed in the listening experience itself. A two-year study entitled New Music: New Audiences (2009), which considered 32 contemporary classical music ensembles from 18 European countries, demonstrated similar results. Findings indicated that audiences prefer cosy venues where they can sit near the musicians, rather than in formal concert hall rows. Having an opportunity to share their perceptions with the artists and other audience members after the concert was also described as

one way of making the audience feel included in the experience (Alston, 2009). Conner (2013) also reinforces the importance of a "hospitable environment" that nurtures democratic interaction between artists and audiences and thus encourages audiences' participation and the possibility of spontaneously generating what she calls "arts talk" (2013, p.54).

While acknowledging that providing a more intimate and informal environment is valuable to foster audiences' feeling of belonging to the classical music setting, it is important to consider other practical factors related to audiences' socio and economic conditions when reflecting on the barriers for classical music attendance. Baker (2000) highlights the difficulties related to transport, ticket costs, audiences' lack of awareness of the options, time availability, as well as the 'competition' of other activities which might be more socially appealing, such as going to the movies or socializing with friends in a pub, as reasons that might affect audiences' decisions to attend a classical music or opera concert. Moreover, audiences reported a combination of such elements, rather than choosing just one as the single reason for not attending a concert.

Among the described reasons that alienate audiences from classical music experiences it is also worth noting the impossibility of choosing modern proposals in contrast to traditional repertoire and the predictability of the events, where the script is often expected and invariable (Sloboda and Ford, 2012; Sloboda, 2013). The uniformity of classic concerts in terms of the programme order, how the music will be played and how musicians will behave are also factors that reinforce the lack of interest among attendees (Sloboda, 2011).

In light of the above, the barriers related to participation in classical music imply a complex set of issues faced by audiences when deciding whether to attend a concert or to take part in a classical music activity. Nonetheless, the "perceptual barriers" (McCarthy and Jinnet, 2001, p.46) which audiences attribute to classical music participation also impact on how organisations shape their initiatives to comply with government requirements to broaden access to their initiatives and to diversify the profile of participants whist maintaining the artistic excellence of their programmes.

Such requirements are reinforced by the recent two national documents that depict Arts Council England's vision for the arts sector. Firstly, the document 'Great art and culture for everyone', which ran from 2010 to April 2020, describes five goals which indicated the areas where arts organisations should be orienting their attention and efforts during that decade: artistic excellence, access, sustainability, diversity and participation. The strategic priority related to access to culture is extensively mentioned by other consulted sources,[37] suggesting that this is one of the major concerns inside arts organisations.

The orientation towards access to and participation in culture continued to be paramount in the latest version of ACE's strategic vision: 'Let's Create' (2020). The document highlights the aim of championing everyone's right to express themselves creatively by articulating the three outcomes in which the strategy is centred: 'creative people'; 'cultural communities'; and 'a creative and cultural country'. Such outcomes do not represent a significant shift in the overall vision of the previous strategy, as the message implied by them is that publicly funded arts need to include and reflect the people they serve.

The challenges in articulating policy practice with arts organisations' priorities to maintain artistic excellence while supporting public involvement, promoting equitable access, providing experiences in which creativity can be encouraged and ultimately, satisfying the public's different expectations is a job that impacts not only an organisation's infrastructure, but also requires a high level of synchronisation in decision-making between both artistic and executive bases. Distinct approaches and rationales for decision-making collide in organisations' daily work, meaning that such a process is not easy to achieve.

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[37] Democratizing Culture or Cultural Democracy? (Evrard, 1997); Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (Wilson, Gross and Bull, 2017).

3.2.1 Mission, vision and the place of educational and outreach projects within classical music organisations' structures

As McCarthy and Jinnet (2001, p.41) suggest, an "organisation's key activities should serve its ultimate purpose". That is, in order to build participation, organisations needs to first examine their purpose and mission to then align the goals of their participatory programmes.

According to Varbanova (2013), mission is an objective concept which relates to the purpose of the organisation, the reason it exists and a brief history of its role and vocation. An organisation's values, basic principles, commitment and responsibilities with the public can also be included in the description of an organisation's mission. Vision, on the other hand, is a more abstract concept as it refers to the idea and ambitions of what the organisation wants to achieve. Although both concepts appear to be somewhat logical, they require a deep understanding of the values and commitments of organisations to reflect a proper alignment between them. The risk of not considering how participation supports the organisation's basic purpose and mission might be reflected not only in an imbalanced relationship among organisations and stakeholders and in conflicts between staff, but above all, it can lead to an organisation's mission creep (cf. McCarthy and Jinnet, 2001; Knell, 2007).

The strategic management approach described by Varbanova (2013) offers a valuable contribution as it encourages arts organisations to think and act lucidly by considering internal resources (both financial and human), as well as external factors which might impact on a project, even before its implementation. Structured in five phases, the strategic management process is firstly focused on developing a clear articulation of an organisation's mission and vision aligned with its actual resources and capacities. Phase two of strategic management refers to organisations' internal analysis of structures, which enables them to meet desirable changes and position themselves according to external factors such as economic, social and political contexts. The subsequent phase involves the elaboration of strategic plans or a "set of strategic programmes" (Varbanova, 2013, p.32) in order to achieve the proposed objectives. The importance of involving all areas within the organisation is key at this stage. The fourth phase regards

implementation as well as monitoring of the strategic plan. The final phase is centred on measuring, evaluating and identification of corrective actions. It proposes a reflection on the whole process to provide feedback and useful indicators towards management changes and innovations.

The common tension between what is expected from the artistic and creative teams versus what can be truly implemented by the financial, marketing and operational areas were observed by Varbanova (2013), particularly during the phase of implementing and monitoring the strategic plan. According to Varbanova (2013), one of the main difficulties in arts organisations is achieving a balance between the creative process and other processes of management.

Winterson (1996) corroborates this perspective by reflecting on the place of education and outreach programmes within an orchestra structure. Education teams are motivated by what is "educationally sound" (p.268) – by the outcomes that an educational experience with classical music might bring to participants. The executive side of an organisation, on the other hand, is oriented by a logic of broadening the number of attendees in the concert hall. In this sense, educational and outreach departments often struggle to come to grips with quantitative methods of evaluation required by funding bodies. Furthermore, the education and outreach work is often viewed as a complementary part of the organisation, rather than placed within its core function. As a consequence, those initiatives can be detached from the orchestra's artistic life and 'take on a life of their own' (Winterson, 1996). Considering the potential of educational projects not only in terms of diversifying the profile of audiences, but above all, in providing authentic experiences to audiences of different ages, in encouraging self-expression through the creation and enjoyment of music and, ultimately, in challenging traditional thinking and expanding the world view of participants, the educational work must be seen as a vital part of orchestras' structures.

However, if on one hand public funding requirements are pushing organisations towards innovative practices capable of promoting access, broadening and diversifying audiences whilst maintaining artistic excellence, on the other hand, the language and measuring tools of the market bring about the perverse logic of numbers over quality. The consequences for the arts, particularly for education

and outreach projects reflects directly on the risk of having projects developed and delivered oriented by quantity-outreaching instead of by authentic transformative artistic experiences. In the face of such a scenario, classical music will continue to struggle to find its place and value for the communities they serve.

This chapter has revealed the variety of forms that participation in the arts can take, whilst highlighting the complexity around the 'participation debate' by acknowledging the broad understanding of culture and the arts that underlines the development of public policies for the sector, as well as arts organisations' discourses regarding participation in the arts. In addition, this chapter highlighted the inequalities in arts participation still observed among different socio-cultural groups, and explored the two approaches to address cultural access that has been adopted by arts organisations to address such an imbalance.

This chapter also highlighted the government's requirement to justify the amount of subsidy dedicated to the arts resulting from the social, personal and community outcomes it can generate, rather than being supported by the value of the arts for its own merits.

Taking into consideration the issues around the definition of participation in the arts, the thinking which underpins what forms of arts and culture have been legitimised and valued over others, as well the extent to which such 'business' language has impacted on how educational and outreach programmes are conceived, communicated and evaluated, this study moves on to describe the methodology design, researcher positionality and methods of data collection chosen to undertake the fieldwork of this research.

Chapter 4
Methodology

The research question of this investigation emerged through the advantages and challenges of being an education and cultural insider who witnessed the fragilities and potentialities of developing classical music education projects in a country marked by huge social and economic disparities. It also considers my ethical position, as a professional, a researcher and a citizen in believing that access to the arts is a human right and must be within everybody's reach, regardless of their cultural and social context. Moreover, it is acknowledged that publicly funded organisations are responsible for addressing their communities' interests. As a music education advocator, the way I observe and interpret the multifaceted aspects of making classical music today, as well as my attitude towards those who are involved in such experiences, implies a risk of confirmation bias.[38]

To minimise biased behaviours and judgments that could have restricted the process of learning throughout the research and threatened the reliability of the results, I adopted an approach of 'reflexivity' (Mackieson, Shlonsky and Connolly, 2019, p.967) throughout all phases of the research. The process of framing the research questions, selecting the methods of data collection and participants, the nature of the interview questions, and, ultimately, the development of the structure of the thesis were all built through an ongoing reflection about the extent to which my assumptions and beliefs were influencing the context analysed and, at the same time, how the research process was affecting me (cf. Probst and Berenson cited in Mackieson, Shlonsky and Connolly, 2019). Acknowledging from the outset that both 'influence and collaboration' coexisted throughout the study stages required me to constantly reflect, discuss and sometimes reorient my research practice to produce a transparent report, "sensitive, contextually nuanced, richly detailed and above all faithful to what it depicts" (Ingold, 2017, p.21). In addition,

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[38] Confirmation bias is the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision-making is largely unintentional and often results in ignoring inconsistent information. Existing beliefs can include one's expectations in a given situation and predictions about a particular outcome (Casad, 2019, no pagination).

the adoption of mixed methods of data collection and analysis, allowed for a triangulation of participants' perceptions, interpretations, as well as confirmed emerging findings, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of data and reducing the risk of bias in the results interpretation (cf. Merrian, 1988; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

Considering the focus of this study, which investigates the extent to which educational and outreach projects allow or inhibit different forms of participation in classical music and opera, and how such forms of participation are expressed and interpreted by participants, the ethnographic approach was identified as the most suitable to conduct this investigation. Defined as the description of a system of cultural meanings pertaining to a certain group, their social interactions and behaviours, ethnography seeks to comprehend others' points of view, life relations and worldviews (Spradley, 1979; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). Rooted in sociological and anthropological studies performed in a variety of settings, mainly in the early 20th century (including remote, rural societies, small groups and communities), ethnographic studies have inherited the approaches used by anthropologists and sociologists, in which the researcher engages in long-term fieldwork to observe and describe community social structures and cultural forms in detail (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2001; Madison, 2005; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008).

Ethnographers and anthropologists may share similar ways of working in the field, however the disciplines differ due to the positionality of the researcher, as well as the aim of each endeavour. As a discipline of speculative character, anthropology is defined as "an open-ended, comparative and yet critical enquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the word" (Ingold, 2017, p.22), in which the researcher join with people through a "practice grounded in participatory dialogue" (Ingold, 2004, p.87). Anthropologists seek to provide answers to their own interventions, questions and responses to the "happenings going on" around them (Ingold, 2014, p.389). Ethnographers, on the other hand, refrain from interfering directly in the environment they are involved in by assuming the stance of observers. Thus, the resulting description of what was witnessed in the field reveals someone's reality in the interlocutor's own words (cf.

Spradley, 1979). The researcher's commitment, in its turn, is to provide a "fair representation, interpretation, or analysis of what the subjects of inquiry do, say or think" (Ingold, 2017, p.23).

Considering the subjective aspect of how people experience the arts, as well as the variety of ways in which such experiences can be expressed, it was fundamental that the participants' voices, actions and reactions, rather than the researcher's expectations or hypothesis, were placed at the heart of the inquiry. Thus, the adoption of the ethnographic approach allowed for the autonomy of participants in expressing and attributing meaning to their experiences without the researcher's intervention.

To provide the most accurate description of the activities and relationships comprised by the fieldwork, a key point of the ethnographic process is the construction of a rapport of empathy and trust between all parties involved in the research. Such relationships can be built through a reciprocal rapport of "active thinking and sympathetic listening" (Madison, 2005, p.32). The act of listening to understand someone's viewpoint, rather than adopting a judgmental position, permitted an engaged dialogue between researcher and participant from which memories, experiences and meanings could emerge. In addition, as stressed by Sedgman (2016), different kinds of knowledge can arise by listening to what audiences have to say, how they reflect on their perception regarding a performance and how such experience can be articulated through language or other forms of expression. Therefore, I paid close attention to other forms of communication expressed by participants, such as voice intonation and facial expression (cf. Juslin et al., 2010), as well as the signs and marks depicted in pupils' drawings (cf. Adams, 2002).

Although language is an explicit form of communicating by describing another's world, comparing different realities, and providing a channel of cultural transmission across different generations, 'tacit knowledge' (Spradley, 1979) and 'meaningful silence' (Freire, 2005) were also considered to avoid pitfalls that can lead a researcher to make early deductions, distortions or misleading conclusions. Thus my role and sensibility to observe others' contexts and participants' behaviour, as well as what might not have been explicitly said, was particularly

important for this study, as it involved a music experience articulated through unexpected feelings and reactions that were not commonly vocalised by participants in their daily lives.

Aligned to the premises which support the ethnographic approach, a socio-constructivist perspective underpins this investigation. The socio-constructivist perspective relies on the assumption that the meaning attribution of an object or a situation is not an isolated process but is constructed through human interactions and influenced by historical and cultural patterns present in individuals' lives (Creswell, 2007, p.27). The emphasis placed on the collective elaboration of meaning as a dynamic process compounded by human relationships, spaces and contexts in which it occurs resonates in Small's (1998) and Bourriaud's (2002) relational frameworks, as identified in the literature review. The advantage of adopting an approach which considers participants' attitudes, interactions and reactions in the analysis of results lies in the potentiality of it to gain a deeper comprehension that goes beyond what was written on participants' feedback and vocalised by them only at the time of interview.

Adopting an ethnographic approach allowed me to authentically observe the participants' context and gave me the flexibility to constantly reflect on my own research practices and processes rather than controlling participants' responses and reaffirming my preconceptions. Such an orientation builds on Freire's (2005) ideas on dialogical knowledge building. The author draws upon the concept of *praxis* – the encounter of action and reflection upon the world in order to transform it – as a legitimate way to emancipate those considered oppressed by a system he named the 'banking model of education'.[39] Freire's body of knowledge reflects his socio-political militancy during the Brazilian military dictatorship, and his concept of praxis emerges from a context of political control and therefore does not refer directly to an arts participant. However, if classical music is still perceived by some as an exclusive and elitist artform, if orchestras are still failing

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[39] What Freire (2005) metaphorically identified as the 'banking model of education' refers to a system in which the educator 'deposits' what is defined by others (excluding the voice of the students) as legitimate knowledge. The students are required merely to memorise and repeat that content.

to produce an environment where everybody feels welcome, and therefore a system which can reinforce forms of exclusion and oppression, Freire's contribution to this research lies in the possibility of exploring a framework which is rarely adopted in classical music studies, as well as a potential tool to investigate singular forms of participation in such an artform.

4.1 Methodological introduction

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the research question and sub-questions of this study were revealed throughout the investigation process, as well as through the reflection of informal observations I had the chance to conduct prior to the fieldwork beginning.

The first phase of this investigation comprised the development of a robust literature review, which consolidated the most important academic findings regarding the theme and sub-themes of the research focus. The review pinpointed the historical, social and cultural components behind the label of elitism and exclusivity of classical music settings. It highlighted the inequalities in participation in and access to the so-called 'high' arts, as well as the correlation between levels of engagement and socio-economic status. Furthermore, it identified the mismatches between traditional discourses in promoting equal participation in the arts and the concreteness in the publicly funded arts organisations' work. Finally, it highlighted the complementary place that educational and outreach programmes occupy in the structure of a classical music organisation, as well as the challenges of evaluation faced by those who place the quality of an artistic experience on the participants over the quantity of people such an experience might attract.

This phase was important not only for collecting data relating to the existing body of knowledge, exploring underlying theories, critically reviewing prevailing concepts and allowing comparisons, but it also guided the refinement of the research questions.

Also, as part of the initial research stage, I had the opportunity to informally observe seven performances of Opera North's 'Whistle Stop Opera' project winter

season,[40] one of the case studies included in this research. Although informal observations were made without any interference of the researcher, such preliminary involvement has had a pedagogical function as it: 1) allowed a broad understanding of the project's aims, production and implementation; 2) provided a fresh perspective of the context to be analysed; 3) informed the research questions of the study and interviews; 4) facilitated new insight into research methodology; 5) flagged challenges that might be presented, as well as the possible means of overcoming unexpected situations, such as an audience's absence at a venue; and 6) allowed me to become more familiar with the organisation, the project team, musicians and singers.

To visually represent the associations of thoughts that resulted from the literature review and the informal observations, a research mind map was designed with the support of NVivo qualitative software analysis. Such material had multiple functions throughout the investigation. Firstly, by producing a visual record of relationships linked to the central theme, the mind map encouraged me to engage in "systematic thinking" (Wheeldon and Mauri, 2012, p.8), which allowed a better understanding of my own approach to knowledge, as well as developing my criticality throughout the process of research. Secondly, the material informed the fieldwork by guiding the development of an observation script,[41] as well as supporting written descriptions and further categories of analysis. Ultimately, the material functioned as a reference point that could be referred back to and with which I could reflect upon my decisions and methods of inquiry.

For the purposes of this research, two contrasting case studies were undertaken with Opera North and The Hallé Orchestra, both located in the North of England. The fieldwork was conducted with the researcher embedded in the programmes to watch what happened, listen to what was said, ask questions through informal and formal interviews, and to collect documents and data relevant to the research

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[40] The performances occurred in February 2018 in a variety of venues in Leeds, such as Kirkgate Market, Ralph Thoresby School, Leeds Central Library, the Howard Assembly Room, St. Richards Church and Westward Care Home.

[41] For the observation script designed for the Whistle Stop Opera project, see Appendix A.

questions. The aim was to develop what Geertz (1973, p.6) called a 'thick' description of each setting: a detailed description of the observed field, which also includes a report that considers the motivations and feelings that lie behind participants' actions and responses.

4.2 Case studies

According to Yin (2009), the case study is a broad research design which investigates a complex contemporary social phenomenon in which the barriers of the real-life context are entrenched and thus relevant to the phenomenon itself.[42] Merrian's (1988b) approach to case study echoes Yin's perception of the blurring aspect of isolating real life and the context studied. According to the author, the "key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998a, p.6). Under the qualitative research paradigm, the world is not viewed as a detached and 'objective thing', but a "function of personal interaction and perception" which needs to be interpreted, rather than measured according to a hypothesis or other manipulated variables (Merrian, 1998b, p.17). The role of the researcher is to "observe, intuit and sense" what happens in a natural setting to understand the process behind how a determined thing happens, how it was experienced and how it was interpreted by those involved in it (Merrian, 1998b, p.17).

By acknowledging that the researcher is the first medium through which data is collected and analysed, it is clear that there is no neutrality in a qualitative research process (cf. Merriam, 1998b). Thus, the researcher's role in attributing meaning to an experience, as well as in the character of the result produced by the investigation, is emphasised in Merrian's words:

> The researcher brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the

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[42] A phenomenon can be understood by a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution or a social group (Merriam, 1998b, p.9)

phenomenon being studied. The final product of this type of study is yet
another interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through
his or her own (Merrian, 1998a, p.22).

Such philosophical assumptions align with the socio-constructivist perspective
mentioned earlier in this chapter, as well as with my own position in
understanding that knowledge is constructed by people and with people, as a
result of an intricate net of human interactions.

4.2.1 The Hallé Orchestra

Based in Manchester, The Hallé Orchestra inherited its name from the group's
founder Charles Hallé, a German-born pianist and conductor who immigrated to
England during the Revolution of 1848. Under Hallé's 35 years' conductorship, the
group became a self-governing professional orchestra, as well as recognised as a
national institution (cf. Rainbow, 1989; Baele, 2007). Throughout its history, the
organisation has expanded its activity beyond the concert hall by offering a variety
of initiatives dedicated to reach out to communities and schools both within and
outside the Greater Manchester area.

In the organisation's mission, as described in its website, the intention of reaching
out to those considered deprived from classical music opportunities is positioned
at the centre of the organisation's work. The education section reinforces the
organisation's emphasis in using classical music as a vehicle to increase their
community involvement with art by offering opportunities, particularly to those
who are currently not engaged with it (cf. McCarthy and Jinnett, 2001). Such an
orientation is clearly described in the purpose of the organisation's educational
programme, which "exists to create a wider enjoyment and understanding of music
in all sectors of the community, especially those who do not traditionally come to
the concert hall, by providing a range of unique opportunities to participate in
music and other creative artforms" (Hallé, 2020).

The Hallé Inspire programme (HI), is one of the organisation's initiatives in which
the musicians move away from their regular practices of rehearsing and
performing at traditional stages to connect with the community by developing an

educational work inside primary school classrooms. Derived from The Hallé Shine on Manchester project,[43] the HI programme aimed for a cross-curricular approach by offering a tailored creative music-making project according to each school's specific interest. In relation to the project's purposes, however, the HI programme's principles differed from the original initiative. While the Shine project music was seen as a vehicle to support numeracy and literacy skills development within the HI programme, participation in music activities aimed to increase positive social and behavioural aspects involved in the learning process, such as fostering better attitudes to learning, motivation, resilience, self-esteem, concentration, cooperation, confidence and team working.[44] Regarding musical aspects, according to the booklet entitled 'Resource pack for Hallé musicians & teachers', the HI programme aimed to 'inspire and offer children the opportunity to be musically creative and for them to be given ownership of that creativity' (Hallé, 2019, p.2). As pupils, teachers and parents participating in the HI programme can also be seen as audiences, as I shall describe in section 4.2.3, it is worth noting an absence of any mention of the organisation's aim in broadening, diversifying or building future audiences through the HI programme in the material, which could offer a connection between the programme outcomes with the organisation's mission described on its website.

To maximise the possibilities of having the most diverse group of students possible, the criteria of selecting one of the four schools participating in this

[43] Run from 2012 to 2018, the project was designed with the purpose of supporting literacy and numeracy attainment of Key Stage 2 'underachieving and disadvantaged' pupils. Comprising 25 Saturday sessions in which the pupils worked around specific themes, the programme also included a visit to the Halle's rehearsals and performances and other theme-based activities (Menzies et al., 2016, p.4).

[44] It is worth noting that despite being projects with different specific aims, Hallé Inspire bears some resemblance with the In Harmony programme, a national initiative based on the world renowned programme "El Sistema", originated in Venezuela. Aimed to "inspire and transform the lives of children in deprived communities, using the power and disciplines of ensemble music-making" (Lord et al., 2016, v) – the In Harmony programme relies on music engagement as a tool to promote social change (El Sistema, 2020). Similarly, in Hallé Inspire, one of the functions of music engagement relates to an expectation of pupils' attitude change towards learning. In this sense, in both projects music is seen as a vehicle to foster change in different aspects of participants' lives.

research considered the presence or absence of music education in their curriculum; the school's location in an area comprised by mixed-ethnic groups; and the existence of a solid indicator of disadvantage in terms of students' learning, such as the Pupil Premium Indicator.[45] According to such criteria, and in agreement with The Hallé Project Manager, Gorse Hill Primary School, located in Trafford, in the Greater Manchester area, was chosen as the most suitable place for the fieldwork. Regarding the participating pupils, according to the school's decision, the two groups comprising the cohort of Year 5 pupils (Key Stage 2) were chosen to take part in the HI programme during the academic year 2018/2019. The fieldwork started in October 2018 through a meeting with the school staff and ended with the last culmination concert in July 2019, allowing adequate time to produce a rich description of the context, and to explore the variety of participants' activities, responses and potential impacts of the project on pupils and teachers.

4.2.2 Opera North

The Leeds based company Opera North debuted its first production in 1978, although the company was established one year before its first performance. The company was founded as a response to the "demand for more opera productions in English provincial cities" (Opera North Special Collections). As highlighted by McKechnie (2014, p.16), Opera North is the only permanent opera company in England outside London, as well as the largest arts organisation outside the capital.

A similar purpose identified on the Hallé Orchestra website in reaching out to those who might not be currently engaged with the artform is implicit in Opera North's statement that the organisation "believes opera and music is for everyone" (Opera North, 2020). The description of the organisation's educational purpose is also somewhat limited in its scope. By pointing out that "Opera North Education connects with communities and inspires each generation, aiming to enhance the health and wellbeing of people in the communities where we work through arts

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[45] The Pupil Premium is additional funding for public schools, which was developed to help disadvantaged pupils (children with special needs or disabilities, for instance) to perform better and minimise the gap between them and their peers (www.gov.uk).

participation and performance" (Opera North, 2020), the website lacks a more detailed statement about why health and wellbeing, rather than developing creativity for instance, were chosen as the focus of the organisation's efforts.

Although the efforts to enhance community health and wellbeing can be related to The Whistle Stop Opera (WSO) project's aims, as past seasons included performances in care homes, the main purpose of the project is connected to the organisation's aim to reach out and diversify their audiences. As highlighted by the Education Director, the project aims to strength the organisation's connection with its communities and to reach new audiences while demystifying the barriers that potentially inhibit people from engaging with this musical genre. Developed in 2016, the WSO project seeks to offer an introduction to the genre, particularly to those who have never experienced an entire opera concert. The project was designed specifically to reach audiences of all ages and to be performed outside the formalities of a concert hall setting, such as in community centres, public markets, schools, shopping centres and care homes.

For this study, 19 performances of WSO were observed. In agreement with the Project Manager and Opera North Education Director, such performances were chosen due to their potential in reaching audiences with different profiles, as well as representing the variety of venues in which the project was developed. With the aim of including a diversity of voices in the investigation, I attempted to invite members of the audience of different ages, genres and ethnic backgrounds to participate in an individual interview at the end of each WSO performance. The criteria for the selection of participants were based on people's openness and willingness to collaborate with the researcher. It is worth mentioning that in venues where the SingOn[46] groups gathered, a previous social gathering including coffee and tea, which was a regular part of the groups' encounters, allowed me to socialize with participants before asking for an interview, making the process of interviewing easier than on other occasions where socialising between audience members was not available, such as in some arts organisations' spaces. The possibility of talking to some SingOn audience members before the concert itself

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[46] Opera North's lifelong programme dedicated to participants aged over 55 years.

brought to light personal stories, music connections, memories, feelings and expectations regarding the performance. Such testimonies represented valuable accounts to be considered in the interpretation of the results.

4.2.3 Criteria for selecting the projects

The reasons for selecting the two projects comprised in this study lie first and foremost in the contrasting functions of participation in each of the initiatives.

In the WSO project, participation is connected to audiences' appreciation of the performance and their interaction with predetermined artistic content in deliberate moments throughout the performance. Selecting the WSO project therefore allowed for an investigation focused on audiences' responses to this predetermined artistic content and the extent to which such an experience stimulated an audience, especially first-time attendees to talk about and engage with opera. Furthermore, due to the informality regarding both staging and the language adopted to narrate the story, the WSO project enabled me to investigate the relationships that emerged between audiences and performers, among attendees and, ultimately, between audiences and the artistic content itself (cf. Small, 1998; Bourriaud, 2002; Breel, 2015).

In the HI programme, on the other hand, participation is viewed as a process in which pupils' direct involvement led to the development of their creative skills. Different from the WSO project, in which audiences' interaction did not change the artistic content, the levels and forms in which pupils' took part in the activities proposed by the HI programme determined the result of their final creation, as well as the artistic content, the outcomes and success of the initiative (cf. Breel, 2015). As previously observed, due to some aspects of the HI programme, pupils participating in the project also acted as audiences, since they experienced the musicians playing their instruments during the sessions and final concerts, heard each other's creations and, finally, attended the Hallé Orchestra concert in a traditional concert hall. The analysis of the HI programme took into consideration both the experiences of pupils as co-creators of an artistic work and as audiences who experienced a live performance.

With the aim of evaluating participants' aesthetic experience (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013), the WSO was chosen as an attempt to capture the immediacy of audiences' responses in being exposed to a reduced opera concert in which both language and production structure contrasted with the conventionalities expected in traditional opera houses. The WSO project offered the possibility to observe audiences' reactions before, during and following the performance. It also allowed me to register the "short-term intrinsic impacts" (Brown and Novak, 2013, p.224) present in audience responses, perceptions and emotions while still affected by the event they had just experienced. Commonly described in the literature as the outcomes of the artistic experience, the intrinsic impacts identified by Brown and Novak (2013) encompass both the emotional effect and the personal transformation that might occur as a result of changing attitudes and perceptions during and immediately after an aesthetic experience (p.226). The observations of WSO audiences sought to identify the occurrence of any of the six intrinsic impact constructs as proposed by Brown and Novak (2007; 2013):

1) Captivation: relates to the degree in which an individual was absorbed in the performance. It can be investigated through audiences' perceptions of being transported to the world of the performer, losing track of time and detaching themselves from their own realities.

2) Intellectual stimulation: refers to the extent to which audiences were engaged intellectually by the performance, challenged or provoked by a particular idea, or stimulated to reflect on their own beliefs.

3) Emotional resonance: relates to both the extent to which audiences empathize with the performers, as well as the therapeutic value effect of such emotional responses.

4) Spiritual value: indicates the degree to which the performance was uplifting or inspiring and the extent to which audiences had a transcendent experience.

5) Aesthetic growth: refers to the extent to which being exposed to a new type or style of art which changed someone's feelings about such forms and offered a stimulus to engage with the artistic work (or a particular artist) in the future.

6) Social bonding: relates to the feeling of belonging or connectedness with other members of the audience generated by the artistic experience. It also refers to the extent to which the performance allowed audiences to learn about other cultures and gain new insights into human relations or social issues, or to celebrate someone's own cultural heritage.

Conversely, by being a longitudinal programme, the Hallé Inspire project permitted an evaluation of participants' prolonged experience and self-perceptions regarding their involvement (or lack of it) throughout a one-year project. Reason (2013) argues for the importance of evaluating the longer and ongoing experience in the arts by highlighting the multiplicity of "connotations and interpretations" (p.102) that memories, feelings, connections and reflections can bring to audiences' experience after attending a performance. Hence, observing the longer experience of participants who were invited to take part in different music activities, such as attending a concert, composing their own music, as well as performing in front of an audience, allowed me to evaluate and contrast the aspects of being exposed to classical music for different periods of time.

Other aspects, such as participants' profiles and the diversity of spaces where the projects were developed, also played an important role in the selection criteria. Although some WSO performances were presented to primary school students, most audiences consisted of random members of different ages and motivations. The venues selected for the performances met the purposes of Opera North's marketing, outreach and education work and consisted of informal spaces such as cafes, shopping centres, pubs and libraries in which the structure of a traditional opera production (lighting, orchestra, stage, props) were very limited or often non-existent. In the HI programme, on the other hand, both participants and the place where the project was held remained the same throughout the year, offering me the possibility to continue observing pupils who demonstrated different degrees of interest and participation, to expand my notes (cf. Spradley, 1979), as well as to follow up the activities and processes envisioned by the partner organisation.

The projects' selection took into consideration the singularities of each programme to provide a purposeful sampling, their potential to reveal multifaceted forms of participation in classical music and opera, as well as to offer solid indicators that

can support the discussion regarding the extent to which such projects can be meaningful to those who have experienced them. Ultimately, the projects' selection also considered organisations' willingness to act as the research's gatekeepers, the practicality of both organisations' geographic location, as well as my personal commitment in contributing to the place where I was given the opportunity to develop a PhD programme of study.

4.3 Participant observation and methods of data collection

Unlike other research designs, which require specific methods of data collection, a case study embraces all methods of gathering and analysing data (Merrian, 1998). Due to the qualitative character of this study, techniques of data collection allowed me to gain insights, and discover and interpret the particularities of the context, rather than test a hypothesis (cf. Merrian, 1998).

In light of the projects' particularities, as well as the range of participants' profiles, it was identified that a mixed method of data collection would be the most suitable to provide "rich, holistic insights" (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008, p.512) of participants' realities. In this respect, I opted for a combination of strategies which included participant observation as well as traditional ethnographic tools of data collection: interviewing, field notes and the compilation of both written and non-written material (cf. Merrian, 1988).

In the literature, participant observation tends to refer to a method of data collection. An alternative interpretation, found in Ingold (2017), questions the limitations of considering participant observation as solely a tool of data gathering by highlighting the educational dimension that coexists in the act of joining with people. According to Ingold (2017), more than producing an account of people's lives, participant observation is a way of "corresponding with people" (p.23). To observe is to participate attentively by recognising people's voice and actions and responding in the researcher's own practice. Participant observation also carries with it a moral commitment, since the researcher's responsibility in writing a fair representation and interpretation of what was heard and seen in the field will inevitably be permeated by readings, conversations and the researcher's own critical considerations (cf. Ingold, 2017).

Understanding participant observation as a way of learning with people is aligned with the relational and socio-constructivist approaches undertaken by this research, which emphasise the collaborative nature of knowledge as a construct of individuals' interaction. To a certain extent, embracing such a theoretical framework also approximates this investigation to an autoethnographic enterprise, since it incorporates the researcher's personal accounts, produced by a significant number of empirical observations, experiences and memories as research data (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011).

In practical terms, participant observation involves gaining access to and immersing oneself in a particular setting for a considerable length of time to examine, experience and document other peoples' realities, their social lives and cultural processes (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001). Gaining access to conduct this research was achieved through different methods.

This research began in November 2017 by being introduced via e-mail to both partner organisations' educational directors. This first contact allowed me to explain the focus and aims of the investigation, the timescale envisioned for the fieldwork, as well as the potential methods of data collection. A meeting with each project manager was then scheduled to discuss the best ways to use rehearsals, schools' pre-meetings and participants' moments of socialization as opportunities to potentialize my observations, as well as to reflect the variety of voices encompassed by the selected projects. Such meetings were also important to establish the involvement expected from partner organisations as well as the ethical procedures required throughout the research.

Access to conduct research within the WSO project was gained through both the educational manager and project manager providing verbal consent, further validated during a meeting in the presence of my main supervisor. Access to conduct the research with the school participating in the HI programme was gained through a meeting with the headteacher mediated by the project manager and further transcribed in a signed letter of agreement.

A core activity of participant observation is the production of written descriptions of a setting through field notes (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001). For this research, which sought a sensitive perception of people's different ways of participating in

classical music and opera, two types of field notes appeared to be the most relevant forms of gathering information: 1) the 'fieldwork journal'; and 2) the 'expanded account' form of documenting data (Spradley, 1979, p.75). The journal was used to record the observations of the HI programme. A notebook,[47] dated according to each session, was used to register the number of participants (pupils, teachers and other people invited to observe the sessions), development of the session's activities, the researcher's personal view of the work, as well as a detailed description of experiences, reactions, expectations, problems and feelings expressed by the participants. Expanded notes were registered mainly during the time between the two groups' classroom exchange, as well as at the end of each session. The expanded account type of field note, as suggested by the term, implies an enlarged register of considerations that were not made on-site. By adding as much detail as possible after each session, I had the opportunity to identify new speakers and recall events that occurred through informal conversations (Spradley, 1979).

As a result of the HI programme fieldwork, 22 entries were registered in the notebook, reflecting the observations of 15 sessions, three culmination concerts, three school preparation meetings and one Hallé Orchestra concert at the Bridgewater Hall. Regarding the WSO project, field notes were produced by using an observation script. This decision was taken by considering both the similarity of the performance and the diversity of settings and audiences it comprised. The adoption of an observation script allowed me to keep track of my observations on venues' structure and audiences' general reactions in an organised order which facilitated data processing. In total, I attended five rehearsals and 19 performances and field notes were produced accordingly.

In addition to participant observation and field notes, semi-structured questionnaires consisting of open questions were elaborated to help develop a rapport between the researcher and interviewee, elicit information and capture the participants' perceptions. The advantage of using open questions was the

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[47] For the guide that oriented the observations of the HI programme recorded in the fieldwork journal, see Appendix B.

possibility of broadening the length of the responses by encouraging participants to use their own language to describe a setting (Spradley, 1979).

The first part of the form comprised a questionnaire regarding participants' demographic data, opera and classical music concerts attendance, as well as involvement with music activities in general. In the second part of the interview, attendees were invited to share their perceptions about the performance, the venue and the project itself as well as to comment on anything they considered relevant to their experience.[48] Following 19 performances, I was able to conduct 21 interviews, whose results are discussed in Chapter 5. In addition to individual interviews, I had access to the responses of Opera North's feedback forms which were left on each venue's' seats. Consisting of a single question,[49] the feedback form aimed to investigate audiences' perceptions regarding the performance and, as highlighted in the speech of the project manager at the end of each performance, to encourage them to share suggestions and criticism regarding the project. In total, 156 responses were collected in the venues where I was present.

For both WSO and HI projects, in-depth interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) were conducted with three musicians, two singers, two teachers, project managers and education directors of both partner organisations to investigate their experiences, expectations, feelings and memories of events that occurred during the projects' development.[50] An audio recorder was used to assist with interview transcription and further analysis, resulting in approximately 10 hours of audio recording.

Interviews conducted with WSO staff were divided into sections to include the following key themes: 1) the artists' involvement in the project; 2) criteria of artists and opera excerpts' selection; 3) the process of developing the production; 4) perceptions of audiences' participation and engagement; 5) project outcomes; and 6) general views on barriers to opera attendance. Related to the HI programme, interview questions were developed considering the project aims and

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[48] For the complete WSO audience's interview form, see Appendix C.

[49] 'Please take a moment to tell us about your experience of seeing Whistle Stop Opera'.

[50] For the complete interview questions with Opera North and The Halle Orchestra staff, as well as with Gorse Hill's teachers, see Appendix D to J.

expected outcomes, as well as questions which reflected my interests in observing the sessions throughout the year. The main key themes selected for teachers, musicians and the senior education staff comprised their involvement within the project; expected outcomes; and their perceptions on the involvement (or lack thereof) of pupils, school staff and families throughout the project. Specific questions about session planning and curriculum impact were directed to the musicians and teachers. Similarly, the project manager and education director were invited to answer broad questions related to the project's impact on the organisation, as well as the way it could be forwarded in the future.

I initially planned to conduct interviews with selected pupils who participated in the HI project. Due to my immersion in the fieldwork, however, I realised that adopting a method of data collection which included all children, rather than only those chosen for a face-to-face interview, could be more beneficial both for the group as well for the research results. Rather than concentrating only on some children's verbal literacy during an isolated interview, a workshop was designed that combined drawing activities with interpretative commentaries to encourage all children to engage with their memories, supporting them to formulate, articulate and share their thoughts in a more pleasurable, ludic and interactive environment.

Considering the broad definition of drawing proposed by Adams (2002) as the act of "making marks that have meaning" (p.222), using drawing as a tool of enquiry assisted the children's process of making ideas and feelings accessible to the researcher whilst enabling them to order and understand their own experiences. According to Adams (2002), as a method of perception, drawing can assist the ordering of sensations, ideas and thoughts, thus enabling pupils to develop their interpretation and understanding of the world. As a form of communication, drawing supports a process of making feelings, ideas or sensations available to someone else. Finally, as manipulation, drawing can prompt the development of thoughts and 'mark-making' that were partly formed in the beginning of the process (Adams, 2002, p.222). In this sense, it can be argued that the role of drawing is both a medium for learning as well as a tool of thought and further action (Adams, 2002). As highlighted by Reason (2013), engaging participants in

more active and reflective activities through combining drawing and dialogue is more beneficial when working with children, as it places the participants in the "position of actively interpreting and constructing meaning" (p.105) of their arts' experience. Such a change in the method of data collection was also more advantageous for the researcher as it reflected the diversity of the group, as well as individuals' different responses.

Also, as part of data collection, an online survey was designed as a requirement of The Hallé educational department to evaluate the programme across the four participant schools. The questions were elaborated with my personal contribution and aimed to capture teachers and pupils' perceptions, self-evaluation, aspirations and suggestions regarding the programme. As my involvement was focused on a specific school, only the responses of this school's pupils are considered in the resultant analysis. Unfortunately, both teachers participating in the project did not reply to the online survey.

4.4 Coding and analysing data

According to Reeves, Kuper and Hodges (2008), ethnographic data analysis tends to follow an inductive process of identifying and categorising key issues that emerge from the collection of the information itself. The procedure of coding (grouping data according to its similarities) allows the distinction and connection of overlapping themes to emerge along with a comparison between specific topics and even the exclusion of themes that might not be relevant for the analysis (Madison, 2005). As Creswell (2007) points out, the outcome of the resultant analysis is to provide a "holistic cultural portrait" (p.72), which includes the variety of factors identified in both the perspectives of the group and the researcher.

Regarding the WSO project, audience feedback was collected at the end of each performance. The responses were transcribed and coded to anonymise any detail that could identify participants. A preliminary analysis highlighted the repetition of some elements, which were further grouped by mirroring the research mind map. Such groups comprised the following preliminary elements of analysis: general enjoyment; quality of the performers (singers and musicians); proximity with the performers; performance duration; good introduction to opera; informality of the

production; singing in different languages; emotions and moods of the story; audiences' interactions and reactions; learning aspects (Q&A); venue adequacy and accessibility; tickets cost and other barriers for attendance. Similarly, interviews and observations were pre-examined using the same elements to find similarities and differences across the collected material.

Data collected during the HI programme, such as pupils' online responses, was first analysed trough the production of charts and tables with the assistance of the Google Docs tool. Although such a tool is not a traditional academic form of data analysis, it offered a useful first visualization of the results. Interviews with musicians, teachers and The Hallé project manager were transcribed and analysed considering the qualitative and socio-constructivist approaches employed by this research. Pupils' drawings were analysed in line with the process applied to verbal data – through coding and grouping recurrent themes that emerged from pupils' illustrations (cf. Dearn, 2017). The drawings were not examined in light of how good or bad they were, but by investigating the evidence generated by them (cf. Adams, 2002). A first step adopted to interpret this evidence was grouping the drawings, which presented clear contextual information about the pupils' perceptions of a specific instrument, a working theme and how they felt in a particular situation or their relationship with music. Such a process of grouping also included information given by the children through verbal comments while drawing or before the activity, as a form of complementing their illustrations. A second step was identifying the recurrence of similar perceptions in pupils' drawings, such as their preference, dislike or disapproval regarding an element of the project. This process generated recurrent themes which supported a nuanced analysis of pupils' perceptions, in which drawings and personal reflections about what was depicted were considered. Ultimately, the drawings which did not correspond to any of the emergent themes were identified and analysed according to the similar process of identifying the information presented, as well as by the pupil's accompanying comment.

4.5 Study limitations

Although music is present in everyday life in a number of different ways it is not an easy task to translate the musical experience, capture its meaning and express its impact in words (Pitts, 2005; Turino, 2008).

According to Johanson (2013, p.163), 'talk-based' research strategies, such as interviews, are associated with both advantages and limitations. On the one hand, participants are given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, share their perceptions and identify their feelings correlated to a performance. On the other hand, the results may be circumscribed by the extent to which spoken language is capable of articulating complex socio-cultural experiences. Another difficulty in evaluating audiences' responses is the previously mentioned common sense idea that the arts can do good, thus attending an arts event is a "positive thing to do" (Johanson and Glow, 2015, p.267). Such a belief can lead participants to feel obliged to express positive perceptions in order to collaborate with the researcher, as well as to avoid demonstrating "feeling out of place" (p.258). Reflecting upon the question-and-answer approach, Baxter (2010) also identifies similar factors that can influence audience replies and, as a consequence, contest the accuracy of some verbal responses. Among the factors which can restrict the audiences' narrative, the author highlights those affected by partial memory (not automatically recalling usual events or spontaneous attitudes), selective memory (verbalising only what the participant assumes the researcher is interested in knowing), and being influenced by peer pressure, which leads to participants acting in accordance with the group's conventions and providing a good answer to please the researcher. Nonetheless, as acknowledged by Reason (2013) in his study with young children, participants may also avoid engaging in the conversation or even deliberately provide answers against what is being investigated as a consequence of a rebellious position towards those who represent authority, such as the researcher, other adults or the school. Thus, the risk of relying only on someone's vocabulary to describe an often abstract experience can jeopardise the validity of the results (Johanson, 2013; Reason, 2013) or lead to an overly positive evaluation (Johanson and Glow, 2015).

To encourage participants to truly open up and reduce standardised postures and clichéd responses, a rapport based on mutual respect, cooperation, trust and positivity was essential to help participants avoid self-censorship and develop the feeling of being authentically heard rather than judged (Madison, 2005; Baxter, 2010). Such a rapport was constructed throughout my involvement with the WSO and HI programme teams during rehearsals, performances and school sessions, as well as in moments of socialisation such as meals, travel and lifts to the venues.

Nonetheless, to avoid a bias towards positive evaluation, I focused my attention on also registering "what had not happened" or who might have been "incidentally excluded" from the activities observed, in order to provide rigour to the research (Johanson and Glow, 2015, p.258). Thus, participants' responses, gestures and attitudes that pointed to a lack of interest or engagement in the two projects were equally considered as outcomes of participants' experiences and interpreted accordingly. In addition, I remained faithful to my position of an ethnographer who observed and reported participants' views without interfering in their experience by not displaying gestures or expressing words of appraisal or disapproval regarding their perceptions or forms of participation. I ensured that my methods of data collection, such as the workshop with the pupils participating in the HI programme were inclusive enough in terms of offering equal time to all pupils to produce an illustration and to have their voices heard during the activity. Such approaches and practices were also beneficial to avoid creating a relationship of power between participants and me.

To reduce any potential study limitations, using an alternative strategy which could support the participants' awareness of their feelings and experiences that could be articulated intuitively rather than rationally, such as the adoption of drawings allied to verbal comments, represented an effective method for gaining a deeper insight throughout this research (cf. Baxter, 2010).

It is also important to acknowledge that I encountered some initial language limitations as a non-native English speaker. As with all languages, English encompasses delicate nuances that might not be completely discerned immediately during the process of data collection. To overcome such limitations, I relied on my expertise and sensibility of working for more than two decades with

several groups, including children, teachers, musicians and art managers, and my ability to recognise their different forms of expression. The possibility of double-checking information through a process of "restating what informants say" in the researcher's own words (Spradley, 1979, p.81) also contributed to elucidating and reinforcing the information provided, as well as demonstrating my effort and interest in learning participants' particular speech, beliefs and perceptions.

4.6 Ethical principles

The study was conducted according to the University of Leeds' ethical codes and policies on good research practices, as detailed on the institution's website. The application for ethical review began concomitantly with the PhD transfer process and approval was granted by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Culture Research Ethics Committee in October 2018. As mentioned previously in this chapter, as conducting interviews with selected pupils who participated in the Hallé project was replaced by a workshop with the entire group, an amendment to the original ethics form was forwarded to the University Research Ethics Committee for re-examination and further approval was given accordingly.

Although the study did not represent risk to the participants, to minimise any inconvenience, an information sheet stating the research purpose, methods, general impact of the study and sources of support was given to all participants and partner organisations [51] before their participation began. The information sheet also included descriptions regarding data confidentiality, participants' anonymity, safety and wellbeing to ensure that appropriate regard was given to all participants, particularly those considered part of vulnerable groups.[52] In addition, an informed consent form sought to ensure that the participants were aware of the processes associated with the study and to guarantee their possibility of

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[51] For study information sheet provided to participants, see Appendix K.

[52] Ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled people, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, isolated elderly people and children all often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment (The European social fund and social inclusion, 2010).

withdrawing participation at any time.[53]

Nonetheless, during the process of data collection, the participants could have experienced feelings of embarrassment for having (or not) an opinion about a specific subject or become distressed (in case of people with disabilities or special needs, for instance) resulting in stress and anxiety that might lead to "damaged self-esteem" (Murphy and Dingwall 2001, p.340). To avoid such a scenario, I paid close attention to the principle of causing 'no harm' and safeguarding the participants' rights, safety, dignity, privacy, interests and sensitivities (Spradley, 1979; Murphy and Dingwall, 2001; Madison, 2005). This was achieved by making sure all interviewees were given enough time to share their perceptions and comments. Similarly, all pupils were given time to participate in the workshop activities and to comment on these through individual drawing-based reflections and group discussion in the presence of either the headteacher or the assistant inside the classroom. I also counted on my expertise of working for more than a decade as a music teacher in regular schools, as well as my experience in working with students with Down Syndrome developed during my masters study – I was therefore used to the classroom environment and its particularities. I also ensured all policies required by the school and the partner organisations were addressed and respected during the fieldwork activities. Moreover, I made myself available and open to any suggestions, critiques or requirements that was of concern to the research partners.

This chapter examined the methodological approach, the criteria for selecting the two case studies and participants, as well as the methods adopted to collect and analyse data generated in the investigation of the two programmes. Such approaches and decisions draw on the understanding that participation in the arts can take different forms and be expressed by participants in a variety of ways. In addition, such approaches and decisions also take into consideration the inequalities in arts participation observed among distinct socio-economic groups. The ethnographic approach was chosen as the most suitable for conducting this

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[53] See Appendix L for the consent form provided to participants prior to their participation in the interviews.

research, since it allowed enough distance to critically observe and analyse participants' experiences and the settings I was embedded in, and to report on those accounts by placing the participants' perceptions at the forefront. Similarly, the use of mixed methods to collect and analyse data, such as written feedback, face-to-face interviews, participant observations, online surveys and drawings supported by verbal comments, were chosen both to amplify the possibilities of gathering data amongst participants of different ages and to address the needs of those who felt more comfortable in writing or drawing, rather than talking, to have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

This chapter highlighted the limitations of qualitative research which also aims to investigate the subjective relationship that participants establish with music and the value they attribute to their experiences with this artform. By identifying the researcher's approach to overcoming such limitations, this chapter also pointed out the challenges I would encounter throughout my immersion in the fieldwork: participants' apprehension, discomfort or even lack of interest in talking about opera or classical music.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the empirical findings of this research. These chapters explore the variety of forms of participation (or lack thereof) allowed by musical and extra-musical elements encompassed by both programmes. The structures of these chapters follow the key elements and findings that emerged from the investigation in order to provide cumulative answers to support the proposed research questions of this study.

Chapter 5
Whistle Stop Opera

This chapter investigates audiences' experiences of attending a Whistle Stop Opera (WSO) performance, bringing out distinct responses and their meaning to audiences. By examining audiences' emotional and physical reactions to the interactive, musical and dramatic elements comprised by the production, as well as the relationships between participants and artists allowed in the spaces where the performances were held, this analysis addresses the following research questions:

> *RQ 1*. How do educational and outreach projects with a focus on audience engagement allow or inhibit different forms of participation in classical music and opera?

> *RQ 2*. To what extent can such forms of participation stimulate new and existing audiences to talk about and engage with this artform?

> *RQ 3*. What can observing and analysing different forms of participation tell us about the effectiveness of this project in engaging its audiences?

First, a prelude for this chapter is presented to contextualise and describe audiences who attended the 19 performances observed. The section continues by describing the demographics and profile of the 21 attendees who participated in face-to-face interviews conducted immediately after each performance. A brief description of my first impressions, as well as my own emotional involvement and reflections experienced while attending a WSO performance is also presented to offer a vivid overview of the fieldwork. Some of the challenges encountered throughout the research process are described as an attempt to highlight the pros and cons of conducting qualitative research with a variety of audiences in different settings.

The chapter moves on to describe the three themes and sub-themes that emerged from the process of open coding (Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, 1984), based on all the data generated from audiences' feedback forms (n=156) , one-to-one

interviews (n=21), performance observations (n=19), and interviews with artists (n=3) and Opera North staff (n=2). After being transcribed and pseudonymized, the material was read and re-read widely to identify recurrent ideas, comments and interpretations. Prompted by patterns identified with the assistance of NVivo software for qualitative analysis, a table labelled by colours was designed to classify responses directly connected with the related literature, and new insights generated from the fieldwork. The classified patterns were combined, generating three themes capable of providing a comprehensive account of the experience (Aronson, 1994), as follows:

1. Group and individual experience

2. Project value recognition

3. Barriers to opera attendance

The three themes revolve around an additional theme: the project's artistic choices. This theme permeates the whole analysis and discussion, as it indicates the intentions and outcomes envisioned by the project and allows the researcher to consider the extent to which such intentions were perceived and reported by audiences as well as its impacts on individuals' experiences (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013).

The first section of this chapter describes audiences' emotional and kinaesthetic responses to a WSO performance. Here, the two parts of the performance were analysed to identify the different forms of participation that occurred during the experience. The role played by the elements of interaction, as well as how audiences were invited to join in is explored in the first part of this section. Audiences' emotional responses, facilitated by the proximity with singers and the intimacy of WSO settings, are explored in the second part of this section. The extent to which elements of music and language were accessible to different audiences is under investigation in the last part of the section. A broad discussion on distance and subjectivity in music appropriation is adopted throughout this part to support a more nuanced analysis of WSO audiences' responses.

The ways in which audiences found value in their experiences are explored in the second section of this chapter. First and foremost, audiences' emotional responses emerged as an important feature of engagement. Similarly, attendees' inclinations

to talk about and share their experiences with others emerged from audiences' perceptions of the project.

The third section of this chapter highlights both first timers' and regular attendees' recognition of the barriers to opera attendance. Reflecting the literature review, some preconceptions about the genre were vocalised by many members of the audience and the ways in which the WSO project demystified some of them is detailed in this section as an effort to identify authentic ways to develop future projects that are capable of being accessible and entertaining whilst stimulating different audiences to talk about and engage with opera.

With the aim of answering the last research question proposed by this research, the fourth and final section of this chapter moves on to analyse the implications of WSO audiences' feedback for the organisation. The discussion draws on interviews with Opera North's staff, on insights gleaned during the observations to discuss audience impact data in informing future artistic programming (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013), as well as other logistical decisions relating to project planning. The analysis reveals the fragility of current practices of evaluation adopted by the organisation, as well as the potentiality of a qualitative study centred on the audience experience in informing existing practices and challenging preconceptions about opera.

5.1 Knowing Whistle Stop Opera project audiences

Although some characteristics cannot be attested to just by observing a group of people, it is possible to assert that throughout the 19 performances observed, WSO audiences were composed predominantly of white and middle-aged people. Except in the two schools and three pubs, the presence of young people was not frequently seen in the venues where WSO performances were held. Regarding the gender of audiences, data collected during the observations shows a predominance of women over men attending performances. To include a diversity of voices among the 21 interviewees, the researcher managed to interview 13 women and eight men. Among the groups of respondents, 16 were middle-aged or older (between 45 and 75+ years of age) and five respondents were aged between 25 and 44.

Regarding opera attendance, among the 21 interviewees, 15 respondents had attended an opera before, while six participants were experiencing opera for the first time. Among regular opera attendees, six participants had attended opera once a year, two participants frequented opera concerts twice a year, and five attended more than twice a year. Among the reasons given by the four interviewees who had never attended an opera before, two had never thought about the reasons why. In their words, opera "was just not an option". Such a perception finds a correlation with what Baker (2000) noted as one of the barriers which prevents people from attending classical music concerts. According to him, for some audiences, the reluctance to attend concert halls does not relate to the rejection of the artform, but for many people classical music and opera concerts simply do not appear as options for leisure time in their "menu of choices" (p.43). Only one participant highlighted mobility issues, such as public transport difficulties and venues' lack of disabled access, as the main reasons for not attending opera concerts. Similarly, the high cost of tickets was mentioned by only one respondent, confirming that the practical limitation of paying for tickets is not the major barrier for arts attendance (e.g. Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre, 1999; Baker, 2000; Jancovich and Bianchini, 2013).

The hypothesis that WSO audiences were often not unfamiliar with opera settings was confirmed throughout the 19 performances observed. This conjecture was proven by the high number of people who raised their hands when asked by the host if they had been to an opera before, as well as by the vocabulary used to express what they would expect to see in an opera concert and how an operatic voice should sound.[54] Furthermore, in moments where the researcher had the opportunity to informally talk about her thesis with some members of the audience, considerable knowledge about the barriers to classical music attendance was shown by many attendees, who mentioned issues of inequality in access, the lack of local opportunities to attend opera concerts (cf. Baker, 2000), the dress

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[54] The three questions were asked by the host at the beginning of each WSO performance. Responses such as: "lavish and period costumes", "swirled, in tune and majestic voices", "drama", "passion", "scenery", "orchestra", "props", "narrative and plot" were heard repeatedly in several venues.

code still expected in concert halls (cf. Small 1987; 1998; Baker, 2000; Dobson and Pitts, 2011; Gross, 2013), and the language barrier in some opera productions (cf. Cuenca, 2015).

The feeling of exclusion ('not for me'), on the other hand, was constantly vocalised by many attendees who engaged in informal conversations with the researcher before and after the performances, as well as by 14 attendees in interviews. For two interviewees, the feeling of not belonging to an opera setting was accompanied by a fear of inadequacy prompted by perceptions of others' judgements regarding expected clothing and conduct codes. Similarly, the fear of not being able to understand a story narrated in another language was vocalised by two members of the audience who approached the researcher during the experience. For a group of three men, who were incidentally in Marks and Spencer's café in Bradford at the time of the performance, the feeling of not belonging was related to their belief that opera houses are not for 'working class people'. While talking with the researcher, the group was laughing and making jokes about their poor cultural background. Such testimonies implied both a sense of social discomfort (cf. Price, 2017), as well as a perception of classical music as an "aspirational, culturally-valued activity" (cf. Dobson and Pitts, 2011, p.360), which is still seen as a mechanism of affirmation of one's class (Bourdieu, 1984). Curiously, during the performance, one of the men sang out loud many of the baritone's arias, causing a certain astonishment between his colleagues and the researcher alike. After the performance, he acknowledged that listening to those arias at home had been a recurrent practice since his adolescence, confirming that his knowledge of opera was transmitted through his upbringing (cf. Barrett, 2015).

Besides attending opera and classical music concerts, involvement with other music activities was revealed by 80% of the interviewees. In total, 64.7% belonged to a choir, 23.5% took music lessons (singing or playing), 1.6% went to gigs or workshops, 11.8% played and taught a musical instrument and 5.9% played an instrument for their own pleasure. Moreover, seven respondents (i.e. 30% of the total) mentioned more than two of the activities listed above as part of their weekly routine. Such results are consistent with those reported by the latest Taking Part survey (DCMS, 2018), which identified the types of activities and

frequency with which different groups of adults engaged with the arts. Among the 22 arts activities and events covered by the survey, those related to music, such as 'playing an instrument for your own pleasure' as well as 'singing as part of a group or taking singing lessons' were classified respectively as the third and ninth most likely activities which respondents reported to be engaged with. These results confirm that musical participation, beyond what the traditional surveys described as participation in classical music activities (such as chamber music, symphonic and opera concerts attendance), is an integral part of people's daily lives (DeNora, 2000; Green, 2006).

Regarding the motivation to attend the show, for one member of the audience who was attending the performance at The Northern Brewery Refectory, opera was not an enjoyable genre for them and their attendance was motivated only by their partner's persuasion. Except for one interviewee, who was attending the performance alone at the Belgrave Music Hall in Leeds, 20 respondents pointed out that invitations from friends, partners and family were the main motivation to attend a Whistle Stop Opera performance. For the six participants of the SingOn groups interviewed, attendance was influenced by an overlapping of musical and social motivations, accompanied by a sense of 'moral responsibility' (cf. Tepper and Gao, 2008; Burland and Pitts, 2014). According to these participants, a shared interest in singing and in opera itself, as well as the joy of being among friends in a familiar space, were all highlighted throughout the interviews. Observation of SingOn groups also revealed a strong sense of community between participants, which will be detailed in section 5.3.3.

In relation to ethnicity, all of the interviewees were white and native English speakers, with only one exception, a woman from a Middle Eastern country, who attended the performance at the Ordsall Hall in Manchester. Interviewees' occupational statuses showed that from the total of 21 respondents, 12 were currently employed and nine were retired. The absence of interviewees who identified themselves as students highlights both the demographic reached by WSO audiences as well as the organisation's requirement to not interview members of the audience in the three pubs, where a higher concentration of young people were likely to be found, as detailed in the next section.

Figure 1 summarizes the profiles of the 21 participants who took part in the post-performance interviews.
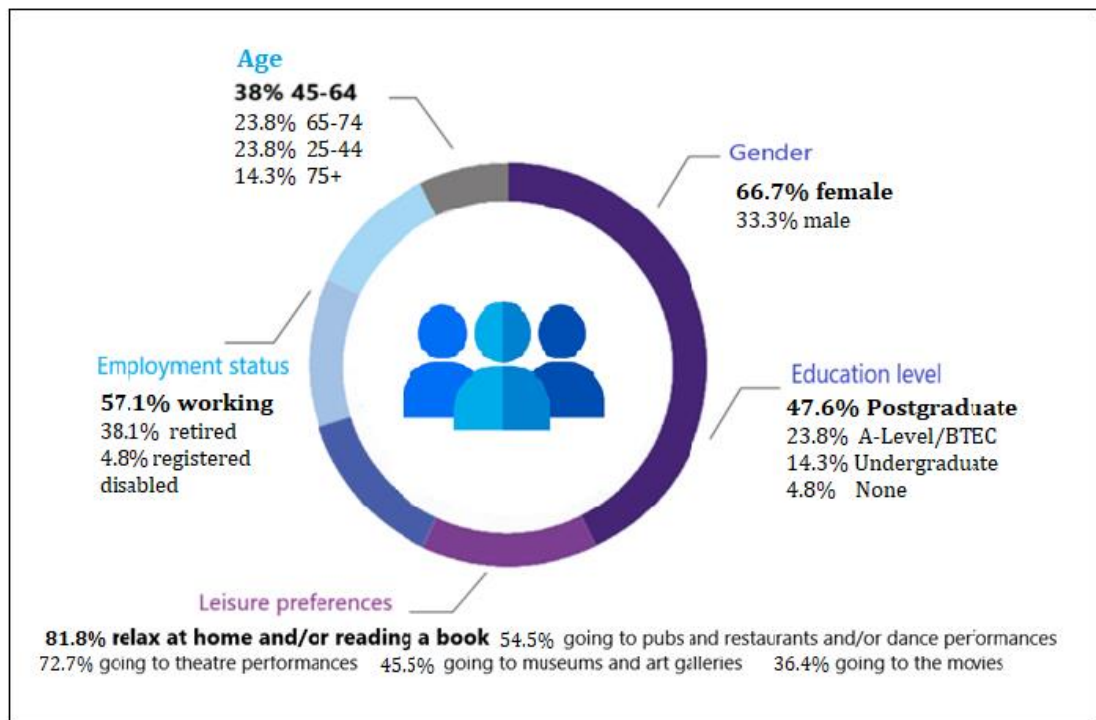
Figure 1: Whistle Stop Opera interviewees' profiles

Although WSO interviewees reflected a demographic of classical music and opera attendees previously identified by other surveys – white, middle-aged groups with higher degree levels of education and economic backgrounds, with no illness or disability (cf. YouGov UK 2018; Taking Part Survey, 2018; Parkinson, Buttrick and Wallis, 2014) – witnessing the variety of ways in which WSO audiences engaged with the performances' interactive, musical and drama elements, as well as the reasons why people responded differently to such elements, suggests that 'the audience', as a singular and homogeneous entity does not exist (cf. Barker, 2006; Walmsley, 2019). What exists instead are individual experiences of interpreting, expressing and attributing meaning engendered by a more complex process of conceiving ourselves and the world, "in negotiation and in relation" with our own selves, other people and the "lived environment" that surrounds us (Reason, 2010, p.24). This analysis therefore draws on a relational framework (Small, 1998; Bourriaud, 2002) to interpret audiences' accounts of individual experiences. It is thus a study developed by joining and corresponding *with* people (Ingold, 2017,

p.23) and not a study *about* them. It also draws on a dialogical knowledge building (Bennett, 1997; Freire, 2005) approach, according to which audiences' reflections and actions co-exist in the process of attributing meaning to an experience. By investigating the nature of interactions between members of the audience, audiences and artists, audiences and spaces, as well as how the artistic components mediate these relationships, this investigation offers helpful insights to understand the extent to which the Whistle Stop Opera project allowed or inhibited different forms of participation in opera as well as investigating whether such participation was capable of stimulating audiences to talk about and engage with this artform.

5.1.1 The researcher's experience

My first experience with Whistle Stop Opera began in February 2018 when I was invited to attend the dress rehearsal of a reduced version of *Don Giovanni*. After a brief introduction conducted by the Project Manager, the first notes of a solitary accordion announced the beginning of the show. I was immediately captivated by that sound and, in a few seconds, transported back to my childhood when my grandfather, an amateur musician, used to sit on the doorstep of his house, in his Panama hat and smart shoes, accompanying himself on his guitar and singing folksongs from rural communities of South Brazil. The entrance of two singers in the scene brought me back to the large rehearsal room, where staff members from different departments of the organisation shared the space with colourful props, costumes and mirrors. The atmosphere was unmistakable: I was amongst opera lovers whose bonds of friendship and familiarity with the environment, as well as with the genre, allowed me to experience a certain feeling of belonging, albeit as a foreigner who had recently moved to England.

As the performance started, I felt immediately hypnotized by the beauty of the timbres of the singers' voices and astonished by seeing artists performing in their daily clothes, using no make-up, costumes, wigs or anything that might remind me of an opera setting, except the high quality of their voices and the repertoire chosen. The fast pace of their acting, with movements between the rows, and the

impact of their resonant voices heard in different ways while they were moving amidst the audience made the afternoon a unique experience.

Despite being a classical music 'insider', as well as being raised in a country where physical proximity marks the nature of relationships, I felt uneasy with the singers' closeness. The fear of finding myself in an embarrassing situation, should my acting or spoken English skills have been called upon, made me hope that the artists would not approach me. Later on, during the tour, I was indeed approached by one of the singers and, even though I was fully aware of the scene development, I could not control the oscillation of my breath, my heart began to beat faster and my face immediately blushed in the moment a rosebud was offered to me by the *Don*.

Feeling part of the experience was a matter of concern to me throughout the entire process of shadowing the Whistle Stop Opera project. As a result of my classical music training, my efforts were directed towards understanding every word to keep track of the storyline and the timing of the jokes. As a member of the audience, for whom English is not my native language, I also felt I had the right to let myself be involved in the magic created when sounds, movements and bodily expressions were used to communicate beyond the limits of spoken language. Feeling conflicted about the different attentions that the Whistle Stop Opera performance required from me caused a certain frustration of not being able to immediately decode the different layers of meaning associated with a foreign language (cf. Lindelof and Hansen, 2015). It was also important to realise that the analysis of data gathered would have been informed, reformed and transformed (cf. Matsunobu and Bresler, 2014) by my experience of being at the same time a member of the audience, a researcher, a musician and a foreigner.

After gaining in confidence, I shared with the cast some of my inevitable misunderstandings, provoking a series of amusing conjectures of what could have changed in the scene as a result of a single disconnected word. Little did I know that such an episode was a prediction of the countless situations I would encounter ahead. The multiplicity of interpretations comprised in the performers' words and gestures combined with the unpredictability of reactions and emotions of audiences – to whom both the universe of opera and the nuances of English

language were territories differently explored – became an intriguing component of my observations and a great part of my thoughts for the coming months.

5.2 Researching *with* Whistle Stop Opera audiences

As both a researcher and a member of the audience, it took me several attempts to identify the best way of observing audiences' reactions and the performance simultaneously. To gain as much learning as possible from being with participants (cf. Ingold, 2017), I alternated my position by sitting in different places, such as in front of the audience, where I could observe people's facial expressions and body movements; in the middle of them, as an attempt to capture tiny variations of breath and attitudes that could denote enjoyment or boredom, such as someone huffing or looking repeatedly at their watch; or in the back of the room, where the whole environment could be perceived. Such a strategy allowed for a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of audiences and performers' reactions as well as venue characteristics. Additionally, by alternating the points of observation, I was able to recognise the reactions of those who stopped by to watch the performance and eventually invite them to contribute to an interview. Each performance observation was recorded in the observation script, generating the 19 accounts comprised by this analysis.

It is worth mentioning my initial difficulties in eliciting information from participants. Besides the novelty of interviewing participants in a language that is not native to me, which caused me a certain apprehension (notably in the first interview), the lack of verbal elaboration in many participants' responses was perceived in the first minutes of conversation, as well as the repetition of certain terms, such as 'lovely', 'great' and 'enjoyable'. To encourage audiences to expand their comments and express their emotions and memories derived from the experience in more nuanced ways, I attempted to ask the same question in different permutations (cf. Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Also, I directed my intentions towards a posture of "sympathetic listening" (Madison, 2005, p.32), by showing a genuine interest in hearing the participant and refraining from second-guessing their responses (Reason, 2010). Nonetheless, several written feedback forms left on the seats or handed in after the show were more detailed than feedback

gathered in the face-to-face interviews. In comparison with the face-to-face interviews, written feedback revealed audiences' greater critical approach regarding the negative aspects of hearing the soprano's high notes in such proximity, the frustration of not experiencing the arias in their original language, as well as audiences' complaints about not having as many opportunities as they wished to experience opera locally.

Some of the limitations of speech-based methods of enquiry, such as audiences' lack of technical vocabulary or adjusted responses to match the investigation's presumed aims (Reason, 2010; Johanson and Glow, 2015), proved to be a reality during the fieldwork. Reason (2010) offers an explanation for this issue by noting that the intricate relationship between "language, intention and meaning" means that "we cannot and do not always say what we mean – or indeed know what we mean" (p.17). In the following section, I return to this discussion by exemplifying some audiences' responses in which meaning and intention were blurred by the limits of language or by the respondent's positive bias towards evaluation (Johanson and Glow, 2015).

The absence of responses collected in the Belgrave Music Hall and Canteen as well as the Northern Monk Refectory (both in Leeds) reflects Opera North staff's decision not to distribute the feedback form in pubs and at restaurant tables, mindful of audiences' moment of enjoyment. Despite not having audiences' written responses, the observations were carried out systematically and observation scripts were produced accordingly. In the Belgrave Music Hall, I had the opportunity to informally talk about the involvement of young people with opera with a member of the audience. As interest and willingness to collaborate was shown during the conversation, an alternative day and time were agreed between the participant and me to conduct the interview. Similarly, at the Northern Monk Refectory, a couple who was identified by one of the singers as showing little appreciation for the show was approached by me and agreed to talk about their experience. The register of this conversation was also added to the observation script of that day and considered in the analysis.

In the two schools where I was present, there was no possibility of talking to the teachers or headteachers, as the performances were accommodated according to

the schools' daily schedules. The high number of responses collected at Scarborough College reflects the two music teachers' efforts in gathering the feedback and sending it to Opera North's educational department, who made it available for me. Finally, at Richmond Hill Primary School, all feedback forms were left uncompleted on the seats. Similarly, I struggled to interview someone at the end of the performance as a buffet of refreshments, offered by the school as part of the event, diverted the audience's attention.

Table 1 describes the dates, venues, apposite abbreviations and numbers of responses collected through written feedback forms and face-to-face interviews gathered during Whistle Stop Opera 2018 Autumn season.

Date	Venue	Abbreviation	Written feedback forms	Face-to-face interviews
24-Sep	Morley Town Hall	MTH	5	1
	Batley Methodist Church	BMC	10	1
25-Sep	St. Barnabas Church (Alwoodley)	SBC	3	1
	Headingly Methodist Church	HMC	11	1
	Oakwood Church Leeds	OCL	4	2
26-Sep	Belgrave Music Hall and Canteen	BEL	0	1
27-Sep	Lawrence Batley Theatre (Huddersfield)	LBT	12	1
01-Oct	Richmond Hill Primary School	RHS	0	0
02-Oct	Howard Assembly Room	HAR	4	1
09-Oct	Scarborough College	SCB	30	2
12-Oct	Marks and Spencer Caffe (Bradford)	MSC	0	1
	The Brick Box Pub (Bradford)	BBP	0	2
15-Oct	Norther Monk Refectory	NMR	0	0
17-Oct	Cast (Doncaster)	CAS	14	2
20-Oct	The Witham (Barnard Castle)	TWI	20	1
	Hamsterley Village Hall (Teeside)	HVH	10	1
21-Oct	Locomotion Railway Museum (Shildon)	LRM	4	1
	N42 'The Pod' (Bishop Auckland)	POD	20	1
11-Nov	Ordsall Hall (Salford – Manchester)	ORD	9	1
Total			**156**	**21**

Table 1: Whistle Stop Opera performance dates, venues, abbreviations, number of audiences' responses

When mentioned in this chapter, audiences' responses appear anonymised in line with the University of Leeds's research ethics guidelines. Responses are identified by the abbreviation of the venue followed by the number of the transcription. For instance [HVH 04] refers to Hamsterley Village Hall, feedback form number four.

In relation to face-to-face interviews, the same logic of abbreviation followed by the order of the interviews was applied. Therefore, [INT 13], for example, refers to the 13th participant who took part in an interview.

5.3 Group and individual experience

This theme relates to audiences' aesthetic experiences according to Brown and Novak's (2013) definition of "what happens to individuals as they see, hear and feel art" (p.224). How audiences reacted to the interactive elements such as the host's and singers' invitations to participate, as well as the relationship between performers, audiences and the musical content itself are analysed within this theme. Audiences' responses to external elements, such as the informality of venues and the absence of scenery, props and costumes, are also included in this category. Two subcategories emerged from the analysis of the aesthetic experience: **proximity with musicians** and **accessibility of musical elements and the plot**.

Emotional reactions were a recurrent feature displayed by audiences, as well as heavily reported as outcomes of their experiences (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013). As seen in Chapter 3, emotional engagement with the arts involves complex cognitive mechanisms (Reason, 2010). In this sense, it is worth clarifying the approach adopted by this research to analyse emotional responses expressed by audiences while attending performances. Juslin and Sloboda (2010) define emotion as "a quite brief but intense affective reaction that usually involves a number of subcomponents – subjective feeling, physiological arousal, expression, action tendency, and regulation – that are more or less 'synchronized'" (p.11). The nature of emotions is therefore complex, as it involves a variety of cognitive, psychological and physical mechanisms (Juslin et al., 2010). Nonetheless, emotional responses are determined by contextual factors, such as the social setting and time in which the experience occurs as well as how much attention the individual has available to participate in the content (Juslin and Sloboda, 2010). Emotional responses to music, as highlighted by Sloboda and O'Neill (2001), result both from the individual's reaction to and associations with the musical material itself as well as their reactions to the context in which the music is inserted. Sloboda and O'Neill

(2001) add another layer to be considered in the intricate debate about emotion in music and the function of it in the everyday lives of 'music users' (p.24). Drawing on studies about music taste, practices and habits during adolescence, Sloboda and O'Neill (2001) highlight how emotions are also implicated in the process of creation and maintenance of identity. As cultural resources, "musical materials provide terms and templates for elaborating self-identity" (DeNora, cited in Sloboda and Neill, 2001) once those materials can be used as a route for "self-interpretation, self-representation, and for the expression of emotional states associated with the self" (p.16).

For a study which investigates the extent to which preconceptions of elitism and exclusivism in classical music are still present in the ways audiences talk about and relate to classical music and opera, such a framework is valuable to support an analysis which considers not only the emotions displayed by audiences, but also those that were concealed, whether consciously or unconsciously, as a way of manifesting and projecting the "personhood" (Sloboda and O'Neill, 2001, p.24) of the music listener.

While acknowledging the difficulties of interpreting audiences' emotional responses into written labels (cf. Juslin et al., 2010), I focused my observations on the different manifestations that could support a categorization of data collected from both group observations and individual responses. In this regard, audiences' facial expressions, verbal self-reports as well as the inflections of their voices were considered as ways of identifying particular emotions experienced by WSO audiences (cf. Juslin et al., 2010). At the same time, I also paid close attention to what Juslin and colleagues (2010) called "psychological mechanisms" (p.606) – all sorts of information processing that could induce emotions through music listening (p.619).

Among the seven psychological mechanisms described by Juslin and colleagues (2010), two were identified as the most relevant for this analysis. The first, "emotional contagion", relates to the process in which the listener perceives the emotional expression of music and 'mimics' it through facial expression, for instance (p.622). An interesting feature of emotional contagion is that it can also be perceived from "emotional speech" (p.622) as sound patterns created by music

may be similar to the voice and thus associated with the emotions it produces. Considering an opera performance in which singing is permeated by recitatives, emotional contagion stimulated by the voice is a relevant element for this analysis. The second mechanism relates to "episodic memory", a process in which emotions are evoked by the listener's remembrance of a past event, or, as highlighted by Baumgartner (1992), an "autobiographical episode" (p.615) in which the music is associated, thus influencing how the listeners evaluate their experience. A recurrent element reported by audiences when associating music with an episodic memory is the feeling of nostalgia it can provoke (Juslin et al., 2010).

Audiences' reactions and expressions of emotions, whether vocalised or physically displayed, as well as the extent to which such manifestations were significant in stimulating audiences to talk about and engage with opera, are investigated in the sections that follow.

5.3.1 The invitation

Under the title 'Introduction to opera', WSO's Autumn 2018 production consisted of a selection of opera excerpts and music fragments from *Turandot*, *I Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Traviata*, *The Merry Widow*, *Trouble in Tahiti* and *Katya Kabanova*. In contrast to previous WSO productions,[55] audiences were presented with a narrative built through the combination of the selected excerpts, rather than a story based on a single opera title. Instead of the traditional piano accompaniment, typically adopted in opera reduced versions, three singers (one of whom also played the roles of artistic director, writer and host) were accompanied by an accordion, played alternately by two musicians throughout the season. Similarly, what would be expected by some attendees in terms of scenery, costumes and props was scaled down to a minimum in WSO performances.

The Whistle Stop Opera experience starts by the host asking audiences' overall perceptions about opera. As an artist whose broad involvement with different phases of the WSO project includes a wide range of activities, such as writing

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[55] *The Elixir of Love*, *Hensel und Gretel*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, performed from 2016 to 2018.

scripts and translating, supporting the players and singers in making musical decisions that work best for each production, connecting directly with the audience, as well as guiding the structure of the performance, the host's familiarity with the project and confidence in approaching different audiences was visible both during the rehearsal week, as well as throughout the performances.

The first moments of the WSO performance were conducted through an informal conversation in which audiences were encouraged to express their ideas on what opera should be about and how an opera singer should sound. Following the conversation, audiences were invited to stand up and sing along to Puccini's 'Nessun Dorma' chorus, from the opera Turandot. Although a few reluctant faces and some attendees refraining from singing could be observed, all of the attendees stood up in response to the invitation. The amusement of being somehow directed was perceived in the audience members' smiles and in the attendees' interest in showcasing their voices. As the host began the performance itself, audience members were immediately captivated by the first lines of the recitative, in which the word 'welcome' is sung in different languages. The same feeling of excitement was perceived during the singers' presentation, constructed through an informal narrative bridged by rhymed couplets. The informality of the first contact between the host and the audiences and the use of accessible language accompanied by simple musical elements performed by the accordionist were noted by many members of the audience as a positive ice-breaker and welcoming moment, regardless of their ages and venues in which the performances were held. Audiences were rapidly absorbed in the experience and captivated by the informality of the introduction, suggesting that such a moment functioned as a 'gateway' for audiences to immerse themselves in the experience (Brown and Novak, 2013, p.227).

In conversation with the WSO Project Manager, it was highlighted that the interactive elements were included with the purpose of breaking down some of the barriers that are still perceived by some audiences, particularly to show that opera can also be funny, that attendees can enjoy themselves and that there should not be a division between the audience, the host and the singers. Such a statement reflects both the effort of many classical music institutions to challenge the

traditional culture of silent listening somehow still prevalent in many concert and opera halls, as well as an explicit assumption that modern audiences feel uncomfortable with conventional rules (Toelle and Sloboda, 2019) and often seek a more 'active role' (Dobson and Sloboda, 2014).

On the one hand, the host's invitation and first interactions, such as encouraging audiences to share their perceptions about opera, as well as to stand up and sing along to a popular chorus, added some surprising elements to the experience, thus involving the audience in an unpredictable way compared to what would be expected in a traditional opera concert. On the other hand, the risk of exposing individuals (White, 2013) and challenging the very purpose of engaging the audience is apparent in a format such as the WSO project, as acknowledged by the Project Manager:

> Singing together the *Nessun Dorma* is quite a good way of engaging the audience. There is a sense of not being singled out. I think, sometimes, if you single out someone and dance, in some settings and for some audiences, that work really well at breaking the 'fourth wall'. In other cases, it can make them back into a shell a bit.

Although group interaction was embraced by audiences, feelings of embarrassment were noted amongst some participants when the individual choice to interact was required. When asked to join the singers for a dance or wear a feather boa, for instance, a few members of the audience, mainly the young ones, felt unease or refused to participate. Such reactions were perceived through audiences' apprehension in accepting or even declining the performers' invitation to take part. This feeling of apprehension was reflected in an interview with one of the singers. Surprised by the level of closeness that one-to-one interactions require from the performers, and how intimate such a proximity can become to certain audiences, the singer pointed out the challenge of performing in such a context due to their own introverted nature. Having to balance the levels of interaction with different audiences was a recurrent concern highlighted at different points of the interview. According to the singer, while particular elements can 'go well' for some members of the audience, for others, who may decide to sit and enjoy the show in

private, they can represent an imminent risk of disengagement or disinterest. By observing the singer's performance throughout the season, as well as by taking into consideration the ephemeral nature of a live performance, it was possible to identify that balancing the intimacy of interaction with different audiences was a decision made instinctively, in the immediacy of the moment, rather than based on the singer's technical skills or specific training.

The singer's statement resonates with the wider debate on how and with which skills classical music institutions are equipping future musicians to work in the music industry, as well as in communities (Kater, 2004; Bennett, 2008; Smilde, 2010; Eastburn and Williams, 2020). In the face of changes in the social role of classical music institutions, leveraged both by the developments in the cultural industries themselves as well in funding bodies' requirements for arts projects to be capable of including and diversifying audiences and to be relevant for the communities they serve whilst maintaining their artistic excellence, it is worth reflecting on how modern programmes of music training are shaping the profile of young performers (Bennett, 2008) and preparing them to embrace a wide range of roles, rather than being trained to undertake a job (Bennett, 2008; Smilde 2010). In this regard, the contribution of a music education and training curriculum with a view to a humanizing approach (Kater, 2004) is an interesting one. Under such an approach, music education should aim to integrate both the particularities of the individual and the collective in mutual collaboration (Severino, 2015). This relates to an education capable of fostering a process of performers' self-knowledge, conscious of who they are as artists, the role they play in society and culture, and ultimately, how can they deal with and respond to the needs of the changing world (Kater, 2004; Bennett, 2008).

In the context of audience engagement, the humanizing approach represents a valuable avenue towards encouraging performers to expand their self-awareness and of their audiences, thus nurturing new abilities to connect, empathise and communicate with different people in different contexts.

The ways in which musicians can learn different modes of being onstage, as well as communicating with different audiences is the focus of Sloboda's and Ford's (2012) investigation involving a collaborative project between drama and music

students from a renowned British conservatory. By working alongside drama students through improvisation workshops intended to include both artforms, musicians reported a sense of renewal, or even of discovery or spontaneity, in their performance. In addition, their awareness in relation to their physical presence on stage as well as how physical motion could convey a message were also related as positive outcomes of working with the group of actors. Nonetheless, some musicians acknowledged the possibilities of developing a relationship with the audience and reported being able to notice audiences' different reactions during the performance, which had not been possible in their careers to date.

If self-awareness of their physical presence on stage informs and transforms performers' ways of conveying a message, it can be argued that the audience experience will also be impacted as a result of how performers project themselves outwards (cf. Sloboda and Ford, 2012) and, ultimately, how the artistic message is "communicated, interpreted and made meaningful as experience" (Reason, 2010, p.24). From such a perspective, the nature of the audience experience is therefore *relational* and its "subtract is formed by intersubjective" phenomena (Bourriaud, 2002, p.15). Reason (2010) explains that while attending a performance, audiences engage in an "intersubjective doing through kinaesthetic empathy" (p.19) – a kind of 'doing' which is not understood as an action in itself, but as a sensory and cognitive perception of other people's presence and movement in space. The contribution of Reason's (2010) argument to this study resides first in highlighting the importance of the social element in audience experience. Audiences want to socialise with other members of the audience (cf. Walmsley, 2019). They also want to feel connected to the performers, close to the artistic object, be immersed in it and feel inspired by it (cf. Burland and Pitts, 2012). Secondly, Reason's (2010) assertion suggests that although some audiences might appear to show physical passivity, there is no such thing as 'passive' participation, as I shall return later in this chapter. As Reason points out elsewhere, audiences experience a performance with their mind and body, which are related in complex cognitive and physical processes while they engage "empathetically through the imagination and kinaesthetically through the body" with the elements on the stage (Reason, 2013, p.97).

While the traditional discourse and values in classical music training – in which students are required to dedicate long hours of solitary practice to become "the conduit" of the composer's voice and intentions (Sloboda and Ford, 2012, p.7) – remain in place – rather than a training model that also encourages and prepares young performers to think about and relate to their audiences (Sloboda and Ford, 2012) – music professionals will continue to struggle to grasp the idea and means to develop a closer relationship with their audiences, as illustrated by the feeling of being on a 'blind date' with the audience and 'gambling' with different approaches, vocalised by one of the singers described later in this session.

A recent study conducted by James and Sloboda (2015), which involved 52 young British professional orchestra players and singers, revealed that despite claiming to be "open to audiences" (James and Sloboda, 2015, p.485) and sensible to the audience engagement agenda, the majority performers were still not fully conscious of their active role in "securing and relating to audiences" (p.478). Most tended to assume a more *reactive* stance of interaction, such as responding to audiences' interest in an informal conversation particularly after a performance, instead of embracing a more strategic, active posture towards reaching out to their audiences. In addition, most participants appeared to be less likely to want information about their audiences before the concert, whereas for the minority, some prior knowledge about their audiences was recognised as a positive element in promoting engagement.

The feeling of finding oneself in front of a group of people, whose musical backgrounds, personal tastes and expectations are unknown to the performer, was compared by one of the WSO singers as being on a 'blind date with the audience'. The anxiety and uncertainty involved in testing different forms of approach, characteristic of occasions where one does not know who and what to expect, was vocalised by the singer:

> you're asking them questions, albeit in a sort of musical and dramatic forms. You're saying: do you find this funny? Do you find that funny? You're testing the waters with the audience the whole time as you go.

The performer continued to elaborate on their apprehension of experimenting with an unknown group of people and the risk of failure implied in determining the approach to be taken:

> basically, you have lots of endless options of audiences that you could have in front of you, and you're just asking question after question with your acting to see what will get the right result and, hopefully, you will find your way. But like a blind date, sometimes the show won't work out, sometimes you pick the wrong approach and you don't get the result that you want, but you try your best. It's a total gamble, a complete gamble!

As the season evolved, a deeper perception of audiences' possibilities and limits became clearer, as did the singer's confidence in venturing into more personal approaches to engage with the groups. For a young professional singer who was debuting in the Whistle Stop Opera project, the feeling of 'getting into the audience in small rooms', rather than on a traditional opera stage and being 'fed by audiences' reactions', was highlighted as both a challenging and a rewarding process (cf. Heim, 2012). Reflecting on audiences' positive and negative reactions as a way of delving into their own performance and, consequently, being able to experiment with elements of acting and singing to convey a message was noted by the singer as one of the benefits of the WSO project format. Although such a format is limited in offering the possibility for the artists to know something about their audiences beforehand, my observations suggest that the singer's willingness to overcome their own boundaries and embrace a more relaxed, confident and closer approach to convey a message evolved throughout the season.

As mentioned earlier in this section, audiences' responses to the host's invitation – as well as to the individual interaction with the singers in the first quarter of the performance – was generally welcomed by the majority of audiences, with a few notable exceptions. A simple analysis could assume that the relationship between audiences and performers was established in the first moments of invitation and interaction, as different production elements such as language, the role played by the singers, and the meaning of the story were being understood by the audience

(cf. White, 2013). However, focusing exclusively on the purposeful ice-breaker elements of interaction is not sufficient to assert the extent to which the WSO was accessible to different audiences, and furthermore whether such an interaction actually contributed to breaking down the fourth wall between performers, audiences and opera itself.

A closer examination revealed that WSO audiences responded with polite gestures of interaction, by standing at the invitation to join in the *Nessun Dorma* chorus; by sharing only positive perceptions in the conversation about opera; and ultimately, by accepting, sometimes with a certain degree of reluctance, to wear a prop offered by the singers. The extent to which such polite gestures can be interpreted as forms of participation in opera, as a stimulus for further conversations about the genre, as well as for further engagement with this artform, lies at the heart of the following analysis.

5.3.2 Investigating Whistle Stop Opera audiences' forms of participation

As highlighted in the literature review, the term 'participation' in the arts is not easy to define. Moreover, the variety of terminologies surrounding the concept of participation confirms the lack of consensus within the arts sector (cf. Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, cited in Walmsley, 2013).

This analysis draws on the premise that all audiences are, by their very nature, participative (White, 2013) and that participation is not restricted to the duration of the performance itself, but occurs from the moment of the decision to attend a performance, during the event and continues to resonate in audiences' memories and correlates with their lives afterwards (Barker, 2006; Reason, 2010; White 2013).

Previous expectations and personal preoccupations could be identified in WSO audiences' and the singer's testimonies (as described in the previous section), suggesting that, for both parties, the performance experience started before the event itself. For some members of the audience, particularly first-time attendees, a speculative attitude towards the event was expressed by audiences' different expectations before the event as well as by their apprehension in facing an

intimate setting and the unknown content of the performance. The reductive description of the project on Opera North's dedicated webpage did not offer audiences a comprehensive idea of what the show was about. Apart from a few prompts, such as 'never tried an opera before?', the term 'pop-up' as well as an indication that the show was 'aimed primarily for adults, but all ages are welcome to attend', audiences who consulted the website to decide whether to attend may have risked remaining uncertain of what to expect.

The response below exemplifies the preoccupation of a middle-aged mother who attended the performance at Barnard Castle with her young daughter. For both, it was their first time experiencing opera. Although motivated by the short length of the performance, she expressed her apprehension regarding her daughter's behaviour, but at the same time, was relying on her child's familiarity with the venue, as it was the site of her weekly dance classes.

> I heard about the event on Facebook and, because of the short duration,
> I thought it would be suitable to bring my four-year-old daughter. But
> she is only four, and I was worried that she was too young to attend an
> opera. But she loved it, clapping and dancing along with the singing and
> music. Neither of us had been to an opera before, but I think we'll be
> doing it again. [INT 08]

Observing both mother and daughter, who were sat at one of the small tables at the back of the room, where I deliberately chose to sit as well, I could observe the child's attention and interest in the artists' movements in the room alongside their body language. At one certain point, the child stood up to dance and to move closer to the singers.

An opposite reaction was observed by one member of the audience in Bishop Auckland's 'The Pod'. Finding himself in a small venue with no stage and few seats prompted a similar decision to take one of the back-row seats. Despite having enjoyed the performance, he was convinced that not being directly in front of the singers was the wisest choice. His feedback does not confirm whether such a choice was made by presupposing that a high volume and intensity, characteristic of operatic voices, would be generated or by any other kind of apprehension of being so close to the artists. However, such a response does imply his decision to

remain somehow on the 'safe side' and avoid any risk when deciding where to position himself in the room.

In her comprehensive study about distance in theatre, Ben Chaim (1984) draws on philosophical and dramaturgical perspectives to argue that audiences possess a "tacit awareness" (p.74) in distinguishing fiction from reality which allows them to "experience emotions without danger" (Ben Chaim, 1984, p.74). In other words, it is our imaginative capacity of engaging with what we know is not real, or our ability "to suspend disbelief" (Reason, 2010, p.19), that enables a feeling of "psychological protection that permits an intense projection of emotions" (Ben Chaim, 1984, p.75). For that attendee in particular, it could be argued that awareness of physical distance was connected to a feeling of uncertainty of what could happen on stage, a "sense of danger" (Walmsley, 2019, p.67) of being so close to live performers. It also suggests that some members of the audience prefer to take a more contemplative stance when attending an opera concert; or, as highlighted by Sedgman (2016), to assume a 'strategic passivity' to manage pleasure and disappointment, rather than to 'risk' direct engagement with the artists. Ultimately, it highlights the role of different settings in enhancing socialisation between members of the audiences as well as between audiences and performers (cf. Walmsley, 2019), which might not be desired by all attendees.

Ben Chaim's assertion might shed light on the decision of those who decided to experience a WSO performance from a physical distance and to maintain (either consciously or unconsciously) a distance from the fiction, therefore having somehow more control over their level of involvement. For the majority of audiences, however, being physically close to the singers enhanced the experience, allowing for what O'Neill, Edelman and Sloboda (2016) describe as the "truth effect" that enables "believability" (p.35) to occur. In their study with a group of highly engaged opera attendees, who were asked to reflect on what they love about the genre, the authors identified a strong need for participants to believe in the narrative portrayed by the characters, as well as to be able to relate the elements of such narratives with those inherent to the human condition. Moreover, such an element of 'truth' was closely attached to how participants assessed the quality of a performance. To audiences of Whistle Stop Opera, it could be argued that the

concept of 'believability' related to the accessibility of the plot, to the technical skills of the performers, as well as their identification with the emotions portrayed by the singers.

A detailed account of feelings and emotions emerged in audiences' descriptions of the different moods portrayed by the singers during the performance. Characterized by the presence of comedy elements allied with moments of physical interaction, the first quarter of the show prompted an immediate response of joy in the audience. A pattern of response across all audiences was clearly perceived in the precise moment when the two singers winked at each other, accompanied by a 'ping' chord played in the high register of the accordion. The perfect synchrony between singers' eye contact exchange and the mimic sound produced by the accordion set the mood of playfulness in the room, which was recognizable in audiences' smiles and amusement on all the occasions observed by the researcher. Certain kinaesthetic reactions such as clapping, stomping and discrete body movements as an accompaniment to the arias could be observed, particularly when a wedding dance was performed by the singers (cf. Sloboda, 1985; Benzecry, 2011; Reason, 2013)

More veiled feelings of embarrassment were also shown, mainly by the parents present at Richmond Hill Primary School. As the first part's final scene portraying the singers' honeymoon contained sexual innuendo, a feeling of censure could be seen in many parents' faces, in some forced smiles, as well as felt in the immediate energy change if the room. A similar reaction was observed among a mixed-age group of people formed by participants of Opera North's community projects partners, who attended the performance at Howard Assembly Room, as the same honeymoon scene did not provoke any kind of loud reaction in the audience, but an awkward silence that spread across the room.

Regarding the second part of the performance, the story – filled with elements of drama and tragedy that was also explicit in the recitatives – led audiences to an introspective experience. Replacing the smiles, the eye contact exchanged between attendees and the comedy portrayed by the singers, an atmosphere of conflict between the two main characters was immediately absorbed by the audience. It is worth mentioning the language change, from English to Italian, maintained in the

original soprano's aria *'Vissid'arte'*, performed in the middle of the second part. Audiences' responses to the intimate moment in which the soprano reflects on her fate and misfortunes in love were demonstrated by attendees' feelings of empathy and identification with the character provoked by the solo, suggesting that the scene generated an emotional contagion (cf. Brown and Novak, 2004; Juslin et al., 2010; Brown and Novak, 2013) among attendees. Some were moved to tears while others described the solo in terms such as 'a roller coaster of romantic emotions', 'it grabs your heart', or felt that it offered some identification with the character: 'I could feel her suffering'. A spontaneous reaction was witnessed at Scarborough College, where an Italian pupil dashed to give the soprano a hug at the end of the performance. According to the singer, the child was touched by the experience of unexpectedly hearing her native language. The child's expressed emotion of nostalgia[56] suggests a correlation with the role of music participation in providing a way to escape from everyday life (Pitts, 2005; Burland and Pitts, 2012). Although it does not refer to physical escape from a routine or a place, for instance, the emotion expressed by the child highlights the ability of a music experience to lead someone to abandon the present moment and (re-)connect to something related to other places and times.

A similar feeling of nostalgia was expressed by a participant of one of the SingOn groups, who related his experience with WSO to an "autobiographical episode" (Baumgartner, 1992, p.615). According to the participant, the WSO performance took him back to Africa, where he worked within the British Council for 16 years, when the organisation used to put on chamber music concerts for the staff. For him, watching the WSO performance evoked the recollection of "things and people not present" (Sloboda and O'Neill, 2001, p.7), bringing memories of his children growing up in a different country, the family involvement with music and the couple's engagement with singing until that moment. It can also be argued that for

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[56] Although the Greek origin of the term nostalgia denoted a negative meaning – '*nostos* (homecoming) and *algos* (pain)' – and its first use was to describe the feeling of the Thirty Years War's soldiers who experienced a prolonged feeling of melancholy, thereupon losing their will to live, the modern connotation of nostalgia is attached to a positive emotion towards something that "can invoke happiness or that yearning in relation to a past period of time" (Koenig, 2018, p.12).

this attendee, the WSO experience represented a form of withdrawing from the real world and a will, even momentarily, to engage with experiences lived in the past (cf. Belfiore and Bennett, 2008).

Such findings echo Pitts' (2017) advocacy of the long-term impacts of music education in audiences' appreciation of a live performance. According to Pitts (2017), "audiences at all levels of experience bring their past musical encounters to their listening" (p.165). Furthermore, such a music history provides audiences with "attitudes and insights" (p.165) for their live experience. The process of meaning-making is built while audiences talk and reflect upon their music history and present experience (cf. Reason, 2010, O'Neill; Edelman and Sloboda, 2016).

Barker (2006) offers another valuable contribution for this discussion by highlighting the complex process that exists in the "audiencing encounter" (p.124). According to Barker, audiences carry in with them expectations, knowledge, personal and social histories that continue to resonate after experiencing an event. Therefore, it is hard to pinpoint when an experience starts and when it ends, as the idea of "making-sense" (p.134) of a cultural experience (whether watching a film, reading a book or listening to music) is an ongoing process which can emerge from immediate perceptions of being brought by the recollection of memories and connected thoughts with other aspects of people's lives.

The responses of Whistle Stop Opera's audiences revealed the richness comprised in the 'audiencing encounter'. By vocalising different expectations and personal preoccupations, by responding to the interactive elements of the performance in different ways, or by looking back to the reminiscence of their musical experiences and life memories to describe how they felt about the experience, WSO audiences' responses mirror the nature of the ongoing process identified in the literature of audience engagement.

Emotional responses to such an encounter were certainly the most recognizable feature generated by all the data gathered. Considering that emotions have a pivotal role both in the production and reception of the arts (Konijn, 1999, p.172) and that emotional engagement is the "most significant impact that the performing arts have on audiences" (Walmsley, 2019, p.75), it can be argued that WSO allowed for different levels of audience engagement, evidenced by audiences' identification

with the feelings portrayed by the characters and the changing moods conveyed by the narrative. Furthermore, it can be argued that such emotions were boosted by the intimacy created by the production and triggered by the proximity with the musicians, as described in the following section.

5.3.3 Proximity with singers

This sub-theme explores the role played by performers' closeness as well as the effects that an intimate space had on providing audiences with a personal experience. It also investigates the idea of community being embedded (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Burland and Pitts, 2012; Dearn, 2017) in particular groups where the project was held.

The high quality of the performers was recognised by nearly all of the 21 interviewees and expressed in several written feedback forms in which audiences were complimentary about the singing, acting and playing. Adjectives such as 'superb', 'fabulous', 'stunning' and 'magical' were repeatedly used by audiences to describe their perceptions about the singers' performance. One interviewee struggled to verbalise their response to describe the experience of being close to the artists, which was affected both by the participant's visible excitement in talking about the experience, as well as by their desire to offer a positive evaluation for the researcher. According to the participant:

> I can't think of enough words to describe it. Wonderful, brilliant... any other superlatives you think would be suitable! [Int 19]

By contrast, for another member of the audience, a more articulate response regarding the positive impact of having a closer experience revealed the potential of an intimate setting in encouraging deeper levels of engagement with the artform (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Burland and Pitts, 2012), as well as in promoting future opera attendance:

> I've always professed to dislike opera but that is the result of not seeing it 'close up' – seeing the physicality of it – expressions – and power taught it to me. And the very clever way you demonstrated emotional change. An eye and ear opening occasion. [HVH 04]

Audiences' emotional contagion (cf. Juslin et al., 2011), facilitated by experiencing opera from a closer perspective, was also reported by six other interviewees and identified in eight written feedback forms. Having the 'privilege to be so close to such talents and feeling the power of singers' resonating voices' as well as getting 'a real feel of their emotions' were among audiences' most prominent descriptions. A first-time attendee became emotional during the interview when describing their involvement with the singers:

> It was my first time seeing an opera. I loved being stood next to the
> singers and feel their emotion. I felt connected with them. [INT 13]

The interviewee continued to describe their expectation of having a first taste of opera by relating their dream of seeing a production at *La Scala* in Milan. They described how opera was never an option during their childhood and confided that their current financial condition did not enable them to travel to attend an opera in the country where it was born, hence the high expectation. By observing the participant's reactions throughout the performance, it was possible to recognise a level of emotional engagement, revealed by their undivided attention directed towards the performance, by the participants' facial expressions in mimicking some of the feelings portrayed by the singers (cf. Juslin et al., 2010; Benzecry, 2011), as well as their excitement displayed in the moment of singing the '*Nessun Dorma'* chorus. Although opera was envisioned by the participant from the perspective of one of the world's most traditional opera houses, the WSO experience was described by them as a unique and valuable first taste of opera.

DeNora's (2000) investigation of subjectivity in music reception is valuable for analysing the strong emotion felt by the participant and the extent to which his high expectations might have shaped his experience with Whistle Stop Opera. DeNora departs from a constructive perspective to argue for a "reflexive conception of music's force" (p.23). Following this approach, music reception is context-dependant, or the product of a "human-music interaction" (p.33); in other words, it is through the relation of the particularities of each "recipient" (p.23) and their circumstances of place and

time that music appropriation is constructed. The interviewee's reaction of being moved to tears when talking about his experience with WSO suggests that such an emotion was contingent on the interwoven feelings of expectations, frustrations, and excitement in listening to some well-known arias live for the first time and in such close proximity.

Observations gathered from performances for SingOn groups[57] also suggested a correlation between a sense of familiarity and 'friendship' with the singers and how the performance was felt to be appropriate by those participants (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008). A feeling of community could be observed in the atmosphere of familiarity among the singers themselves and the Opera North staff, perceived in moments of socialisation over a cup of coffee and biscuits before the performance and also by the shared interests demonstrated in the Q&A sessions. Although the feeling of belonging to a community is hard to measure and was also not the main scope of this research, a positive correlation between the idea of community was found throughout all the six performances presented for the SingOn groups. The evident coexistence of shared interests, bonds of friendship and collective routines allowed by regular gatherings dedicated to singing made the atmosphere of the WSO more intimate than in other venues observed. Lastly, the welcoming approach towards to the researcher, who was warmly invited to join in the singing and dancing sessions after the performance reinforced the feeling of bonding and relationship building inherent in the groups. Audience responses confirmed that attending the project every year is an effective way to sustain and deepen their relationships with Opera North itself, revealing that for them, attending a WSO performance also carries with it a sense of moral responsibility (cf. Tepper and Gao, 2008; Burland and Pitts, 2014) and loyalty (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008).

Considering the understanding of 'encounter' in which art is about relationships, as proposed by Bourriaud (2002) and Small (1998), it could be argued that for SingOn groups, attending a Whistle Stop Opera performance is associated with the benefit of the arts in encouraging social bonding, and supporting a sense of place

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[57] In this research, participants from Morley, Batley, Headingley, Alwoodley, Oakwood and Huddersfield groups were engaged in interviews.

and belonging (cf. Williams, 1997, Dearn, 2017). As stressed by one member of SingOn, interviewed at St. Barnabas Church, being among a group of friends, singing 'good music' and combating social isolation is more important than the artform presented, whether opera or otherwise. Such a result echoes a participatory music study conducted by Toelle and Sloboda (2019). According to the authors, audiences' appreciation of sharing a space with professional musicians and other participants who have played, sung and created something together was independent from the musical content itself. More importantly, the social and psychological realms identified in audiences' responses suggested that participants "perceived themselves as a group of people who share something" (Barker, cited in Sloboda and Toelle, 2019, p.13).

The feeling of belonging 'to the production itself', intimated by one member of the audience, was implicit in many testimonies of audiences when describing their 'privilege of being so close to the artists'. Audience contributions to the atmosphere of the performance as well as their potential role in influencing performers' interactive approach, as described in the previous sections, suggest that rather than behaving as 'passive onlookers' (Small, cited in Burland and Pitts, 2014, p.127), WSO audiences felt included as part of a special encounter with the performers (cf. Dobson, 2010). Such a feeling of belonging, fostered by the elements comprised by the performance – such as the connection with performers and, in the specific case of SingOn groups, supported by the community feeling among participants – was verified as a strong factor in audiences' satisfaction, as previously identified by other studies (Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Burland and Pitts, 2012; Pitts, 2015; O'Neill, Edelman and Sloboda, 2016; Dearn, 2017).

Indeed, building sustainable and ongoing relationships with different communities through opera was stressed in interviews with both the WSO Project Manager and Opera North's Education Director. According to the Project Manager, the importance of building those relationships is appreciated from two perspectives. First, to break down the 'social barrier' that many attendees may still encounter when faced with the 'grandiose nature of the theatre' and feeling that the experience of attending an opera is not for them. Second, by establishing 'different relationships, in different ways, with different members of society', the WSO

project has the potential to preserve the future of opera itself through the diffusion of the operatic repertoire to audiences who are still not provided with many opportunities to experience it.

The aims of the WSO project in reaching out to 'different members of society' while breaking down the 'social barriers' still present in opera attendance reflect two approaches to audience development described by Kawashima (2010). Directed towards increasing audiences' interest of organisations' existing products, the product-led approach intends to enable non-attendees to "appreciate the artistic quality" of the organisation's productions (Lindelof and Hansen, 2015, p.236) Conversely, the approach taken from a marketing-led point of view considers specific target groups in orienteering the organisation's decision to offer and adjust its products according to the chosen target group (Hansen, 2014; Lindelof and Hansen, 2015). The coexistence of both approaches to audience development in the WSO project leaves a margin of doubt regarding where exactly the WSO project is located within the organisation, whether it is an education driven work, an outreach endeavour or an initiative with any commercial ends.

An impression gathered from the initial performances and confirmed throughout the season related to the WSO project's potential to fulfil different aims. Due to the project's intersection with other areas of Opera North, such as lifelong learning, development and marketing, WSO's original purpose was not immediately easy to pinpoint. During the interview with the Education Director, the collaboration between different departments of the organisation in contributing to the decision to target audiences for a WSO season was indeed acknowledged. Although such a collaboration can be positive from an outreach and financial point of view, once the budget of WSO is developed by resources from different departments, a WSO season risks including community groups supported by funders whose attendance decreased from one year to another, but continued to be embraced by the project. Conversely, the existence of shared aims between the WSO project and other departments, such as the marketing department, proved to be successful in attracting new audiences who could potentially become subscribers of the 'under 30s membership', as highlighted by the Education Director.

Regarding the ways in which the WSO contributes to 'break down the social barriers to opera attendance', the Education Director reflected on the proximity with musicians as a way to reduce the distance contained in the traditional perception of seeing the artists as special and unreachable individuals. Describing a scene at a primary school, in which the headteacher enjoyed themselves on stage, the Education Director expanded the discussion by suggesting that such a proximity also helps to reduce the distance between someone who occupies a high position and the pupils. Seeing the headteacher as 'being human and somebody they can talk to, not somebody that's just remote and tells them off, or send out rules all the time, but much more human', the Education Director echoes the idea of approachability upon which the whole project was built.

Overall, this analysis suggests that the intimacy created during the WSO performance benefited singers and audiences alike. For the audience, abolishing the raised stage – and, with it, the idea of physical division between artists and members of the audience – moved the production away from the traditional rules of etiquette and behaviour that was expected in opera houses. Giving audiences the opportunity to experience a live performance from a closer perspective, with singers and musicians wearing their daily clothes, with no make-up or wigs, and thus closer to a sense of 'real life', did not prevent audiences from suspending disbelief (cf. Reason, 2010) and engaging with the illusion created by the artists on stage. Nonetheless, the WSO project format contributed to mitigating the old idea of seeing the artist as someone whose divine qualities (Levine, 1986) make them somehow inaccessible. Ultimately, by providing a more intimate setting, the WSO project allowed audiences to have a more personal experience with the artform by experiencing the physicality of it and engaging with the emotions portrayed by the characters.

5.3.4 Accessibility of the plot, musical elements and setting

This category of analysis works in tandem with the idea of 'approachability' which permeates WSO's artistic choices made by the WSO project writer, Artistic Director and host – who in this case was the same person. It considers audiences' understandings of the story and the musical aspects comprised in artists'

performances and how attendees related these elements to the entire performance experience. In addition, the informality of the setting is also included in this theme, as it played an important role in audiences' overall involvement.

Whistle Stop Opera's narrative was conceived, according to the Artistic Director, 'to be simple to follow, [it] has a light touch, and a fast pace in plot development to keep the audience on their toes and engaged'. The narrative, bridged by rhyming couplets and permeated with singing, recitatives and instrumental solos, was constructed with the intention to be understood by and to involve all ages, and – as stressed several times both by the Project Manager and the Artistic Director – 'to avoid any patronizing attitude towards the audience'. Changing the language in some sessions (from English to the original excerpt language) was adopted as an attempt to demonstrate to audiences that enjoyment is not reliant on a specific knowledge of opera, as the story can also be understood by the way musical and acting elements are able to convey the messages comprised in the plot. Behind the decision to reduce musical, textual and scenic elements lies WSO's overarching purpose of demystifying opera by presenting it in a more accessible format.

Indeed, due to the flexibility of the WSO format, some decisions were able to be taken in advance, such as omitting a naughty joke when performing for children or reducing the length of a particular opera excerpt. The impossibility of knowing in advance the profile of some groups who attended the performances, as well as the unpredictability of how audiences would interact and respond to the experience, remained one of the main topics in the performers' conversations after the shows. The researcher could notice their surprise in realising the success of 'the blink' moment, whereas other moments identified during the rehearsal week as potential triggers to audiences' enjoyment – such as the honeymoon scene – did not generate the same response. Audiences' possible reactions were discussed and somehow anticipated during the rehearsal week. However, predicting audiences' responses was not proven to be possible throughout the season.

Regarding the adoption of English as the main language of the show, although audiences' appreciation for a text that could be easily understood was stressed by the majority of first-timers and indeed by many regular attendees, some participants of the SingOn projects expressed disappointment with such a decision,

confirming that, due to the semantic and sensory dimensions comprised by language,[58] the adoption of different languages on stage plays an important role in how audiences experience the performance as a whole (cf. Lindelof and Hansen, 2015). One interviewee who was familiar with opera but was not necessarily a regular attender, expressed the importance of the text and language adaption in order to relate to issues inherent to modern life (cf. O'Neill, Edelman and Sloboda, 2016). The participant continued to suggest that if opera companies are focusing their efforts on reaching younger audiences, language and story should mirror themes that are relevant to young people. If on the one hand audiences whose expectations might not correspond to a WSO performance could have experienced feelings of unease about the translation and the story adaption, on the other hand, for those who had no previous contact with opera, and therefore are somehow unaware of what it should resemble, such assumptions might not even be taken into account.

The contrasting perceptions across audiences' responses bring to light one of the challenges of building a 30-minute performance under the premises of accessibility and excellence with a non-patronising production. Although acknowledged by two interviewees as 'not dumbing-down', the results generated by this research are not enough to ascertain whether the text felt patronising or not, and more importantly, to whom it could be read as patronising: whether for those who were already highly engaged with opera and though more traditionally about its language conventions or for new attendees whose expectations reflected similar conceptions.

Regarding the opera excerpts comprised in this season of WSO, the choice reflected Opera North's annual season programme. On the occasion that WSO was touring, *Tosca* was also on the main stage, while *The Merry Widow*, *The Magic Flute*[59] and *Katya Kabanova* were in the forthcoming season's programme. Along with other

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[58] The semantic dimension refers to the understanding of content itself – what is said. The sensory qualities of the language, on the other hand, relate to a pre-semantic aesthetic dimension and are connected with the sounds, tone and other elements present in spoken language (Lindelof and Hansen, 2015, p.242).

[59] Also including a reduced version dedicated to children.

excerpts of *Turandot*, *I Pagliacci* and *Trouble in Tahiti*, it is clear that the majority of the WSO repertoire was circumscribed in the so-called canonical operatic repertoire.[60] Nonetheless, some of the arias performed, such as a brief excerpt of *Carmen's 'Habanera', Magic's Flute 'The Queen of the Night'* as well the chorus of '*Nessun Dorma'*, are well-known not only by audiences in England, but by many people around the world, as they have been heard in television adverts, in the case of the two first arias,[61] or were performed by Luciano Pavarotti on the opening night of the Turin Winter Olympics, in 2006. According to the Project Manager, the decision to include arias of opera titles which would had been performed on the main stage had the purpose of working as an invitation for audiences to attend the main stage productions. Whilst such an invitation could perhaps have attracted audiences to the main stages where Opera North was touring, not including a single excerpt of a contemporary opera would represent a missed opportunity to diffuse an operatic repertoire still being written by young composers, and therefore, contributing towards the preservation of the artform.

Regarding the reasons for choosing the accordion as the single accompanying instrument, besides its portability, the instrument's versatility in rapidly reproducing a wide range of instruments' timbres (by combining its different keys) and the broadness of its *tessiture*, allowing the performer to create a variety of moods and atmospheres, explains its adoption in the project. The instrument's capacity for creating different moods by accentuating the elements of humour, drama and irony as well in conveying emotions were recognised in audiences' enjoyment. Equally, the high quality of both accordionists who alternated in the season, and the musicians' ability to reproduce the atmosphere of a whole

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[60] Except for *Katya Kabanova*, which was in its third production within the company in 2019 (Opera North, 2019), *Trouble in Tahiti*, performed for the first time by Opera North during the 'Little Greats' season in 2017 and *I Pagliacci*, also presented at the same event (Ashley, 2017). Performances of *The Magic Flute*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata*, on the other hand, were extensively found in McKechnie's (2014) records of the company's production between 1978 and 2013.

[61] *Habanera* was used to advertise a brand of bleach in Brazil in the 1980s. *The Queen of the Night* was heard in several television commercials, such as an advertisement for Volvo in Sweden in 2019. It is also worth mentioning the recurrent adoption of several operas' arias in many Walt Disney cartoons.

orchestra, was explicit in one attendee's feedback:

> Fantastic to be almost a part of the production. At one point, I thought
> there was an orchestra and was looking around for the other players.
> [HMC 01]

The adoption of a non-conventional opera accompanying instrument, performed by highly-skilled musicians, one of whom also wrote the arrangements, denotes a key concern of the WSO project in not 'dumbing down' the production, as stressed by Opera North's Education Director. For the accordionist and music arranger, reducing the elements of an already reduced piano version, capable of conveying the message of a half hour story, implies a process of learning both with audiences' reactions and singers' individual interpretations of the elements comprised in the plot. Reducing musical elements whilst maintaining a cohesive and engaging story is stressed in the musician's testimony:

> Within half an hour, every second is equally important, whether in
> playing, singing or acting. So, we changed it [the arrangement] to the
> point where we don't want to leave anything hanging there, for the
> people to wonder whether it should be there or not. Even if it's just five
> seconds, if it felt long for the audience, we would reduce it and make it
> work.

Employing a musical instrument which does not carry with it the same social and class connotations of a piano or an orchestra reveals another layer in the discussion of accessibility in classical music. According to Sonevytsky (2008) "musical instruments index a variety of socially prescribed attributes" (p.101), which result from their "morphological, metaphorical and historic contexts" (p.102). Due to the accordion's duality in being considered both "pure and vulgar, beautiful and ugly, highbrow and lowbrow, classy and classless, serious and pop, hip and square" (Schimmel, cited in Sonevytsky, 2008, p.101), the instrument's adoption in projects built on the premises of being accessible might represent an

approach capable of involving audiences of different social and cultural backgrounds.

If the premise of the WSO project format was being accessible for audiences of all ages from different cultural and social backgrounds, choosing an instrument that is represented in the folk music tradition in several countries around the world, and played in many different contexts, such as on the streets and in public ceremonies, allowed for a contrast between a relaxed setting created by WSO and the perceived rigidity of many traditional classical music buildings. Equally, the option of not having costumes or props had a similar implication on contributing to a more prosaic environment, rather than the "*paraphernalia*" (Bourdieu, cited in Barrett, 2015, p.47) required to stage a full-scale opera production. Such a feature was recognised as a positive element of engagement by some members of the audience.

> For me, stripping down the costumes and set made it more accessible and made it a better experience. [TWI 07]

> We don't need much to enjoy opera. I think simple costumes and sceneries are better. The singers managed to convey the emotions. [INT 14]

> I have been to several operas, but it made me realize that I have never learnt the essentials of what makes up opera. [POD 20]

On the contrary, for one participant, who was attending the performance at Northern Monk Refectory, a more relaxed setting of listening to opera arias was not seen as part of a positive experience. They were emphatic in expressing their frustration, stating that 'Opera North should be about excellence, not an experience of opera in the midst of the noise and other disruptions caused by waitress's movements and people having their meals during the performance'. For the attendee's partner, attending at their insistence, a higher level of frustration related to the nuisance caused by the surroundings and a feeling of indifference towards the performance. In their view, opera does not transmit any particular feeling and, despite acknowledging the performers' skills, the experience of

attending a WSO performance did not leave a lasting impression on them. By claiming that all their attempts to appreciate opera were not successful, the attendee's testimony suggests that once an aversion to a specific artform is cultivated, the propensity to explore new opportunities which could change their opinion is less likely to occur (Pitts and Price, 2020, p.137).

A sentiment of disappointment regarding the performance was also revealed by Scarborough College's group of Year 5 to 7 pupils. Among 30 respondents to Opera North's audiences' feedback form, 11 children expressed their expectation of seeing a longer show with 'more acting, props or people on stage'. In conversation with one of the music teachers prior to the beginning of the show, the researcher was informed about the children's close involvement with singing, as well as their previous work around opera carried out to whet the children's appetite for the show. A correlation with audiences' expectation for a longer show was also noted among younger audiences, such as the two interviewees at The Brick Box Pub and one at the Belgrave Musical Hall and Canteen. One respondent seemed to summarize the feeling for a longer experience in their words: 'high quality art, but short'.

The findings of this section suggest that the informality of musical and extra-musical elements characterised by the production were perceived by the audience as a positive way to promote engagement as well as to break down some of the traditional conventions attached to opera. A straightforward storyline supported by the descriptive musical elements which accompanied the narrative, added to the singers' ability to portray the different moods contained within the plot, allowed audiences to keep track of and engage with the story, regardless of the language shifts. Furthermore, for the majority of attendees, the absence of all "paraphernalia" (Bourdieu cited in Barrett, 2015, p.47) involved in opera settings – the opulence of a traditional stage, lights, costumes, props, the presence of an orchestra and all rituals involved in opera concerts – did not discourage audiences from enjoying the experience and responding emotionally to it.

5.4 Project value recognition

A common perception observed in many feedback forms and interviews related to audiences' recognition of the project's value for their communities, demonstrated by the high number of messages wishing for the project's continuity as well as audiences' explicit gratitude for having a WSO project locally. Such statements were more frequently expressed by attendees in County Durham localities, where a member of the audience described the place as 'a cultural backwater'. In addition to the lack of cultural opportunities, audiences from Hamsterley Village and Bishop Auckland also noted the complications and cost of traveling implied in accessing their nearest concert hall.

Considering the project's premise to offer a taste of opera in a reduced format capable of portraying the main features comprised by the genre, the WSO project was acknowledged by audiences as an effective way of being introduced to the world of opera. Nonetheless, all 21 interviewees pointed out their desire to attend an entire opera after their WSO attendance. Similarly, many members of the audience with whom the researcher had the opportunity to informally talk, some of whom were experiencing opera for the first time, felt inspired to seek out other opportunities to see a full-scale opera production.

Relatedly, the accessible elements of the production – the role played by the host in conducting the story, the language used throughout the narrative, the relaxed setting allowed by the proximity with the singers as well as by a positive 'casual' feeling that audiences attributed to the production – were recognized by the majority of attendees as effective ways of encouraging engagement with opera whilst creating a feeling of belonging to a shared experience.

The observations conducted during 21 performances enabled the researcher to recognize the benefits of allowing time for conversation between performers and audiences. The opportunity to participate in the Q&A sessions was pointed out in audiences' replies as an important part of the entire experience, rather than separate from the performance itself (cf. Reason, 2010). Many interviewees pointed out the importance of offering first time attendees a deeper perception about opera. The possibility of sharing perceptions, expressing disagreement, criticizing and gaining a deeper understanding of opera enabled by the host's

introduction, the Q&A sessions, and in the conversations after the show, was recognized both by audiences and performers as a positive means of engagement (cf. Conner, 2013; Pitts and Spencer, 2008). Many attendees approached the artists to share impressions and suggestions. Artists appreciated and cherished attendees' willingness to come closer as an opportunity to stimulate participants' interest in opera, to better articulate some ideas that might have not been elaborated during the Q&A, as well as an opportunity to deepen their engagement with audiences. Such a finding contests Heim's (2012) previous assertion that some performers are reluctant to engage with audiences and prefer to maintain a "relationship of character-audience" (p.190), rather than develop a more personal one. Like Heim, Small (cited in Pitts, 2010, p.109) corroborates the idea that performers "do not want their world to be too close to that of the audience; and individually and collectively, they guard jealously their privacy and their distance from the public". Whistle Stop Opera's artists' willingness to engage with their audiences challenges both findings, as observed in all venues where the conditions of time and space allowed them to be available for an informal chat after the performance (such as in pubs and coffee places) were possible.

Reflecting on the criteria of choosing the performers to participate in a WSO season, the Project Manager highlighted that some of the singers were also cast to sing in Opera North's concurrent season, thus the WSO project functioned both as a connection with the main stage as well as a way of enticing audiences to attend a full-length opera programmed throughout the season. Regarding the artists' profile, the Project Manager pointed out that more than having high technical skills, performers of WSO needed to be flexible in adapting to 'any sort of venue' and performing to 'any sort of people'. In addition, the artists needed to be capable of reacting 'ad-lib' in the way they moved, what they chose to sing (or omit in specific cases described previously), as well as how they work in collaboration with other performers on stage. The performer's profile and recruitment criteria described by the Project Manager implies that for a programme which aims to connect with audiences of all ages and opera backgrounds, a specific type of performer is required. It also suggests their concern going beyond the quality of the artistic product and the outcome generated by it, but also bring focus on the variety of audiences that may attend the performances as well as how the artists

can genuinely engage with different people and adapt to different settings (cf. Walmsley, 2013).

Questions regarding the challenges of singing in a variety of venues, for different audiences and in different languages, particularly the rehearsal process and techniques of pronunciation, were recurrent among audiences who attended a WSO performance. Performers' feelings of 'modernizing' opera titles and settings were explored more by audiences of SingOn groups than other groups who had the opportunity to participate in the Q&A session.[62] It is worth mentioning that many participants of SingOn groups were attending WSO for the second or third time, as the project revisits the groups on an annual basis. Naturally, the questions mirror an interest in the singing world shared by a group of choralists, and the familiarity of participants with WSO events. Due to the profile of participants – regular opera attendees of a specific age range – it is unsurprising that questioning the decision to translate original excerpts into English and reducing the scenic elements would have been a matter of curiosity for many members of SingOn groups. During the Q&A with pupils from Scarborough College, children demonstrated their eagerness to ask questions regarding the challenges and achievements of the singers, for example how they make a living as artists added to general curiosities about weird situations shared on stage. The large number of children who raised their hands and the disappointment shown by those who were not heard due to time constraints suggests the high level of engagement that WSO achieved with this group.

The researcher had the chance to informally talk with one of Scarborough College's teachers who was participating in the experience a couple of months after the school performance. During the conversation, the teacher stressed their astonishment in realising that the WSO performance continued to resonate in pupils' conversations some weeks after the show, echoing what Reason (2013) has

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[62] At Richmond Primary School, Belgrave Music Hall and Canteen, The Northern Brewery, Cast and Howard Assembly Room there was no Q&A session due to various circumstances, such as Opera North marketing staff decisions, as pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, as well as a train disruption, which caused a delay in the event's schedule.

identified as "the prolonged experience" of the arts. Rather than an isolated involvement, audience engagement is an ongoing process (Barker, 2006; Reason, 2010; Radbourne, Glow and Johanson, 2013; Walmsley, 2016) in which reflections, "recallable pleasures, dream materials, and points-of connection" (Barker, 2006, p.135) continue to operate in people's lives, offering cumulative or lifetime value (Brown and Novak, 2013).

Although it could be argued that the Q&A session was conducted through an "expert-driven" model (Heim, 2012, p.190) – mediated by a professional artist – the findings of this research reveal that WSO audiences derived pleasure from talking about their experiences as well as sharing them with others (cf. Conner, 2018; Conner, 2013; Pitts and Gross, 2017). Furthermore, such talks had the potential to add both intellectual stimulus and educational value (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013) to the experience of many attendees, regardless of audiences' previous knowledge about opera. In this sense, it seems legitimate to acknowledge that creating a shared space of audiences' satisfactions, perceptions, criticisms and suggestions is a key element to be considered by programmes which aim to reach out to new audiences and break down barriers to opera attendance.

The opportunity of attending a show in a venue in which everybody is allowed to enjoy the experience without the pillars and distance from the stage (usually attached to reduced price tickets) were also acknowledged by many attendees in different venues. Similarly, the Artistic Director's intention to approach opera from a 'light-touch and fast pace in plot' was recognized by several members of the audiences, who described the overall WSO experience as a 'thoroughly enjoyable', 'heartfelt and 'spellbound' experience.

5.5 Recognising the barriers to opera attendance

Many participants interviewed identified the school as the best place to reach younger audiences (cf. Donelan and Sallis, 2014) as well as the urgency of having music education as part of the regular curriculum to nurture classical music listening and encourage opera lovers of the future, whilst demystifying the artform. Nonetheless, a suggestion highlighted in six interviews related to alternative times and days, such as evenings and weekends, as a potential way of

reaching younger audiences. Except in schools and pubs, many performances were held in late mornings or early afternoons, when children and young students were not able to attend.

Four interviewees, including one who was physically disabled, highlighted the issue of accessibility as a barrier to attendance. According to them, the distance of opera houses from their community, venues' lack of disabled facilities, as well as the poor conditions of public transport, combined to put them off experiencing operas and classical music concerts in general (cf. Baker, 2000). The high cost of tickets was mentioned as a barrier to attendance by only one interviewee, suggesting that pricing was not a major factor that prevents opera attendance for the majority of WSO interviewees (cf. Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre, 1999; Baker, 2000). Although the issue of ticket cost was not directly mentioned by most, two members of the audience who attended the performance at Barnard Castle and Shildon reflected on the costs implied in opera attendance, as the need to travel long distances to the closest opera houses explained their lack of experience with the genre.

A strong trend vocalised by many members of the audience was the perception that opera is reserved for upper class people and still seen by many as quite a serious artform. The expression 'not for me' was heard several times by the researcher during informal conversations with members of the audience and staff working in the venues where the performance took place.

It is worth noting the reactions of the 'working class' men who attended the performance in Bradford. The group showed a higher level of excitement compared with other audiences, particularly in moments where an ironic or cynical phrase was sung, which was evidenced by 'hearty laughs' (cf. Barrett, 2015) and recurrent exchanges of eye contact. Such a finding reverberates with what Barrett (2015) identified in her study involving theatre repertory, which revealed that humour and comedy as well as a 'festive and communal' atmosphere are important elements to promote engagement between working class theatregoers. The reactions observed among the group echo the historical references of opera dating back to the 19th century, when the growing working class used to occupy the cheapest seats of theatre pits and express their enjoyment (or lack thereof) with

no inhibition (cf. Blanning, 2008). Opera was therefore seen as a "shared public culture" and a form of popular entertainment which could attract all social classes (Storey, 2002, p. 33), a perception which is also recognised in the expected aims of the Whistle Stop Opera project. In this sense, it is also worth acknowledging in the WSO project's format a similarity with the "missionary journeys" (Upchurch, 2013, p.619) of performers across England during the 1940s. Among other aims, those journeys sought to promote and maintain what was legitimised as 'British culture'. Besides the concept of touring in more remote communities as a tool of reaching out to a variety of audiences, the similarity of those journeys to WSO resides also in the intention of maintaining a legitimate artform, implied in the Project Manager's interview when claiming that 'the WSO project has the potential to preserve the future of opera itself'.

Another barrier pointed out by two interviewees and expressed by a few members of the audiences to whom the researcher had the possibility to talk with prior to the shows related to language barriers. However, when consulted after the performance, the same attendees actually reported their enjoyment in hearing another language and conformed that it had not impeded their comprehension of the narrative.

Similarly, audiences' responses highlighted that some preconceptions about opera, such as the seriousness or the genre, were demystified through the performance.

> Fun and accessible, not intimidating. [TWI 08]
>
> …a lot more accessible than I imagined. [CAS 05]
>
> A completely new experience. I didn't know what to expect, but completely captivated from the start. Entertaining, very moving in a way that I had not foreseen. [HVH 05]

The lack of advertising as a barrier to attendance was also pointed out by one interviewee, who lamented the local community's lack of awareness of the opportunity. Opera North's website did not advertise all of the performances and some were found only on the project's partners' websites, as well as on their social

media. In a few venues, such as Morley Town Hall and Headingley Methodist Church, a small printed sign was displayed in public areas.

This section confirms that audiences of WSO were quite aware of the difficulties encountered when deciding whether to attend an opera in a traditional venue. Moreover, the psychological barriers (cf. Keaney, 2008) attached to opera attendance, such as feelings of 'social discomfort' (cf. Price, 2017), of not belonging to a particular setting often seen as a "place where middle-class white people can feel safe together" (Small, cited in Dobson and Pitts, 2011, p.358), as well as a sense of not possessing enough knowledge to talk about the genre (cf. Baker, 2000; Dobson and Pitts, 2011; Cuenca, 2015) were evidenced by many attendees who contributed both formally and informally to this research. Nonetheless, the social dimension of the experience was accentuated, perceived in WSO attendees' expressions of their enjoyment in feeling welcome, as well as engaged with the singers and other members of the audience (cf. Dobson and Pitts, 2011).

5.7 Summary of findings

This chapter investigated the responses of first-time, regular, and non-regular opera attendees while experiencing Whistle Stop Opera performances. From the analysis of data gathered through participants' responses, three overarching themes emerged: group and individual experience; project value recognition; and barriers to opera attendance.

The fist theme explored WSO audiences' individual responses as well as groups' reactions to the interactive, musical and drama elements comprised by the performance. A first finding revealed that the informal approach of the host in starting every event by asking about audiences' perceptions about opera, as well as inviting attendees to sing along to the chorus of a well-known aria, were seen by the majority of audiences as positive, 'surprising elements' of engagement. Similarly, the informality of the language adopted throughout the performance and the playful way in which the artists were presented functioned as a 'gateway' (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013) to engage audiences of all ages and opera backgrounds in the experience.

A striking finding of this section emerged in relation to how audiences related the emotions evoked by the experience to a sense of being engaged with both artists and plot. The way in which the singers and musicians managed to convey the story's message, regardless of the language in which an extract was sung, impacted on how audiences received and attributed meaning to what they were seeing and hearing on stage. Such meanings were permeated by attendees' previous expectations, by their past memories related to a particular episode of their lives, as well as by the emotions evoked in the immediacy of the experience.

The proximity with performers, fostered by an intimate setting in which the raised stage and all the rituals of traditional opera concerts were absent, allowed audiences to have bodily experiences in feeling the resonance of operatic voices and in perceiving the movement of the performances in the space from a new perspective. Such a close perspective was revealed as an important element in audiences' judgments about the quality of the performers, as well as the performance as a whole. Nonetheless, the physical proximity with singers enabled some members of the audiences to identify themselves with the characters, as well as being emotionally affected by the feelings portrayed by them. Having a 'close-up' experience of opera, thus perceiving the physicality of it and engaging with the interactive elements proposed by the singers, contributed to demystifying the preconception of 'seriousness' attached to the genre.

The role of an intimate setting, in turn, proved to be relevant in promoting a 'welcome' feeling as well as in encouraging socialisation between audiences and performers both before and after the performance. The atmosphere of intimacy fostered audiences' sense of connection with the performers as well as a feeling of belonging to a shared experience, confirming findings from extant audience research.

The second theme investigated audiences' recognition of the WSO project format in being accessible, and in engaging both regular and first-time attendees. Audiences were pleased and felt privileged to have the opportunity to attend the performance locally. Accompanying the messages of gratitude identified on several feedback forms, a desire for the project to continue was expressed by many attendees, who also revealed a concern about the preservation of opera for future

generations. Thus, some attendees identified the school as a place to develop outreach work in which life-long engagement with opera could be fostered.

Regarding the distinctive characteristics of the production – the role played by the host in conducting the story, the language used throughout the narrative, the absence of costumes, props and specialist lighting generally found in a professional opera production – were recognized by the majority of attendees as effective elements to encourage engagement with opera, particularly for first-time attendees. Audiences acknowledged the Q&A sessions as a significant part of the whole experience. Some attendees referred to the Q&A session as an informal learning opportunity to delve into the different aspects involved in an opera singer's career, to deepen their knowledge about the artform, and to explore the complexities inherent in singing training.

In the third section of this chapter, the so-called 'barriers' to opera attendance were explored. Through face-to-face interviews and during informal conversations, I had the opportunity to engage with members of the audience and hear their different concerns when attending an opera concert. The findings highlight that the major impediments to opera attendance relate to the social and psychological barriers still attached to the genre. The belief that opera requires a certain level of education to be understood, as well as a set of determined conducts and behaviours from its audiences, still persists in many people's perceptions. The testimony of an attendee who self-identified as 'working class' reveals that the predominant mechanisms of exclusion within the so-called 'high arts' are intertwined not only with the social history of classical music, as described in Chapter 2, but also find a close correlation with the movement of how the arts became publicly funded in England.

Finally, the ways in which WSO audiences' responses informed Opera North's education department work was another consideration of this chapter. The key finding here reveals that although WSO audiences' feedback represents a source on which the Artistic Director can build in order to make immediate artistic decisions which can better 'fit' a group of attendees, the potential of audiences' responses to leverage significant changes in the repertoire choice, as well as in the themes

encompassed by the WSO narrative, are still not being considered in the project format, partly due to positive bias.

The findings of this section confirm that if the arts sector is truly concerned about its existing and potential audiences, it should invest time and resources in developing genuine tools capable of evaluating all dimensions of the audience experience.

5.8 Recommendations to partner organisation

In times of funding cuts and growing demands for arts organisations to broaden and diversify their audiences, the outcomes generated by this case study shed light on how future outreach activities can be designed to broaden, diversify and strengthen the organisation's relationship with participants, whilst remaining relevant to the communities they serve.

Observations gathered throughout the performances and confirmed by the analysis of interviews revealed that the WSO audience demographic comprised predominantly middle-aged, non-disabled attendees, who possessed a high level of education and were employed at the time this research was conducted. Except in schools and pubs, the presence of younger and new audiences was not frequently observed at WSO performances. If one of the aims of Opera North is to diversify the demographics that the WSO project has so far been reaching, WSO performances should also be scheduled on alternative days and times to enable school students and young professionals to attend them.

In light of the successful turnout at the Belgrave Music Hall and Canteen and Northern Brewery, and the positive responses of the vast majority of audiences to the show, those types of venues could be more frequently utilized and become an integral part of the WSO season programming. Similarly, grassroots music venues where opera and classical music are rarely performed should continue to be explored[63] by the organisation as a way of reaching out to other demographics and

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[63] As in previous WSO project seasons, the organisation maintained its successful practice in presenting the WSO performance in pubs, cafés, and shopping centres. Other alternatives venues, such as Slung Low and Hyde Park Book Club (both in Leeds),

breaking down the barriers still attached to the formalities and rituals of traditional opera halls, while supporting the preservation of the artform among new audiences.

As suggested by a visually impaired member of the audience attending the WSO performance at Cast (Doncaster), an audio description of the performance would have enhanced their experience. Therefore, I would also suggest that, regardless of disability, the inclusion of a video excerpt, accompanied by some audio information about the project on Opera North's website, would be beneficial for all those interested in attending a performance. In the highly visual age we are living in, providing footage on the organisation's website would also allow first-time audiences to have a sense of what the performance and the environment are about, thus reducing possible feelings of inadequacy regarding the setting (cf. Baker, 2000; Keaney, 2008).

Another suggestion expressed by one of the teachers related to the lack of supporting material for the pupils to work on prior to their attendance at a performance. Reflecting on the quality of the resources and material produced by Opera North's educational department, the teacher indicated that material containing the chosen arias and some contextual information about them would have been appreciated by pupils and staff alike. In this respect, I would consider the inclusion of a post-concert activity designed by the organisation's educational department with the purpose of encouraging pupils to talk about and reflect on their experiences while nurturing lifelong engagement in opera, as well as inviting them to discover other educational opportunities offered by the organisation. The results of such activities and discussions could also be sent to Opera North's educational department and included on their website as a way of recognising participants' perceptions and productions inspired by a WSO performance, and as a form of amplifying the educational outcomes of the project to those who only have digital access to Opera North's initiatives.

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were scheduled to be incorporated into the WSO project's season in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Reflecting on the singers' instinctive ways of connecting with audiences, as well as on their testimonies about 'testing' different approaches to find the best ways of interacting with them, it could be argued that bespoke training developed for the performers and musicians involved in the WSO programme would be beneficial. Considering the gap between the traditional training provided by conservatories and the reality of outreach and education activities and settings, providing in-house training capable of developing a variety of forms in which performers can communicate with different audiences when the raised stage is not present would contribute to breaking down the fourth wall between performers and attendees. Whether through relating theatre techniques to those already mastered by such professionals (cf. Sloboda and Ford, 2012) or by enhancing the performers' awareness of the substantial impact that the proximity and interaction required by the WSO project format have on audiences' experience and responses, such training would benefit the performers by adding a set of skills which is fundamental when working with audiences of different ages, opera backgrounds, and in a variety of non-traditional venues.

Considering the performers' willingness to engage with their audiences during the Q&A session and after the performance, as well as audiences' perceptions of the educational value and intellectual stimulus (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013) that resulted from experiencing a WSO performance, I would suggest the organisation consider increasing the opportunities for audiences to talk to performers, by fostering spaces of socialisation where artistic experiences and perceptions could be shared between performers and audiences, as well as between members of the audience themselves. For the artists, such occasions would represent an opportunity to strengthen their relationship with their audiences, to increase their awareness of who their audiences are, and the impact of their work on attendees, to expand the topics of the Q&A, and, ultimately, to stimulate audiences to attend an entire opera concert on the main stage. For attendees, regardless of their knowledge of opera, having an informal space to engage with the performers would enhance their engagement with the WSO experience, as it would continue nourishing the feeling of belonging 'to the production itself', cherished by several attendees. Talking to the performers would also allow audiences a closer and more

personal experience with the artists, thus moving away from the conventionalities of traditional concerts halls where a similar opportunity is rarely available.

Regarding the repertoire of the Whistle Stop Opera season under analysis, as identified by previous findings, as well as highlighted by some interviewees, including contemporary issues experienced today by young people in the WSO performance would represent a valuable way of attracting younger audiences, while fostering a sense of identification between these attendees and the artform. I would therefore suggest Opera North consider involving young people in the organisation's artistic practices, by inviting them to collaborate on a deeper level – by co-curating the programme, for instance. Such a collaboration would inevitably highlight particular issues that young people experience in their lives and might like to see related to their artistic experience, thus contributing to mitigating the preconception that opera does not appeal to young audiences. Involving young audiences in the artistic practices of the organisation would also contribute to broadening the range of voices involved in the organisation's decision-making process, while allowing other forms of participation of younger audiences in opera. Ultimately, having young people as co-curators of opera programmes could potentially bring to light fresh insights, inputs, outcomes, and impacts of participatory programming in audience engagement, a field which is currently under-researched.

Chapter 6
Hallé Inspire programme

This chapter examines the experience of a primary school group of Year 5 pupils who participated in a year-long music-making project run by two professional orchestra musicians. It considers the expectations and interpretations of children's engagement throughout the project of those directly involved in the experience: the two musicians who led the sessions and those who were impacted by it – classroom teachers and the researcher herself.

The first section of this chapter begins by analysing the group activities developed during the 15 sessions observed by the researcher. By investigating pupils' different forms of participation in the proposed music activities, this analysis seeks to identify the elements which encouraged or inhibited such participation to occur. In this sense, pupils' involvement and motivations in taking part in the warm-up activities, as well as in those involving body percussion and rhythmic improvisation, are described in order to understand the nature of children's musical engagement. The section continues by reflecting on the challenges of classroom management emerging from a programme involving a group of primary children in creative music-making activities. Underpinned by the relevant literature, as well as supported by the interviews with two teachers, two musicians, the Project Manager, and the Hallé Education Director, this section of the chapter explores the complexities of a partnership between a primary school and a classical music organisation, bringing out different expectations of the professionals involved and the organisation itself. In this sense, the chapter moves on to identify the issues around classroom teachers' training and the extent to which previous opportunities to engage in classical music activities prior to the beginning of the project impacted on teachers' own interest in participating in the initiative, as well as the influence of their attitudes on pupils' engagement.

In the second section of this chapter, children's views of their experiences are investigated through their drawings, discussions and responses to an online survey. The extent to which pupils were given the autonomy to explore their own interests, to make decisions, set goals and find possible paths to achieve them (cf. Small, 1980) is explored to identify how such elements impacted on pupils'

participation, stimulating them to talk about and engage with classical music. The second section focuses on children's perception of self-efficacy regarding their musical and social skills development as a result of participation in the project.

The last section of this chapter describes pupils' experience in attending the 'Hallé for Youth' concert at the Bridgewater Hall (Manchester). Observations gathered during the event, as well as through pupils' discussions, are analysed to identify the extent to which attending a symphonic concert in a traditional hall influenced their overall experience and their relationship with classical music.

To capture the complexities of participants' feelings and perceptions, mixed methods of data collection were adopted (cf. Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008), as outlined in the methodology chapter. Having a range of methods at hand to elicit data was invaluable to facilitate data triangulation, as well as to reinforce the rigour of the findings. Participant observation of the activities and concerts generated rich and nuanced accounts of the contexts observed (cf. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001). A 'fieldwork journal' (Spradley, 1979, p.75) registered the 25 entries produced during the activities inside and outside the school – sessions, concerts and meetings with the organisation's staff. A workshop conducted by the researcher using a drawing added to participants' comments (cf. Adams, 2002) proved to be a valuable way of eliciting new insights, as well as confirming previous observations. Responsive in-depth interviews (cf. Rubin and Rubin, 2005) with the musicians, teachers and Hallé education senior staff, and an online survey dedicated to pupils and teachers acted as additional tools to delve into participants' expectations and to envision outcomes related to their experiences. As data collection occurred concurrently, Figure 2 offers a timeline of each procedure.
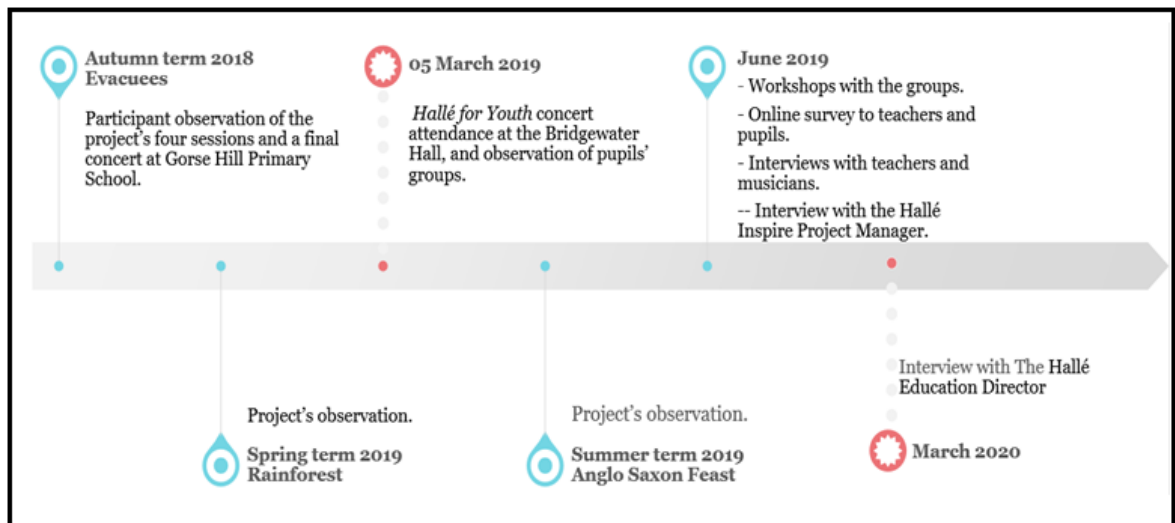
Figure 2: The Hallé Inspire project fieldwork timeline

Following the previous chapter's structure, a prelude section is offered to contextualize the Hallé Inspire project's aims and outline, as well as the profile of the school and groups participating in the experience. Similarly, my first impressions of the project as both a researcher and a music educator are offered as an attempt to provide the reader with a vivid ethnographic perspective of the field under analysis.

6.1 Contextualizing the project

The Hallé Inspire programme (HI), as previously described in Chapter 4, is a partnership between the Hallé Orchestra and primary schools which aims to engage pupils facing social and economic disadvantages, as well as "low engagement and motivation" and "poor behaviour towards learning". By using music as a creative tool, the HI programme's purpose is to promote positive attitudes to learning, to help pupils to develop life skills and motivation, and to deepen the children's learning and understanding in a range of curriculum areas (The Hallé Orchestra, 2019).

Being musically creative, as highlighted by both the Project Manager and the Hallé Education Director, relates to children's freedom in expressing their own ideas and exploring forms of translating them into music by improvising, composing and performing. Such a view of creativity echoes the broad concept of creativity

described by the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education report (ACE, 2019b), as well as the latest OfSTED report (OfSTED, 2019). According to the Durham Commission report, creativity is described as "the capacity to imagine, conceive, express, or make something that was not there before" (ACE, 2019b), whereas in the OfSTED report, the concept of music creativity is more abstractly related to "musical imagination, where pupils 'hear' and create the music in their heads" (p.44).

Also included in the booklet are the outcomes of the project extended to teachers, families and the school in general, aiming for a "broader and more balanced curriculum, to increase teachers' knowledge and confidence in creative music; a better parental engagement with the school, as well as to increase family participation in cultural activities" (Hallé, 2019, p.2).

According to the Hallé's Education Director, the decision to work with primary school-age children, and the criteria to select the participating schools in the project, followed the former Hallé Shine project's similar premises, in which children's low social and economic levels, low engagement and motivation towards learning were relevant indicators for consideration. The collaboration between the Hallé and the Greater Manchester Music Hub in identifying areas and schools that would potentially benefit from a project with such aims was also highlighted as an important step in the selection process.

Working in partnership with the Hub, as noted by the Education Director, was paramount to reduce the duplication of music initiatives in the schools as well as to guarantee that the Hallé's music education provision could reach every area of Greater Manchester. After being identified as potential beneficiaries, the schools were invited to apply to host the project during the academic year. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the four schools participating in the project were: St Paul's Peel CE Primary School (Salford), St James' CE Primary School (Tameside), Armitage CE Primary School (Ardwick) and Gorse Hill Primary School (Trafford), where the researcher chose to be based in accordance with the criteria described in Chapter 4.

An initial meeting between the participating schools and the Hallé education team was scheduled prior to the beginning of the project to align the organisation's

purposes and the schools' expectations. On this occasion, as described by the Project Manager, the schools were invited to select three working themes which could benefit from an activity involving music composition and performance. Gorse Hill Primary School's selected themes were 'World War II and Evacuees', 'Rainforest' and 'Anglo-Saxon Feast', all of which are strongly reflected in the National Curriculum. These themes were developed during Autumn, Winter and Spring terms respectively. Following the school's decision, the cohort of Year 5 pupils (Key Stage 2) was chosen to take part in the project. Structured into three parts, each working theme was developed throughout four sessions followed by a culmination concert. The two-hour session, in turn, was divided into two sessions of one hour each to accommodate the two groups of Year 5 students (n=56).

6.1.1 Knowing the school and participants

Gorse Hill Primary School is located in a residential street of Trafford, one of the ten metropolitan boroughs of Greater Manchester. Although Trafford's position in the Index of Multiple Deprivation highlights the socio-economic nature of the area,[64] my initial impressions gathered when walking from the bus stop towards the school was of a well-maintained, quiet residential neighbourhood with fair housing conditions, a feeling that was diametrically opposed to that experienced wandering around underprivileged areas of Rio de Janeiro. Bordering the main road, where large car dealerships prevail, a few small food businesses could be seen. The absence of cultural centres close to the school indicated the limited opportunities for arts and leisure activities for those who live in the surrounding areas. Conversely, the large presence of ethnic minorities both in the school as well as in local shops revealed the rich cultural diversity that characterizes the area.

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[64] Findings of the latest English Indices of Deprivation show that Trafford "is ranked 191 on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) out of 317 local authority districts in England, where 1 is the most deprived and 317 is the least deprived" (Trafford Data Lab, 2020).

The school website's 'Welcome' message describes the school as a busy and friendly space with "lots going on". The message continues by indicating the school's aim "to have lots of exciting things happening and have FUN" (Gorse Hill Primary School, 2020). The emphasis on the word 'fun', written in capital letters, intrigued me from the outset until the last day of the project. My observations were also directed towards identification of a joyful experience of learning. Another point of interest, discovered while I was browsing the website, regarded the "Learning Challenge approach" to the curriculum taken by the school. Such an approach, according to the school, is oriented by "direct experience and activity-based learning", in which the pupils are encouraged to "have greater involvement in their work, deeper thinking and understanding of their learning" (Gorse Hill Primary School, 2020). Prompted by the combination of information gathered from the school website, a premature assumption of Gorse Hill as a place which possessed the ideal conditions for a collaborative music-making project to thrive was inevitable.

Regarding the 2018-2019 cohort of Year 5 pupils (aged 9-10) participating in the project, a form completed by the school staff and made available to the researcher evidenced the existence of a mixed ethnic group for whom English was not their first language. Among the 52 children, less than half of the group were White-British (eighteen pupils), whereas ten were White and Black-Caribbean, eight Pakistani, five Indian, four Black-African and seven identified as other Asian, ethnic or mixed background groups. The number of pupils for whom English was an additional language accounted for 20 pupils of the group's total, approximately 40% of the children. Twenty-eight pupils were targeted according to eligibility for free school meals and the Pupil Premium scheme. Regarding learning and disability, 10 children were classified as part of the special education needs group. Comparing those indicators with the national average of English primary schools, Gorse Hill's pupil population results were significantly above average. Data collected during the academic year of 2018-2019 show that the proportion of children for whom English was not the first language accounts for 29.4% of Gorse Hill's pupil population, whereas the national average of mainstream primary school accounts for 21.2%. Regarding pupils' eligibility for free school meals and the Pupil Premium scheme, 35.8% of Gorse Hill's pupils were eligible for the

scheme compared with the national average of 23%. Finally, 18% of Gorse Hill's pupils were included in the special needs support group, whereas the national average indicates 12.6% of children were under the same indicator (GOV.UK, 2020).

Comparing Gorse Hill's indicators with other British primary schools offers a valuable insight to situate the context of the analysis. The high proportion of non-native English speakers suggests the coexistence of cultural diversity in Gorse Hill's classrooms. Similarly, the high proportion of children eligible for the pupil scheme indicates the low social and economic backgrounds of almost half of the school population.

Results from a study conducted by Russel-Bowie (1993), which sought to investigate the effectiveness of a music curriculum development model in Australia, revealed that both teachers and pupils from less advantaged areas were less involved in extracurricular musical activities, compared to those from schools in higher socioeconomic areas and where the percentage of non-native English speakers pupils was also lower. Although such a study regards a reality observed in another country, it does highlight that external factors such as cultural, social and economic and geographic demographics play a role in participants' from different backgrounds involvement in extra-curricular music activities, thus correlating with the context analysed by this research.

6.1.2 First impressions

Entering a primary school in England for the first time is one of those memories that will certainly remain in my mind. It was 2015 when I had the chance to observe a session of a project run by the Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning team in a school located in Hackney, London. With the support of a teaching artist who visited the school on a regular basis, the children were composing music, songs, and poems by using a theme as their working background. Such a brief yet positive experience allowed me a deeper reflection on the particularities of the Brazilian and English school music teaching cultures, which at a first sight can seem contrasting, but carry many similarities, as I later had the opportunity to observe.

Five years later, I found myself again sitting in an English primary school chair, waiting to start an in-depth investigation of children's engagement with classical music through a project offered by the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester. As soon as the first session began, I could not avoid the same feeling evoked in Hackney years before: the sensation of 'order' enabled by the silence constantly demanded from the children by the teacher, even when almost no sound was being heard, as well as the physical distance between musicians and pupils during a creative music-making process. My own experience as a music teacher resembled a starkly contrasted environment, where the polyphony of voices and sounds was evident to whomever passed the classroom, indicating that a music lesson was taking place. So the calm British experience felt like heaven for a couple of weeks.

As a classical music trained educator, I reflected that discipline and silence were emphasized and valued for different reasons during my career. As a researcher, interrogating the presence or absence of those elements and their role in a participatory project in which creativity was paramount, acquired another connotation. Just as with Whistle Stop Opera, I was once more confronted with my beliefs and interpretations of 'distance' and its articulation with classical music involvement. Witnessing the 15 sessions of the Hallé Inspire programme pushed me out of a comfort zone I was trying to create. Experiencing boredom and frustration at not seeing the reactions I would have envisioned as ideal for that group – such as an immediate high level of excitement among the children and teachers due to the opportunity of working with professional orchestra musicians and with such a variety of musical instruments available (a structure and condition that Brazilian schools would hardly have) – forced me to discover the 'yin and yang' of my research process, – the complementary sides of an experience which would include my expectations and challenges. Above all it required me to embrace a posture of what Eco (2015) called "academic humility" (p.142) towards a reality in which I was also a participant, and therefore someone who was also learning from all those involved in the experience. Signs of demotivation, disinterest or tiredness sometimes perceived in teachers, children, musicians, and in my own countenance had to be carefully balanced and contextualized to allow genuine and less judgemental observations to emerge.

If on the one hand the rigidity still associated with classical music learning may find resonance in disciplinary practices inside the classroom, on the other hand, the creative music-making process generally requires chances for everybody to freely express themselves as well as a rapport of trust powerful enough to enable different forms of expression to flourish. The Hallé Inspire programme was, therefore, a source of continual questioning about my own preconceptions and expectations as well as a valuable opportunity to observe the challenges of working with an artform which still fights to find its place and be recognized in the school system, yet is often regarded and even dismissed as belonging to an affluent cultural elite.

6.1.3 Describing the Hallé Inspire programme sessions' structure

Overall, the structure of the sessions run by the musicians, comprising one violinist and one double bass player, followed a similar pattern throughout each encounter, creating a routine of activity within the groups. A warming-up activity involving body percussion and clapping rhythms was regularly adopted as a way of starting to engage the children. In the first session of the project, for instance, a rhythmic warm-up activity involving the pupils' names followed the first contact between the musicians and the group.

The musicians then talked about the particularities of their instruments and played part of the 'Imperial March', by John Williams, immediately recognised by the majority of the children as the 'Star Wars music'. As the session continued, the musical concepts of pulse and pause were introduced by the musicians through another interactive group activity. A brief explanation of the reasons why the musicians were in the school was given by the double bass player, who conducted the last part of the session by asking the children to share their knowledge about the first working theme of the project: World War II and evacuees. Ultimately, the first bars of 'Mars', from 'The Planets', written by Gustav Holst, one of the two pieces chosen to comprise that working theme, was played and children were invited to share their feelings provoked by the music. Some percussion instruments that could relate to the feelings expressed by the children were

selected by the group, whose last task was playing together the *ostinato* present in the first bars of the music.

The subsequent sessions followed a similar structure, starting with a brief recapitulation of the last session and continuing through a collaborative work in which pupils and musicians co-created the bits of music and song lyrics by exchanging ideas and trialling possibilities to express them through music. Music concepts relating to dynamics, rhythm and basic playing techniques were approached by the musicians when the need of this knowledge was beneficial to deepen the pupils' exploration and comprehension of their own work.

It is worth noting the lack of a shared moment of discussion between the musicians, children, and teachers in order to make the group aware of the long-term purposes and goals of the project from the outset. The opportunity to ask their own questions about the reasons why they were participating and the benefits the experience might have was not made available to the children in the first session. Equally, the reasons for choosing the three specific working themes remained unclear to participants.

Departing from the premise that "participation is not simply about joining the game, it's also about having the ability to question the rules of the game" (Sternfeld, cited in Eriksson, 2020, p.74), this analysis investigated the extent to which pre-determined academic content allowed or inhibited the pupils to express their ideas and create their own music. Similarly, the extent to which opportunities of choice were made available to pupils during the activities proposed and the impacts of it in participants' engagement is at the core of this analysis.

6.2 Investigating engagement through a creative music-making project

Engagement was analysed by following a similar approach adopted in the Whistle Stop Opera project's analysis – a first observation of children's reactions of happiness, excitement, attention, enjoyment, interest, disappointment or disagreement was devised as a valuable route to begin eliciting information. In this context, gestures and embodied reactions, such as smiles, rolling eyes, silent or ironic laughing, whispering and general distractions observed during the sessions and final concerts were carefully registered, resulting in a detailed account of

participants' responses. Engagement was also investigated through children's vocal responses regarding their experiences of composing and performing their creations. Pupils' perceptions of self-efficacy, whether expressed in their drawings or vocalised during the sessions, were equally included in this analysis.

A high level of involvement was observed during the group's activities in a circle, particularly in those where movement and rhythm were involved. Activities in which specific directions were made clear to participants, such as the 'question and answer' exercise,[65] were commonly embraced by both groups. Such a result was evidenced by the high level of attention, interest, expectation and reactions of enthusiasm and enjoyment displayed by participants. Observations throughout the year also revealed that children gained in confidence and ability in creating more complex patterns of rhythms as well as in imitating with accuracy those created by their peers.

Other examples of activities involving concentration, rhythm, and movement, such as 'pass the shush', as well as the imitation of a locomotive movement improvised according to a rhythmic unit proved to be a valuable way of engaging the pupils, especially those who demonstrated less interest in the activities of creating music or performing it in front of an audience. Combining movements and sound to represent the musical material composed by the children, such as using body percussion to depict a storm, characteristic of a rainforest, was appreciated by the children and recalled by some when asked about the highlights of the performance. Such a finding suggests that involving coordination and physical action in music-making practices are beneficial to "reinforce comprehension and internalization of rhythmic motives" (West, 2019, p.416). Later in the project, the musicians adopted a similar approach of using body percussion, such as claps and snaps, to devise rhythmic patterns originating from food names suggested by the children when describing an Anglo-Saxon feast. Some of these patterns were then reproduced

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[65] One participant improvised a short rhythm pattern by using body percussion to communicate (whether by clapping, stomping or making any other sound), followed by the group's response in imitating exactly the same pattern.

using a musical instrument and, combined with other musical ideas, generated new motifs.

Observations on the process of how rhythmic motifs were internalized by the pupils and further used to bring about new musical ideas find a correlation with an ethnographic study conducted by West (2019). By investigating the pedagogical strategies of improvisation adopted by two music teachers of a kindergarten and an adult class who used musical pieces of the canonized repertoire in their practices, West (2019) identified the role of activities involving physical movement in fostering participants' improvisation and further exploration of new combinations of rhythmic motives (p.416). According to West (2019), experimenting with creative movements to describe a part of a musical piece or as a way of matching a certain rhythm, for instance, became part of a "working inventory and knowledge base" (p.419), which participants could draw on as well as a route to continue exploring the recombination of new motifs.

Group activities requiring improvisation and creation, such as warm-ups and activities involving words and rhythms, were pointed out by one of the musicians as the most effective way to engage the entire group, particularly those less confident in 'coming up with their ideas'. According to the musician, the effectiveness of group activities lay both in providing an opportunity for every child to contribute by supporting the shy and less confident pupils to participate (cf. Hallam and Rogers, 2010), as well as in establishing the grounds for children's understanding of what would be developed later in the session. Thus, it can be argued that such activities served as what West (2019) identified as a "scaffolding device" (p.416), which functioned as a platform to trigger pupils' interest, develop their comprehension and encourage creativity.

Activities in which the children felt they were challenged, yet capable of accomplishing a task, had a positive impact on their motivation, enjoyment and confidence, central elements to stimulate a creative work (cf. Hallam and Rogers, 2010). Another moment of high involvement noticed in both groups related to children's appreciation of the musicians' performance of the pieces included in the working theme. When asked to highlight the part of the project they most enjoyed, 'hearing the musicians playing their own instrument' was mentioned by four

pupils. Similarly, both teachers acknowledged that the opportunity to hear and see orchestral instruments from a closer perspective was valuable to engage the children, particularly those who were experiencing it for the first time. The novelty of seeing highly skilled musicians playing instruments which were not familiar to many pupils (nor available in the school's collection of musical instruments) in their own classroom generated high levels of attention and enthusiasm that could be observed in both groups. In the online survey, a pupil suggested that 'hearing more the musicians playing' could be a way of improving the project for the future, confirming the impact that experiencing the musicians' talent with such a proximity had on the children's enjoyment (cf. Burland and Pitts, 2012).

On the other hand, children's attention seemed to be more dispersed in moments where the musicians were focused on each group's composition, while the rest of the pupils rested, waiting for their turn. Reactions of boredom, such as children looking down and supporting their heads with their hands, as well as pupils' attention being easily diverted, were observed when no other activity was taking place. One response to the online survey, as well as one child's comment related to their drawing, revealed a feeling of unfairness shown by pupils who considered that the musicians' attention was directed unequally between groups. Another factor observed during the work with small groups was the constraints brought by the space dedicated to the project.

Despite being considered a medium-sized classroom, the space proved to be limited when activities involving small groups were planned, thus restricting the movement of the musicians between the groups, as well as children's possibility of sharing their ideas and playing their instruments without the interference of other sounds. Reflecting on the responses of primary pupils about their levels of engagement in a music-making project, Green (2008) points out that, rather than the nature of proposed practices themselves, logistical and practical issues – such as insufficient space, time, equipment and "disruption from other pupils" – were identified by the pupils as impediments to engagement (p.95). Hallam and Rogers (2010) also highlight the challenges inherent to classroom management when a creative work involving small groups is involved. According to Hallam and Rogers (2010), the time gap generated by visiting the groups in turn, as well as the

restrictions imposed by the space, can facilitate misbehaviour and become a source of stress for those leading the project.

Relating to classroom management, observations revealed that in circumstances where a particular child demonstrated a lack of interest in engaging with the activities or misbehaved by spending the entire session under the table, for instance, the absence of classroom teachers' authority was noted. Except for constantly asking for silence, teachers' lack of words of encouragement or reproach suggested that the sessions' success or failure was solely reliant on the musicians. One of the musicians expressed a level of expectation regarding the teachers' involvement.

> I do think that there are times when you see somebody struggling to play and you just wish the teacher would just instinctively go over and help them because you can't be helping everybody all the time.
> [Musician 1]

When reflecting on the reasons for the success of previous projects, the other musician participating in the programme observed that children's engagement was enhanced when the classroom teacher got involved in the activities, even if such involvement was simply sitting next to a child who was struggling with something or, in exceptional cases, by practising with the pupils between sessions.

In the general guidelines comprised by the 'Resource pack for Hallé musicians & teachers' the separation of roles between these professionals is clearly stated. Responsibility for "classroom management and organisation, e.g. grouping of children" is designated clearly to teachers, whereas the musicians are deemed to be responsible "only for the music aspects of the session" (Hallé, 2019, p.10). Conversely, when explaining the criteria of choosing the musicians to work in schools, the Project Manager mentioned that despite not being classroom teachers, the musicians selected for the project are likely to be those who can 'relate to children' as well as 'sort of manage the classroom, even though it's a partnership project'. Thus, it could be argued that the separation of duties between musicians and classroom teachers was not clear. Similarly, the organisations' expectation that both musicians and teachers "should work as a team" (Hallé, 2019, p.10) as

expressed in the resource pack raises a question around the precise nature of the partnership and level of collaboration expected by the organisation from teachers, especially when one of the project's intended outcomes was to increase "teachers' knowledge and confidence in creative music" (p.2).

Reflecting on the given orientation which divides teachers' and musicians' duties, as well as the organisation's expectations of teachers' creative music skills, it was observed that teachers would have benefited from more explicit orientations on the expected forms of their participation and interventions during the activities. In this sense, a training session delineated with both partners' expectations and expertise in mind would have offered a valuable opportunity for all professionals to share their concerns and intentions. For the musicians, a joint training session could have anticipated the delicate situations that emerged in the classroom, especially when group activities were in place, and illuminated ways of overcoming them. For the teachers, being involved in similar activities that would have been adopted in the sessions, rather than having contact with them for the first time with the whole group of pupils, would have enabled the professionals to become part of the process, not auxiliaries to it.

Teachers possess a leadership role in their classrooms. They are "the mind and the spirit of curricular experiences and activities", and by transmitting knowledge and values they are responsible for framing children's learning experiences (Bresler, 2010, p.135). Research demonstrates how teachers' approaches and attitudes towards music are crucial in influencing how children perceive and value their own musical experiences (e.g. Pitts, 2014a; Pitts, 2012; Rusinek and Rincón, 2010). Despite holding a leadership role, Gorse Hill's teachers' minimal level of participation in the activities proposed by the musicians suggests a dichotomy between their position of being simultaneously insiders to the classroom environment, and therefore familiar with their pupils' needs, but outsiders to the practices involved in a creative music-making project (cf. Bresler, 2010).

The Education Director argued that the common perception of excellence and quality attached to The Hallé might explain the behaviour of some teachers in assuming a distant position during the sessions. According to the Education Director, due to the organisation's tradition, the assumption that the education

programmes offered by its department also relate to 'high quality' is 'almost taken as a given' by some primary teachers. As a result, some teachers consider that the Hallé musicians are the most qualified professionals for the project development in the classroom. The Education Director continued to describe teachers' attitudes in relation to their involvement with the project by arguing that some may be shy, others may have 'no artistic match interest' in the project, and 'as soon as the Hallé players arrive, they are out of the situation' and continue to carry on with their classroom duties, regardless of the project activities. Such a situation, however, was not observed among Gorse Hill's teachers, whose presence was constant in all sessions of the project. A level of shyness and limited interest in classical music, on the other hand, could be observed throughout Gorse Hill's sessions, and was further confirmed through interviews with both professionals, who were incidentally sisters and thus had the same scholarly background.

The interviews revealed that for both teachers, opportunities to be involved with classical music were limited to their participation in the school choir. Both teachers demonstrated a certain level of disinterest in listening to classical music or attending a concert, mainly due to lack of time. Lack of free time was mentioned often by both teachers, highlighting that, for them, this was a barrier that was too hard to overcome when considering attending not only classical music concerts, but also other arts events (cf. Baker, 2000).

The convenience of turning on the radio and listening to what is on offer was also highlighted by both teachers when describing their relationship with music. According to teacher A, as the radio 'doesn't seem to play a lot of classical music', their contact with the genre was not substantial. Curiously, no classical music radio station was named by the teachers nor any other alternative method of listening to it, such as from films, CDs or the Internet.

An important trend identified in both interviews was the teachers' belief that they lacked the requisite musical knowledge and skills to make music themselves in their classrooms (cf. Paynter, 1982). Furthermore, according to teacher B, having an opportunity to experience music with the support of two professional musicians from such a prestigious orchestra 'was educating both them and the children', as they 'could never teach music at that standard' themselves. The

message implicit in the teacher's testimony is twofold. Firstly, it reveals a self-perception of ineptitude in teaching music due to a lack of 'education' in such a subject. Secondly, it correlates with a view that, in order to teach music, one has to be an "accomplished performer" (Hennessy, 2000, p.188). Implied in both perceptions is that the exclusivism and 'extra-specialism' (cf. Hennessy, 2000) attached to classical music and musicians are reinforced.

Primary teachers' perceptions of being ill-equipped, not confident or even not interested in teaching music have been well-documented in the literature relating to the UK context (e.g. Hannessy, 2000; Bresler, 2010; Ellison and Creech, 2010; Kokotsaki, 2012; Baldwin and Beauchamp, 2014; Savage and Barnard, 2019), as well as in other countries (e.g. Russell-Bowie, 1993; Rusinek and Rincón, 2010; Burak, 2019). A common feature identified among these investigations reveals that the perception of sophistication attached to fine arts implies a repertoire of expertise and skills which goes beyond those possessed by classroom teachers, who might have no particular interest in acquiring them (Bresler, 2010; Rusinek and Rincón, 2010). Similarly, the common belief that music skills are conditioned to innate abilities available to those who are gifted or developed by a few encourages a mindset of primary teachers which assumes that teaching music is reserved for the 'musical ones' or those whose past musical learning and teaching placement experiences were successful (Hannessy, 2000; Kokotsaki, 2012; Burak, 2020).

If music remains accredited as one of the most difficult core subjects to be included at Key Stages 1 and 2, and if only a minority of UK primary teachers have a formal qualification in this subject, as highlighted by Ellison and Creech (2010, p.218), it is possible to anticipate that the lack of confidence, as well as feelings of reluctance or inadequacy in teaching music will continue to undermine classroom teachers' willingness to work with music or, in the worst-case scenario, their teaching practices risk remaining "patchy and unsatisfactory" (Russell-Bowie, 1993, p.55). Similarly, a perpetuating culture of innatism to explain musicality may be used to justify the failure of making musical opportunities available to all (Sloboda, Davidson and Rowe, 1994). The way to overcome such an impasse is by guaranteeing a consistent level in the quality of music provision in schools, which

first requires the schools' leadership's recognition of the value of music in the curriculum (Ellison and Creech, 2010). In this sense, the Hallé Education Director echoes the importance of art's recognition by school leaders in a successful partnership:

> If you have a headteacher who is not interested in the arts and doesn't see a role for it (and there are plenty of them around), it doesn't matter whatever you do, you're never going to succeed in the school.
> [Education Director]

Secondly, to support consistent music teaching, an open dialogue between local authorities' music services and schools' leaders in identifying teachers' needs to provide sustainable and proper opportunities to develop teachers' and pupils' music identities (Ellison and Creech, 2010) is paramount. Reflecting on the 'disconnection' of some primary teachers with the HI programme, the Hallé Education Director identified the lack of opportunities for teacher training as an issue to be considered. According to him, the INSET sessions offered by the Hallé, under the revealing title 'Creative music for the terrified', were valuable to offer primary teachers a chance to experiment and have fun with music, as well as to explore the variety of music teaching practices which could be replicated in their classrooms.

If, on the one hand, Gorse Hill's teachers acknowledged lack of music literacy might have intimidated them to collaborate according to an external partner organisation's expectations, on the other hand, although both teachers sounded overgenerous[66] in their overall assessment of the project, they also recognised the benefits and weaknesses of the experience for their pupils.

For both teachers, pupils' development of confidence and self-esteem were the most significant features observed throughout the programme. Such a perception was described by teacher B when observing the changes of a child in the classroom

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[66] The perception of Gorse Hill leaders being 'overgenerous' regarding the evaluation of pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching was also identified by the latest OfSTED report, released in 2018, which classified the school under 'Requires Improvement' (GOV.UK, 2020).

after one session of the HI project. The pupil, recognised as very quiet and shy, was able to put their 'hand up a bit more in class' and, to an extent, be 'a bit bossy with their group' after experiencing a similar leadership position during the Hallé session. Similarly, teacher B also described the increase in self-esteem of one child, who usually hid themselves behind their difficulties in a certain academic area and struggled to ask for help. According to the teacher's perception, the opportunity to perform in front of their peers and parents boosted the child's confidence, evidenced by their attitude in figuring out how to work on a particular mathematics task, as well as to ask for the help of others to achieve the task's requirements. Such findings correlate with the relevant literature in suggesting that participation in music can impact on children's social and personal development, as it has the potential to improve self-image, self-awareness, positive self-attitudes and confidence, as well as to enhance motivation for study more broadly (Hallam, 2010, p.9).

For both teachers, pupils' confidence and enthusiasm grew particularly in the second phase of the project due to children's proper awareness of their role and the parts they were supposed to play with their instruments. Children also felt their writing was more purposeful and they were more willing to perform their composition in front of an audience. The success of the second phase of the project, as reflected by the teacher, was connected to it being 'more organised' than the previous one, suggesting that the children's process of composing benefited when an "overarching framework" was given (cf. Hallam and Rogers, 2010, p.107). Conversely, poor creative responses, such as those identified in the first phase of the project, and detailed in the next session of this chapter, can be understood as a "result of the tasks themselves had been poorly framed or the expectations were not sufficiently precise" (OfSTED, 2012a, p.16). The relationship built between the pupils and musicians was acknowledged by teacher A as a positive element in encouraging children's expression of their own musical ideas. Developing a relationship with the musicians and the Hallé Inspire Project Manager, both through the sessions and the preparation meetings after each project's phase, was also seen as a valuable way to give the staff the reassurance about the planned steps and to provide encouragement in suggesting what the teachers considered

beneficial to the group, such as naming each part of the pupils' composition to facilitate children's understandings of their turn to play.

In both teachers' interviews, the term 'creativity' was not directly mentioned nor related to the benefits and outcomes of the project for the children and professionals alike. Similarly, neither teacher was able to draw on creativity in their personal teaching experiences (cf. Kokotsaki, 2012). However, pupils' development of creativity was implied in teacher A's response, as they recognised the advantages that a group-based creative music-making activity can promote, such as opportunities for children's decision-making, as well as for experimenting with ideas and exchanges between the group (cf. Hallam and Rogers, 2010; Kokotsaki, 2012).

> They let the children lead and think of ideas of what to do, rather than having to think of the perfect idea straight away. They let them have a go and talk to partners. [Teacher A]

The findings described in this section revealed that different levels of engagement occurred as a result of pupils' development of confidence in expressing their own ideas both musically and verbally. Such an engagement was potentialized by the development of a relationship of trust between the pupils and musicians. Similarly, high levels of interest and participation could be observed during the improvisation activities involving movement, when children were allowed time and space to be creative (cf. Kokotsaki, 2012). In contrast, lower levels of engagement could be observed especially during the first phase of the project suggested by children's perception of the lack of purpose in their creation, as well as their uncertainty about their turn to play during the performance, resulting in a visible feeling of dissatisfaction among the majority of the group. Similarly, the low level of engagement of teachers (both principals and assistants) during the activities highlighted the challenges inherent in promoting a learning exchange between those skilled in classroom management and the music experts, suggesting that the partnership had limited effects in improving teachers' musical confidence, as well as in providing the musicians' adequate support to find an immediate

solution for behavioural issues encountered throughout the experience (cf. OfSTED, 2012b).

The extent to which the activities proposed by the project encouraged children's autonomy in making their own decisions, fostered a sense of ownership over their creations, and encouraged participants' engagement in classical music is discussed in the following section through pupils' own perceptions regarding their experiences.

6.3 Hearing children's voices

This analysis considers pupils' responses to an online survey, their verbal responses throughout the sessions, and the drawings they produced during the workshops. The online survey was developed by the researcher at the request of the Hallé Education senior staff, and it was comprised of questions created according to the organisation's specific evaluation aims. Therefore, the material represents a valuable source to identify the organisation's expected impacts of the project on participants.[67]

This analysis also includes the interpretation of 56 drawings produced by the pupils, as well as their comments about their illustrations during the two workshops conducted by the researcher. Drawing has often been used as a tool of qualitative enquiry to elicit participants' perception of an artistic experience (cf. Reason, 2010; Dearn, 2017), as well as to investigate children's basic emotions (Brechet, Baldy and Picard, 2009). The adoption of drawings to explore children's perception and representation of musical genres and sounds (cf. Pacheco, 2007; Elkoshi, 2019) and their musical identities and skills (cf. Pitts, 2014a) can be seen as a "conceptual tool" (Adams, 2002, p.222) which allows children to shape ideas and feelings, as well as to communicate them to others beyond the limits implied by spoken language (Adams, 2002).

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[67] Two surveys were developed to assess the project: one dedicated to pupils and one directed to teachers. Until the end of the fieldwork, no response for the two teachers of Gorse Hill Primary School was registered on the form.

The drawings produced by the pupils revealed that 15 children used emoticons such as an "upturned mouth for happiness", a "downturned mouth for sadness" or "circumflex eyebrow for disgust" (Brechet, Baldy and Picard, 2009, p.597) to label their preferences. Similarly, the illustration of the human figure was observed in 11 drawings, agreeing with a previous finding which highlighted the human figure as one of the most prevalent in children's drawings until at least the age of 10 (Cox cited in Pacheco, 2007). The posture of these human figures suggests children's emotions, such as "arms raised" to represent happiness and "arms dropping by sides or hands raised" to indicate sadness (Brechet, Baldy and Picard, 2009, p.597).

In 19 drawings children used musical notes to illustrate their experience, even if inaccurately, such as stems pointing in the wrong direction (cf. Ilari, cited in Pacheco, 2007). The children's preference for illustrating musical instruments was noticeable in several drawings (cf. Pitts, 2014a). In 25 drawings, musical elements such as notation and words that described the sound – 'BANG!' – appeared combined with non-musical elements, such as animals and trees to represent the rainforest and bombs as an allusion to World War II, suggesting a correlation between auditory stimuli and overall visual representation (Pacheco, 2007; Elkoshi, 2019).

The two following figures exemplify children's contrasting emotions and perceptions about their experience. In Figure 3, Isabel added a detailed written comment including how she could express herself by playing and singing. Isabel also depicted musical and non-musical elements to convey her preference for the Anglo-Saxon feast theme, as well as to describe how she felt in singing a solo in the last phase of the project. Jack's response (Figure 4), on the other hand, relies mostly on emotion icons to illustrate the pupil's negative experience. During the observations throughout the year, the pupil showed a considerable level of disinterest towards the activities proposed by the musicians. Similarly, his posture and behaviour during the three performances showed a clear sign of disengagement with the project.

Figure 3: Isabel's drawing and comments about the project

Figure 4: Jack's drawing and comments about the project

To avoid the pitfall of over-interpreting the drawings without additional contextual evidence (cf. Pitts, 2014a, p.134), the pupils were invited to vocalise their perceptions while drawing or after finishing their illustrations. Jack was approached and asked about his music preferences in general. The child showed a great interest and knowledge about rap by naming some of modern British rappers, and by singing one of his preferred songs. Jack also revealed a taste for jazz and, according to him, YouTube was his main source for listening to both genres. Such a testimony reinforces Campbell's (1998) argument that prior to any specialized training or schooling, music is a "childhood constant" (p.5) and children have their own opinions about what music is or is not, their perspectives about where and when to listen to it, as well as the times they allow it in their lives (p.5). Yet, children's existing musical knowledge often receives minimal attention from teachers (cf. Campbell, 1998; Pitts, 2012). Such a view echoes what Boal-Palheiros (2004, p.9) called "cultural dissonance", when investigating the factors that contribute to the decline of music recognition in the school curriculum. One of those factors, according to Boal-Palheiros (2004), is the discrepancy between the content of music classes in schools, often taught by professionals trained according to the Western classical music tradition, and children's musical preferences and practices outside the school.[68]

Children bring with them a diversity of musical influences, gained through interaction with parents, siblings, peers and media (Pitts, 2012). Knowing the children musically and drawing on their existing musical experiences and knowledge informally acquired outside the school can broaden their musical perspectives and encourage their musical development, but above all, it can act as an "impetus for lifelong musical engagement" (Pitts, 2012, p.83). Gorse Hill's pupils' musical preferences were not investigated by the musicians, revealing a missed opportunity to integrate children's existing musical knowledge in the proposed activities (cf. Pitts, 2014a). Children's willingness to participate in

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[68] It is important to note that children's personal preference was also identified as a barrier to music participation in the In Harmony Project (Lord et al., 2016), thus highlighting the importance of such an element when designing a participatory music-making project in schools.

another project offered by the Hallé was investigated through a question integrated into the online survey. Results indicate a division between the pupils, as illustrated in Figure 5:
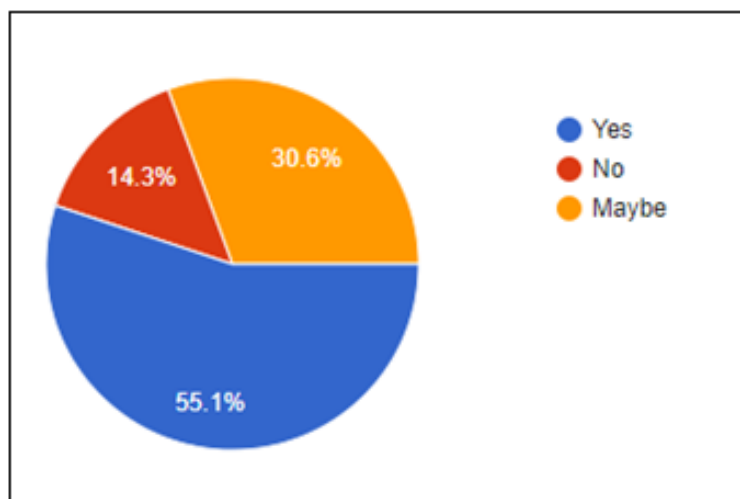
Figure 5: Pupils' response to the question: Would you like to work with The Hallé again?

For those who ticked the option 'maybe', an additional question was provided, asking what they would like to do if they chose to participate again. Among 15 responses, 'play other instruments' was selected by three pupils. Learning about other topics and expressing 'kids' own ideas' was directly mentioned by two respondents and implied in two other replies ('do music about a desert place' and 'do modern songs').

Allowing children to bring in their own music has important educational ramifications, as highlighted by Green (2008). Adopting a particular piece, for which the learner already possesses a "level of competence with the style" (p.101) and which is placed to some extent in their memory, reduces the probability of negative responses in relation to the "inter-sonic and delineated meanings"[69] (p.101) that a musical genre can engender. As Green (2008, p.101) explains:

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[69] By inter-sonic meanings, Green (2008) refers to the properties of the sound and its relationships (p.37). Delineated music meanings refers to "the extra musical concepts

> It is through inter-sonic meanings that pupils gain access to the
> material and practical elements of music-making and music listening.
> But it is through delineations that they touch upon issues of personal
> identity and social belonging.

Green (2008) continues by contending that when learners' responses to both inter-sonic and delineated meanings are positive, what she calls "a celebratory musical experience" is likely to occur (p.101). Relating Green's (2008) framework to Jack's response about his antipathy towards classical music, as well as to the desire expressed by some pupils in choosing their own themes and music, it can be argued that not exploring children's musical preferences, as well as the rich cultural background of such a varied cohort of pupils, and including part of a piece (or even an idea it might have evoked) in pupils' compositions would have resulted in different outcomes.

Such an argument is corroborated by children's suggestions about how the project could be improved. Around 15% of the responses implied the children's desire to choose their working themes, share their ideas or work with something different from what was proposed. Responses also revealed that for 14.3% of the total, 'having a turn on different instruments' would make for a better experience. Similarly, having 'equal time on instruments' was selected by 8.2% of the online survey respondents, as well as found in one child's comment included in their drawing. Such findings reveal that children's levels of autonomy in selecting their own themes and choosing their instruments was fairly limited.

Related to the most enjoyed part of the project, the 'Rainforest' working theme was chosen by 28.6% of the pupils who responded to the survey. Although the form did not include a question regarding the least enjoyed part, children's comments during the workshop with the researcher as well as reflections depicted by their drawings highlighted that the 'Evacuees' working theme generated the lowest level of children's interest and engagement.

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or connotations that music carries: for example, its social, cultural, religious, political and other associations" (p.87).

Findings revealed that the reasons behind pupils' low interest in the 'Evacuees' working theme were connected both to children's feelings of dissatisfaction regarding the groups' creation as well their disappointment about playing instruments assigned to them, particularly those who played tambourines and small shakers. Many comments overheard in the sessions and registered in the online survey highlighted pupils' expectations in trying instruments that could allow a variety of playing techniques and produce different sounds, such as xylophones and 'big drums'. In addition to their eagerness to play 'big instruments', children's responses indicated an expectation about having more time to play those instruments (cf. Pitts, 2014).

Green (2008) highlights the role played by cultural associations attached to musical instruments in the analysis of children's choice over which instrument to play. According to Green (2008), each musical instrument carries with it a "delineation of authenticity" (p.99) in relation to the image of its player, their posture and gestures when playing as well as their "bodily looks, hair, clothing, gait and so on" (p.99). Therefore, the unpopularity of certain percussion instruments among Gorse Hill's pupils, such as shakers, triangles and tambourines on the one hand, and the high level of interest in the double bass, on the other, might be explained both by pupil's expectations in experimenting with a range of different sounds and playing techniques, as well as by a culturally constructed image of certain musical instruments and their players, which is still reinforced by many modes of communication.

Regarding the group's creation, a feeling of uncertainty was evidenced in the first final concert. Added to children's visible hesitancy in playing, only a few smiles and expressions of happiness and enjoyment could be seen among the pupils. When approached by the researcher at the end of the performance, one child described their feeling of dislike, claiming that the performance 'was boring'. The unsatisfactory result of the first phase of the project was acknowledged by musician A, who recognised that the pupils did not experience feelings of achievement or pride in their process of creation as well as in their performance. A child summarized their experience by claiming that the first phase of the project 'was hard'. Having clarified with the child, the feeling of difficulty was related to

their lack of understanding regarding what the music created by the group was about as well as not knowing when it was their turn to play in the final concert. A similar feeling of confusion was mentioned by some children who pointed out that the 'War Music' was 'too loud'. A deeper investigation into children's perceptions revealed that 'too loud' was expressed to indicate that everybody was playing their instruments at the same time, with no particular awareness of their turn. Such findings suggest that in the first phase of the project, children had limited opportunities to both express their own ideas as well as to choose their instruments, resulting in the struggle to understand the purpose of their creation.

Hallam and Rogers (2010) offer an explanation by pointing out that the stimulus required for the creative work is connected to the interest of those participating in it. Tasks need to be enjoyable and challenging yet achievable to engender participants' feelings of control and ownership over them. Furthermore, to be musically and educationally worthwhile, creative tasks "must be purposeful and facilitate progression" (Hallam and Rogers, 2010, p.115).

On the one hand, children showed low interest in detailing their experiences during the first phase of the project; on the other hand, a rich account of their involvement with the 'Rainforest' working theme was noticed. During the drawing workshop, the details given by the children were impressive. Detailed descriptions of the forest's layers, tropical animals and deforestation issues were highlighted in both groups' vocal responses as well as in their drawings, as exemplified by Figure 6.

Figure 6: Pupil's drawing about their perception of the Hallé Inspire programme

A child hummed the complex rhythm of '*Tico-Tico no Fubá*', a Brazilian musical piece selected for the project phase, while drawing. Another child mentioned the 'river music' (Vltava Theme) by the composer Bedřich Smetana, whose country of origin was remembered by them. Such a finding highlights that pupils' ideas, perceptions and memories about the working theme were evolving while developing the illustration (cf. Reason, 2010).

The final concert was also described by the pupils with expressions of pride and joy. The children highlighted the happiness of playing together to an audience comprised of their families and colleagues and that their composition was able to resemble a 'real rainforest'. The piece was solid in terms of musical elements, which comprised body percussion at the beginning, simulating a coming rain, followed by the sounds of the forest. Pupils' musical development was observed throughout the sessions when the moment of creating the image of a rainforest was built through children's exploration of their voices, hands and bodies as active

producers of sounds (cf. Strickson, 2018), as well as through the improvisation of melodies which, played on the percussion instruments, would represent the feeling of hearing the flow of a river or birdsongs, for instance. The piece also included a child in the role of conductor, who had volunteered during a session discussion. The instrumental parts of the piece were also better articulated between both groups, reflecting the children's collaboration both during the sessions and the performance rehearsal. Similarly, the parents' perceptions were positive, as described in the 22 feedback forms collected after the presentation. Parents appraised the performance quality, the children's ability to convey the sounds of a rainforest, as well the happiness demonstrated by them during the concert:

> Beautiful music to give a feeling of being in a rainforest. [P 17]

Another parent highlighted the success of the children's performance and noticed the improvement in children's rhythmic skills:

> It was a very effective performance. All the children looked like they thoroughly enjoyed taking part and learning a new skill. They learnt about time keeping with their instruments. [P 09]

Finally, the rainforest working theme was also vocalised in the interviews as the highlight of the Hallé Inspire project by both classroom teachers due to the groups' high levels of involvement and confidence in performing their composition and written poems. Children were able to express their own ideas of how the atmosphere of a rainforest should sound as well as to choose the instruments which could reproduce their ideas as a piece of music. Rather than a written text read with little enthusiasm and vocal articulation, as seen in the first final concert, a powerful poem written by the pupils, reporting their concern with the environment was read with confidence by some pupils.

These findings correlate with Kokotsaki's (2012) study on the perception of pre-service student-teachers about creativity in music. Results indicated that the most

important component of creativity, as highlighted by the teachers, is related to the opportunity of freedom and choice to interpret and create music (Kokotsaki, 2012, p.140). In this sense, tasks that involve "creative music thinking" are those which permit participants' own choices and decision-making in adding or adapting something to a "given idea" (p.140), rather than replicating a musical piece with nothing personal being integrated into it.

Relating to children's perceptions of self-efficacy, a Lickert scale was used to investigate participants' responses about whether the project had helped them to develop determined musical and social skills. Figure 7 describes the replies of each question.
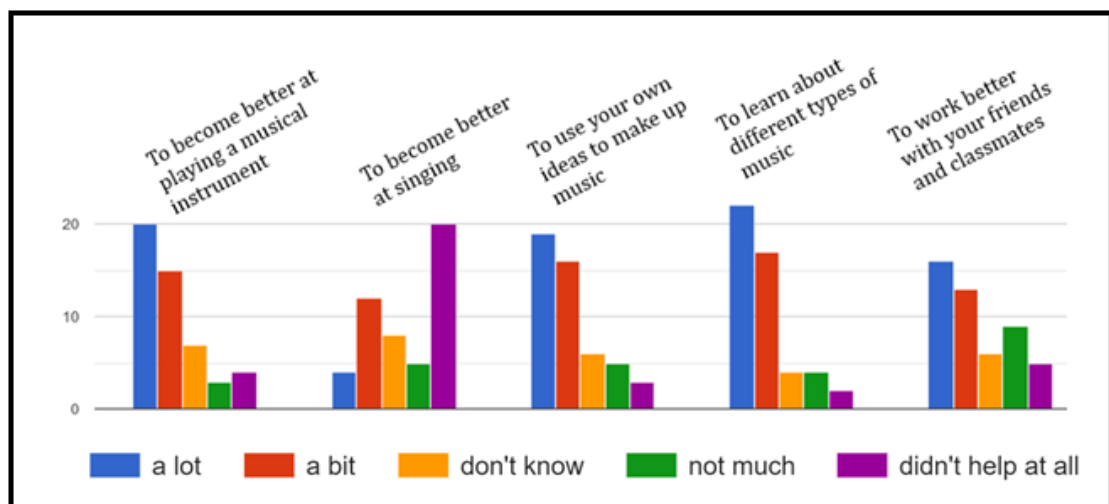
Figure 7: Children's perceptions of self-efficacy in pre-determined music and social skills

Responses demonstrate that singing was the skill which children perceived as less developed as a result of their participation in the project. Despite integrating children's creation of a song into the first concert as well as a vocal solo into the last one, activities involving singing were hardly present during the sessions. Such a finding suggests a correlation with what the latest inspection report identified in the majority of primary schools visited between 2008 and 2011. According to this report, the improvement of children's vocal work quality as well as the development of musical learning through singing were not receiving enough emphasis in the majority of inspected schools (OfSTED, 2012a). Apart from the

sessions described above, no trace of singing in Gorse Hill's courtyard during pupils' break was heard as an accompaniment to their games, for instance, or in the classrooms during the several visits of project shadowing.

Gorse Hill's reality contradicts a prevision expressed by a music lecturer during a session directed to British schools' music teachers participating in a two-week music training course in the 1950s, a time in which singing and listening were predominant in British education (cf. Pitts, 2000). Vocal music, as stated by the lecturer "has been and will always be the basis of our work in schools" (Reichenthal, 1952, p.30). Baldwin and Beauchamp (2014) related the reduction of choirs and instrumental groups, which represented the "only music in a school" (p.196), to the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988, and its consequent stipulation of a National Curriculum in 1992. Although music was established as a statutory subject in a "progressive curriculum facilitating access to music for pupils of all abilities" (p.196), at the same time it disempowered music specialists, once music teaching became the duty of class teachers, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The second element that received the lowest recognition in children's perception of self-improvement related to working better with their classmates. Such a result echoes one of the challenges of listening to and making music in schools, as highlighted by Boal-Palheiros (2004). As opposed to experiencing music in their homes, in the school context children have no privacy to listen to music, nor can they choose with whom they share the experience, which is reflected in their levels of attention and emotional involvement (Boal-Palheiros, 2004).

High measures of confidence were pointed out by children in relation to the following elements: 1) learning about different types of music; 2) becoming better at playing an instrument; and 3) using their own ideas to make up music. Considering the unequal music provision at Gorse Hill observed in the year in which the HI programme took place,[70] the results suggest that children perceived

[70] Gorse Hill Primary school did not count a specialist music teacher among its staff during that academic year. According to teacher A, only the pupils of Year 3 enjoyed music activities provided by Trafford Music Service. Furthermore, the Hallé Inspire

more improvement in the activities which were not being prioritised in the school's culture, despite their benefits and outcomes being clearly appreciated by the teachers (cf. Pitts, 2014, p.149).

This analysis revealed the need for a "supportive climate" (Kokotsaki, 2012, p.148) in which children's feelings of ownership, confidence and competence can be encouraged and supported. Allowing time and space for the children to make up their pieces, present and discuss them, as well as to reflect upon their own practices (cf. Paynter, 2002; Freire, 2005; Kokotsaki, 2012) was revealed to be fundamental to pupils' levels of interest and engagement within the proposed activities. The importance of choice regarding musical instruments, as well as the working themes comprised by the project, were equally identified as key factors which impact on children's level of interest, motivation and, ultimately, in their engagement with classical music (cf. Green, 2008). The results agreed with the need for continuity in musical support in schools, which is "beyond the resources of most arts organisations and beyond the expertise of many primary school teachers" (Pitts, 2014, p.148) and also not encouraged and valued as a central part of the curriculum.

6.4 Views of the 'Hallé for Youth' concert

As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, the proliferation of outreach youth programmes through education concerts, designed with the aim of exposing younger audiences to the universe of classical music, is a trend that can be seen in several orchestras around the world (Rusinek and Rincón, 2010).

The subject matter of an educational concert, as proposed by Rusinek and Rincón (2010, p.149), goes beyond the intrinsic aspects of the musical composition per se, and is found in the combination of the aesthetic experience of hearing and watching a live performance (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013), the musical meaning constructed through it, as well as in the perception of the rituals (cf. Small, 1998) of the concert hall. In this sense, it can be argued that a concert hall is more than a

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programme was the only opportunity for the Year 5 pupil's cohort to be involved with a musical work.

physical site – it is a place for learning, framed by the messages it transmits (cf. Bresler, 2010). The aesthetic experience of Gorse Hill's pupils and teachers and how they relate to the ritualised elements of the concert hall are analysed in the following section.

Held in the Bridgewater Hall in March 2019 and under the title 'Conflict and resolution', the Hallé for Youth concert programme celebrated the end of the First World War and the bi-centenary of the Peterloo massacre (Hallé, 2019). Among eight pieces from different musical periods,[71] only 'Mars' from Gustav Holst was part of Gorse Hill's working themes. After a presentation of the orchestra's sessions, whose players were immediately identified by a touch of colour of their accessories, such as a foulard, a tie or a thin scarf tied around their waist, the host explained to the children the ideas around the concepts of conflict and resolution in music. Despite showing excitement in recognising the two musicians amongst the orchestra, who responded by waving back from the stage, as well as an interest in hearing the host's explanations, many pupils started to whisper and interact with their classmates as soon as the first music started. A similar attitude of distraction was observed between the six adults who were chaperoning the group, confirming the impression gathered during the sessions' observations and further vocalised by the two teachers that classical music listening was not part of the cultural practices of Gorse Hill school (cf. Green, 2006).

The children's high level of attention was observed when the host announced 'Mars', the third piece of the concert. The host's invitation to clap and stomp the rhythmic pattern of the piece's first bars, an activity which was also adopted during the classroom sessions – and thus familiar to the children – was immediately embraced by the group, who responded with enthusiasm to the host's solicitations. It is worth mentioning the children's interest in seeing another school group playing 'Mars' with the orchestra on stage. Similarly, both teachers were impressed by the quality of the students' performance and expressed some

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[71] The concert repertoire comprised the following pieces: Night Ferry (A. Clyne); Cello concerto in E minor, op.85: III. Adagio (E. Elgar); Adagio for Strings (S. Barber); Star Wars – Imperial March (J. Williams); Ride of the Valkyries (R. Wagner); Rite of Spring: Sacrificial Dance (excerpt) (I. Stravinsky); and 1812 Overture (P.I. Tchaikovsky).

'embarrassment' regarding the work their groups had done with the same piece. That perception was explicitly shared by one teacher in their individual interview.

Another moment referred to the two marching songs of the First World War[72] performed by a soprano who entered the hall from the back rows of the audience accompanied by a snare drummer. Despite being supported by a screen displaying the songs' lyrics, Gorse Hill's pupils and teachers did not engage in the singing. Children appeared somehow 'lost', looking at their teachers and classmates. The two teachers, in turn, showed complete unfamiliarity with the repertoire and, as also observed among the three working-class members of the audience of Whistle Stop Opera, laughed at their unawareness and the awkwardness caused by the situation. In the following HI session after the concert attendance, pupils were asked about their experience. No mention was made about the singing and children did not demonstrate any interest in knowing what the songs were about.

From the middle part of the concert until the penultimate piece, Gorse Hill's pupils' distraction grew, as did the group's disposition to keep silent. The children's attention returned when they were again invited to participate by clapping, stomping and replying to the signs shown by the host (Cheer! Bang!) as an attempt to mimic the sound effects of cannon fire implied in the '1812 Overture' composition. Such reactions suggest that the relationship between auditory stimuli and overall visual representation (Pacheco, 2007; Elkoshi, 2019), previously pointed out in this chapter, impacts strongly on children's engagement with music.

Despite not being registered in the online survey nor being directly mentioned by any pupil as the most enjoyable part of the project, one pupil described the concert experience at the Bridgewater Hall as something 'impressive, inspiring, a lifetime opportunity'. During the drawing workshop, one child drew the stage, the orchestra and the chairs used for seating in detail. The interaction with the host during the concert, on the other hand, particularly at the end, when the children were invited to participate by replying to the signs on display, was mentioned by some children during the workshops with both pupils' groups. Such results

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[72] 'It's a long way to Tipperary' and 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag'.

corroborate Rusinek and Rincón's (2010) proposition that the 'subject matter' of an educational concert includes extra elements comprised by the aesthetic experience. In the case of Gorse Hill's pupils, the structural elements of the hall and the moments of interaction proposed by the host were highlighted as part of the experience of attending a concert – for many of them for the first time.

The teachers' approach towards the event is notable. When talking about the concert during the interview, none of the teachers indicated that any preparation or follow-up activities were delivered around it (cf. Rusinek and Rincón 2010). On the other hand, there was no specific requirement from the partner organisation for teachers in this respect. In conclusion, the role played by the two teachers throughout the development of the project at Gorse Hill school was observed to be an ancillary one, limited to both the organisation's and the musicians' practical needs and logistical demands, rather than conducted in a spirit of collaboration.

6.5 Summary of findings

This chapter has investigated the responses of a group of primary school pupils during a year-long creative music-making programme delivered by two professional orchestra musicians. A key finding revealed the close relationship between pupils' confidence and their engagement in the project. This feeling of confidence, in turn, was built through the development of a relationship of trust between the musicians and the children and fostered by children's participation in activities that allowed musical and extra-musical ideas to be expressed.

Activities involving body rhythms and locomotive movements in which children felt challenged, yet able to achieve, proved to be a valuable approach to build a relationship of trust between participants, as well as to encourage pupils to express their own ideas. Such activities were also recognised by the pupils as enjoyable and 'fun', as well as an effective way to involve those who demonstrated low interest in playing or singing participating through distinct creative forms. For the musicians, it can be argued that such activities represented a "scaffolding device" (West, 2019, p.416) used to support pupils' comprehension of a task ahead, as well as to boost their creativity.

Similarly, confidence building was attached to children's sense of purpose over their creations. Observations and interviews with teachers demonstrated that such a sense of purpose was nearly absent in the first phase of the project, resulting in children's frustration and dissatisfaction regarding their participation. In the second phase of the project, however, pupils' increased interest both in the musical and extra-musical elements evoked by the working theme functioned as a stimulus for participation in the sessions.

The children's creation of a cohesive piece, composed of sounds and rhythms which reflected the development of their own ideas, resulted in their recognition of ownership over their musical piece. Nonetheless, the children felt proud to perform in front of an audience comprised of their parents and the school community. Their enjoyment on 'stage' was highlighted by several parents present at the concert, who recognised the pupils' expressions of happiness while interpreting both their musical piece and the written poem. The second working theme was reported to be the most enjoyable part of the project by pupils and teachers alike. Such findings are indicators that for children to feel confident in expressing their own ideas in a creative music-making context, they need to understand the purpose and goals of their collaboration. Considering the lack of a moment where teachers and pupils could have shared their expectations and anxieties and mitigate possible doubts about the nature of their participation, the children's understanding of the purpose and goals of participation in the project took longer than it could have done if such an opportunity had been offered from the outset.

Reflecting on the lower levels of participation observed during the programme, an initial finding highlighted the moments in which pupils were required to wait for the musicians to assist each group as the cause of children's distractions, feelings of boredom, disinterest and misbehaviour. In this sense, the difficulties imposed by a medium-sized classroom in working with separate groups added to musicians' limited mobility among groups, alongside the children's possibility to hear their own creation without the interference of the sounds produced by their classmates.

Issues of classroom management observed during the Hallé sessions were not fully addressed by any of the teachers participating in the programme. Their lack of

intervention, observed in particular cases where some pupils presented behavioural issues, and teachers' limited participation in the musical activities as well as their absence in encouraging those pupils who expressed disinterest in the activities proposed highlighted the mismatches in the partnership. If on the one hand the information found in the guidelines for teachers and musicians highlighted the organisation's expectation of teachers' musical creativity to grow as a result of their participation in the project, on the other hand, teachers did not receive any specific training or orientation towards how the music creativity of professionals with no music background could have been unlocked during the sessions or how they could relate such a creative music approach to their classroom practices. Ultimately, teachers' lack of background in music and their perceptions of being ill-equipped to work with it in their classrooms combined with their limited interest in classical music are strong indicators that for a partnership between professional musicians and classroom teachers to thrive, an approach dedicated to providing continuing training opportunities for all professionals involved is required.

The implications of delegating to the school staff the responsibility to select the project's three working themes, rather than involving the children, musicians and teachers (principals and assistants) in a collaborative process of exploring the possibilities of the curriculum as well as the participants' interests, was reflected in pupils' perceptions about the experience. A desire to choose their working themes was implied by several responses registered in the online survey as well as expressed in pupils' drawings. Similarly, a high level of disappointment regarding the lack of instrument choice was mentioned by several children, and was explicit both in their drawings and online responses.

Results revealed the importance of giving the children possibilities to express their musical and curriculum interests and the negative impacts manifested in pupils' motivation and engagement with the project when this autonomy is not enabled. Above all, knowing their pupils musically, by exploring their musical preferences and diverse cultural backgrounds (especially in such an ethnically-mixed cohort), and including them in the children's composition, would have encouraged the participation of those for whom classical music has no resonance at all. Ultimately,

making opportunities available to all pupils to have a turn on the existing instruments, while experimenting with the richness of sound each one can produce, would have represented a valuable opportunity to mitigate preconceptions attached to some musical instruments.

Finally, despite being mentioned by a few pupils as the highlight of the project, the Hallé concert was acknowledged by both teachers as a valuable first experience for many pupils for whom attending a classical music concert in a traditional hall is not an affordable leisure option. On the other hand, signs of distraction accompanied by the constant talking observed among the school group and chaperones, as well as in teachers' combined feelings of embarrassment and amusement regarding certain pieces of the concert which were familiar to other schools but Gorse Hill, evidenced their distant relationship with classical music repertoire. Nonetheless, such results also confirm the diminishing place of classical music both in the school curriculum as well as in its culture, as observed throughout the Hallé Inspire project's development.

6.7 Recommendations to partner organisation

One of the findings from this case study highlighted the limited choices offered to pupils, teachers, and musicians in relation to the working themes comprised by the project. In addition, the pupils had few opportunities to share their expectations, to express their interest in other curriculum themes that could have been considered in combination with the programme, or to mitigate possible doubts and fears prior to the beginning of the project.

I would therefore strongly suggest the inclusion of some sessions throughout the programme dedicated to hearing participants' perceptions and offering some feedback to whatever participants bring to the discussion. The adoption of shared moments of discussion during the programme would have enabled participants to reflect on, interpret and critique their creations, thus contributing to transform their learning process by being protagonists of their own experience, rather than recipients and reproducers of pre-determined content and knowledge (cf. Freire, 2005). Furthermore, using talking as a medium to promote pupils' reflections and aesthetic understanding of their own creations would promote each pupil as the

"principal assessor" (Ross and Mitchell, 1993, p.99) to judge and evaluate their experience, thus fostering pupils' autonomy regarding their own learning process and avoiding the reproduction of structures of power which still 'divide' those who learn from those who teach, and which place the former in a secondary position (cf. Freire, 2005). Allowing moments of open conversation between the group would also be a valuable opportunity to develop and extend pupils' memories about their experiences, to explore their capacity of thinking about music, to formulate their opinions (cf. Ross and Mitchell, 1993; Reason, 2013), and to articulate those thoughts not only with the working themes proposed by the project, but also with other topics of the curriculum. Having a dedicated moment for sharing their artistic insights, for reflecting on the development of their own musical skills and on the process of creating music together could also reinforce the democratic aspect that participation in the arts can bring about, since it would enable pupils, musicians and teachers the opportunity to "question the rules of the game" (Sternfeld, cited in Eriksson, 2020, p.74) and to transform and evaluate their experiences, adding an authentic form of assessment which is rarely employed in schools' traditional practices (cf. Ross and Mitchel, 1993). Such an action would have also echoed the school's mission, which aims for a greater involvement of its pupils by encouraging 'deeper thinking and understanding of their learning' (Gorse Hill Primary School, 2019).

Similarly, classroom and assistant teachers' lower levels of participation highlighted the need for the partner organisation to foster training opportunities with the aim of involving school staff in experimenting with music and being positive about its impacts. Thus, the inclusion of INSET sessions involving both teachers and musicians in a joint activity would enable arts professionals to share their experiences and to find original ways to overcome these kinds of issues.

Comparing the choice of repertoire adopted to support the three working themes of the programme against pupils' responses, which highlighted their will to choose their own working themes and 'music', I would argue that if the working themes must be chosen in conformation with what is dictated by the National Curriculum, then the selection of musical pieces to support the work could be undertaken in collaboration with the children. Inviting the pupils to share musical pieces that

they related to the working themes (whether from the classical music repertoire or not) would represent a valuable opportunity to understand participants' prior musical knowledge and to build on this to establish new relations and connections with their compositions. Furthermore, as a way of amplifying children's knowledge of different genres, cultures, structures and musical languages, some elements of these pieces or ideas implied by them could have been used to enrich their composition, such as the metric characteristic of rap applied to writing poems or in the melodic improvisation with words, proposed particularly during the Anglo-Saxon feast working theme. Such an approach would be advantageous in adding to pupils' "working inventory and knowledge base" (West, p.419), from which they could draw on and continue exploring the combination and recombination of their ideas with the themes. In addition, it would reduce the 'cultural dissonance' (cf. Boal-Palheiros, 2004) found between children's musical preferences and what they experienced inside the classroom. Furthermore, such an approach would represent a valuable opportunity to integrate different cultures and musical expressions into the children's experience, by encouraging them to explore the variety of their cultural heritages and expanding their cultural repertoire, and consequently enabling a sense of representation in the cultural arena (cf. Persell, 1981; Sandell, 1988).

Reflecting specifically on the teachers' engagement with the project, as well as their recognition of the quality of the performance of pupils from a different school during the Hallé for Youth concert, I would suggest the construction of a blog through which all participating teachers could easily communicate. The blog would be a beneficial platform for participants to share their achievements, to explore different uses of the programmes' activities in the classrooms, to post children's written poems and other creations, as well as to be an immediate and interactive medium for the exchange of ideas between participants. Mindful of the amount of work teachers have in their daily routines, the blog could include teachers' inputs generated through audio or video formats, which involve less time to be produced and could be immediately posted on the platform.

Given the low turnout of parents in two out of the three concerts performed by the pupils, as well as the school leadership's absence at the sessions, or, at least, in part

of one of them, I would suggest some specific actions capable of fostering and maintaining a positive relationship with Gorse Hill's community. Discounted tickets for the orchestra's concert season might represent a straightforward and low-cost action for the organisation but it does not guarantee attendance from children's families and school staff. Despite understanding the time and financial constraints of an educational project offered by a classical music organisation in a school, I would recommend in future to include in the project's budget an extra session involving parents, children, teachers and musicians in collaborative and enjoyable music activities. Likewise, a chamber music concert performed by the musicians and dedicated to the school staff (in a similar format to the dress rehearsal offered by Opera North to its staff) could contribute to nurture a culture of classical music in the school, whilst encouraging the staff to attend a concert at the Bridgewater Hall.

Chapter 7
Conclusions

This chapter consolidates the key findings of this extensive research project, which investigated the extent to which the two selected projects allowed or inhibited different forms of participation in classical music and opera, as well as the extent to which such forms of participation encouraged participants to engage in both artforms. By combining the analysis of data generated from the two case studies undertaken during the study, this chapter also discusses and synthesizes the resulting conclusions.

In the first section, I reflect on the major findings of the literature review and reconsider how such findings converged to address the research questions of this study. The second section presents the key features, similarities and discrepancies that emerged from both projects. The extent to which different forms of participation encouraged participants to talk about and engage with classical music and opera permeates this section's discussion.

In the third part of the chapter, I discuss the extent to which the WSO audiences' and The Hallé Inspire participants' responses inform both organisations' educational and outreach work.

The fourth part of the chapter highlights the contribution of this study to the fields of audience research, music education, arts management and cultural policy, as well as the implications for further studies in these areas. This chapter concludes by presenting a critical evaluation of the research methodology, as well as a personal reflection about challenges and advantages of the methods of data collection and analysis adopted throughout the study.

7.1 Research overview

Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated that the feeling of distance expressed by many participants in this study when talking about opera or classical music has its roots in a socio-construction in which philosophical, political and ideological orientations of dominant groups dictated the ways in which classical music should be valued, appreciated and performed. Such a construction brought to light moral

notions in determining the significance of classical music detached from its own values as an artform (cf. Goehr, 2007), whose richness of repertoire is powerful in recounting the traditions of different cultures, in stimulating a reflection of our own cultural identities, in evoking feelings, reactions and memories that connects us with who we are and supports our understanding of the world in which we live (cf. Baker, 2000).

Attributing the label of 'high' art to classical music and believing in its capacity to shape ideal citizens through the appreciation of a predetermined repertoire (cf. Guthrie, 2014) not only undermines the artistic outcomes that engaging in singing, performing, composing and improvisation are capable of providing – such as encouraging authentic forms of expressions and developing imaginative abilities – but also engenders a perception that not everyone is skilled or knowledgeable enough to talk about classical music and opera. In the school context, relying on a predetermined repertoire of classical music to convey civic and moral values, to shape pupils' behaviours, and to support the process of learning other subjects not only diminished the place of music in the school curriculum, but hindered the development of a strong rationale which could legitimise music as a practical subject valued in its own right. Consequently, music has never acquired a central place in the core curriculum, a reality which was sadly also identified in the school participating in this research.

Chapters 2 and 3 also revealed that, despite attempts to shift the mainstream conceptions of culture and places where distinct artistic practices could emerge, as well as challenging the role of artists with communities, such as those envisioned by Dartington College of Arts, the community arts movement and by the work of Benjamin Britten, in the policy realm, the legitimacy of the so called 'high' arts still prevails in relation to funding allocations.[73]

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[73] Although a change in the National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) running from 2018 to 2022 can be observed in the inclusion of seven libraries, 30 museums and 11 arts sector support organisations, the highest proportion of funds is still allocated to mainstream opera and theatre companies (cf. ACE, 2020), resulting in no major changes in equitable funding allocation among different forms of art.

Similarly, Chapter 3 highlighted the relation between socio-economic status and the profile of who is taking part in publicly funded arts (cf. Jancovich and Bianchini, 2013; ACE, 2014; Jancovich, 2015; Neelands et al., 2015), which reflects the profile of audiences participating in the WSO project: middle-aged, white, native English speakers, able-bodied graduates. Such a finding also supports the results of a survey conducted by Bennett and colleagues (2009) which found that, among white respondents, classical music remains "attuned to class" (p.83).

In addition, Chapter 3 brought to light the discrepancy in participation in music, which by and large comprises a variety of activities outside of what is offered by publicly funded organisations. Such results correlate with those identified by this study, which highlighted that WSO audiences were formed by a majority of attendees who were familiar with opera, or who were already engaged with it (cf. Taylor, 2016), such as the community groups targeted by the organisation every season. Nonetheless, for almost the majority of those who were interviewed, participation in music activities, such as singing in a choir, playing an instrument for their own pleasure, teaching music or going to music gigs, were part of respondents' weekly routines (cf. DeNora, 2000; Green, 2006), evidencing that participants were highly engaged with music beyond what is offered by professional arts organisations.

The reasons preventing audiences from attending classical music and opera concerts highlighted in Chapter 3 found a close correlation with those pointed out by participants of this study, with special attention placed on the so-called psychological barriers – the perception of feeling 'out of place', lacking knowledge or skills to appreciate and talk about classical music or opera – rather than those associated with practical limitations, such as ticket prices and access to venues (cf. Keaney, 2008; Johanson and Glow, 2015). In addition, the formalities, etiquette and codes which discourage first-timers', particularly younger audiences', attendance, identified in the literature review were also echoed in participants' testimonies (cf. Small, 1998; Baker, 2000; Dobson and Pitts, 2011; Price, 2015; Cuenca, 2015). Participants' perceptions of the psychological barriers to classical music and opera were perceived during interviews and informal conversations and manifested

through gestures and postures observed among WSO attendees, teachers and pupils involved in the HI programme. Such perceptions are detailed in Section 7.2.

A reflection on the place of educational and outreach programmes within the structure of classical music organisations described in Chapter 3 highlighted first and foremost the need for a concise alignment between the organisation's mission and vision with the goals and outcomes envisioned for any project or activity focused on broadening and diversifying audiences. Secondly, the literature review highlighted the uncomfortable place of educational and outreach departments in relation to quantitative approaches of evaluation whereby the number of participants trump the meaning and benefits of the experience for those who take part in the programmes. The tension between what is envisioned by the education and executive sides of an arts organisation sheds light on what was also observed in the fieldwork regarding the WSO programme, identified by the blurring aims of the programme described in Chapter 5. Although sharing similar goals with the marketing, lifelong learning and community partnerships departments is valuable to involve the entire organisation in work dedicated to reach out to and diversify audiences for opera, targeting groups according to funders' requirements risks offering those audiences an approach to engagement with opera which might not be the most adequate, resulting in an effort that works against the purpose of reaching out to new audiences or, in the worst case scenario, missing an opportunity to redefine the outmoded conceptions of opera that put audiences off the experience of attending an entire concert, as I return to in Section 7.2.

7.2 Participants' perceptions about opera and classical music

The perceptions of distance between opera and classical music and participants' daily lives were evidenced through various elements of this research. This became apparent through explicit verbal statements, such as those offered by some attendees of WSO performances, or through more veiled forms and gestures, such as participants' embarrassment in talking about their knowledge of opera, as well as in some pupils' implicit disagreement in taking part in particular activities of the HI programme. In this sense, what was concealed in participants' testimonies or revealed through their gestures of politeness, postures, behaviours or expressions

of 'social discomfort' when talking about their experience are relevant for this research as they help to develop a shared understanding of the long-standing perception of elitism and exclusion in classical music environments.

By accepting interaction in the moments required, by offering excessive positive feedback and little criticism or by showing some embarrassment in expressing their opinions about the performance, it can be argued that, to a certain extent, the label of elitism attached to opera was somehow perceived in WSO audiences' gestures and testimonies. The message in audiences' politeness in not refusing the host's or the singers' invitations, as well as in highlighting their appraisal regarding the performance is twofold. First, it was noted that audiences recognised the institutional value of Opera North as an organisation which provides high quality art (cf. Holden, 2006). Second, it also reinforced the value of opera among an audience which, as described in Chapter 3, represents the niche of opera attendees, rather than a culturally diverse group who might not have had the same reactions towards the performers' invitations to interact.

The feeling of embarrassment exhibited by some members of WSO audiences, as well as the repetition of terms employed to describe their experience when asked to offer more details about it, highlighted the difficulties of translating into words the personal impacts of experiencing an opera concert (cf. Pitts, 2005; Turino, 2008; Johanson and Glow, 2015). A certain level of apprehension about not having enough knowledge or vocabulary to talk about an artform, and not feeling that they had the opportunity to be sufficiently 'educated' to appreciate or critique it, was also noted in some participants responses. It was perceived that some attendees did not want to 'expose' themselves in front of the researcher and, as a result, expressed over-generously positive feedback when asked to expand on their opinion about the performance (cf. Johanson and Glow, 2015), or simply delegated to the researcher the responsibility to find the best adjectives to match with a positive performance description (cf. Reason, 2010).

It is worth mentioning, however, that such perceptions of apprehension and embarrassment observed in some participants' reactions and testimonies when describing their perceptions did not preclude attendees from enjoying and immersing themselves in the experience. It is, however, further evidence that the

value of what has been considered and reinforced by public policies as legitimate 'high' art was embedded in the discourse of those who represent the socio-demographic of who is likely to attend opera, rather than of those who have been targeted as priority groups[74] in policies focused on increasing attendance in classical music, on broadening the profile of attendees, and on guaranteeing practical access to arts venues and programmes offered by publicly funded organisations (cf. Keaney, 2008). This finding thus highlights a need for both arts managers and policymakers to work in partnership towards fostering public debate focused on recognising the broad range of meanings, perceptions and values attributed to culture and the arts by individuals of all ages, social, economic and cultural groups as a way of building a sense of entitlement to, ownership of and representation in culture among distinct groups (cf. Sandell, 1998; Keaney, 2008; Ashley, 2014).

The distance between classical music and participants was even more pronounced throughout the HI programme. During the development of the programme, the division between the school, the partner organisation, teachers, pupils and classical music itself was revealed through different forms.

Despite appraising the project and being supportive of the Hallé's requirements regarding classroom organisation and other logistics required by the programme, the two teachers involved showed limited knowledge and interest in classical music. Their position reflected the lack of opportunities to engage in music activities during their own education and continued to be reinforced by the absence of training opportunities which could minimise the gap of not possessing the skills to work with music in their classrooms, or, at a minimum, to participate *with* and support their pupils in basic rhythmic and melodic tasks. Furthermore, it was perceived that there was an almost non-existent music culture at the school, evidenced by the provision of music being offered only for one Key Stage and by the absence of any trace of music in the school's physical sites or in children's recreation. Nevertheless, the distracted behaviour of the teachers during the Hallé

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[74] Namely black and minority ethnic groups, individuals with long-standing, limiting illness or disability, and those from lower socio-economic groups (Keaney, 2008).

concert at Bridgewater Hall and the presence of the headteacher only at the final concert denoted the secondary place of music in the school. Sadly, it also suggests that opportunities to sustain pupils' engagement with classical music were unlikely to occur after the end of the HI programme.

Regarding pupils' perceptions, playing instruments, 'making up' their own music, and expressing their own ideas were acknowledged by the majority of the group, evidencing that children were keen to participate in musical activities. However, having limited choices regarding their musical instruments, as well as no opportunity to choose the themes to work with, proved to be problematic during the programme.

By associating predetermined musical pieces with the working themes, it can be argued that children's freedom of creation was not completely detached from a guided direction. Although a level of direction and instruction are required to contextualize the structure and purposes of the tasks for pupils (cf. Hallam and Rogers, 2000; Reason, 2013), the first final performance of the children's composition was almost entirely based on the repetition of the *ostinato* of a canonical piece of the repertoire. Such a finding highlights the musicians' excessive direction during the sessions, which resulted in children's lack of understanding of their roles, as well as lower levels of enjoyment over their final creation when compared to other compositions created during the programme, whereby the resemblance with a predetermined piece was not evident. Being assigned an instrument to play inhibited children's feelings of ownership over their final creation, thus distancing the pupils from the pleasure of music-making. On the other hand, those moments when the opportunity arose to choose an instrument that corresponded to the ideas, feelings or atmosphere the pupils wished to convey resulted in high levels of participation, interest, excitement and motivation.

In light of pupils' appetite for selecting the themes and their 'own music' to work with, I would argue that adopting predetermined working themes and musical pieces without pupils' collaboration limited the children's involvement with the project. In a context where almost all pupils were originally from mixed ethnic groups, such as Gorse Hill's Year 5 cohort, encouraging pupils' musical creation supported by the investigation of sounds, rhythmic variations, melodies,

contrasting harmonies, vocal aesthetics and instruments that characterise different cultures (cf. Queiroz, 2020) could have created opportunities to promote 'cultural resonance' and identification between the pupils and the supporting music materials proposed in the programme. In addition, integrating pupils' own cultural expressions into the creative process, as I observe in section 7.2, would also have represented a valuable route for amplifying children's emotional connection with their own musical creations. Integrating the working themes (whether pre-determined or not) into a discussion about the contemporary issues affecting the local community, such as those related to experiences of displacement which some families might have experienced, as well as the impacts and consequences of deforestation and climate change locally, would have represented a unique opportunity to reinforce the social role of music education (cf. Queiroz, 2020).

In light of such considerations, music educators should consider including in their practice forms of discussion and incorporation of children's music and cultural expressions to allow for a contextualized and inclusive form of music education which, by fostering pupils' imaginative abilities to create and respond to music, also reflects the evolving changes of society.

7.2.1 The relational aspect in classical music and opera participation

The process of researching *with* participants of the Whistle Stop Opera project and the Hallé Inspire programme evidenced that, just as there is no 'audience' as a single entity (e.g. Barker, 2006; Walmsley, 2019), there is no single form of participation. Audiences are varied in their expectations, backgrounds and, above all, in the way they take part, express and attribute meaning to their experiences.

Relating to the WSO project, audiences' responses and reactions revealed that participation in the performance was triggered by the informality of the production, moving participants away from the conventionalities and impersonality attached to traditional opera halls. In this sense, the vast majority of participants were captivated by the informality of the host's approach and cherished the proximity to singers, evidencing the importance of the relational aspect (Bourriaud, 2002) encompassed in a live performance experience.

WSO audiences acknowledged the relationship of proximity with performers in allowing for a unique experience with opera to occur. Nonetheless, audiences' judgement of the performance quality was related to such an experience of closeness. This result encourages a reflection about the collective meaning proposed by Bourriaud's (2002) relational aesthetics, whereby the meaning of an art object lies in the encounter – in the relationship constructed between the viewer and the object itself. I would therefore argue that the 'collective meaning', in the case of WSO audiences, included the performer as a fundamental element in audiences' meaning making processes.

Although the proximity to the performers was an important element in how audiences attributed meaning to their experience, it is worth reflecting on the extent to which such a proximity provided a 'realistic' perception of an opera production performed in a traditional opera hall, where the distance between audiences and performers is an element which might lead to disappointment for some attendees. WSO audiences' responses emphasise the importance of having alternative formats and spaces to present opera where the proximity to the singers can be enhanced. It is worth noting that for a member of the audience (and also for myself) who perhaps felt unease at what was required by the artists in their invitations to interact, or uncomfortable at the volume of operatic voices in such proximity, distance was a welcomed element. Although this perception was expressed only by two people and therefore does not relate to the general audience experience observed in this study, the ambiguous feelings that proximity to the artists can provoke must be acknowledged. The feeling of anxiety that some attendees might have experienced when approached by the singers, and the risk that 'singling someone out' in moments of interaction might bring, need to be discussed both by those who are in charge of designing such programmes and by the artists who take part in them to expand their awareness regarding the distinct impacts that their work has on their audiences, thus informing and orienting their practices.

Regarding the HI programme, the relational aspect of arts participation was also identified among the musicians, pupils and teachers participating in the programme's activities. The development of a relationship of trust between

musicians and pupils – built through the combination of pupils' growing feelings of confidence to express their own ideas, their awareness of their roles, as well as their sense of ownership over their creations observed from the second phase of the programme – is a strong indicator of the social dimension implied in a creative music-making project involving a group of primary children. Relationship building between participants thus emerged as a key feature in promoting different layers of pupils' engagement with music-making throughout the project.

This finding has implications for both theoretical and applied knowledge. In practical terms, the longitudinal nature of the HI programme, run by the same musicians during a full academic year, proved fundamental in allowing the construction of a relationship referential between the musicians, teachers and pupils. Such a relationship was constructed throughout the sessions in which pupils, teachers and musicians had opportunities to know and communicate with each other, either by using verbal language or by creating music together. Thus, a participatory music-making programme offered by a professional orchestra in partnership with a school to thrive needs to be planned with a guarantee that the entire programme can be run by the same musicians, and to include a significant number of sessions throughout the year in order to enable relationship building between participants.

In relation to the theoretical knowledge about how pupils engage with classical music in a context involving professional musicians working in the classroom, such a finding evidences that involvement with this artform, which was until then a distant subject for almost all pupils and teachers, scarcely represented in the school culture, requires time for building both a relationship of trust between participants, as well as a supportive environment in which the pupils feel safe and encouraged to express themselves, to reflect upon their own practices (cf. Paynter, 2002; Freire, 2005; Kokotsaki, 2012) and, consequently, for different forms of participation to flourish.

Considering the findings of this research in light of the literature on participation in the arts, a variety of forms of participation was identified in both projects, highlighting the richness of audiences' experiences. Participants engaged kinaesthetically through their bodies (cf. Sloboda, 1985; Bennett, 1997; Reason,

2010; Reason, 2013) by dancing with the singers, stomping and clapping as well as by accompanying an aria with body movements during a WSO performance.

Similarly, rhythmic and locomotive improvisation activities proposed by the musicians of the HI programme emerged as a valuable way to foster pupils' participation. In light of children's high interest, involvement and demonstrable rhythmic development during these activities, I would argue that an approach rooted in the active body, capable of bringing joy to participants whilst challenging the pupils individually is of great value in a programme which aims to encourage pupils' creative skills, improvisation and performance.

Relating to empathetic engagement (cf. Konijn, 1999; Reason, 2010) both projects allowed for empathy to occur in distinct forms. Regarding the WSO project, audiences' sense of connection with the singers, their identification with the emotions portrayed by the characters, as well as their engagement with the recollection of memories evoked by the performance confirmed that WSO audiences' imaginative abilities in decoding the elements contained in the performances were not limited by the absence of the elements expected in a traditional opera concert, such as scenery, lighting, costumes and props. Conversely, audiences' feelings of identification with the characters, as well as with their movements on stage, proved to be a legitimate form of how audiences participated in and engaged with the experience, by attributing their own meanings to the experience and by appropriating those meanings for their own purposes (cf. Tepper and Gao, 2008).

On the other hand, empathetic engagement was not revealed in the immediacy of the moment in relation to the HI programme, but was built between the musicians, teachers and the majority of pupils through time, as well as through the development of the programme itself. Identification with both the musical and extra-musical materials chosen to comprise each working theme was not equally acknowledged by the pupils, thus resulting in distinct levels of motivation and interest, and impacting on pupils' levels of participation in the programme. Empathetic engagement thus emerged through the combination of working with a treasured theme, by pupils' recognition in seeing their own ideas reflected in their

composition, as well as by their awareness and confidence regarding their roles in the final concert.

The results of this research did not identify any form of participation that could be described as 'passive', as participants' responses and reactions evidenced participants' both conscious and subconscious involvement in the two experiences. Indeed, in a few cases – some pupils refusing or offering some resistance to participate in the HI programme – such a posture was a deliberate choice to *not* take part, thus it was not a passive decision. For arts organisations, such a finding is valuable in highlighting the inconsistencies of the language used to describe educational and outreach programmes, which often adopt the term 'active' to reinforce intentions regarding their participants, as well what is expected from them. Thus, if the arts sector aims to be more inclusive, it should therefore refrain from using the terms 'passive' and 'active' when referring to the role played by participants, as well as avoiding the establishment of hierarchies relating to different forms of participation in the arts.

Furthermore, the study's findings revealed that the kinaesthetic and empathetic forms of engagement facilitated by the two projects were context-dependant and emerged from the encounters between participants, artists and the artistic objects themselves. Participants' experiences were shaped and influenced by social and psychological factors involving the context in which they experienced the programmes, revealing that engagement in classical music and opera is not purely related to the musical elements encompassed by the programmes (cf. Dobson and Pitts, 2011). Relating to the WSO project, audiences' expectations regarding the performance, their feeling of 'belonging to the production', their identification with the feelings portrayed by the characters and the memories evoked by the experience are strong indicators of the significant influence that social and psychological factors played in audiences' meaning attribution of their experiences. Similarly, in the context of the HI programme, pupils' high levels of participation and enjoyment regarding their creations and performance in front of an audience were nurtured through a process of relationship building and bonds of trust between the group, rather than immediately established by the musical activities proposed by the musicians.

In light of such considerations regarding the relational dimension in the encounter between performers, participants and the artform itself (cf. Bourriaud, 2002) and its impact on participants' experiences, this study contributes to arts organisations' understandings of the importance of extra-musical elements in engaging those who take part in their educational and outreach initiatives (cf. Dobson and Pitts, 2011). It highlights the fundamental role of the specific knowledge, expertise and emotional intelligence needed by professionals involved in education and outreach projects in relation to the participant experience. This suggests that arts organisations need to carefully consider the profile of those involved in such projects by including in their recruitment process a set of criteria which combines artistic skills with artists' abilities to connect and communicate with participants.

7.2.3 A reflection on power-relationships

The findings of this research revealed distinctly different ways in which participants engaged with the two projects investigated. While WSO audiences engaged with the performance in an instinctive way, thus confirming that some audiences need no instruction to engage (cf. Toelle and Sloboda, 2019), participants of the HI programme required a significant level of instruction to engage in the activities proposed by the musicians. Regardless of the nature and aims of each project, what is relevant for this discussion is the relationships of power built around them.

Audiences of the WSO project demonstrated a high level of engagement, evidenced by their immersion in the experience (cf. Toelle and Sloboda, 2019), by their positive appraisals of the project's quality, and by acknowledging the intrinsic benefit of the experience in providing emotional and spiritual value, as well as intellectual stimulation (cf. Brown and Novak, 2007; 2013). However, the extent of their participation was predetermined by the project format. In other words, WSO audiences' actions and responses towards the host's and singers' invitations to interact in determined moments of the performance became 'part of the fabric of the show', but they did not change the 'original parameters' established by the artistic director (cf. Breel, 2015, p.369). WSO audiences' participation was thus

restricted to a contribution which did not impact the work aesthetically. Audiences' role in the show, therefore, remained limited to the immediacy of their reactions, and the meaning they attributed to the experience was circumscribed in appreciating the performance and establishing relationships with what they were hearing and seeing on stage.

On the other hand, participants of the HI programme had the opportunity to co-create an original work, thus contributing creatively to its final realisation (cf. Breel, 2015). The predetermined working themes and musical pieces employed to support the musicians' work, however, indicated that both pupils and musicians were also offered limited decisions, and had to conform with what is dictated by the National Curriculum and chosen by the school's leaders.

This finding reflects perhaps the top-down approach that still pervades traditional practices of arts organisations (and schools). Participants' roles in decision-making were limited to the extent to which their contributions did not affect major decisions about the conduct the programmes and parameters of culture underlined by the projects, revealing that both initiatives are closely related to the approach of democratization of culture, whereby the 'official culture' (cf. Price, 2015) is disseminated to those who have limited or no access to what are considered major cultural works. Such a finding calls for the necessity of arts organisations and policymakers developing mechanisms and initiatives that go beyond those predicated in the cultural deficit model (cf. Persell, 1981) and encouraging a bold move to challenge the mainstream notion of arts and culture which excludes those who do not feel represented.

7.2.4 The role of spaces
As highlighted in the relevant literature, the place where a performance occurs has a significant impact on the audience experience and is an important factor for understanding their enjoyment (cf. Dobson and Pitts, 2011; Burland and Pitts, 2014; Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Dearn, 2017; Walmsley, 2019). Thus, the venues where each project took place were identified as an important factor of impacting in the experience of participants.

The role played by different venues in promoting socialisation was identified in the WSO project as an important element to encourage engagement between audience members, as well as between audiences and performers. Thus, the atmosphere of intimacy, fostered by the configuration of the performance space, was observed to have a significantly positive effect on audiences' enjoyment (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008; Dearn, 2017). Similarly, the performers' longer presence in cafes, pubs and other venues, where audiences could stay after the show and share feedback with the attendees, was acknowledged by performers as a valuable opportunity to strengthen the relationship with their audiences, as well as to continue the conversations started during the Q&A sessions (cf. Conner, 2006; Burland and Pitts, 2012).

Similarly, WSO audiences also recognised the value of an atmosphere of familiarity created by the production as an opportunity to see the physicality of opera, as well as to demystify the outdated unapproachable reputation often attached to artists. The observations gathered from the SingOn groups revealed another layer attached to the role of the venue in the WSO project. In addition to representing familiar spaces for participants, the SingOn venues were identified with the idea of community, where companionship, passion in singing and a sense of wellbeing could be shared, nurtured and preserved among participants.

Nonetheless, by underlining their concern about the preservation of opera to young listeners and by suggesting the schools and other alternative places where younger people could have the opportunity to experience the artform, WSO audiences' testimonies not only demonstrated their awareness of the issues around opera attendance, but revealed attendees' expectations that opera could be performed outside traditional concert halls to reach and attract younger generations.

The choice of venues and their impact on participants' engagement highlighted the responsibility of arts organisations in reproducing or re-signifying traditional values attached to opera and classical music (cf. Pitts, 2017). In this sense, community spaces and non-traditional venues for an opera concert, such as those chosen by the WSO project, proved to be legitimate spaces where artistic

experiences could occur, thus positively impacting on audiences' engagement (cf. Burland and Pitts, 2012).

Regarding the HI programme, although it could be argued that the classroom was a familiar and safe space for the group of pupils, it also brought with it the values of the school culture. In this sense, the challenges encountered by the two musicians in overcoming issues related to classroom management, as well as in teachers' restricted collaboration in the activities, emerged as significant obstacles in promoting the environment of 'fun' highlighted in the school's website welcome message. The identification of an enjoyable experience with participating in the project was observed from the second phase of the project towards the end, as a result of pupils gaining in confidence, motivation and ownership over their creation, as already described in Chapter 6.

The school, as a site of formal education in which music still occupies an underprivileged position in the core curriculum, as well as an environment where conflicts, frictions and occasional episodes of violence require permanent control of teachers and staff to mitigate against it (cf. Bresler, 2010, p.145), needs to be evaluated in light of different variables. This study highlighted the complexities involved in developing a classical music education project in a school classroom where musicians and teachers encountered difficulties working as a team.

The divisions between the teachers' roles and the musicians' tasks are fundamental in a partnership project. However, considering that teachers' postures and attitudes are central in influencing how pupils perceive and value their musical experiences (cf. Bresler, 2010; Rusinek and Rincón, 2010; Pitts, 2012; Pitts, 2014a), not having clear statements of which kinds of engagement were expected from the teachers during the musical activities themselves resulted in a level of frustration among the musicians. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that if teachers proactively involved themselves with the activities by experimenting with music with their pupils or by bringing to the sessions any fresh or non-conventional connection between the selected working themes and what the children were expressing and creating, children's levels of participation, engagement and confidence would have taken less time to be developed. Furthermore, the pupils' process of learning about each subject could have been

enriched by establishing multiple associations that a creative music-making activity is able to encourage, and which are rarely found when learning through traditionally didactic methods.

7.3 The impact of participants' responses on the organisations' educational and outreach work

One of the study's research questions invites an investigation of the extent to which participants' responses inform organisations' educational and outreach work.

According to both Education Directors, audiences' responses are central to informing and improving all projects run by the organisations. As highlighted by Opera North's Education Director, however, measuring and evaluating the responses generated from a project such as the WSO is neither simple nor easy. The Education Director continues to explain that by being a performance usually seen only once, the WSO project makes a longitudinal follow-up more difficult. On the one hand, audiences' immediate reactions and responses bring to light their levels of enjoyment and engagement with the performance, allowing the organisation to identify the impact of musical and extra-musical elements on the experience of audiences of different ages and opera backgrounds, and to make well informed artistic decisions. On the other hand, the tendency of attendees to give 'very positive feedback' was highlighted by the Artistic Director as one of the factors that make decisions of improvement or change challenging to undertake. By comparing the tools of evaluation of the In Harmony programme, for instance, the Education Director reflected on the directness of teachers' responses gathered in the CPD sessions to enable the development of artists to build on this feedback to improve delivery. Moreover, the collaborative work between all professionals allows for constantly learning from each other and for the project to be developed and adjusted according to participants' needs and demands, which is not always possible in a project such as the Whistle Stop Opera.

The Education Director's perception echoes a tendency of some members of the audience to 'match' their response according to the expectations of the interlocutor (cf. Reason, 2010) or, as highlighted by Johanson and Glow (2015), in offering

feedback which is often biased towards positive evaluation because audiences feel ill-equipped or reluctant to speak critically about their experiences. However, as identified by this research, WSO audiences' responses found on the written feedback forms were more critically articulate than those gathered during face-to-face interviews, suggesting that for WSO audiences, written forms of evaluation represent a valuable resource to broaden organisations' knowledge about their audiences in future research.

The Project Manager's view on how audience responses inform the work of the WSO offers a different perspective. As mentioned in Chapter 5, due to the WSO project's format, it was possible to adapt the performance and the plot according to the audiences' profile. Shortening the length of a performance by omitting a particular aria or softening a naughty joke when performing for school students, for instance, were among the possibilities adopted by the Artistic Director to 'tailor' the performance according to context. Such practices, as highlighted by the Project Manager, were drawn both from the expertise gained in performing for a variety of audiences since the beginning of the project, and from the Artistic Director's sensibility and experience in 'quickly reading the room' and perceiving 'what works and what doesn't work'. Audiences' feedback vocalised during the Q&A or expressed in written feedback forms, as well as in testimonies sent by email and captured by the Project Manager, are also considered in internal discussions regarding logistical decisions, such as targeting future audience groups, determining the venues in which the next season will be presented, scheduling the performances in order to better suit groups' specificities, and optimizing the schedule of artists who come from other localities.

Reflecting on the Artistic Director's and Project Manager's testimonies about how WSO audiences inform the work of the organisation, despite acknowledging the importance of audience feedback in fostering immediate artistic decisions that could be adopted according to different audience profiles, there was no mention of the extent to which audiences' responses impact in terms of the artistic programming, or further changes in the project format.

If, on the one hand, relying on 'popular' opera titles or on those which were programmed for the main stage season is a valid strategy, which may function as a

'gateway' to engage and diversify audiences (cf. Brown and Novak, 2013), on the other hand, lacking the attendees' perceptions of their expectations about the possible repertoire represents a missed opportunity. Including particular themes which audiences can relate to and which are contemporary to issues experienced today is a valuable tool to foster identification and to attract younger audiences (cf. Cuenca, 2015). Furthermore, considering the perspective that articulates the meaning of 'canon' with the commercial appeal of popular opera titles, it could be argued that, with few exceptions,[75] the excerpts chosen to comprise the WSO performance are part of a repertoire that carries with it determined "musical values and social expectations" that result from the intellectual authority built up around it (Weber, 1994, p.490). As highlighted by Redhead (2011), "a canon is never neutral" (p.1), since it contains "implicit assumptions" and "ideologies" that describe its function in society (p.1). In this sense, it could be argued that in terms of repertoire, the WSO project tends to perpetuate established 'classics' – what Weber (1994) refers to as "the ultimate authority in musical taste" (p.506) – rather than deconstructing the hegemony of a repertoire that implies class and societal assumptions, as described in Chapter 2.

In relation to the Hallé Inspire project, the Programme Manager highlighted the importance of establishing an ongoing dialogue with the participating schools throughout the year in order to gather feedback, critiques and suggestions from teachers and pupils. As vocalised by the Project Manager during the interview, the educational team:

> "respond to comments from children, players and teachers as they arise, and as part of ongoing evaluation, not just at the end of project. All comments and suggestions are considered carefully and, where appropriate, changes or additions may be made. Hallé Inspire is very much a collaborative partnership project so opportunities for developing ideas and feedback or comments are set up right from the beginning".

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[75] The excerpts from *Trouble in Tahiti* and *Katia Kabanova*, which are modern opera titles.

However, the Project Manager also acknowledged that "changing policies is a slow process", which requires not only time, but also devising the best practice capable of stimulating first-time and young audiences to attend a concert again, for instance. As a practical example, the Project Manager mentioned the responses gathered from teachers in which they suggested a more 'visual' introduction to the orchestra, so that the pupils could see the instruments as well as hear the musicians playing. As a result, the organisation included a large screen to amplify the stage and visually engage the pupils, and invited a host to lead the concerts, while explaining the key elements of music to the audience. Such an example was also echoed by the Education Director, who expanded the discussion beyond the artistic decisions made according to audiences' responses by highlighting that both feedback and requirements received from audiences influence how their programmes develop, while offering the organisation a 'guide' to further decisions in relation to their educational projects. The Education Director continued to reflect on the extent to which audiences' feedback are internally discussed in relation to the organisation's own mission and artistic aims, according to what the Hallé "has the expertise to be able to do at the best possible standard".

If 'audience reach' is one of the core elements of artistic innovation, as highlighted by Bakhshi and Throsby (cited in Radbourne, Glow and Johanson, 2013, p.4), it is important to know not only who is or is not benefiting from publicly funded projects, but also how these projects are being experienced by those who engage with them (cf. Lindelof and Hansen, 2015). The variety of responses gathered from WSO audiences and the Hallé Inspire participants highlights the extent to which different elements of the projects connect to participants' entire experience (cf. Lindelof and Hansen, 2015). Participants' perceptions, judgements and expectations are therefore of paramount importance for both researchers and organisations to understand existing preconceptions about the artforms, the social and psychological barriers of concert attendance, and to find innovative ways to challenge existing views that reproduce preconceptions attached to the artforms. Finally, as articulated by Radbourne, Johanson and Glow (2013, p.6), "as the cultural or aesthetic experience is the chief focus of the arts organisation or institution, it is this experience that should be the chief focus of an ongoing form of

assessment of such organisations' success", rather than quantitative oriented forms of measuring the outcomes of a project.

7.4 Contributions and implications of this study for audience research and cognate fields of knowledge

This study makes an original contribution to the field of audience research in classical music and opera, as well as to music education, arts management and cultural policy, by drawing on an investigation built around participants' own voices, perceptions, interpretations, gestures and attitudes in relation to the experiences in which they took part. As opera is an artform which combines music and theatre, the findings of this research also contribute to academic knowledge in understanding the audience experience in both artforms.

By talking to participants and observing how they expressed and attributed meaning to their experiences, whether by attending an opera concert or by participating in a creative music-making programme, this study offers an in-depth understanding of the elements which allowed or inhibited participation in classical music and opera. The findings of this research identified the role that social and emotional aspects play in the audience experience and, therefore, the influence of such aspects in the participants' overall engagement with the artforms. In addition, participants' responses gathered from written feedback forms, face-to-face interviews, an online survey, as well as from pupils' drawings evidenced the importance of relationship-building between participants and performers in encouraging participation in classical music and opera. The study highlights the importance of placing audiences' voice at the heart of the inquiry to explore the relational aspect of audiences' experiences, bringing to light their motivations and challenges in engaging with these artforms, highlighting the contribution of this research beyond the case studies analysed.

WSO audiences' emotional reactions – their empathetic and kinaesthetic responses towards what they were seeing and hearing – were revealed to be central to how audiences articulated their perceptions, enjoyment, and the value they attributed to their experiences. Such reactions and responses resulted from the audiences' sense of belonging to an experience in which a non-traditional setting fostered a

feeling of proximity with the performers and the artform itself. The results suggest that audiences' engagement with and enjoyment of an opera performance is not reliant on the elements expected in a traditional production. Conversely, the absence of the raised stage, combined with moments of interaction between the performers and attendees, as well as the accessibility of the plot, enabled audiences to hear and 'feel' opera in a more personal way, to follow the story despite the language changes, and to empathise with the feelings conveyed by the performers. Furthermore, audiences' appreciation of hearing an accordion accompany the performers, an instrument which is hardly seen in symphonic or in opera concerts, and does not imply the same class and social connotations attached to an orchestra, contributed to building the sense of 'approachability' identified in audiences' responses in relation to the performance.

By acknowledging the informality of the setting in allowing them to see the physicality of opera, audiences expressed a feeling of being 'part of a special encounter' with the performers and the artform itself. Such results highlight the positive impact that a closer and informal experience with opera had on both audiences' engagement and in their perceptions of an artform which still carries with it notions of excessive 'seriousness' and exclusivism that put many people off experiencing it. Moreover, the results of this research identified the potential of outreach programmes which move away from the rigidity, rituals and conventionalities of traditional opera halls in enhancing audiences' engagement with opera, and the capacity of such initiatives for mitigating and resignifying some preconceptions regarding this artform. The case is thus made for further outreach projects to be planned by taking such a premise into careful consideration.

This study highlights the importance of non-traditional spaces in allowing different forms of audience participation to occur; it is an element which must also be considered in empirical research that aims to explore audiences' experiences with both theatre and music. In addition, the adoption of community centres, pubs and cafes, represented a valuable way of reaching out to attendees who were incidentally in these venues, therefore not planning to attend an opera concert, and who felt encouraged and motivated to attend an entire opera concert in a traditional concert hall after seeing a WSO performance. This finding emphasises

that the choice of venue is an influential tool when reaching out to audiences who might not consider opera as a cultural option in their 'menu' of choices' (cf. Baker, 2000; Dearn, 2017), highlighting the importance to arts organisations, audiences researchers and practitioners of exploring spaces where non-intentional attendance can occur to develop strategies focused on increasing opera attendance whilst broadening and diversifying the profile of attendees.

Similarly, by exploring the ways in which pupils who participated in the HI programme found enjoyment in participating in the activities proposed and developed confidence and the autonomy to express their own ideas, the results of the study brought to light the significant role of space and also, in the relationship building between participants, musicians and their final artistic creations. In light of the findings, the role of the school as a place to develop a partnership programme needs to be carefully considered by researchers who undertake a qualitative approach to conduct their investigations. Findings showed that the values conveyed by the school and transmitted by the teachers impacted significantly on pupils' overall perceptions of the programme. Therefore, the place of music in the school curriculum and school culture, as well as the value attributed to it by the school staff, are relevant aspects which need to be considered in order to offer a contextualized and nuanced qualitative analysis of pupils' forms of participation in a creative music-making programme.

The results emergent from both case studies stress the value of space and relationship-building between participants and performers in breaking down the psychological barrier of distance felt by many people in relation to classical music and opera, in encouraging different forms of participation to occur, and in nurturing life-long engagement with these artforms, adding to previous empirical research focused on investigating the audience experience in arts. Nonetheless, such findings confirm the need for a specific profile of artists who are selected to work in programmes aimed at diversifying and increasing participants' engagement with these artforms, highlighting the need for conservatories to broaden their training curriculum with a view to equipping performers with additional skills to communicate and empathise with audiences of different ages

and music backgrounds, and of arts organisations to offer in-house training tailored to the aims that underpin their programmes.

By identifying the elements that enabled and inhibited different forms of participation in the projects analysed, this study also offers new points of entry that expand the academic knowledge regarding participation in classical music and opera, thus challenging the contentious dichotomy between 'active' and 'passive' forms of participation in the arts, as identified in the literature review. Hearing what audiences had to say, their perceptions, motivations, expectations, the meaning they attributed to their experiences, and the variety of relationships they established while experiencing a concert or composing and performing music, confirmed that participation is a process which is hard to define – especially where it begins and ends. This study therefore contributes to a more integrated understanding of the term 'participation', which considers not only the broad range of physical actions involved in taking part in a determined experience, but which also encompasses the emotional gestures, expressions and attitudes explicit in how audiences relate to their experiences. Furthermore, rather than a concept which carries with it predetermined expectations and outcomes, participation should be viewed as a concept that embraces a variety of expressions, whether verbal or through other forms of communication and, therefore, as a more inclusive term.

Another implication of this study for the field of audience research relates to the value of enjoyment, as well as the sense of fun and pleasure that resulted from participating in arts programmes (cf. Keaney, 2008). The findings of this study highlighted that enjoyment was a central (if sometimes missing) outcome for the experience of both WSO audiences and the pupils participating in the HI programme. Future studies that focus on understanding the audience experience in classical music, opera, and theatre should not underestimate the value of enjoyment, fun and playfulness to promote effective participant engagement (cf. Popat, 2006). Ultimately, participants' feelings of enjoyment and fun were revealed to be valuable in influencing future attendance in opera or in taking part in another music education programme, thus reinforcing the important role of such elements in encouraging life-long engagement with music. In light of these results, I would

argue that, alongside emotional, spiritual and intellectual outcomes of the arts described by Brown and Novak (2007; 2013), enjoyment should also be included as an intrinsic value that an arts experience may bring to participants and equally considered in programmes' evaluations.

The findings of this research also evidence the importance of choice in a collaborative creative music-making programme, highlighting the impact of allowing opportunities for choice in enhancing pupils' motivation in participating in the activities proposed, in their levels of confidence, enjoyment and sense of ownership over their final creations, and, ultimately, in their interest to experiment with classical music. Such a result stresses the importance to both music educators and professional orchestra musicians working in schools to consider including in their practices ongoing opportunities for discussion capable of encouraging pupils to bring new inputs, and to criticize their own processes of making music, contributing to bringing classical music closer to pupils' daily experiences.

The distance from opera and classical music stated by many attendees of the WSO project and made explicit by some pupils participating in the HI programme revealed that psychological barriers of participation, such as lack of expected knowledge, feelings of inadequacy as well as perceptions of a limited relevance of classical music and opera to participants' daily lives were still paramount in the testimonies and observations gathered during this research. On the other hand, offering participants the opportunity to express their opinions was valuable in encouraging participants to talk about and reflect on their own experiences, highlighting the need for future research in which the participants' voices are at the centre of the inquiry. I would argue that having their voices heard by themselves and by me, while describing their experiences, proved to be beneficial in enhancing participants' critical reflections about music (cf. Brown and Ratzkin, 2011). In addition, by reflecting on their experiences, by attributing their own meaning to them and by offering their own critique regarding the programmes (cf. Tepper and Gao, 2008), whether expressed through vocal responses, written feedback or drawings, participants highlighted the extent to which such experiences impacted on them. This collection of participants' feedback is also

valuable for arts organisations to understand the artistic impact of their initiatives, and for arts managers to work towards tailored approaches of audience engagement in classical music and opera which also draws on participants' insights and viewpoints as well as their own appetite for engaging in such artforms (cf. Brown and Ratzkin, 2011).

Ultimately, as this research also has an interest in identifying the effectiveness of both projects in reaching out to new audiences of classical music and opera, the results of this study indicate that 71% of the WSO interviewees and the majority of audiences who raised their hands when asked about their experience with opera were not new to the artform. Across all interviewees, 28% said that they attended an opera concert more than twice a year, while a further 28% indicated at least one attendance at opera an year. In addition, community groups, such as SingOn, have regularly attended a WSO performance in every season since its inception, suggesting that the project is likely to reach out to individuals who are already engaged with the artform. However, in localities where opportunities to attend an opera production were limited, due to the distance of opera halls, as well as in pubs, schools and cafes, the number of first-time and younger attendees was higher. From the total of 11 interviewees in these venues, five were experiencing opera for the first time. The high levels of engagement perceived in both these audiences' reactions and in their face-to-face interviews highlight the potential of the WSO project format to attract new audiences for opera. In addition, such a result evidenced the value of touring in rural communities, as well as of exploring non-traditional opera venues, not only to reach out to new and younger audiences for opera, but moreover, to contribute to changing current patterns of participation in subsided arts previously identified by other surveys, in which opera has continuously occupied the position as a cultural activity least liked to be attended by respondents (cf. DCMS, 2018),

Relating to the Hallé Inspire participants, the findings of this research revealed that 79.6% of the pupils who replied to the online survey had never heard about the Hallé Orchestra before the beginning of the project in their school. Listening to an orchestra for the first time was an experience shared by 36.7% of the respondents, whereas 89.8% affirmed that they would like to listen to an orchestra

again after experiencing one live. Similarly, both classroom teachers involved in the project suggested they would appreciate an opportunity to continue their partnership with the Hallé Orchestra, as they acknowledged the benefits that being involved in a collaborative music-making programme brought for their pupils, to whom playing an instrument and making music in collaboration with professional musicians was not a possibility prior to the beginning of the programme.

In light of the above, this research is also a plea for arts managers, artists, educators, audience researchers and policy makers to talk *to* and *with* young people as an integral part of the planning, delivery and evaluation of a project. In other words, in order to address the inequalities in participation in classical music and opera, as well as mitigating the preconceptions attached to these artforms, educational and outreach programmes need to be developed by considering the extent to which their aims and expected outcomes relate to young peoples' daily experiences, thus ensuring that opportunities for participation can be seized to enrich young people's cultural lives.

7.5 A reflection on the methodological approach and methods

The adoption of an ethnographic approach proved to be an appropriate and valuable methodological approach through which to investigate participants' experiences in the 'real world' of attending an opera concert and making music in groups, allowing me to capture participants' reactions and responses in the settings in which they occurred. In addition, being fully immersed in the contexts where the programmes were developed, listening to what participants had to say, their expectations and anxieties, witnessing their emotions and reactions, as well as engaging in several conversations with participants of different ages and music backgrounds allowed for an in-depth perception of what classical music and opera are capable of effecting and 'doing' to people (cf. Pitts and Spencer, 2008).

Similarly, the socio-constructive and relational approaches which underpinned my position as a researcher, as well as orienting my reflections during the research process, were valuable in supporting an interpretation of the results which took into account the influence of other individuals, spaces and the variety of

relationships built between those involved in the programmes, thus allowing for a broad and nuanced account of what I was observing in the fieldwork.

By not requiring predetermined categories of analysis, the ethnographic approach proved valuable for this study since it allowed me the freedom to orient the research process according to the evolving nature of the programmes. Being immersed in contexts in which I had no control over what was happening, and, at the same time, being open to learn *with* participants (cf. Ingold, 2017), oriented me towards an investigation informed by what I was experiencing throughout the fieldwork. In practical terms, participants' testimonies guided me to explore additional readings beyond those I identified at the beginning of the research process, deepening my investigation in relation to specific issues raised by participants' responses, as well as informing the interview questions conducted with the senior staff members of both organisations.

Gaining access to investigate participants' experiences proved to be a delicate matter, as it involved grappling with partner organisations' different concerns with the comfort, safety and privacy of participants. In this aspect, one of the partner organisations highlighted the discomfort that being approached by a researcher for an interview at pubs, for instance, might cause to participants. I was therefore required to refrain from approaching those audiences for a formal interview to avoid any disturbance or discomfort to attendees. As a consequence, the collaboration of an important demographic – young people – was limited to what I could observe and gather through informal conversations.

This study highlights the researcher's limitations in assessing an arts programme in which the organisation acts as a gatekeeper, and therefore is not neutral in the results generated by the investigation (cf. Matarasso, 1996). In light of such a consideration, an open discussion between arts organisations and audience researchers about the 'personal cost' to individuals and the ethical 'dilemmas' in approaching participants to take part in a qualitative study, as well as the benefits that widening the range of voices represented in an investigation can bring to assessing the outcomes of the project needs to be undertaken, and an agreement made, prior to the beginning of the study (cf. Matarasso, 1996).

Regarding the different periods of time in which I was involved in the two programmes, both weaknesses and strengths were identified over time. The longitudinal approach chosen to investigate the HI programme allowed me to observe pupils' development regarding their levels of interest, participation, and motivation throughout an entire academic year. It also offered me the possibility of identifying the development of their music skills and establishing some comparisons at the end of the programme. On the other hand, as far as a position of an observer can be viewed as comfortable, it was also challenging to shadow the sessions without displaying any gesture of judgement or, as a music educator, to interfere when a pupil was struggling with a particular task.

Adopting an ethnographic approach in which the researcher remains true to their commitment of observing without interfering in participants' experience, and reporting their viewpoints, aware of the pitfalls that exist between advocacy and research (cf. Johanson and Glow, 2015), requires from arts professionals working in research settings a set of principles to be undertaken, as highlighted by Strike (cited in Matarasso, 1996). Amongst such principles, it is important to highlight the principle of 'due process', in which the research standards and procedures are reasonable, known by the researcher and applied consistently throughout the research process, and the principle of 'equality', in which the researcher's decisions should not differ by gender, ethnicity, age or other socio or personal characteristics of participants. Researchers should also take into consideration the principle of participants' benefits, in which the interest of those participating in the programmes needs to come before those of the arts organisation staff (cf. Matarasso, 1996, p.7) and the researchers themselves.

In relation to the WSO project, participants' responses were gathered in the moment of the performance and minutes after it through individual interviews. While expressing their opinions and judgements after a short period of time of being exposed to the experience encouraged audiences' spontaneous reactions and fresh insights, it can be argued that due to the brevity of time and impossibility of a deeper reflection, WSO audiences' responses were somewhat limited in assessing the level of engagement of attendees (cf. Johanson and Glow, 2015). However, the purpose of observing the same performance of the WSO project several times was

to allow me to understand the individual experience and how the participant attributed meaning and value to it, rather than to assert with precision their level of engagement with the artform. Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge that the analysis offers a snapshot of attendees' responses in a determined period of time, of a certain opera programme which was held in non-traditional venues in a specific country, and thus the results cannot be generalised to all opera audiences.

Adopting mixed methods of data collection proved to be valuable in the task of investigating different forms of individuals' participation. Combining participant observation with different methods of eliciting verbal and nonverbal information, such as interviews, drawings and the online survey, allowed me to have different points of entry and fresh insights regarding participants' points of view. In addition, relying on mixed methods to collect data allowed for a triangulation of the findings, enhancing the rigour and validity of the analysis as well as mitigating the risk of bias in my interpretation of the results (cf. Merrian, 1988; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

Similarly, adopting the method of drawing accompanied by verbal comments was welcomed and appreciated by the pupils, suggesting that this is an accessible and valuable form to encourage them to express and reflect on their experiences (cf. Adams, 2002; Reason, 2013). As a way of eliciting information, the drawings were important to confirm what I was observing during the sessions and final concerts, as well as revealing pupils' musical preferences, interest (or the lack thereof) in particular activities, as well as their broad connection to music beyond what was offered by the HI programme (cf. Campbell, 1998; Reason, 2013).

Being involved in face-to-face interviews with the WSO participants showed me that people enjoy talking about their cultural experiences and feel valued when approached by someone who demonstrates true interest and respect in hearing their perceptions. The importance of giving participants the opportunity to talk about their experiences is reliant on allowing space for connections and relations with music to arise, and to be expressed without judgement, thus contributing to minimizing the distance still perceived between classical music and many of the people who participated in this study. This finding reinforces Reason's (2013)

assertion that the ability to engage in reflective dialogue in which participants can talk about their experience with the arts is empowering. It gives participants 'command' over their own experiences, the opportunity to be the protagonists in constructing meaning and interpreting their experiences (Reason, 2013) and, therefore, a route to (re)signify the world in which they live (cf. Freire, 2005).

This study highlights the mutual benefit of a study designed by placing audiences' voices at the heart of the inquiry for participants and audience researchers alike, offering a comprehensive example on how to conduct in-depth qualitative research by those who are dedicated to capturing participants' experiences with the arts. It also highlights the benefits of hearing participants' perceptions and the meanings they attribute to their experiences in order to evaluate the outcomes of arts programmes focused on engaging and broadening the profile of attendees, reinforcing the need for arts organisations to invest in qualitative research, by dedicating financial resources towards research and evaluation conducted by independent researchers who are not part of their staff.

Overall, hearing what audiences had to say as well as what was concealed in their testimonies, how they interpreted and attributed meaning to their experiences, as well as their perceptions of the impediments that still put people off experiencing opera and classical music was more than a piece of academic research; it became a journey in which I, as a passionate advocate for music education, was also confronted with my own preconceptions and practices, and in which I became an academic researcher.

7.6 A final personal reflection: the way forward

Due to my training as a music educator, as well as my working experience as an education manager within an orchestra, my perspective as a researcher reflects my position as an insider in both the education and cultural sectors, which proved be beneficial in carrying out this study. Being an outsider to British culture, as well as to the country's educational structures, allowed me to take an advantageous critical distance regarding the settings I had the opportunity to be embedded in.

Being inside a classroom in Brazil, entirely dedicated to making music with the pupils, and responsible for the development of educational projects and in charge

of the logistics of a school concert delivery, only allowed me rare occasions to observe participants' reactions and to gather their responses regarding their experiences. In a UK context, having the opportunity to direct both my focus and energy to observe how audiences reacted and responded to every detail of an opera concert or a creative music-making project, to hear their expectations, to witness their excitement after experiencing a performance, or to identify their discontentment or disagreement with a proposed activity, was invaluable for me not only in gathering rich and nuanced information regarding the audience experience, but also experiencing work that renewed my passion for classical music and education.

Having conducted this research in a non-native language and outside my home country pushed me outside any comfort zone, while requiring me to abandon preconceptions, expectations and bias which could have overridden what I was observing and hearing from participants during the fieldwork. In addition, having the opportunity to investigate the topics included in the literature review, such as the rationale and intentions behind the process of how the arts became subsided in Britain, how music teaching entered state schools in the country, and the correlations and discrepancies in British classical music organisations' narratives in relation to their outreach and educational programmes' aims, allowed me to draw similarities and differences between the Brazilian and British cultural and education contexts.

Despite the socio-educational and economic differences between Brazil and the UK, some significant similarities in both countries' cultural and education sectors were observed throughout the development of this research, enabling the findings of this study to be related also to the work of Brazilian arts organisations, arts managers, music educators and policymakers. Among such key similarities, I would highlight the mismatches still encountered in British and Brazilian state schools' infrastructures and professional training that still need to be overcome in order to promote inclusive, contemporary and contextualised music learning opportunities for all pupils. In addition, the continued governmental cuts in education, as well as the lack of public policies capable of unifying the aims and content of school music education at national levels make access to music

education a reality far beyond the horizon of the majority of those in British and Brazilian state schools.

In light of such a scenario, professional orchestral musicians who enter the classroom territory should also receive adequate and continuous training to deal with the challenges inherent to a context which is distinct from those that emerge in concert rehearsals and in public performances, as well as in their private instrumental practices. In addition, such professionals need to be made aware of the substantial distance between pupils' relationships with the musical repertoire heard in a traditional concert hall, the music often adopted by traditional educational programmes in schools, and children's 'own music', namely the different genres they choose to hear among friends, as well as in their own private contexts. And, conscious of such a disparity, they need to direct their practices towards an approach capable of integrating, developing and sustaining more "representative, cross-cultural and innovative music cultures" (Bull, 2019, p.237) that are capable of supporting pupils' sense of identification with and representation in the programmes offered to them. In this regard, pupils' different forms of cultural expressions, heritages and musical interests should be equally acknowledged and valued by those (professional musicians or music educators) who aim to engage the children in a creative and collaborative music-making process, and expect that the resulting creations are meaningful and transformative to them.

Secondly, I would highlight the lack of sufficiently clear aims and objectives for education and outreach programmes, and the absence of an explicit correlation between those aims and objectives with some Brazilian and British arts organisations' missions described on their websites. Such an absence risks having education and outreach programmes designed without a concise alignment with the very purpose of existence that each arts organisation defines for itself, resulting in education and outreach initiatives partially disconnected with other areas of the organisation, and, in the worst case scenario, not recognised by stakeholders, such as funders, partners and participants, as having a fundamental role for their communities. In this sense, education managers, marketeers, artistic and executive directors should work in a close partnership to pursue a cohesive

alignment between what its envisioned by the organisation regarding their mission and contribution to the communities they serve, what is communicated to their external public through different channels of communication and, more importantly, what its practised through initiatives focused on broadening and diversifying their audiences.

My original motivation to undertake this study was supported by an uncomfortable feeling that the distance between classical music and people from different ages and lower socio-educational backgrounds was also due to orchestras' managers and cultural makers' approaches which did not contribute to mitigate what was historically constructed. I finish this study by acknowledging that despite the continuous innovations and achievements that have been reached by the arts sectors of both countries, we – whether arts managers, policymakers, artists, music educators or music advocators – have long and unceasing work to do to make equal access to and participation in classical music and opera a reality that is achievable by the majority.

Engaging in a reflective dialogue empowers participants to reflect, attribute meaning, transform and, ultimately, re(signify) not only their artistic experiences but the world around them. Developing an authentic ability to hear – by displaying a true interest in the interlocutor's voice and by refraining from reproducing outmoded preconceptions and judgments – is equally empowering in its ability to provide an invaluable route to understanding the diversity and richness of our relationship with the arts and moving towards achieving more equality in arts participation.

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List of Abbreviations

ABO   Association of British Orchestras

ACE   Arts Council England

BBC   British Broadcasting Corporation

CEMA   Committee for Encouragement of Music and the Arts

CSE   Certificate of Secondary Education

HI   Hallé Inspire programme

NPO   National Portfolio Organisations

WSO   Whistle Stop Opera

Appendix A Whistle Stop Opera observation script

When	Element	Observations
Before the performance starts	Venue	• Description of the venue's structure: absence of stage; lights; scenario and seats; quality of the acoustics. • Position of the seats regarding the audience. Can everybody see and listen to the host and singers? How people occupy the space? Are there disabled seats and access to the venue? • Anticipation feelings (buzz, laughs, cough spread around, phone use).
	Audience's profile	• Age, gender, number of people attending, invited groups x spontaneous audience. Is it a partner group of Opera North (SingOn, Paul Hamlyn Foundation groups, etc.)? • Are there many people alone or mainly with friends, family or in small groups? • Is there a moment of socialisation prior to the beginning? Are musicians present as well? Is there a relationship between attendees?
During the performance	Elements of interaction	• How does the host start the performance and invite the audience to join in? How does the audience react? • Does the audience pay attention to the host explanations? Are there visible reactions and/or involvement? • How does the audience react when the singers come closer? • How do people react to the singers' invitation to participate? • How are the elements of the text (such as jokes, romance, comedy, tragedy) being received and expressed by attendees? • Is the audience involved with the singers? And the plot?

		• Audiences' spontaneous reactions: body gestures, eye contact, singing, clapping, stomping, etc. • Are there signs of enjoyment or lack of it? • Members of the audiences leaving the concert in the middle, phone usage, chatting, sleeping?
After the performance	Reactions and learning elements	• Involvement in the Q&A session. • Kind of questions asked by the audience and artists' answers. • Does anyone come to find out more about: the performance, the artist, musical excerpts or general information about Opera North's season? • Who in general is available at the end of the performance to answer audiences' questions? • Do the artists leave the venue immediately or they are also available for an informal chat?

Appendix B The Hallé Inspire fieldwork journal

Session number: _____

Group: _____

Date: _____

Activities' structure

- What, why and how the activities are being conducted
- Who is leading?
- Who is participating?
- What kind of relationship is being developed between the musicians and the group, among the pupils themselves and teachers?
- How are pupils invited to participate in the activities? Are their suggestions and expectations being heard? How are the choice of instrument, musical ideas, turn to play, moments of silence being articulated/negotiated within the group?
- Length of the activity
- Results (or preliminary results)

Researcher's reflections

- Children's and musicians' involvement/relationship
- Challenges encountered by the group or by a pupil in particular
- Achievements
- Level of pupils' interest, motivation, participation and reactions (gestures and words)
- Teachers and assistants' participation

Emerging questions and further observations

What caught my attention that needs further observation or to be delved into in an interview?

Appendix C Whistle Stop Opera audiences' interview form

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1. Your profile

Gender: ( ) female   ( ) male

Age:
( ) Above 16   ( ) 16 - 24
( ) 25 – 44   ( ) 45 – 64
( ) 65 – 74   ( ) 75+

Where do you live? (specific suburb)

_____

What is your occupation status?
( ) working   ( ) non-working
( ) studying   ( ) retired

Educational level:
( ) GCSE   ( ) A- Level/BTEC
( ) Undergraduate   ( ) Postgraduate
( ) none

2. Frequency of attendance in opera and classical music concerts

Is it your first time attending an opera performance?
( ) **Yes**   ( ) **No**
How often do you go to opera concerts?
( ) once a year
( ) twice a year
( ) more than twice a year

After seeing Whistle Stop Opera, would you come to a full opera performance in the theatre?
( ) yes   ( ) no
( ) depends on the opera title
( ) depends on the ticket price
( ) depends on other factors:_____

How much do you think you would have to pay for an opera concert? _____

Are you aware of discount tickets (season tickets package, under 30s, child tickets, concessions and other discounts)?
( ) Yes   ( ) No

Do ever attend to music activities?
( ) **Yes**
What kind of activities?
( ) playing an instrument in a group (chamber music, orchestra, band)
( ) singing in a choir
( ) taking music lessons (singing or playing)
( ) playing a musical instrument for your own pleasure
( ) Other: _____

How often?
( ) once a week   ( ) twice a week
( ) more than twice a week

( ) **No**
How do you normally spend your free time?
( ) going to museums and art galleries
( ) going to the movies
( ) reading a book
( ) going to theatre performances
( ) going to pub/restaurants
( ) dance performances
( ) relaxing at home
( ) Other: _____

Key questions and prompts for face-to-face interview

1- If this is your first time attending an opera, what are the reasons you have never attended an opera before?

2- What motivated you to come to this performance?

3- Did you come alone or with someone else (friends, family, group)?

4- How did you learn about the performance?

5- What do you think about the performance?

6- Was there anything that caught your attention in particular?

7- Was there anything that disappointed you about the performance, the venue, the performers, or anything at all?

8- How would you describe your experience of seeing a Whistle Stop Opera performance?

9- What is your opinion about the venue (acoustics, facilities, seats, etc.)? Were you able to hear the performers well (also in the Q&A session)?

10- Your perception is important to help understand how opera can reach new audiences, be attractive to those who are not regular attenders (or have never attended to an opera) and accessible to everybody. Would you like to leave a comment about Whistle Stop Opera project?

Appendix D Whistle Stop Opera Project Manager's interview questions

About Whistle Stop Opera and your personal involvement in the project

1- When was Whistle Stop Opera created and what are the aims of the project?

2- What is your relationship with opera? How have you personally get involved with WSO?

3- Have you changed anything in the project during the time you have been working with it (format, length, aims) and if you changed anything, why have you done so?

4- Could you talk about the criteria of choosing the singers and musicians who participate in a WSO season?

Audience interaction and engagement

5- In a project like WSO, how important is to promote interaction with the audience and encourage the audience to participate in the performance?

6- To what extent can such participation stimulate them to talk about and/or engage with opera?

7- What are the practices/elements developed by WSO to create an interactive environment between the audience, artists and the story itself? Which one(s) do you think is the most effective in doing it?

Involvement with different departments of the organisation

8- The WSO is an educational project that involves other activities within the organisation, such as lifelong learning, outreach, schools and marketing. Could you please talk about how these areas are articulated with WSO aims, and to what extent they impact in a WSO season planning?

Project outcomes

9- Does the project have different benefits other than increasing opera attendance? Which ones?

10- Do you think the WSO project helps to build a stronger relationship between different communities, groups and Opera North? How?

Project future development and general view of opera today

11- What do you think are the strengthens of the project and is there anything that still could be done to increase audiences' attendance and interaction?

12- In your opinion, what are the barriers to opera attendance today?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix E WSO singers' and artistic director's interview questions

Your involvement with the project

1- How did you personally get involved with Whistle Stop Opera and how long have you been working in it?

2- You have different roles within the project: music director, writer, host, and singer. Could you please talk briefly about what each role entails?

3- Thinking about the particularities of these four roles, to what extent audiences' interaction (or the lack of it) influences your decision-making inside and outside the stage?

The process of building a Whistle Stop Opera performance

4- What are the criteria for selecting the opera extracts that will compose a version of WSO?

5- Considering the diversity of audiences you perform to (people with and without opera knowledge from different social and cultural backgrounds), how is the narrative constructed in a way that will bridge all these extracts in a cohesive and accessible story?

Audience participation and engagement

6- In your perception, how important is to promote interaction with the audience and encourage different forms of participation through WSO?

7- To what extent are audiences' interactions and responses discussed during the rehearsal week with the singers and musicians?

8- In your opinion, are there any barriers to opera attendance in traditional theatres and if so, how does WSO collaborate to break them down?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix F Opera North Education Director's interview questions

Project value

1- What impact do you believe WSO has had on different audiences?

2- What do you see as WSO value for audiences (schools, community groups, SingOn participants, etc.)?

3- Does the project have different benefits other than increasing opera attendance? Which ones?

Targeting audiences

4- How are audiences targeted for WSO project? How are you reaching them?

5- Do you believe the WSO project is helping to build a stronger relationship between different community groups and Opera North? How?

WSO connection with other areas of the organisation

6- This is an education project that involves other areas of Opera North, such as lifelong learning, outreach and schools' projects. Could you please talk about how these areas are articulated with WSO aims?

7- To what extent do WSO audiences' responses inform ON educational work and feed back into the organisation's mission?

8- How does the project engage with the aims of the new ACE 2020-2030 strategy?

Barriers to opera attendance

9- In your opinion, what are the barriers to opera attendance?

10- How is WSO helping to break them down?

11- To what extent can attendance at a WSO stimulate audiences to talk about and engage with opera?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix G The Hallé musicians' interview questions

Your music background and involvement with the project

1- Could you please talk about your music background (as a performer or/and as a music educator)?

2- How did you personally get involved with the project?

3- Does the Hallé educational department provide any specific training for musicians who are involved in this project? If not, would you be willing to participate and what kind of training do you think could be beneficial to you?

Project's structure, aims and outcomes

1- Do you think the project length (4 sessions and 1 culmination concert) is adequate to achieve the aims proposed by it? Is there anything that could have been done differently?

2- Does the project have different benefits than increasing music learning and supporting the curriculum?

3- Do you think the project is helping to build a stronger relationship between the children and classical music? How? And between the school and The Hallé?

4- What will you personally get out of this project?

Pupils' engagement, feedback

5- What is your perception about the overall involvement of the groups throughout the project? (Any specific example of increasing involvement/interest throughout the year, for instance?)

6- Why is it important for the children to be creative and how do you foster creativity through the project activities?

7- To what extent do children's responses inform your work in the classroom?

8- Does being involved in this project impact your work on the stage as well? How?

Barriers to classical music engagement

9- In your opinion, are there any barriers to classical music engagement? What are they? How does the Hallé Inspire project help to overcome these barriers?

Appendix H Gorse Hill School teachers' interview questions

Your involvement with classical music

1- Can I start by asking about your personal involvement with classical music? (Do you enjoy classical music, did you study music when you were a child, are you a regular concert attender?)

Music provision in you school

2- What is the existing music provision in the school?

3- What do the children do on a regular basis regarding music activities (sing, perform in specific dates, etc.?) What about arts provision in general?

4- To what extent has the project impacted on this context?

Learning activities

5- Have you had the chance to use the teachers' pack (or other resources) provided by the Hallé to do any activity around the project?

6- How have you used it?

Pupils' engagement

7- What is your perception about the overall involvement of your group throughout the project? Any specific example of pupil's increasing involvement, motivation, interest, etc. throughout the year?

Project outcomes

8- To what extent has the project helped your work in the classroom?

9- Do you think the project has different benefits than increasing music learning and supporting the curriculum? Which ones?

10- Is there anything that could has been done differently (regarding project structure, activities, culmination concert, etc.)?

11- Do you think the project is helping to build a stronger relationship between the children and classical music?

12- What do you get out of this experience?

Appendix I The Hallé Inspire Programme pupil's online survey

Please tell us about your experience in working with the Hallé at your school.

1- Had you heard about the Hallé before they came to your school?
     Yes ( )   No ( )

2- Had you ever heard an orchestra before?
     Yes ( )   No ( )

3- What did you most enjoy when you heard the Hallé play at the Bridgewater Hall?

4- Would you like to listen to an orchestra again?
     Yes ( )   No ( )   Maybe ( )

5- What have you enjoyed most about the Hallé project in your school?

6- Do you have any ideas about how we could make it better?

7- Has taking part in Hallé Inspire:

	a lot	a bit	don't know	not much	didn't help at all
helped you to become better at playing a music instrument?	○	○	○	○	○
helped you become better at singing?	○	○	○	○	○
helped you to use your own ideas to make up music?	○	○	○	○	○
helped you to learn about different types of music?	○	○	○	○	○
helped you to work better with your friends and classmates?	○	○	○	○	○

8- How did performing your music in front of an audience make you feel?

9- Would you like to work with the Hallé again?
    Yes ( )   No ( )   Maybe ( )

10- If your answer was yes or maybe, what sort of things would you like to do?

Thank you very much for telling us about working with the Hallé. Please do come and hear the orchestra again and bring your friends and families. We hope to visit your school again soon.

Appendix J The Hallé Inspire Project Manager's interview questions

Your work with The Hallé Orchestra, the project aims and structure

1- How long have you been working with the Hallé and what does your role as schools programme manager entail?

2- How was Hallé Inspire project created and what are the programme aims?

3- Working closely with the school curriculum is paramount within the project. Why is it so important to establish such a connection?

4- Creativity is described as one of the project's aims and outcomes. Why is it important for the children to be creative? How about the teachers?

5- How does the project promote creativity inside the classroom?

6- How does the project structure (length, activities planned, strategies) allow the aims and expected outcomes to be achieved?

Musicians selection and training opportunities

7- Could you please talk a bit about the criteria of choosing the musicians who participate in the project?

8- Does the organisation offer them any prior training before start working with the project? If yes, which ones, if not, what could be offered in order to benefit musicians working with the project?

Project outcomes and feedback

9- To what extent does the project impact on children and stimulate them to talk about and/or engage with classical music?

10- To what extent do participants' responses (children, teachers, school staff, parents) inform the Hallé education's strategies and policies?

11- In your opinion, what are the barriers of classical music involvement and concert attendance? How does the Halle Inspire project help to address them?

12- How would you like to see this kind of project develop? What do you think as the way forward?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix K The Hallé Orchestra Education Director's interview questions

Project structure and criteria to participate

1. Why choose to work with primary schools and what are the criteria of choosing the schools participating in the project?

2. What can the musicians add to the class experience?

3. Working closely with the school curriculum is paramount within the project. Why is it so important to stablish such a connection? How were the three working themes chosen?

4. What do you see as THI value beyond the classroom?

5. Creativity is emphasised as one of the project's aims and outcomes. Why is it important for the children to be creative and how does the project allow this to be achieved?

6. What training do you think is necessary for musicians working on this kind of project? How did the orchestra prepare the chosen musicians for the residency?

About Gorse Hill Primary School

7. You have attended the three culmination concerts at the school. What were your perceptions about the children's involvement and the performances delivered?

8. It was the first time working with Gorse Hill. How easy or difficult was the process of working with the school? Did the results match your expectations?

9. As observed, sometimes some children and even the teachers (especially the assistants) were somewhat reluctant to get involved with the activities proposed. In your perception, what might be the reason for this? How does the project help to address lower engagement with classical music in the school context?

Project outcomes

10. To what extent can participating in the project impact on children and their families, stimulating them to talk about and engage with classical music?

11. To what extent do audiences' responses (children, teachers, parents, school staff) inform the Hallé's education work and the organisation's mission?

Finally

In your opinion, what are the barriers for classical music involvement and how is the HI programme helping to address them?

Appendix L Participant information sheet

Participant information sheet

Researcher: Anahi Ravagnani

PhD programme of study - School of Performance and Cultural Industries

Dear participant

I am PhD student at the University of Leeds researching audiences' different kinds of participation in educational and outreach classical music programmes. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

The aim of my project is to investigate the activities involved in the processes of being engaged in classical music programmes and how participants can express their experiences. It also aims to explore to what extent such involvement can impact on participants and organisations. This will be done through participant observation, field notes and interviews. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

If you do decide to take part, you will keep this information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time during data collection. You do not have to give a reason for deciding to withdraw. However, you cannot withdraw from participation once the results have been anonymised, analysed or published (up to 6 weeks from the interviewing date). Should you wish to withdraw from the project please contact me at pcar@leeds.ac.uk

The interview will not be any longer than 15 minutes and will involve a questionnaire with multiple answers about your profile and open questions regarding your perception on the performance you have attended. You are not obliged to answer every question, and you will be given opportunity to make your own comments about the subject of my project. The interviews will be done by myself and I will make notes

accordingly. Your name or any detail that could identify you will remain anonymous. In case of using data for further publications, conferences speeches, seminars, as well as data that could be shared with the other partners in this research, will be also kept anonymised.

I do not foresee any disadvantages of taking part in this research.
By agreeing in participate, you will be helping me as a researcher and a professional to better understand the different forms of participation in classical music, to identify the potential barriers in classical music attendance, explore the variety of forms people engage with classical music and investigate the impact classical music educational programmes have on people's cultural lives.

If you agree to take part in this research, please complete the consent form and return it to me. If you have further questions following the interview, please contact me at pcar@leeds.ac.uk or my main supervisor, Dr Adam Strickson at a.j.strickson@leeds.ac.uk

Kind regards,

Anahi Ravagnani

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee on 08/10/2018, ethics reference FAHC 18-002

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Appendix M Informed consent form

Appendix M – Informed consent form

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Consent to take part in the research: Listening to what audiences have to say: a critical analysis of audiences' participation in classical music educational programmes	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during data collection without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. However, I cannot withdraw from participation if the results have been anonymised, analysed or published (**up to 6 weeks from interviewing date**). In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. The lead researcher is Anahi Ravagnani (School of Performance and Cultural Industries). Should you have any questions about this research or wish to withdraw from the project please contact the researcher at pcar@leeds.ac.uk	
I give permission for members of the research team and partner organisations to have access to my **anonymised** responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report that results from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be stored and used in relevant future research in an **anonymised** form.	
I understand that if my words are audio recorded and I wish to **remain anonymous**, my name and role will not be linked to the research materials.	
I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	
I understand that the lead researcher may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if she agrees to preserve the **anonymity** of the information as requested in this form.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	*Anahi Ravagnani*
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee on 08/10/2018, ethics reference FAHC 18-002