RISK AND REWARD IN CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT ATTENDANCE

INVESTIGATING THE ENGAGEMENT OF 'ART' AND 'ENTERTAINMENT' AUDIENCES WITH A REGIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN THE UK

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Abstract

Classical music organisations across the UK are under increasing pressure to grow and diversify their audiences. 'Populist' concerts are designed to attract new audience members by being more accessible and informal than core classical concerts, with programmes structured around well-known short pieces within a broadly-defined classical repertoire. Populist programming has been criticised in mainstream press for 'dumbing down' classical music in favour of attracting larger audiences. This thesis investigates how the distinction between populist and core programming is perceived and negotiated by audiences for a regional symphony orchestra, in order to explore cultural hierarchies operating in classical music today.

This thesis is the product of a three-year Collaborative Doctoral Award with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). It was intended to supplement the orchestra's existing knowledge of their audiences, whilst reflecting on the value and challenges of conducting academic research within the arts industry. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 42 CBSO attenders from core and populist classical concerts, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to investigate how participants evaluate and assimilate their experiences of live classical music. The interviews explored participants' musical engagement over a lifetime, considering: routes into concert-going, the decision to attend, the value of concert-going to the individual, the live concert experience, and their views on the classical music industry. This qualitative study was complemented by quantitative analysis of the orchestra's customer records and ticket sales data.

This thesis questions the relevance of the inherited model of 'barriers' to concert-going in understanding non-attendance. Instead, the analysis reveals that the decision to attend can be understood through an effort-risk-reward framework; audience members assess the amount of effort needed to attend a concert against their confidence that it will be enjoyable. For all participants, enjoyment of a concert was comprised of a mixture of 'aesthetic' and 'extrinsic' forms of value, thus complicating traditional models of 'art' and 'entertainment' audiences. In highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of attendance, this analysis challenges the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about attenders' motivations for concert-going from their ticket booking history alone. This study reveals that audience members believe there to be 'right' and 'wrong' ways of listening, and suggests that making concerts more informal and less elitist, and providing attenders with support to engage with the music, may be beneficial to attracting new audiences.

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Acknowledgements

I must begin by expressing my gratitude to the 42 interviewees in this study for giving up their time to take part. The richness of the findings is testament to how freely and openly they spoke about their experiences.

Publications

Dearn, L. K., Gross, J., Price, S. M. & Pitts, S. (forthcoming). The listening experience of the concert hall: what do we learn about the experience and value of concert listening from researching with classical music audiences today? *Proceedings of Listening to Music: People, Practice and Experiences, Royal College of Music, London, 24–25 October 2015.*

Including material on the value of qualitative research from Chapter 4 and on the role of companions in concert choice from Chapter 10.

Dearn, L. K. & Price, S. M. (2016). Sharing music: social and communal aspects of concert-going. *Networking Knowledge*, 9/2, pp.1–20.

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Price, S. M. (2015). Academic and commercial research: bridging the gap. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 12/2, pp.168–173.

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Abbreviations

ACE   Arts Council England

BBC   British Broadcasting Corporation

BICS   Birmingham International Concert Season

CANA   Culturally-Aware Non-Attender

CBSO   City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

DCMS   Department of Culture, Media and Sport

NEA   National Endowment for the Arts

THSH   Town Hall, Symphony Hall

U3A   University of the Third Age

1   Introduction: Classical Music and its Audiences

The future of live classical music in the UK is in question. Concerts are attended by a very small and homogenous section of the population, with audiences being primarily white, affluent, university-educated and middle-aged or older (Chan et al., 2008; DCMS, 2016b). As UK state funding for the arts is shrinking (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2011; Harvey, 2016), arts organisations are under increasing pressure to make a case for public funding, leading to numerous cultural value studies with an over-emphasis on the instrumental, rather than individual, impact of the arts (ACE, 2014; Belfiore, 2006; 2012; Belfiore & Bennett, 2007; 2010). This case for support is made yet more difficult for classical music due to the art form overwhelmingly attracting a highly privileged segment of the population (Glennie, 2014a; Larson, 2014). The age profile of the audience is also of great concern; arts organisations are struggling to attract the next generation of concert-goers, leading to uncertainty over the continuation of live classical music in the UK (Kolb, 2001b).

Classical music has been described as facing not only a crisis of popularity, but also of legitimacy (Johnson, 2002, p.3). Johnson has highlighted how classical music's formality and 'discursive' nature is at odds with the immediacy of popular music and, as avid blogger on the classical music crisis, Greg Sandow (n.d.), has claimed, with an increasingly 'informal […] spontaneous […] creative and […] diverse' society. Similarly, Sloboda and Ford (2011) have noted that classical music concerts are often predictable, impersonal, passive events based on established repertoire, whereas audiences are increasingly demanding experiences which are unpredictable, personal, and require active engagement with new work. Others, however, have challenged the assumption that classical music is in a state of crisis, as I discuss further below (Dibben, 2004; Silpayamanant, 2013a; 2013b; Taruskin, 2007).

Against this backdrop, classical music organisations are fighting hard to expand concert audiences through initiatives such as alternative concert formats (CultureHive, 2013), crossover events, special offers, and apps (Crawford et al., 2014; Gosling et al., 2016). 'Populist' concerts form part of this initiative. These are orchestral concerts which feature excerpts of well-known classical music, West End musicals, film soundtracks, and orchestrated versions of pop songs. They are designed to feature music that could be familiar to those without prior interest in classical music, as shown by marketing that informs potential audience members

which television shows or films they might recognise the music from. These concerts tend to have a more relaxed atmosphere, less strict audience etiquette, and can feature presenters and visual spectacles such as fireworks, alongside the music.

I am calling these 'populist concerts', in reference to 'pops' orchestras and to 'popera', the populist operatic programming which has more commonly been established as a term (McCormick, 2004; Mitchell, 2014). However, 'populism' is also appropriate because, in colloquial and political usage, it describes a desire for accessibility and popularity, at the risk of sacrificing integrity (Bale, van Kessel & Stijn, 2011; Lister 2010; McGuigan, 1992). I refer to traditional, classical concerts as 'core' concerts; they are the mainstay of symphony orchestras across the UK as described by Small (1998) in *Musicking*. It is a term I have borrowed from my partner arts organisation, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, alluding to the fact that this forms the core of their concert season. 'Core' and 'populism' are deliberately value-laden terms; these two formats of classical music programming in arts organisations in the UK and further afield form an illuminating case study for exploring ideas of audience development, cultural hierarchy and the position of classical music today in UK society.

The distinction between core and populist programming is perhaps best understood through the UK's two classical music radio stations: BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. Radio 3, part of the publicly-funded British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), began life as the Third Programme, a nightly arts programme established in 1946 to bring high-brow cultural fare to its listeners (Carpenter & Doctor, 1997). Over its 70-year history, Radio 3 has focussed on classical music with presenters aiming to 'inform and educate the audience about music and culture' and 'expand [listeners'] cultural horizons' (BBC, 2010). In practice, this means Radio 3 broadcasts full-length pieces and live concerts, and introduces music with information about its composer, style, or cultural context. The BBC is also responsible for programming the BBC Proms, an annual summer festival of classical music in London.

Classic FM, on the other hand, is a commercial radio station established in 1992. Its remit is specifically to 'break down some of the barriers which have grown up around classical music' and to make classical music 'a relevant part of the modern lifestyle' (Classic FM, 2009). Classic FM's programming centres on playing well-known works, often shortened to single movements or excerpts. They take calls from listeners, allow people to request pieces of music, and have an annual 'Hall of Fame' where listeners vote for their favourite pieces of music. Included in this Hall of Fame

are many film scores and a growing number of video game soundtracks, challenging the outer limits of the category 'classical music'. There are ongoing online debates around the classification of video game soundtrack and a campaign amongst video game promoters to get soundtracks into Classic FM's public-voted Hall of Fame (Classic FM, 2014; see also the Facebook page 'Keep Video Games Music in the Classic FM Hall of Fame', @ClassicVGMusic, n.d.). It is worth noting that Classic FM has a far greater listenership than BBC Radio 3, with over three times as many people tuning in on a weekly basis between July and September 2015 (RAJAR, 2015).

There are several key concepts which surround the core/populist debate. Populist programming is believed to be more accessible and immediate, whereas core is comparatively challenging and requiring sustained work on the part of the listener. Written into Classic FM's policy is the belief that classical music can be enjoyed without listeners being knowledgeable about the art form (Classic FM, 2009), whereas Radio 3 is built on the principle that some knowledge about music increases enjoyment (BBC, 2010; see also Johnson, 2002, pp.22–23).

The belief in the broad appeal of populist concert has seen this form of programming being used as a tool for cultivating new audiences for classical music. In 2010, the then director of the BBC Proms festival, Roger Wright, commented on the power of populism to bring in new family audiences as a form of audience development (Lister, 2010; for a discussion of the ideology and tactics of audience development, see Kawashima, 2000). Some of the features of populist concerts – the programming of familiar music, the relaxation of concert etiquette, having presenters introduce the pieces – directly address the misgivings of non-attenders and have proved to be much less intimidating for first-timers than core concerts (see Dobson & Pitts 2011; Kolb 2000). However, it is unclear whether the ultimate aim of populist audience development is to wean people on to more difficult core concerts or whether arts organisations are happy for newcomers to forever remain populist attenders.

Furthermore, this ambiguity over the function of populist music strikes at the heart of the debate over the future of classical music. If populist concerts are a gateway to core programmes, then their function is to cultivate listeners to be receptive to traditional classical performances as they currently stand. However, if populist concerts are a legitimate form of classical consumption in their own right, they are evidence of the classical music industry adapting to the needs of audiences today.

Media responses to the classical music crisis all cluster around these two proposed solutions. On the one hand, classical music concert culture is still seen as a valid form of presentation, and therefore arts organisations and the education sector need to do a better job of educating audiences to engage with this music. Alternatively, classical music is incongruous with today's society and needs to adapt to better suit the desires of contemporary audiences (for examples of these two views, see Clark, 2013; Edwards, 2013; Furness 2015a; Rhodes, 2015).

Populist programming has received a great deal of criticism in the media. As Spencer (2003) has noted, Classic FM 'is often criticised for presenting classical music as though it were simply "easy listening" without offering emotional challenge or mental stimulation to listeners' (p.332). Criticism for populist programming is especially fervent in relation to the musical activities of the BBC. When it was announced that the 2014 BBC Proms festival would include a 'Sports Prom' of television programme soundtracks, as well as a night of orchestrated music by the Pet Shop Boys, the BBC were accused of 'dumbing down' the festival (Glennie, 2014b; see similar comments regarding other Proms seasons: Dunn, 2013; Pollard, 2013; Rushton, 2015a). In addition, in recent years, BBC Radio 3 has adopted many features of Classic FM's programming in an attempt to broaden its audience. Radio 3 has sacrificed specialist music broadcasts in favour of shows dedicated to short excerpts of music that feature listener call-ins, leading to accusations of it 'dumbing down' to attract a larger audience (see Furness, 2014; 2015b; Glennie, 2014c; Rushton, 2015a; Ward, 2011; White, 2014). This criticism has largely centred on the idea that populism is undermining the integrity of classical music in favour of commercialised popularity.

Is populism a threat to the integrity of classical music? Or is it a means for the art form to find the next generation of concert-goers? What role will populism have in the future of classical music? To understand the contemporary 'threat' of populism, it is necessary to re-trace its origins back to the nineteenth century.

1.1   Cultural history of populist programming

The 'core' concert only emerged in the nineteenth century. Prior to this, 'miscellany' concerts dominated, consisting of a mixture of 'opera numbers, concertos, instrumental solos, overtures, or symphonies, and possibly a string quartet or a song' (Weber, 2008, p.1). Concert programmers freely mixed what we would now consider to be classical and popular pieces. Levine (1988) has shown that at that time there was not a distinct line drawn between high and low forms of culture.

However, over the course of the nineteenth century, a new style of concert was developed. Programmes became more unified, moving towards fewer pieces, played in their entirety, purging the concert of all music that was not considered to be strictly 'classical' (DiMaggio, 1982; 2012; Gunn, 1997; Levine, 1988; Weber, 1977; 2001).

Numerous authors have examined the causes of this monumental shift in concert programming. Gunn (1997) has highlighted the development of a Romantic aesthetic, in which classical music listening changed from a form of sociable entertainment to something that should be enjoyed through insular, reflective engagement. In this period, audiences grew quiet as a culture of still and silent listening replaced the more vocal audiences of the eighteenth century (Johnson, 1995; Sennett, 1977). Core concerts were also the product of an emerging notion of the classical canon, with programmes increasingly built around canonical 'masterpieces', moving away from novelties of the earlier miscellany concerts (Weber, 2001, p.129).

This radical change in how classical music was presented in concerts and listened to by its audiences was symptomatic of a shift in consumption of all forms of art into highbrow and lowbrow culture (see DiMaggio 1984; 2012; Levine, 1988). During the nineteenth century, highbrow 'art' was purified from connections with lowbrow, popular culture. As part of this process, different funding arrangements were established for art and entertainment. Art was increasingly funded by donors, effectively removing it from the marketplace, whereas lowbrow entertainment remained a commercial endeavour and was consequently vulnerable to the demands of its audiences. Furthermore, a new relationship between artist and audience was established at core concerts, with stricter forms of etiquette and the audience being taught how to engage with the art in a purely aesthetic way. The development of core concerts was part of a radical reorganisation of the arts into a cultural hierarchy.

However, core concerts were not successful enough to be financially self-sufficient; thus, miscellany concerts continued to be programmed in order to sustain organisations. Miscellaneous programming continued in the form of promenade concerts in England (Gunn, 1997, pp.219–221; Weber, 2008) and 'pops' concerts in America (DiMaggio, 2012). These populist concerts were designed to support core concerts in two ways: firstly, their ticket sales ensured that organisations could fund series of core concerts, but secondly, they were intended to be a means of developing an audience for core concerts. Gunn (1997) has noted that the Hallé pops were

praised for 'awakening popular taste for classical music' (p.219). From the very inception of populism, it has had both commercial and audience development agendas.

In addition, the rhetoric around populist and core concerts of this era is as value-laden as recent criticism of populism. Levine (1988) has described how those in cultural institutions felt that high art had to be 'rescued' from the tastes of the audience, who, despite organisers' best attempts to educate them, still attended populist concerts of familiar music in far greater numbers than core programmes. Audiences were therefore blamed for the continuation of populist programming. With the division of classical music into higher and lower forms of consumption came the assumption that there were two discrete audiences for the art form. Scott (2016) has shown that, for a variety of music genres, there is an historical belief in the existence of an entertainment audience who do not consume the music in a serious, aesthetic or legitimate way. Accompanying this is a sense of danger that the entertainment audience may corrupt the art form.

Populist concerts have in particular been criticised for featuring short excerpts of pieces of classical music. Musicologist Donald Tovey (1935) described these excerpts as 'bleeding chunks' (p.71). His oft-cited term suggests that playing only excerpts is to butcher classical music, to take a living organism and reduce it to pieces of food for consumption (see also Kennedy, 2006; Ridley, 1993). His sentiments are echoed in Adorno's (1938) criticism of salon music:

> It blatantly snatches the reified bits and pieces out of their context and sets them up as a potpourri. It destroys the multilevel unity of the whole work and brings forward only isolated popular passages (pp.298–299).

Adorno expresses a sense that excerpts destroy the integrity of a piece of work and are automatically of a lower artistic value than performances of the work as a whole. In addition, Tovey's comparison of excerpts to meat hints at a difference in listening; excerpts are designed for consumption, whereas whole pieces of music are living organisms to be engaged with. It goes without saying that Tovey and Adorno condemn this style of programming, not just on aesthetic terms; their comments are couched in ethical language implying a 'right' and a 'wrong' way of presenting classical music.

However, as Levine (1988) and DiMaggio (1982; 2012) have shown, this idea of there being a correct way to consume classical music is not a natural phenomenon but a construct of the social and cultural pressures of the mid-nineteenth century. Their work also demonstrates that populism has been around for as long as core

concerts, casting doubt over the fears that it is a 'threat' to classical music. This historical overview shows that current criticisms for populism are not new, and that the same fears over commercialisation, dumbing down have always been present.

1.2   Populism, crisis and cultural hierarchy

One of the few musicologists to have addressed the issue of populism in recent years is Julian Johnson (2002). In his seminal book, *Who Needs Classical Music?*, Johnson fervently defends the value of classical music in the twenty-first century. Johnson, later echoed by Kramer (2008), claims that classical music fulfils a different function to popular music, its value lying in its 'discursive' nature, which requires critical engagement from the listener and maintains distance from everyday life (p.34). Johnson laments the fact that, in today's society, classical music is forced to compete with popular music in a marketplace which favours immediacy over challenge. Johnson claims that Classic FM presents classical music as part of popular culture, presenting only the most popular and accessible excerpts of classical music in contrast to the rather than the 'school-like' tone of Radio 3 (see also Johnson, 2003).

While Johnson's argument is persuasive, it relies on the problematic and hierarchical division of highbrow art and lowbrow entertainment (see Levine, 1988). Johnson's thoughts are directly descended from Adorno's (1941) belief that popular music precludes aesthetic engagement; indeed, Johnson's disregard for the aesthetic and discursive nature of popular music has been noted by numerous reviewers (Adler, 2003; Dibben, 2004; Perrine, 2014; Taruskin, 2007; Spencer, 2003). Taruskin (2007) has accused Johnson of retreating to defensive aestheticism in trying to justify classical music's superiority over other musical genres. As I discuss in Chapters 2.5 and 2.6, this primacy of aesthetic value has a legacy in audience studies to the present day. Johnson's argument for the supremacy of classical music rests on the division of socially-valuable popular culture and aesthetically-valuable art, however, sociologist Hennion (2002) has argued that the value of music can never be defined in wholly social or aesthetic terms (see also Looseley, 2006).

The relevance of the cultural hierarchy in contemporary society has been repeatedly challenged. Levine (1988) and DiMaggio (1982; 2012) have demonstrated that the idea of a cultural hierarchy is not in any way a 'natural' division of consumption, but a social construct of nineteenth-century, co-opting the arts as a means of distinguishing social status. Peterson and Kern (1996) have suggested that social distinction is no longer articulated by highbrow, snobbish consumption as found by

Bourdieu (1984), but by increasingly omnivorous tastes, marked by the consumption of both highbrow and lowbrow culture (see also Peterson, 1992; Warde, Wright & Gayo-Cal, 2007; 2008). Peterson and Kern (1996) have clarified that their cultural omnivore did not like everything 'indiscriminately', but displayed an 'openness' towards all forms of art and the potential to appreciate anything (p.904; see also Peterson, 1992). This implies that the cultural hierarchy is still present, but the modes of distinction have changed.

However, the theory of the cultural omnivore has since been challenged, sparking a series of research projects around the consumption of culture in the twenty-first century. Researchers have questioned how the design of research projects may be giving an inaccurate view of the cultural hierarchy. Furthermore, Hennion (2001) has suggested that qualitative research may be distorting the picture of the cultural hierarchy, as participants have become 'over-sociologised', giving too self-conscious and apologetic accounts of their cultural engagement (p.5). Chan and Goldthorpe (2007a) have alerted readers to the fact that consumption studies are based on self-reporting, with no means of cross-checking participants' actual arts consumption. The Audience Spectrum tool launched by the Arts Council England (ACE) and Audience Agency is addressing this issue by amalgamating self-reporting through surveys with box office ticket data (Audience Agency, n.d. a).

Furthermore, Biron (2009) has highlighted the role of the researcher in constructing notions of highbrow and lowbrow cultural engagement. He notes how many cultural consumption studies used pre-determined ideas about which art forms are designated as highbrow, middlebrow or lowbrow. Questioning whether audiences draw the same distinctions, he calls for more work to understand the '"in-between-ness" of the everyday audience member' (p.334). As Gayo-Cal and Savage (2009) have noted in their analysis of the UK Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion study, classical music is often used as the 'litmus test' for consumption of high-brow culture (p.5). However, in the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion survey, classical music was the 'single most popular musical genre' amongst participants, with 42% of their respondents reporting positive inclination to classical music (p.8). This suggests that classical music may be a false indicator of highbrow engagement.

Gayo-Cal and Savage (2009) analysed classical music consumption in the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion surveys and interviews, finding two groups of classical music listeners who consumed the music in radically different ways (see also Savage & Gayo-Cal, 2011). They found 'experts' who listened critically and described

classical music as 'energising', and second, much larger segment, who consumed classical music as a form of relaxation. This second form of consumer was predicted by Chan and Goldthorpe (2007b) who termed the phrase 'Classic FM effect' to describe the large rise in classical music consumption as easy-listening (p.7). This suggests that populism has developed classical music audience, but has also served to divide listeners into two segments, strikingly similar to the 'art' and 'entertainment' audience described by Scott (2016).

However, the position of classical music within the cultural hierarchy is complicated further by research in cultural studies, which has placed populist classical music and, especially, popera, within the framework of 'high-pop' (Chandler, 2009; Evans, 1999; Jackaway, 1999; Llewellyn, 2010). According to cultural theorist Jim Collins (2002), high-pop was a movement that emerged in the 1990s around the 'popularisation of good taste' (p.1). It describes the repackaging of high-art for a mass market however, as noted by Collins (2002) and Jackaway (1999), this dissemination capitalises on the high cultural status of the original works of art. Jackaway's (1999) study into the first 'crossover classical' hits in the 1990s found a sense of 'panic' in the reception of these recordings that the boundary between high art and popular culture would be eroded (p.127), which bears a striking similarity to the concerns over 'dumbing down' that surround Radio 3 and Classic FM today. Nevertheless, if Collins and Jackaway's analyses are to be believed, the popularisation of classical music and the 'Classic FM effect' are not eroding but reinforcing boundaries between high art and popular culture.

Populist classical concerts therefore occupy an ambiguous space between highbrow and lowbrow culture. On the one hand, populist programmes are built on high art pieces, with the connotations of aesthetic engagement, authenticity and detachment from market forces that highbrow culture implies. On the other hand, they are a commercial endeavour, capitalising on the notion that classical music presented in this way has a much broader appeal than core classical concerts. They illuminate problems with the highbrow/lowbrow model, depending on whether it is defined by the art form or by the mode of consumption.

1.3   The study

The research presented in this thesis was the product of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award between the University of Sheffield and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). During my three-year partnership with the CBSO, I developed an understanding of how they as an

organisation conceptualise their audiences (see Chapter 3.3). I became intrigued by the role of their populist 'Friday Night Classics' concerts in their musical offering and audience development strategy. Was this series intended to wean people on to core classical music? Or was it designed to appeal to a separate 'entertainment' audience'? Both views were represented amongst the staff, but there seemed to be unacknowledged tension between the two ideologies. I began to wonder how audiences conceptualised this populist series, and whether they saw their consumption as part of the cultural hierarchy or, as Biron (2009) suggests, find the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture irrelevant in their arts engagement. My primary research question was therefore:

- How do audiences perceive and negotiate the divide between core and populist classical music programmes?

The aims of this research were:

- To understand the value of core and populist concerts to current attenders.
- To understand the decision to attend core and populist concerts.
- To investigate populist concerts as audience development tools.
- To build a more nuanced picture of these two audiences, especially questioning the assumptions made about attenders who look for 'entertainment' in classical concerts.

In addition, working with an external partner has brought to light many methodological differences between commercial and academic research. Therefore, this project had three further aims:

- To demonstrate the value of in-depth qualitative research in understanding audiences holistically, as rounded individuals.
- To find ways of translating the outcomes of rich, qualitative research into usable findings for arts organisations.
- To explore the role of the academic researcher in the commercial arts industry.

This was primarily a qualitative research project, an approach I chose for two reasons. Firstly, I felt that there was much to learn from exploring the musical engagement of individuals holistically. As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, there are many assumptions made about the engagement of more frequent and less frequent audiences, which build on over-simplistic models of segmentation. Using in-depth

interviews provided me with an opportunity to present a much more nuanced view of these supposed 'two audiences', to add qualitative understanding to debates around art and entertainment in classical music. Secondly, I designed this project to address gaps in knowledge at the CBSO. Though they had carried out many research projects before my arrival and regularly updated their understanding of their audiences through ticket sales data, they lacked the resources to carry out such a time-intensive qualitative study (see Chapters 3.3 and 3.4).

I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with 42 concert attenders recruited from core and populist concerts. The interviews offered a space to explore participants' routes into concert-going, how they selected which concerts to attend, the value of the live concert experience, ways of listening, as well as their attitudes towards art and entertainment in classical music. Interviewees were recruited via quantitative surveys, statistics from which are included in the thesis where they enrich the discussion, as are analyses I have conducted of the CBSO's ticket sales data. The semi-structured interviews, however, remain the core of this research project, as I discuss further in Chapter 4.

1.4   The structure of the thesis

The organisation of this thesis has been tailored to address the research aims of the project. Firstly, though the data is presented thematically, steps have been taken to try and preserve the holistic accounts of engagement gained from the interviews. Each participant has been given a pseudonym and therefore, their comments can be traced throughout the thesis. In addition, many of the chapters contain short case studies which describe one attender's views in more detail. Quantitative information on their socio-demographics and attendance can be found in Appendix 2, alongside a series of pen portraits of each participant to provide additional information on their engagement and attitudes to classical music. Not only does this help to present them as three-dimensional people, but also serves to illustrate the extent to which different aspects of their experiences and attitudes interact.

Secondly, the structure of the thesis has been designed to be user-friendly to a variety of readers. Read from start to finish, it is an account of the CBSO's audiences and an investigation into ideas of cultural hierarchy within a classical music organisation. It is structured, unconventionally, into 15 short thematic chapters, to enable researchers and arts practitioners alike to 'dip in' to themes, with an executive summary provided as Appendix 1. Over the course of this project, it became clear that arts practitioners encounter difficulties when faced with academic

texts (see Price, 2015; Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011). The structure has therefore been designed to strike a balance between academic and commercial presentations of audience research, providing the depth of an academic study, but the focus and 'usability' of a commercial report. The executive summary (Appendix 1), a common feature of a commercial research report but unusual within an academic publication, provides both an overview of the main findings of the thesis, as well as allowing readers to orientate themselves through the thesis and find chapters that are of most interest.

As the focus of this study has been the experiences of classical music audiences, the following chapter contains a review of previous audience research from both academic and commercial sectors, two bodies of research which are limited by a lack of awareness of each other's contributions to understanding audiences. In Chapter 2.1, I discuss the market for classical music, in which I show that audiences are a small and homogenous segment of the UK population. In Chapter 2.2, I introduce the idea of audience development. I go on to evaluate previous research with non-attenders of classical music concerts, showing that their anxieties centre on ideas of elitism, formality and the difficulty of engagement. Following this, I question the usefulness of the term 'barriers' for understanding non-attendance (for example, Obalil, 1999). In Chapter 2.4, I examine the motivations for attending a live concert in comparison to a recording. In the final section of Chapter 2, I show how definitions of the value of classical music, though growing in nuance and complexity through empirical studies, are restricted in scope by the lack of research with infrequent attenders and those with lower levels of engagement. In addition, value studies have served to reinforce ideas of cultural hierarchy by perpetuating the distinction between extrinsic value and aesthetic engagement.

In Chapter 3 I introduce the partner organisation in this study, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). I first situate it within the arts eco-system of Birmingham, a regional city in the West Midlands of England, before discussion the CBSO's origins, current programming strategy and funding streams. In Chapter 3.3, I describe how I came to familiarise myself with the organisation and the impact this understanding had on my choice of research question. In Chapter 3.4, I reflect on my negotiation of being both an insider and an outsider to the organisation. I also consider to what extent the CBSO acted as gatekeepers or research participants in their own right in this project. Following this, in Chapter 4, I discuss the methods I have employed in this study, exploring the challenges of working between academic and commercial research sectors (Chapter 4.1). I then

discuss my approach to understanding audiences, through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, as I was concerned with how participants evaluate, assimilate and make sense of their engagement (Chapter 4.2). In Chapter 4.3, I introduce the 42 interview participants and in Chapter 4.4, I discuss my methods of analysis for this qualitative data. Appendices 2–4 contain further information about the participants, the interview schedule, and the post-concert questionnaire.

Thereafter, the research findings are presented thematically. Each chapter addresses a different aspect of engagement, with multiple cross-references to related discussions. The views of core and populist attenders are compared to each other and to inherited ideas about the 'two audiences'. Roughly speaking, the 10 data chapters proceed chronologically through a participant's engagement with classical music, from their routes to attendance (Chapter 5), to choosing a concert (Chapters 6–10), to the live concert experience (Chapters 11–13) and finally, to reflecting on themselves as listeners and on the culture of classical music more generally (Chapters 13–14).

In Chapter 5, I look at populist concerts as an audience development strategy, exploring the relationship between knowledge and routes to attendance. While, amongst the dataset, populist concerts did act as routes into concert-going for five participants with no prior knowledge or experience of classical music, the relationship between knowledge and core/populist concert choice was far from straightforward. At the end of the chapter, I show that participants also believe that there are two distinct audiences for classical music, even when this contradicts their own attendance.

To understand the value of core and populist attendance, I investigated how participants made the decision to attend a concert. Unsatisfied with the inherited term 'barriers' (Obalil, 1999), in Chapter 6, I demonstrate how a new effort-risk-reward framework is a much more useful tool for understanding concert selection. I show that audiences attend concerts when the perceived reward of the evening is believed to outweigh the effort of attending. While arts organisations take steps to alter this balance, audience members also undertake their own risk-reducing strategies. Chapters 7–10 feature the effort-risk-reward framework in practice to investigate how populist and core attenders choose which concerts to attend, through programming, familiarity, artists, loyalty and social context of concert-going.

In Chapters 11–13, I explore the value of live concert attendance. Chapter 11 presents participants' thoughts on the 'extrinsic' value of attendance; in Chapter 12, I consider 'aesthetic' engagement. However, I show throughout this section that extrinsic and aesthetic value are inextricably linked and are exhibited by both populist and core audiences alike. In Chapter 13, though I continue to explore the experience of being in-concert through discussing ways of listening, I also move on to participants' reflections on themselves as listeners and begin to consider their views of classical music more generally. In Chapter 14, the final chapter of data analysis, I explore what participants believed the role of populism to be in the classical music industry today, covering ideas of audience development, snobbery and elitism in the art form.

This study expands on understanding of how the cultural hierarchy operates today within the classical music sector. By using semi-structured interviews, I explore how various aspects of classical music engagement relate to one another, building a more nuanced picture of core and populist audiences. This study brings much-needed understanding of how audiences engage with populist programming. By investigating the views of audience members with a range of different frequencies and choices of attendance, this study presents a diversified view of engagement, of the value of attendance, and of the cultural hierarchy in classical music today.

2   Understanding Audiences

Audience research exists as two discrete bodies of knowledge from the commercial and academic sectors, each with limited awareness of the contributions of the other field (for a history of this divide, see Barker, Mathijs & Turnbull, 2015; Katz & Katz, 2016). Overall, there are very few commercial reports that refer to academic texts and vice versa, although it should be said that arts management scholars often successfully span academic and commercial spheres (for example, O'Reilly & Kerrigan, 2010). As I have discussed elsewhere (Price, 2015), this divide is partly caused by a difference in research aims. Stereotypically, academic research could be seen to be concerned with knowledge for knowledge's sake, without practical application; commercial research is aimed at informing business decisions and could, conversely, be seen as too concerned with the bottom line to ask the most interesting questions (see also Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011). While this is an over-simplification of the issue, these preconceptions can result in researchers struggling to see the value of studies from the other sector.

Academic musicology has historically ignored the role of the audience or context of performance in understanding musical aesthetics, until the emergence of what Born (2010) has termed the 'practice turn' in musicology. From the early 1990s, the focus of music research began to shift from understanding music as a text to investigating music as a social practice. The most striking example for this thesis is Small's (1998) *Musicking*. In this monograph, Small analyses a classical symphony orchestra concert as a social ritual, directly countering the tendency to idealise classical music as functionless, in comparison to other forms of music, which are analysed for their social value. While, for many years, musicologists had studied the people who make and consume music within non-western music cultures and in popular music studies, Nettl (1995) described how classical music was the last 'bastion' of music which had not yet been studied ethnographically (p.2). Yet, even by 2008, Cook spoke of the 'ethnomusicologisation' of this field, declaring that music scholars were 'all ethnomusicologists now' (Cook, 2008, p.65).

Today, the academic study of music audiences is a highly interdisciplinary field. Many key concert audience research texts come from business studies or arts management schools, unsurprising given their long history of research in the arts industry (such as Kolb, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2009). Nevertheless, arts consumption has also been studied in sociology (most notably by Bourdieu, 1984), cultural studies (for example Collins, 2002), media studies (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998),

psychology (Earl, 2001; North & Hargreaves, 2007), and within individual arts disciplines. Within the academic study of music there has been an extraordinarily diverse range of approaches to understanding music listening, from quantitative to qualitative work, physiological monitoring to talk-based and creative methods, from studying the effects of background music to exploring special aesthetic experiences, from experimental studies to understanding engagement in everyday life (Bull, 2000; Clarke, 2005; Clarke, Dibben & Pitts, 2010; DeNora, 2000; Sloboda, 2010).

Audience research which is carried out within the music industry can be broadly divided into two categories. The first of these is that which is carried out by arts organisations on their own audiences and local market, either conducted by members of staff in-house or by commissioned market research agencies. This research usually remains confidential within companies to retain a competitive edge over other organisations (Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011, p.461). However, as Baker (2000/2007) has pointed out, this has led to repetition of very similar projects across numerous organisations. The re-publication of his report in 2007 is telling of an endemic problem with research repetition in the arts industry which may not only be caused by confidentiality, but also by a belief in the specificity of research, and an unwillingness to extrapolate findings across different locations or more than a few years into the future. I have written elsewhere about the short 'expiry date' of commercial research compared to academic studies (Price, 2015).

In contrast, the second category of research, that which is carried out by national bodies or funding agencies such as the governmental Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE) and used to influence policy, is widely disseminated. Government organisations have far greater resources at their disposal, often carrying out much larger research projects than many academic studies. These have been a particularly useful source of data on the market for classical music, the socio-demographics of the audience, and long-term trends in engagement. Since 2005, the DCMS in partnership with ACE have conducted a continuous survey of sporting and cultural engagement (see Bunting et al., 2008; for a summary of research at the ACE prior to the Taking Part survey, see Hutton, Bridgwood & Dust, 2004). The Taking Part survey is completed by over 10,000 people each year in England. The incredibly large sample size and longitudinal nature of the Taking Part survey make it one of the most reliable records of concert attendance in the UK, however it asks very few attitudinal questions, documenting the scope of engagement, but not the nature or value of concert-going.

Commercial research is markedly less diverse in research methods than academic research, tending to favour quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups over more exploratory or creative methods. However, researchers in this area can enrich their studies with analysis of sales data that is often out of reach of academic scholars. Indeed, from industry and academic conferences and workshops I have attended over the course of this project, there appears to be an increasing trend towards arts organisations collaborating by pooling their ticket data to get a better understanding of the arts consumption of their local area. Furthermore, ACE and the Audience Agency launched their 'Audience Spectrum' tool in 2014 in which all National Portfolio Organisations (who receive high levels of state funding) are obliged to contribute their ticket data for analysis and conduct surveys with their audiences. Data gathered this way is analysed, in conjunction with the Taking Part survey and post-performance evaluation carried out by organisations, to build a picture of arts engagement across the country that combines self-reporting and verifiable ticket sales, but again, very little account of the value of arts attendance.

Commercial and academic audience researchers face different obstacles and opportunities. Arts organisations have immediate access to their own customers and ticket data, a privilege which an academic research must negotiate via organisational gatekeepers. There seems to be far more scope for collaboration across multiple organisations within commercial research, especially as funding bodies can demand it as a condition of funding. However, within arts organisations, capacity for research is often limited due to time and budget restraints, and can easily be taken up by compulsory research projects. Academics can therefore be seen to have comparatively more freedom in research design and implementation.

In the remainder of this literature review, I will review research from both academic and commercial sectors on classical music engagement. I do not propose that either academic or commercial research is inherently better-equipped to investigate audiences, but attempt to document current understanding of core and populist audiences from both sectors. Topics covered in this review are: the routes and 'barriers' to attendance, the decision to attend, the live concert experience, and the aesthetic and extrinsic value of concert-going. First, it is worth contextualising this study against current understanding of the size of the market for classical music and the socio-demographics of the audience.

2.1   The market for classical music

Only a small fraction of the population in England attend classical music concerts. Whether the number of people who are attending classical music concerts is diminishing is hotly contested (Sandow, 2013; Silpayamanant, 2013a; 2013b). As noted above, governmental research projects are well-positioned to provide an accurate view of the size and make-up of classical audiences, and Figure 1 (collated from DCMS, 2015a; 2016b) presents results from the Taking Part survey. Between 2005 and 2016, the number of adults in England who reported attending a live classical music event in the 12 months prior to the survey has remained between 7% and 8.5%, with a rather large drop in reported attendance in 2013–15. This survey points to a slight, but not alarming, decline in attendance in England over the last 10 years.

Figure 1: Percentage of English population reporting classical concert attendance in the previous 12 months (Taking Part survey 2005–16)
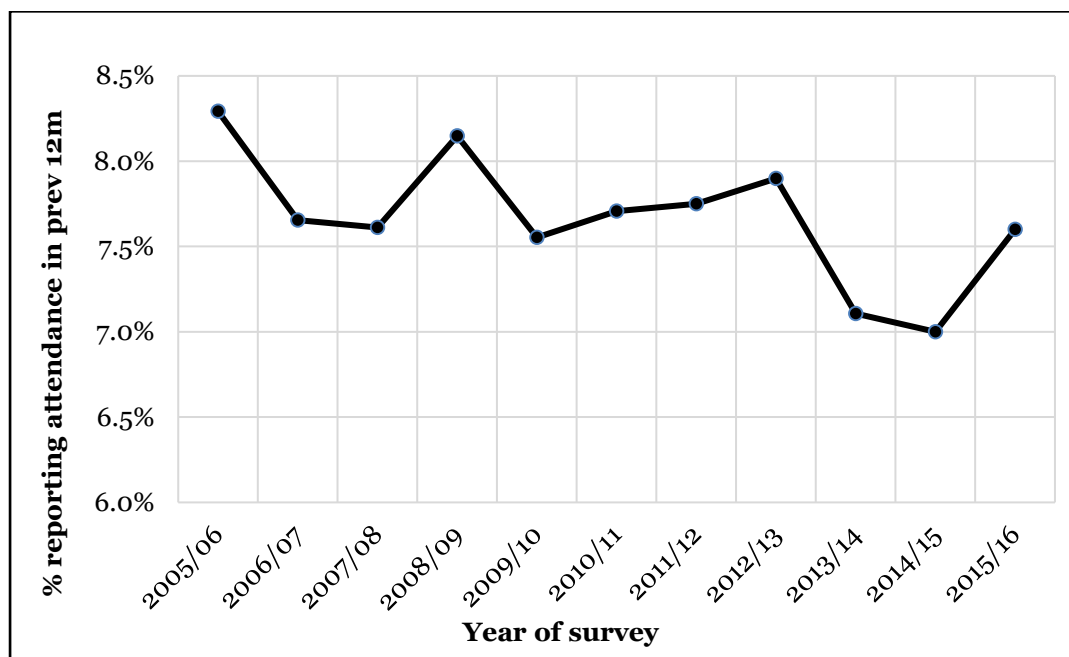
However, the figure of 7–8.5% is a somewhat distorted evaluation of the market for classical music. On the one hand, earlier studies have shown that a much greater percentage of the population listen to recordings of classical music but do not attend concerts, implying a much bigger potential market for classical music (Baker, 2000/2007; Brown, 2002). On the other hand, the figure above does not take into account the frequency of attendance. Most people who reported attending a concert in the previous 12 months to the 2015/16 Taking Part survey had only attended one (30.7%) or two (26.8%) concerts in the previous year, whereas 1.4% of had attended

concerts weekly (DCMS, 2016b). This continues to support Baker's (2000/2007) claim that 'the vast majority of tickets for classical concerts are bought by a very small number of people and the vast majority of people who attend classical concerts do so very infrequently' (p.16) and suggests that the classical music audience is even more insular than the 7–8.5% figure implies. In addition, this audience is concentrated in the capital, with 11.9% of the London population reporting having attended classical music concerts in 2015/16, compared to just 6.3% of the population in the West Midlands, in which the CBSO are located (DCMS, 2016a).

The same surveys also reveal an homogenous audience for classical music, formed of white people who are middle-aged and older. In the 2015/16 Taking Part survey, white people (7.9%) were significantly more likely to attend classical music, and to attend more regularly, than ethnic minorities (5.3%; following statistics are all DCMS, 2016b). The same survey showed that the highest rate of attendance was among those aged 65–74 (12.8%) and 75+ (12.8%), with only 3.6% of 16–24 year olds and 4.6% of 25–44 year olds having attended a concert in the previous year. This is especially relevant to understanding audiences in Birmingham, which has a particularly young and ethnically diverse population (Birmingham City Council, 2013), thereby suggesting that concert audiences are not representative of the population of the city.

In the US, the 1997 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) survey of public participation in the arts (equivalent of the UK Taking Part survey) found that the audience for classical music in America was, on average, older than the national population and ageing (Kolb 2001b, pp.12–13). A series of analyses have been conducted on American attendance data to ascertain whether audiences simply become attenders with age, or whether this is a sign of a generational shift in consumption. Kolb (2001b), Stern (2011) and researchers at the League of American Orchestras (2009) analysed NEA data, all three of whom found that each generation since those born during the second world war was attending less than the previous generation. Their findings suggest that young non-attenders will not automatically become attenders with age and therefore the ageing audience for classical music may not replenish itself. While these studies were based on audiences in America. Although arts organisations in America face different challenges than in the UK, mostly due to having a radically different funding model, the fact that audiences in both countries have a similar demographic and are getting older means that the results are a concern to UK organisations as well.

In addition, classical music attendance is strongly linked to education. In their analysis of the 2005/06 Taking Part survey, Chan et al. (2008) noted 'many persisting socio-demographic inequalities' in levels of engagement with classical music (p.9). This seems to have changed very little in the decade since; the 2015/16 Taking Part survey showed that 15.4% of university graduates had attended a concert in the previous 12 months. The proportion of the population attending concerts correlates exactly to their level of education; 8.8% of people with a higher education qualification attended in the previous year, compared to just 3.3% of those with A Levels and 2.7% of the population who only have GCSEs (all DCMS, 2016b). Furthermore, attendance is determined by social status. Analysing the 2015/16 survey by National Statistic Socio-Economic Classification (see ONS, 2012; Rose & Pevalin, 2001), of those in the 'upper socio-economic group', 10.9% respondents had attended a concert in the previous 12 months, compared to only 2.6% of the 'lower socio-economic group' (DCMS, 2016b). Classical music audiences therefore represent a highly affluent and well-educated proportion of the British public.

The reasons for this correlation between privilege, education and classical music attendance have been explored by sociologists and music education researchers. The most notable sociological study is Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital; he claimed that, like economic inheritance, cultural competence was passed down through higher-status families by exposing children to high art from a young age. He believed that the knowledge and familiarity needed to appreciate classical music was therefore taught to children by family and teachers (for a summary of research since Bourdieu on this topic, see Kawashima, 2006, pp.64–65). Research in music education has also found a strong link between music participation and concert attendance, although Pitts' (2009) qualitative study on the lifetime effects of music education found that musical participation can act either as a prompt or an inhibitor to concert attendance.

Furthermore, Pitts' (2009) study has highlighted the diversity of routes into concert-going in different life stages, whereas previous research has overwhelmingly centred on childhood. The ways in which people become interested in classical music later in life are far less well understood, a key criticism of Bourdieu's (1984) theory (for example, Upright, 2004). I suggest that these gaps in knowledge are in part caused by routes falling under two very different types of research; childhood routes in education research, and adult routes in marketing and audience development. Given the importance of audience development theories in this thesis,

discussion of this forms Chapter 2.2. Being friends with people who regularly attend arts events has been shown quantitatively to positively influence attendance, but once again there is a lack of qualitative research into how this occurs (Kane, 2004; Upright, 2004; Van Berkel & De Graaf, 1995). Furthermore, research into how arts consumption changes over a lifetime has found that arts attendance declines sharply amongst people with young families, but then increases greatly at retirement (Andreasen & Belk, 1980; Belk & Andreasen, 1982; NEA, 2015), which suggests that there may be additional routes corresponding to different stages of life that are yet to be explored. There is still much work to be done to understand the mechanisms by which people attend their first concert and, in time, become regular attenders, which I consider in Chapter 5. This is important both to inform audience development plans and to understand the circumstances which produce an attender or a non-attender.

Large arts organisations in England who are funded as National Portfolio Organisations by the ACE are having to work to diversify their audiences as part of their funding requirements, but their audiences are just as acutely aware of the homogeneity and threat of extinction of classical music audiences. Qualitative academic research has sought to understand participants' views on this situation. O'Sullivan's (2009) study with CBSO audiences found a 'sense of "lack"' in their perceptions of the audience, both in terms of the lack of audience members in the hall and lack of young or more diverse people to replace the ageing audience (p.219). Similarly, CBSO audiences in Pitts et al.'s (2013) study felt that it was a 'worry' (p.72) and 'disturbing to those in that community' (p.73) to see the audience getting older. O'Sullivan (2009) however noted an ambivalence in the audience member's views; on the one hand, they acknowledged the need to change to find new audiences, however there was also reluctance to abandon the past and change too drastically from the traditional concert format (p.220). This seems to support Kawashima's (2006) warning that attempts to broaden an audience may alienate current attenders (pp.65–66). This could be another obstacle in attempts to diversify the audience. Arts organisations, funding bodies and audiences alike are aware of the homogenous and increasingly old audience for classical music; all, it seems, want to see younger and more diverse audiences in concert halls. As I showed in the introduction, however, not all agree about how to bring this about. Audience development strategies are employed to attempt to broaden the audience, however, as I show in the next section, there is no consensus on how to go about finding new audiences, and the ideologies behind audience development are deeply

problematic. This study aims to build empirical evidence of how audience development works in practice, for both core and populist audiences.

2.2   Audience development and 'barriers' to attendance

Audience development is an umbrella term to describe attempts by arts organisations to diversify audiences, broaden the number of people engaging, or deepen engagement with the event (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001). An audience development strategy is required of all arts organisations in the UK who receive state funding (see ACE, n.d.). Kawashima (2000; 2006) has usefully defined four distinct modes of audience development:

1.   Extended Marketing: promoting concerts to potential and lapsed attenders.
2.   Taste Cultivation: introducing current attenders to new pieces and genres.
3.   Audience Education: educating current attenders to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the event.
4.   Outreach: targeting those least likely to attend, persuading hard-to-reach people to attend, including young people, ethnic minorities, those without qualifications and those on a low income.

The value of Kawashima's model is that it highlights the contrasting and problematic ambitions of each form of development. Some are financially driven, attempting to increase income from ticket sales. Others are artistic and educational, trying to enhance people's engagement with the art form. The final form, 'outreach', is driven as much by social as artistic goals. On the one hand, Kawashima (2006) has shown, 'outreach' is a product of 'social inclusion' policies of the 1990s, which saw the arts co-opted as a means of bringing disenfranchised portions of the population back in touch with society. On the other hand, its origins are far older, stemming from the origins of the ACE and the belief in the right of all citizens to access the arts and culture (Kawashima, 2006, p.63–65). 'Outreach' raises important questions about the relationship between cultural hierarchy and audience development. Attempts to grow audiences for forms of popular culture are not usually described as 'audience development' suggesting this term is implicitly describing a method of developing audiences for high art. The attempts to get audiences to engage with more challenging art works is colloquially known as the 'drug dealer' approach, where organisations 'get them in on the easy stuff and then wean them on to the hard stuff' (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004, p.9). The

language surrounding audience development therefore implies a hierarchy between 'easy' forms of culture, that people want to engage with, and 'difficult' high art, that arts organisations want them to engage with.

It is worth noting that Kawashima's (2000; 2006) four modes differentiate by the prior experience of the target group, as do McCarthy and Jinnett's (2001) and Wiggins' (2004) models of audience development. They all distinguish between non-attenders who are open to concert-going, and non-attenders who are unlikely to ever go to a concert. The implication is that different tactics are needed to persuade an interested non-attender to their first concert, than to convince a classical music or arts non-attender to try live classical music. For the same reason, the Taking Part survey monitors arts 'rejectors'. The questionnaire asks respondents whether they feel that 'the arts are not really for people like me'; in the 2015/16 survey, almost 3% 'strongly agreed' and a further 14% 'agreed' with the statement (DCMS, 2016b). To put that in perspective, if around 7% of the population engage with live classical music, almost twice that number reject the arts.

The potential market for classical music concerts could therefore be defined as people who do not reject the idea of attendance. Brown (2002), in a phone survey of US citizens, found that 8% of respondents were 'uninitiated prospects' to classical concerts, having an interest in classical music but having never been to a concert by their local orchestra (p.101). Market research conducted by Classic FM in 1998 found that in addition to 12% of the UK population reporting being classical concert-goers, a further 22% claimed to be interested in classical music despite not attending concerts (reported in Baker, 2000/2007, pp.14–15). These studies were conducted before the rise of iPods and music streaming (see Bull, 2000; Lindsay, 2016; Marshall, 2015), suggesting that the picture could be very different now. There is an absence of research on how people consume classical music recordings today, and how this has impacted on the attitudes of non-attenders and the routes to attendance. While I consider digital engagement with classical music when it is relevant to understanding programme choice (Chapters 7 and 12) and the value of the live concert experience (Chapters 10–12), an in-depth discussion of how digital listening interacts with concert attendance is beyond the scope of this study.

A term that has increasingly been used to define non-attenders who engage with the arts but do not attend classical music concerts, is 'Culturally-Aware Non-Attenders' (CANAs). This is a term I use throughout this thesis to describe the five participants who were entirely new to classical music before recently attending their first

concert. Arts journalist Rebecca Winzenried (2004) first coined the term, defining it as 'adults who have not attended a classical concert in two years, but who have gone to other performing arts events, museums or art galleries' (p.26). Summarising previous research and her own anecdotal evidence, she claimed that CANAs' reasons for not attending classical music concerts centred on tickets being too expensive, on them being intimidated by concert etiquette, on being unfamiliar with the music, and thus, not being confident enough that a concert will be worth attending. They are regularly engaged in the arts, but are not engaging with live classical music.

CANAs are particularly interesting to study because their anxieties about classical music reveal a great deal about what is off-putting about classical concerts in comparison to other cultural activities. Several studies have been conducted to understand why CANAs choose not to go to concerts. These have involved taking non-attenders to their first concert to understand why they choose not to attend, and whether their anxieties or preconceptions about classical music are borne out in attendance (Dobson, 2010a; 2010b; Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Gross & Pitts, 2016; Kolb, 2000; Pitts, 2016). The anxieties they reported around concert-going in these projects can largely be grouped under three topics: difficulty, etiquette and formality, and social discomfort.

CANAs reported being intimidated by the difficulty and 'demanding' nature of classical music (Baker, 2000/2007, p.37). Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs were intimidated by the intensity of listening demanded of them (p.364); and found that the culture of still and silent listening (Sennett, 1977) was not welcoming or accessible for newcomers. Newcomers wanted more help in their listening, believing that there was some sort of specialist knowledge they must acquire to enjoy the music (Dobson & Pitts; 2011, p.367; Kolb, 2000, pp.20–21). CANAs in Dobson and Pitts' (2011) study described the concert as being like a 'cult' because the rest of the audience were enjoying the music on a level they could not comprehend (p.365). CANAs believed this was a result of failing as listeners, because they believed the music was good and therefore any lack of enjoyment was believed to be their own fault (p.118). Kolb's (2000) study showed how ingrained the belief was that classical music was a specialist music genre; her CANAs were surprised that they recognised pieces of music, not believing any music they knew would be considered to be classical (p.19).

CANAs also felt anxious about how to behave whilst in a concert. Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs waited for other audience members to clap to know when to respond

(p.368). They found the concerts too formal and stuffy (p.360–4), which they believed was designed to appeal to older people rather than young attenders. This suggests that Small (1998) and Winzenried (2004) were right in their assertions that concert etiquette was a source of anxiety for new attenders. In addition, etiquette was entwined with ideas of difficulty because the problems with engaging with the music stemmed from the culture of still and silent listening (Sennett, 1977). However, in these previous studies, the difficulty of the music seemed to be a greater source of anxiety than etiquette and concert behaviour.

As classical audiences represent a much older segment of the population, young CANAs in these studies found concerts to be socially alienating. Dobson and Pitts' (2011) participants felt the rest of the audience were older, more smartly-dressed and that everyone seemed to know each other (p.361). There is a real sense of exclusion in these CANAs' accounts; not only did the participants feel that they did not look like a typical audience member, they also believed there to be a community of regular attenders of which they were on the outside. In addition, Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs believed that this audience community knew far more about classical music than they did. This finding therefore shows how social discomfort is also bound up with the difficulty of the music, as the CANAs believed that these regular attenders had the 'specialist knowledge' needed to enjoy the music.

However, it is worth noting that the demographic disparity did not affect CANAs uniformly; in a later study, Pitts (2015) found that while some participants thought the demographic difference was 'off-putting', it did not bother others (p.9). Interestingly, the CANAs in Kolb's (2000) study felt more uncomfortable at core concerts than populist programmes (p.19). Kolb suggests that this was because the music was more familiar; perhaps, therefore, demographic disparity may increase an existing sense of alienation from the music. Nevertheless, the impact of the social discomfort may have been greater had CANAs not been in a research context. Many researchers have found that 'not having anyone to go with' is an important reason for non-attendance especially amongst young people (Baker, 2000/2007, pp.37, 50; NEA, 2015, p.15). The research setting may have minimised the impact of the social discomfort of attendance.

It is worth noting that these studies have shown populist concerts to be effective at countering CANAs' anxieties. Participants felt far more comfortable at populist concerts compared to core programmes in both Kolb's (2000) and Dobson and Pitts' (2011) studies. They particularly appreciated the spoken introductions, given in

'layman's terms' which helped them to connect far more with the music (Dobson & Pitts, 2011, p.367). Given the anxieties of Dobson's (2010b) participants centred so much on the difficulty of engagement with the music, having a presenter provide background information and context to the piece made a huge impact on their enjoyment and sense of ease (p.119). Kolb's (2000) participants left the populist concert wanting to attend a similar performance in the future (p.23), however in Dobson's study (2010a) only two of eight participants did attend another classical concert in the six months following the study (p.231).

While there has been some incredibly useful research with non-attenders at their first concert, there seems to be an absence of studies which join up the first attendance with longer-term engagement. Furthermore, this research has been useful in identifying the pre-conceptions of non-attenders and first impressions of concert-going, but there is a lack of research into new attenders who voluntarily choose to attend their first concert. In addition, Pitts (2014) has noted the need for more research into infrequent and lapsed attenders, for whom classical music has taken on a lower priority in their lives (p.32). There is much more to learn about the value of and problems with classical concerts through understanding the decision to attend of people on the edge of the classical audience. This study aims to explore positives and negatives of engagement by exploring the experiences of attenders of a range of levels of engagement.

2.3   The decision to attend

The decision-making process behind attendance at a concert has been extensively researched, identifying several reasons why audience members choose to attend or not to attend a concert. Various approaches have been taken to understand the decision to attend, from modelling the decision-making process (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001) to understanding the value of attendance (see Chapter 2.5), from identifying the most important factors in the decision to attend a concert (Baker, 2000/2007; Brown, 2004c) to understanding the 'barriers' to attendance (NEA, 2015; Obalil, 1999). The studies with CANAs discussed above are examples of studying the 'barriers' to classical music concerts for non-attenders.

I have, however, avoided using this term in this thesis. I suggest that 'barriers' is a deeply problematic expression for the reasons not to attend a concert, implying that attendance is being thwarted by obstacles which arts organisations may be able to remove. There are some factors which could be appropriately described as 'barriers', such as the inability to access the venue due to mobility problems, not being able to

get home afterwards due to public transport issues, not having enough money to afford a ticket, or simply being unaware that the event is taking place. They are appropriately termed 'barriers' because if the problems were solved and the 'barrier' removed, the audience member would be able to attend. However, the term 'barriers' implicitly relies on a will to attend which, as audience development models recognise above, is often absent. Barriers do not adequately account for a lack of interest in the art form or a lack of perceived value in attending.

In research with non-attenders, lack of time or money is often cited as a reason not to attend (Baker, 2000/2007; NEA, 2015), however, as Wiggins (2004) has noted, these practical 'barriers' are often given as an excuse for a lack of interest in, or negative attitudes towards, attendance (p.26). More expensive tickets often make audiences more selective in their attendance and seek a guarantee that it will be worth the money (Pitts, 2014; 2016; Radbourne et al., 2009). However, Brown (2004b) has claimed that, from his experience of researching audiences and working with arts organisations, 'consumers will pay almost anything to guarantee a home run' (p.2). For many non-attenders, claiming not to have the time or money to attend therefore indicates that concert-going is not a priority amongst the various activities that are competing for their resources. The time and money available for arts activities changes over the course of a life time, with young people often being time-rich but cash-poor and empty-nesters being the most prolific arts consumers of all (DCMS, 2015b; Kraaykamp, van Gils & Ultee, 2008; NEA, 2015). The decision to attend needs to be understood in the context of audience members' arts engagement, and the priority of classical music in their day-to-day lives, as Baker (2000/2007) notes through his concept of money and time 'budgets' (pp.42–43; see also Hand, 2011; Hand & Collins, 2006).

In addition, researchers have discussed the perception of risk of the unknown as negatively affecting arts attendance. Brown (2004c) has shown that familiarity is the biggest driver of attendance across all arts and cultural events (p.22). He developed a model of the decision to attend based on a series of relevance tests, descending in importance.

- Relevance of the specific work(s) of art (e.g., 'I love Brahms' Third Symphony')
- Relevance of the artist(s) ('I'll go see any Matisse exhibit')
- Relevance of the genre, idiom, medium or discipline ('Gilbert and Sullivan is my cup of tea')
- Relevance of the institution presenting the art ('Artspace always does provocative exhibitions')
- Relevance of the activity category ('It's important to be exposed to great art')
- Social relevance ('My friends are involved in drumming circles')
- Cultural relevance (i.e. 'the activity is consistent with my cultural identity')

(Brown 2004c, p.22)

Brown claims that an arts event must 'pass at least one, [...] probably two or three' relevance tests before it is even considered by a potential attender. Brown's use of the words 'pass' and 'test' imply that familiarity is a prerequisite to live arts attendance. This all suggests that unfamiliarity with various aspects of a concert is one of the biggest reasons not to attend. What is particularly good about this framework is that it acknowledges the interaction between repertoire, venue, artist and art form in the decision to attend. Both Brown and Baker (2000/2007) have found that the programme of music is the most important factor in the decision to attend, implying that concert-going is driven by familiar music.

Music psychologists have found that enjoyment of music increases with familiarity, especially for complex music (for a summary of previous research on music and familiarity, see King & Prior, 2013), suggesting that attending a concert of familiar music may be inherently more enjoyable than hearing unknown works. However, enjoyment only increases to a point, until the music becomes too familiar and enjoyment rapidly decreases, which is known as the Inverted-U model (see Greasley & Lamont, 2013; Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987). As listeners become more familiar with a piece of music, they have been shown to develop 'schemata' or mental representations of the musical structure, at first centring on the mood of the music and prominent contrasts, over time becoming more detailed and incorporating thematic elements (Deliège et al., 1996; Ockelford, 2004; Pollard-Gott, 1983; Prior, 2013). Listeners navigate the piece through a series of cues which remind them of previous listenings. It is easier for listeners to develop these schemata if they are familiar with the musical style, and particularly difficult to do so for atonal music (Dibben, 1994; Huron, 2006, pp.203–218).

Familiarity can be actively developed by the listener or can be achieved passively, accumulated through exposure to music in everyday life. If listeners are over-exposed to a piece of music, enjoyment quickly declines; Greasley and Lamont (2013) have found that listeners are aware of this and carefully regulate their exposure, taking time away from a piece of music once they begin to tire of it. Music

psychology may offer a lens through which to understand the importance of familiarity on concert choice in a new way. This is particularly important for the understanding of the value of populist and core concerts because populist performances are programmed around familiarity. Indeed, it could be said that music in populist programmes is intended to be familiar to non-attenders through passive exposure, as seen by the numerous concerts based on classical music from television programmes and adverts.

By centring on familiar music, populist concerts reduce the unknown factors of a concert, thereby reducing the risk of attendance. Sigurjónsson (2010) has noted that audience development programmes overwhelmingly focus on reducing risk for new audiences. Arts organisations reduce risk by programming music, hiring artists and performing in venues that are more familiar to the non-attenders they are targeting. For example, organisations such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment or the City of London Sinfonia have programmed classical concerts in non-classical venues and bars to reach people who would not usually go to a concert hall (see CultureHive, 2013). The BBC Proms have programmed music that would be familiar to popular music audiences such as concerts with rap artists (see Pollard, 2013) and of club music (see Dunn, 2013; Rushton, 2015a). These steps are intended to reduce the anxiety of concert-going for non-attenders by minimising the unknown factors of a performance. Through the new effort-risk-reward framework, I consider risk in relation to the perceived effort and value of attendance to explore when and how participants view a concert as appealing or off-putting.

Gross and Pitts' (2016) study of contemporary arts attenders examined the 'facilitating conditions' for risk-taking. They noted that audiences were more willing to take risks when the effort of attendance was reduced through initiatives such as giving away free tickets, or programming performances in public places and festivals where audiences can 'drop in' on events rather than committing to the whole performance. In addition, they found that audiences were more likely to take risks if they became actively involved in the organisation through volunteering, accessing rehearsals and seeing the creative process, and trusting organisations to recommend things they will enjoy.

Greater propensity to take risks has been associated with frequent attenders who are loyal to an organisation. Newman (1977), in his seminal book on concert ticket subscribers, characterises them as 'saints' who are willing to persevere in trying new repertoire, as opposed to the 'fickle', conservative single ticket buyers, who would be

put off by one bad performance. Arts organisations employ 'relationship marketing' in an attempt to foster feelings of commitment and build a sense of loyalty amongst regular attenders (Kotler & Scheff, 1997, pp.262–263; Rentschler et al., 2002). However, in recent empirical research with chamber music audiences, Pitts and Spencer (2008) found many risk-averse subscribers in concert audiences (see also Boyle, 2007). As various studies have shown, while repeat attendance or subscription purchase can be a sign of loyalty, trust and commitment, it can also be a product of a transactional relationship based on quality of performance and audience satisfaction, or even just habit and routine (De Rooij, 2013; Gross, 2013; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hume & Mort, 2010; Johnson & Garbarino, 2001). There is a danger of conflating ticket-buying habits with homogeneity of attitudes, assuming all subscribers are emotionally committed to the organisation. In Chapter 9, I explore the notion of loyalty for participants at a range of levels of engagement, building a nuanced picture of how loyalty interacts with other considerations in the decision to attend.

It is worth noting that, like Newman (1977), audience researchers have tended to divide attenders into two more- and less- engaged segments and make assumptions about members' individual engagement. In addition to segmenting audiences based on whether attenders are subscribers, frequency of attendance is by numerous arts organisations used to segment their audiences (for three examples, see Baker 2000/2007, p.20). In addition, audiences are grouped based on the type of performances they attend. I noted in the introduction that there is a belief amongst many genres of music that there are two discrete audiences who consume the music as art and as entertainment (Scott, 2016), suggesting a long-standing propensity to distinguish between committed and casual listeners. Brown (2002) in his segmentation of classical music audiences similarly asked respondents to identify themselves as casual listeners (78% of live and digital consumers) or critical listeners (12%). The danger with segmentation is not only over-generalising and assuming homogeneity of attitudes amongst members of the segment, but also in imposing distinctions on an audience that are not conceived of by its members (Barker, 2004; Clopton, Stoddard & Dave, 2006).

In this study, I therefore explore the experiences of two 'segments' of core and populist attenders from an holistic perspective. The in-depth interviews provide an opportunity to explore personal motives for attendance, but through the effort-risk-reward framework, I reveal commonalities between the experience of attenders at a range of levels of engagement. This emphasis on the deeply personal motives for

attendance offer a direct challenge to the assumptions made about what more- and less-engaged audiences seek from their concert attendance. My decision-making framework instead focusses on how the individual perceives the value of attendance.

2.4   The live concert experience

As classical recordings become increasingly widely available to listeners, it is easier than ever to listen to classical music from the comfort of home. As I have discussed above, concert going requires a great deal of effort on the part of the audience members therefore, to understand the decision to attend, it is necessary to consider what makes a live performance worth the effort of attendance.

The issue of what makes a live performance qualitatively different from a recording has been explored by researchers in several different art forms, each of whom have found a remarkably stable set of characteristics of 'liveness' (see Auslander, 2008; Baker 2000/2007; Brown & Knox, 2016; Earl, 2001; Radbourne et al, 2014). Live performances are valued for: the novelty and uniqueness of the live event, the thrill of the chance of a mistake, a sense of honesty in a 'warts and all' performance, the physical feeling of live sound, the excitement of being co-present with the artists, a feeling of involvement or contribution to a performance, the communal act of consumption, social interactions, a sense of occasion, visual spectacle, and state of open-minded focus provoked by the concert hall. Behr, Brennan and Cloonan's (2014) qualitative study with audiences from a range of music events, proposes an interesting reduction of these factors: liveness, they claim, is a mediation between intimacy and spectacle (p.8). While researchers have seemingly achieved a good understanding of the attributes of 'liveness' for the arts generally, there is considerably less knowledge of which of these elements are most important for classical music or why some audiences may value some attributes over others.

'Spectacle' is an aspect of liveness that is frequently mentioned yet rarely explained. There seems to be a lack of a framework for understanding spectacle despite it being studied in a multitude of different disciplines. The most persuasive definition that I have found is in a review of three books on festivals and spectacle by Addo (2009), who bases her discussion of spectacle on sensory overload at events consumed by audiences, often with a connection to ritual. Interestingly, the idea of spectacle often implies value judgement. In Lewis' (2014) exploration of spectacle in film, he notes that spectacle is often implicitly conceived of in opposition to narrative; in other words, the narrative stops when the spectacle begins (p.214). Similarly, Walsh's (1992) account of spectacle in museums is incredibly derogatory towards the

spectacular, believing that spectacle often 'drowns out' the educational message of exhibits (p.103). In both of these cultural experiences, spectacle is set in opposition to aesthetic or educational engagement. Classical music can be seen as having an uneasy relationship with spectacle; on the one hand, a core concert in an elaborate concert hall with the players in formal dress has its own sense of spectacle, yet in terms of the lights, movement and special effects of popular music performances, classical music can be seen as keeping spectacle to a minimum. While the framework for understanding spectacle is under-developed, no comparison of populist and core attendance would be complete without considering the differences in spectacle, which forms part of Chapter 11.

The feeling of spectacle in a concert may also be influenced by the communal context of listening, a topic which has received comparatively greater scholarly attention from audience researchers. O'Sullivan (2009) and Gross (2013) found that listeners had an ambivalent relationship with other audience members. On the one hand, listening communally could enhance enjoyment, offering access to moments of sublimity in the listening experience. On the other hand, audience members could be distracting and disrupt engagement with the music. Overall, there is still too little understanding of how listening in a group can enhance or inhibit listeners' emotional responses to music. Music psychologists use the phrase 'emotional contagion' to describe listeners 'catching' the emotion of a performance, but there is little known about how they might 'catch' the emotion of fellow listeners (Juslin, 2013; 2009; Reason & Reynolds, 2010; Sutherland et al., 2009). The impact of communal listening is often acknowledged but not thoroughly explored (Dearn & Price, 2016; Gross, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2009; Pitts & Burland, 2014).

This is further complicated by the formation of communities amongst frequent attenders of classical concerts (Pitts et al., 2013; Pitts & Spencer, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2009). These audience communities are characterised by a sense of belonging and of responsibility over the future of the audience, commonly expressed as concerns about the lack of younger generations in the concert hall. Indeed, Pitts (2014) claims that concert attendance is a mixture of aesthetic, social and moral factors; being around likeminded people is a strong incentive to attend (p.25), as is a feeling of moral responsibility to support the organisations and ensure the future of the art form. Gross and Pitts (2016) have suggested that this form of engagement might best be understood as 'cultural citizenship' with arts engagement evolving into a form of 'social participation' as audience members' feelings of responsibility for the

future of an arts organisation become intrinsically linked to civil duty and responsibility in the local community (p.18).

Feelings of community are encouraged by arts organisations through opportunities to get closer to the musicians, in exchange for financial support of the orchestra. In their study of CBSO audiences and musicians, Pitts et al. (2013) found that both audience members and musicians alike were aware of the falsities of these audience-musician meetings and the underlying ambition of these 'friends' schemes to promote loyalty to the orchestra as a form of relationship marketing (p.77). Both on the stage and in the stalls, there were those who benefitted from these strategies, and those who disliked them, feeling especially tense around the idea of a developing celebrity culture amongst the musicians (p.78). This false sense of familiarity could be understood as a parasocial relationship, in which audience members develop a long-term, one-sided feeling of friendship with the figures in the public eye (Dibble, Hartmann & Rosaen, 2016). However, the opportunity for donors to meet the orchestra, and especially to sponsor a player individually, had led participants to form actual friendships with musicians, complicating the artist-audience relationship further (Pitts et al., 2013). Parasocial interactions have been more thoroughly studied in relation to television celebrity culture; this unusual mixture of false, real and constructed intimacy with musicians in the classical music industry warrants further investigation. The diversity of concert-going amongst participants in this study provides an opportunity to explore attitudes to musicians across the spectrum of engagement.

Given that frequent attenders have been shown to develop a sense of community, it is interesting to note that O'Sullivan's (2009) participants were unwilling to acknowledge that the communal setting of a concert impacted on their listening. In addition, Behr, Brennan and Cloonan's (2014) study of audiences for live performances of various genres of music found that the social context of attendance was of least concern to classical music audiences (p.10). This appears to be evidence of unwillingness amongst concert audiences to acknowledge non-aesthetic forms of value in live classical music. As I discussed in the introduction, ideas of social value and aesthetic value form part of the dialogue on cultural hierarchy.

2.5   Intrinsic value, extrinsic value, and ways of listening

The cultural value of arts engagement has been an important topic in recent academic discourse (see Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016) and audience researchers have a long history of investigating how people perceive and value live arts events

(Carnwath & Brown, 2014). Particularly prevalent in this research are debates around quantitative versus qualitative measurement, instrumental versus intrinsic value, and societal versus individual impact (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016). When arts organisations are required to report on their impact to funders, it is often the first of each of these binaries that is favoured (Audience Agency, n.d. b). In contrast, researchers are calling for the discussion of the value of the arts to be refocussed onto the experiences of the individual (Brown & Novak, 2007; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Carnwath & Brown, 2014; Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016). This project contributes to the understanding of the value of the arts articulated through the experiences of those who choose to engage with it.

In its infancy, audience studies tended to reduce evaluation to simplistic scales of satisfaction (Baxter, 2010). More sophisticated tools have since been developed to better understand the transient experience of a performance (for example Brown & Novak 2007; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Carnwath & Brown, 2013; Radbourne et al., 2009; Radbourne, Glow & Johanson, 2013). Within this literature, it is acknowledged that an arts experience will not affect every audience member in a uniform way; each person brings their own personal history to bear when processing an arts event, including previous experience of the arts, as captured by Brown and Novak's (2007) concept of readiness to receive (see also Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013). In addition, some attenders will engage deeply with an event, while others could be bored, confused, offended or distracted. For some audience members, the event will be quickly forgotten, whereas others will remember it for a lifetime (Brown, 2006, p.19). This study sits within the trend for audience research which treats 'value' and 'impact' in much more holistic and plural ways than policy-orientated value studies, with qualitative measures and small sample sizes to explore the value of the arts experience to the individual (Brown, 2004c; Gross & Pitts, 2016; Walmsley, 2013).

The types of value sought from an arts event have been divided into aesthetic and extrinsic value; I am using the term 'extrinsic' as opposed to the term 'social' value used by Johnson (2002) and Taruskin (2007) to avoid confusion with discussion of socialising at concerts. Brown (2002) found that attenders sought the following forms of value from arts attendance: sense of occasion, relationship enhancement value, social interaction value, ritual or ambience value, healing or therapeutic value, spiritual value, and artistic or educational value (p.16). These forms of value move from 'extrinsic' to 'intrinsic' factors, from the concert experience as a whole to the music in particular. These attributes could also be seen to move from functional

to functionless forms of value. Brown's model of extrinsic and intrinsic value is useful because it highlights the diversity of ways in which attenders may value an event. However, Brown models these layers of value hierarchically, with 'all values contribut[ing] to the core "artistic or educational value" of the concert experience' (p.127). In Brown's model, aesthetic value is implicitly privileged over and above other forms of engagement.

Indeed, previous authors have been even more explicit in their privileging of aesthetic appreciation, as seen by discussion of Johnson (2002) and Taruskin's (2007) comments in the introduction. The various types of value an audience member may seek from an event have been mapped onto Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of need (Kotler & Scheff, 1997, pp.75–78). Extrinsic values are positioned at the bottom of the pyramid, with aesthetic values at the top. Just as Maslow's hierarchy works on the principle that the bottom levels need to be achieved for people to access the higher levels, the Arts Council England's 'not for the likes of you' report suggested that infrequent or new attenders access lower levels of extrinsic value, while only frequent attenders reach the heights of aesthetic appreciation (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004, pp.38–39). This fails to accommodate for attenders moving back and forth through these levels or seeking a variety of types of value.

The partiality shown towards aesthetic value over other forms of enjoyment is particularly prominent in classical music compared to other musical genres. Clarke, Dibben and Pitts (2010) have noted that the 'functionless' aestheticism of classical music was made possible by the removal of this body of music from social and religious settings to the still and silent listening culture of the concert hall (p.68; see also Gross, 2013; Sennett,1977). However, empirical work with audiences is showing that concerts are seldom solely aesthetic experiences, but are 'pressed into use' by attenders, as part of their everyday lives (DeNora, 2000, p.7; Gross, 2013). In addition, while the stillness and silence of concert listening may suggest that the concert experience is rather homogenous for audience members, Pitts (2005) has demonstrated the diversity of listening experiences within chamber music audiences. This study therefore builds on the idea that concerts are never purely aesthetic experiences, seeking to explore the diversity of roles that concerts play within the everyday lives of participants.

Listening in the concert hall has been explored in terms of captivation. Captivation appears to be related to Csikszentmihályi's (1975; 1990) concept of 'flow', a state of intense concentration in a task, characterised by a sense of complete control over

the task at hand and loss of self-awareness. This has also been associated with what Maslow (1970) called 'peak experiences' and a large-scale project by Gabrielsson (2011) sought to capture accounts of these strong experiences in music listening (see also Whaley, Sloboda & Gabrielsson, 2009). These moments are sometimes accompanied by physiological effects known as 'thrills' (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Huron, 2006; Huron & Margulis, 2011; Sloboda, 1991). Indeed, ideas around being 'captivated' or equivalent terms are used by numerous researchers in post-event evaluation, where it is understood to be one of the most valued experiences for audiences when engaging with the arts (see Carnwath & Brown, 2014; see also, Brown 2006).

However, Gritten (2014) has claimed that there can be no understanding of concentration without considering moments of distraction. I discussed above how listeners have been found to get frustrated with other audience members if they distract them from the music (Gross, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2009). Gross' (2013) seasoned BBC Proms Festival attenders were critical themselves if they did not listen attentively throughout a performance. Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs varied in their attitudes towards concentration, with some criticising themselves for being distracted and others being more accepting of these moments, wanting, in a later study to defend their 'right to daydream' (Pitts, 2016, p.12).

Moments of distraction in listening have not adequately been reconciled with experiences of boredom. In intervention studies with non-attenders, new audiences who have been taken to concerts have often reported being bored during their first concert. Kolb (2000) noted in her study with young CANAs that '"boring" was a word used often in the discussion' (p.20). In Csikszentmihályi's (1975; 1990) model of 'flow', boredom is a state that occurs when the task is too simple for an actor's competence and therefore leaves them in want of 'demands, options, and challenges' (1990, p.228). This does not obviously reconcile with the experience of CANAs who, as I showed above, have often found the music too difficult to engage with (Baker, 2000/2007, pp.36–37; Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Kolb, 2001). However, this may be reconciled by considering the culture of still and silent listening. If CANAs are unable to engage deeply with the music, they may look for other forms of stimulation in a concert hall which they do not find, because concert culture is designed to minimise distractions. This is supported by Kolb's (2000) finding that participants wanted more visual stimulation from the concert and even Gross' (2013) seasoned concert attenders felt that still and silent listening made boredom a

likelihood in attendance. Boredom is therefore related to a lack of engagement with the music and a desire for other forms of sensory stimulation.

Captivation, flow and concentration, along with distraction, daydreaming and boredom operate on a binary of engagement and disengagement with the music. The qualitative difference between these states, I suggest, can be reconciled through the idea of listening as work. To concentrate requires a great deal of effort, and distraction can therefore be understood as failure to maintain focus on the music or failure of other audience members who cause a disturbance (O'Sullivan, 2009; Wilson & Brien, 2014). The language around captivation and boredom is far more passive. In Gross' study (2013), participants achieved absorption when the music 'grabbed' them (p.116). Whereas boredom seems to be explained through disconnection from the music, and the failure of the performance.

The language used to describe engagement and disengagement is revealing of the attenders' attitudes to classical music. It implies two different relationships to the performance. If distraction is blamed on the listener, then it implies, like some of Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs, that the music is seen as inherently worthy and that any lack of enjoyment is understood as being a result of inadequate listening. However, if attenders describe themselves as being bored, it suggests that the onus is being placed on the music to entertain. Far more research is needed to understand moments of engagement and disengagement in the concert hall; in exploring the concert experiences of populist and core attenders, this study will consider how focus and distraction interact across a spectrum of engagement.

Understanding concentration and distraction may provide a route into understanding the relationship between special and everyday experiences of music (DeNora, 2000; Gabrielsson, 2011). Sloboda (2010), summarising a large body of music psychology research, has found that everyday experiences of music are low-intensity, fleeting, functional and rarely aesthetic. However, as Hesmondhalgh (2013) has noted, they are littered with more meaningful moments of engagement (pp.35–42). Understanding how concert-going fits within audiences' everyday lives is an important step towards bridging the gap between mundane and aesthetic musical experiences. This study aims to contextualise concert attendance within participants' everyday lives, by providing participants with the flexibility to articulate the value of their experiences in whichever way they felt was important. The recruitment of 'art' and 'entertainment' attenders has allowed for comparison of how the value of concert-going is perceived across different sections of the audience.

Conclusion

While there is a growing body of work into the value of concert attendance, audience research is still a developing field and there are many opportunities for new ways of understanding arts engagement. There is a need to diversify the definition of value through the accounts of less-engaged participants. In addition, there are many assumptions made about what drives people to attend a concert depending on the type of programming they choose and the level of their engagement. Frequent attenders are assumed to engage aesthetically, whereas infrequent attenders or newcomers look for extrinsic forms of value. The distinction of aesthetic and non-aesthetic engagement only serves to reinforce the idea of a cultural hierarchy in consumption. This theoretical understanding of consumption has failed to keep up with developments in audience studies, which have pointed to far more pluralistic and flexible ways of valuing concert attendance and motivations for attending. This study applies these recent developments in understanding audiences to the discussion of cultural hierarchy.

This review of previous research with classical music audiences has not been exhaustive; there are occasional references to additional literature throughout the thesis, where they contextualise the data analysis but were too specialised to include in the general overview of research presented here. Literature discussed in this chapter is referred to throughout the thesis, in combination with the theoretical, musicological and cultural studies literature which formed the discussion of cultural hierarchy in the introduction.

3 Understanding the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

This research project was conducted as part of a Collaborative Doctoral Award with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). While the research questions in this project were intended to address gaps in understanding of audience engagement in academic and commercial literature, these questions were also influenced by my close working relationships with the orchestra. As a result, this research project is rooted in a thorough understanding of the working practices of the orchestra and the challenges they face in presenting live classical music today.

This chapter provides contextual information on the CBSO and critical reflection on my working relationship with the orchestral staff. I begin by situating the orchestra within the arts ecosystem in Birmingham (Chapter 3.1) and discuss the relevance of its position within a regional UK city for the generalisability of the research findings. Chapter 3.2 briefly introduces the history of the orchestra, before discussing: the structure of the CBSO concert season, the orchestra's education and outreach programme, their income streams, and the means in which concerts are marketed to audiences. Chapters 3.3 and 3.4 then reflect on my relationship with the organisation. In Chapter 3.3, I discuss my understanding of the working practices of the organisation and how this came to shape my research questions. Chapter 3.4 then critically reflects on my negotiation of insider and outsider roles within the marketing team. I suggest ways in which this may have influenced my impartiality as a researcher, but ultimately enriched the value and relevance of my findings.

3.1 Arts and culture in Birmingham

The CBSO is based in Birmingham city centre. Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK with a population of over one million residents in the local authority (Birmingham City Council, 2013).[1] As I discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), Birmingham has a young population, partly due to having several universities located in the city. It is also extremely multi-cultural, with only 53.1% of the

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[1] There is some debate over whether Birmingham or Manchester is the UK's second largest city. It is dependent on how a city is defined; as a local authority, Birmingham is by far the largest outside London. If defined by 'built up areas', Greater Manchester has a larger population at 2.6 million residents, compared to the West Midlands at 2.4 million.

Birmingham population reporting being white British, compared to 79.8% of the population of England (ONS, 2012).

Birmingham is located in the West Midlands region of England. It is an ex-industrial city, which developed largely due to the network of canals that cross through its centre (Barber & Hall, 2008). Birmingham suffered badly with the decline of industry in the region, until a series of redevelopment projects in the 1990s began to revitalise the city centre (Barber & Hall, 2008; Coulson & Wright, 2013). One such development was the building of Symphony Hall, in which the CBSO perform their main season concerts. The concert hall, housed in the same building as the International Convention Centre, was part of a redevelopment of the West end of Birmingham city centre, and now acts as a thoroughfare between the offices, restaurants and bars of Brindley Place and Broad Street, and the main centre of town (see Coulson & Wright, 2013).

Significant for understanding the arts eco-system in Birmingham is that it falls within the English 'provinces', in other words, it is a 'regional city' outside the capital and home counties. There have been historical tensions between the capital and the rest of the country which continue to this day. This is partly an economic tension, with London being head-and-shoulders above other UK cities in prosperity but also because the regions, and especially the North of England, tend to be portrayed in the media as unsophisticated backwaters of England (Pidd, 2014; Turner, 2014). The arts are clustered in London, with many of the country's top arts organisations including four symphony orchestras being located in the capital. The cause of this disparity in arts provision is partly historical and partly as a result of tourism and international investment in the capital, however it is propagated by the arts funding situation; the ACE has recently come under fire for putting far more funding into London than into other regions, a disparity that has grown over the last 30 years (ACE, 2013b; Stark, Gordon & Powell, 2013). The CBSO therefore occupies an interesting position as a professional, world-class symphony orchestra based in a regional city of the UK.

The CBSO's location in a regional city in the UK present it with different challenges to organisations based in London or in other countries. As the only resident professional symphony orchestra between Bournemouth and Manchester, the CBSO aims to appeal to diverse audiences and a wide range of tastes across a large geographical area. In London, on the other hand, there are four professional symphony orchestras, many concert halls and smaller venues, and multiple classical

performances on any given day. Consequently, London appears to have significantly different modes of arts consumption in comparison to regional cities. The Audience Agency's Audience Spectrum tool shows that there are large numbers of 'Metroculturals' in the capital: high-frequency, prosperous, arts attenders 'interested in a very wide cultural spectrum' (Audience Agency, n.d. a). Furthermore, London has greater domestic and international tourism than regional cities (VisitBritain, 2016). Each of these factors alters the arts ecosystem in which classical music organisations operate. Nevertheless, arts organisations across the UK in all art forms have to negotiate the competing aims of excellence and accessibility, not least when applying for Arts Council England funding (Arts Council England, 2013a), making many of the findings in this study relevant beyond its regional context.

Birmingham, though it cannot match the scale of the arts and cultural provision in London, has a thriving arts scene. The city boasts several theatres, dance companies (including Birmingham Royal Ballet) and art galleries, as well as a multitude of other popular music venues and organisations focussing on art from other cultures. In terms of classical music, the main classical venues in the city are Symphony Hall and Town Hall, which are managed and promoted together as 'Town Hall Symphony Hall' (THSH), though performances take place in other venues such as the CBSO Centre where the orchestra rehearse. The CBSO is the only professional orchestra based in the city, though the Orchestra of the Swan, based in Stratford, are associate orchestra at the Town Hall. Furthermore, many other ensembles tour to the city, especially as part of THSH's Birmingham International Concert Season (BICS). The CBSO Centre is also home to Ex Cathedra, a semi-professional choir and baroque orchestra, specialising in early music and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG) who commission and programme new music. BCMG has an interesting relationship with the CBSO; it was founded as a sister organisation to specialise in contemporary music during Simon Rattle's heyday. It has since separated to become an arts organisation in its own right, but still has close ties to the orchestra, as a result of sharing players and working together on projects.

3.2   The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

Established in 1920, the CBSO built a reputation as a world-class orchestra under the directorship of Simon Rattle (music director 1980–98). During Rattle's tenure, the CBSO and Birmingham City Council were successful in receiving EU funding for a new concert hall in the city, Symphony Hall, a 2,200-seat venue which opened in 1991 (Coulson & Wright, 2013). The hall was purpose-built for classical concerts,

with the architects being commissioned to 'design the most acoustically perfect concert hall in the world' (Coulson, 2015, p.180). Since then, the orchestra has built a reputation for finding talented, young conductors, with Andris Nelsons (2008–15) and now, with the appointment of Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla who began her position as music director of the orchestra in August 2016 to great critical acclaim (Clements, 2016; Hewett, 2016; Tilden, 2016). In addition to their Birmingham concerts, the orchestra regularly tour across the UK and abroad and have released several recordings.

The orchestra perform approximately 130 concerts per year with each season being announced in May and running from September to August. Around 70 concerts each year take place in Symphony Hall in Birmingham. These consist of main season 'core' concerts, around 40 evening performances and 13 matinees concerts, which are especially popular with people travelling quite a long distance from Birmingham. Both matinee and evening concerts are focussed around canonical symphonic repertory, with a small number of contemporary pieces and premieres each season. At the start of this collaboration, there were two 'Tuned-In' concerts in each season which featured one piece of symphonic music, with a presenter talking the audience through the piece in the first half with snippets of music from the orchestra, followed by a full performance after the interval. Since the 2015/16 season, this has been replaced by one concert at the start of the season, which features shorter excerpts of pieces from the season, with a presenter giving detailed information about the music, acting as an introduction both to the season and to classical music more generally.

In each season, there are approximately nine populist 'Friday Night Classics' concerts. These consist of programmes of orchestral pop, jazz, blues and big band nights, songs from the musicals, and film soundtracks including an annual live soundtrack for a silent movie. There are also at least two programmes of excerpts of well-known classical music, some presented as 'music you will know from…'. In the current season, partly in response to the questions raised in this research, there are an increased number of 'excerpts' concerts. The Friday Night Classics series is advertised in the main season brochure with some wording about the orchestra enjoying 'good music, whatever the style'. Also, in populist marketing the musicians are, without fail, described as 'letting their hair down' at the weekend in Birmingham. The marketing advertised populist concerts as an opportunity to relax and unwind with the CBSO.

The orchestra has a thriving education and community outreach programme, with a dedicated Learning and Participation Team. Within the concert season, there are three 'Notelets' concerts, for parents and toddlers, each of which are repeated a number of times at the CBSO Centre and often sell out. In addition, there are three family concerts for older children which take place at Symphony Hall. The programme includes several schools concerts each year and offer workshops in schools for different age groups. In addition, the CBSO 'family' provides opportunities for musical participation through the CBSO Chorus, youth choirs and the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

The CBSO makes its income through a combination of ticket sales, hiring out of the orchestra, private donations, corporate sponsorship, and state funding. It is regularly funded by the ACE as a National Portfolio Organisation, receiving over two million pounds each year (ACE, 2015). As part of this funding, they are required to report to the ACE on matters such as the number of people attending concerts, as well as audience development strategies for growing and diversifying the audience. The orchestra is additionally funded by Birmingham City Council, but had this funding cut drastically in 2015, leading to a 'real-terms reduction' in funding of 25% since 2010 (CBSO, 2015). The orchestra is having to find more of its income through orchestra hires, ticket sales, corporate sponsorship, and private donations. The financial pressures faced by the orchestra are specific to its location in a UK regional city. Different funding models operate outside the UK, such as the dependence of American orchestras on subscription sales (Kolb, 2001a). Both of the CBSO's primary funders, ACE and Birmingham City Council, are increasingly requiring funded organisations to find ways of becoming more sustainable and resilient with reduced public funding (ACE, 2013a, pp.31–32; Birmingham City Council, 2016). The Development Team have worked hard to increase the income from private donations, offering a tiered 'friends' system, in which patrons can donate to the orchestra and receive perks such as priority booking periods and opportunities to meet the musicians, depending on how much they donate.

Concerts are promoted by the Marketing Team using electronic and postal mailing lists, as well as the orchestra's website, social media and local and national press. They offer a 'flexible concert package' scheme, in which audience members can save money when they buy tickets for three or more concerts. The greater number of concerts audience members book, the higher level of discount; from 5% for three concerts, up to 30% for 20 performances. In addition, concert package bookers receive free tickets to one of a pre-determined selection of performances if they book

early and choose 11 or more performances. There is a second form of subscription: 'fixed' packages encourage audience members to book for all concerts within a 'series', which are Wednesday evening, Thursday evening, matinee, and weekend concerts. Fixed packages encourage audience members to expose themselves to unfamiliar music; in doing so, they access higher levels of discount than flexible package bookers. It is worth noting that THSH also offer both a friends' membership scheme and concert packages for the Birmingham International Concert Season. The CBSO's audiences consist of a loyal base of supporters who frequently attend concerts and donate to the orchestra, and a much larger, transient audience who attend less frequently (similar patterns of attendance are found for other classical concerts at the Symphony Hall, see Long et al., 2015).

3.3   Understanding the CBSO and their audiences

When I first arrived at the CBSO in October 2013, I sought to understand as much as I could about the organisation in order to inform my research questions and contextualise the experiences of the research participants. A large part of this understanding was gained from time spent in the office. During this time, I was invited to meetings, I had informal conversations with members of staff and I was able to learn how the organisation was structured. In addition, I was given access to confidential, internal reports and was copied into emails to the staff and orchestra. I gained further information from sources that were available to the public, such as marketing materials going back a number of seasons, press releases, concert programmes and the CBSO website.

The three years I spent with the CBSO was a period of significant change and upheaval. In terms of season programming, I witnessed the departure of Andris Nelsons, the search for a new Music Director, one season without any one in the post, and the appointment, to great critical acclaim, of Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. In marketing, there was a great deal of restructuring, with the team being expanded to include a dedicated Customer Relationship Management and Insight Manager. This role was created with the implementation of a new customer database programme, Tessitura, which allowed for far more sophisticated target marketing, and the associated statistics software, T-Stats, which enabled statistical analysis of customer records and ticket sales. Investing in this new software was a recognition of the importance understanding audiences within the marketing, programming and fundraising strategies. With the implementation of Tessitura and a new CBSO website, the marketing team developed a much more sophisticated e-marketing

strategy, which has since taken on an increasingly important role within the overall promotion of the orchestra.

I was given access to various sources of information about the CBSO audiences. I had access to this new customer database, which allowed me to carry out analyses of the CBSO's ticket sales data. I was also provided with various audience research reports that the organisation had carried out prior to my arrival, many of which were otherwise kept confidential within the organisation. From this I found that the CBSO had a great deal of knowledge about their audiences already. As I discovered the extent of the CBSO's audience insight, I was forced to confront my own assumptions about my role as an academic researcher. I had to consider what it was that I could contribute, given their existing engagement with commercial arts evaluation. One way in which I could be valuable as a researcher was to carry out a qualitative study. The CBSO's qualitative research had not been refreshed for a number of years, and while this older research was used to inform the development of their new segmentation model, there was uncertainty about whether the findings of previous qualitative studies were still relevant. Research of this age would still be considered relevant within an academic field, but due to the fact that commercial audience research is designed to inform change, it is quickly seen as out of date (see Price, 2015). I therefore decided early on in this collaboration to carry out a qualitative study to address a gap in the CBSO's understanding of their audiences.

As a carried out this audit of previous research, I noticed that the commercial audience research that had been carried out previously at the CBSO bore little resemblance to the academic articles and books I was reading at the same time. The CBSO's research, and indeed many commercial research reports I read, seemed to be far more goal-orientated, concerned with answering specific marketing questions, in comparison to the more exploratory approach that dominated academic audience research. In addition, the CBSO's previous audience research was overwhelmingly focussed on the marketing and selling of concerts, rather understanding how audiences engaged with programming. My role as an academic researcher afforded me the freedom to ask less goal-orientated research questions, instead employing a more exploratory approach to understanding audience members' engagement. My findings did not have to be geared towards suggestions to increase ticket sales. To this end, I was also able to present complexity, nuance and contradiction within the participants' accounts as the results did not need to be reducible to actionable findings (see Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011; Price, 2015). Furthermore, because my research had not been commissioned by one

particular department in the organisation, I was able to create a research project that would challenge and inform the practice of multiple departments, notably the marketing and programming teams.

The populist Friday Night Classics series prompted some particularly interesting questions around how audiences were conceptualised at the CBSO. Through spending time in the office and attending meetings, it became clear that Friday Night Classics concerts were an important part of the CBSO's audience development strategy. However, there was a lack of certainty about whether populist concerts did actually function as a successful audience development tool. While analysis of CBSO's ticket sales data could reveal some answers to this question, its usefulness was limited. Their records of ticket sales by individual customer only went back to 2009, which may be too short a time span to capture whether populist newcomers become core attenders in time.

In addition, there was no clear consensus amongst CBSO staff about how 'success' would be defined. To this end, I variously heard populist concerts be discussed as 'cash cows', as a route to core attendance, and as a means of appealing to audiences who may never be tempted to attend a core programme. This is not to say that the CBSO were blindly programming these concerts without a clear sense of purpose, but that there seemed to be multiple aims placed upon the Friday Night Classics series. Were all of these goals achievable or were they in conflict? Was attendance of new audiences at Friday Night Classics concerts a desired outcome in itself or were populist concerts only considered successful if they led to core attendance?

Furthermore, I noticed that assumptions were being made about the nature of populist attenders' engagement. The marketing copy for populist concerts emphasised entertainment over musical or aesthetic enjoyment and, in the CBSO's segmentation system, infrequent populist audiences are referred to as 'Good Night Out' attenders. I felt that investigating how audiences perceive and negotiate ideas of cultural hierarchy in classical music could both challenge these organisational assumptions about populist attenders, as well as addressing a gap in previous audience research at the CBSO and in audience research literature more widely. As I noted above, academic research provided opportunities to present complex, nuanced and even contradictory findings, that I felt would offer a direct challenge to assumptions about the nature of populist engagement that I had witnessed in the organisation.

Given my interest in these two forms of programming, understanding the process of the CBSO's season programming was to prove essential to the research focus of my thesis. I came to understand it as follows: each season is first mapped out by the Musical Director and Chief Executive. Ongoing plans are shaped by season planning meetings with managers from other departments. The planning team book artists and venues, negotiating the programme choices of the orchestra and the demands of visiting artists. The Friday Night Classics series, however, is decided upon with little input from the Musical Director. I became intrigued by how audiences were conceptualised within this process which changed dramatically while I was there, with a shift towards more data-driven decision-making with regards to season programming. The marketing team have capitalised on their new capacity for ticket sales analysis to bring concrete data and statistics to the programming team, helping to shape the season in an attempt to appeal to a diverse range of audiences.

Being sympathetic to how the organisation operated was key to avoiding 'knowledge resistance' (Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011), in which the findings and implications of a research project are rejected by industry partners because they are impossible to act on or at odds with the philosophy of the organisation. Through working closely with the organisation, I was able to understand the pressures under which the CBSO was operating. Season planning involved a difficult negotiation of artistic excellence, accessibility and audience development, and financial sustainability. These three factors were both core to the orchestra's mission and demanded of them by funders, as seen by the Arts Council England's 'five goals' for arts organisations (Arts Council England, 2013a). Understanding the conditions in which CBSO were operating was crucial to informing my findings, the manner in which I presented conclusions back to the staff, and the suggestions I made for action.

However, my sympathy for the restrictions under which the organisation operated may have impacted on my impartiality as a researcher. My conclusions were shaped by what I knew to be possible in the organisation and what recommendations they would be able to act upon. For example, a number of participants spoke of how expensive CBSO tickets had become and requested the price to be reduced. This is not, however, a useful finding for the CBSO; it is not at all surprising that audiences wish to pay less for their arts attendance, and the organisation is under pressure to maintain prices in order to be financially viable. Nevertheless, I would argue that I was still able to make radical, uncomfortable suggestions from my research, couched in my understanding of the working practices of the orchestra. For example,

throughout the thesis, I highlight the importance of familiarity in the decision to attend. As the CBSO must balance accessibility with maintaining artistic excellence, they would not be able to exclusively programme music that is very well-known. However, this remained a valuable finding because it highlighted and challenged the ideology at work in the organisation.

In summary, my understanding of the CBSO as an organisation shaped the direction of my research. I decided to explore the engagement of populist and core audiences in order to address the CBSO's lack of knowledge as to whether Friday Night Classics concerts did function as audience development initiatives, to contribute to ongoing discussions around excellence and accessibility within the organisation, to draw attention to the lack of consensus as to the purpose of populist programming within the organisation's programming strategy, and also to challenge assumptions that were being made about the nature of populist attenders' engagement. In choosing to study how audiences perceive and negotiate the distinction between core and populist programming, I focussed on a research question which would both fill a gap in both academic and commercial audience research, and be valuable for the CBSO at a time of change, with increased focus on data-driven decisions in programming and marketing.

3.4   Negotiating my role within the organisation

My role and working relationship with the CBSO was unlike that of any other researcher that they had worked with previously. It took a large part of the first year of this project to establish what role I would have within the organisation and how closely we would work together. The CBSO's recent previous experience of working with academic researchers (Pitts et al, 2013) had been primarily led by the programming team rather than by marketing department, and the research was conducted with very little contact with the organisation. The lack of clarity over my role was not helped by the fact that this Collaborative Doctoral Award had been set up by a member of staff in programming and then responsibility had been transferred to the marketing team. At one of the first meetings, one member of the marketing team confided that they had not been consulted as to what role I would have in the marketing team or how this project would fit within their own research plans. Previously, they had either commissioned research based on their own briefs, or had been approached by external researchers with a specific research plan in mind. My role was something completely new. I wanted to work closely with the organisation, to develop research questions collaboratively, but to also take

advantage of the opportunity to critique their practice. This negotiation of insider and outsider positions within the CBSO brought both advantages and disadvantages.

Firstly, I had to negotiate the boundary between role as independent researcher and as in-house researcher. I spent one day a week in the office for the majority of the three-year project, above and beyond what is recommended for a collaborative doctoral award student but necessary to build trust with the staff and to get to know the organisation, as discussed above. In doing so, I took on increasing amounts of work from the marketing team. This work was always related to understanding audiences, but often not directly related to my research project. For some time after the CBSO began using Tessitura, their new customer database software, no-one else on the marketing team had the capacity to explore the functionality of T-Stats, the associated statistics software. I therefore spent time exploring what was possible to find out using T-Stats and how that might be used to inform marketing strategies. While this work undeniably took time away from research activities, these analyses I carried out were incredibly valuable to the CBSO and to myself as a researcher. For the marketing team, I was able to begin the process of bringing data analysis into decision-making. As a researcher, analysing ticket sales data gave me a huge amount of contextual knowledge about the organisation. Furthermore, I learnt what insight could be gained from this data and what needed to be investigated through other means, helping me to articulate the value of academic and qualitative audience research.

Secondly, my partnership with the CBSO involved a negotiation of my autonomy over the research project. In one of the initial meetings, members of staff at the CBSO suggested that I should explore ideas of excellence versus accessibility and the engagement of less-frequent attenders. As I grew to understand both the organisation and previous audience research literature, I found myself interested in this research question too, as it addressed a gap in academic knowledge as well as contributing to ongoing debates within the industry. Had I been interested in radically different research questions, it is impossible to know whether I would have been able to persuade the organisation to allow me to research them. I similarly had to negotiate how much control and autonomy I had in the design of the research methods, which I explore further in Chapter 4.1.

In order to have autonomy over the research project, it was necessary to gain the trust of the marketing team. When I first arrived at the CBSO in October 2013, I felt

that there was a degree of distrust of me as a researcher. On the one hand, my status as 'academic' researcher gave the impression of presuming to know more than them (for a critique of knowledge transfer models, see Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011). On the other hand, I felt under suspicion that I would exploit the organisation for its knowledge or for access to its audiences (see Nettl 2005, pp.151–152 for the perception of ethnographic researchers as exploitative of their participants). The dual role of both working with the staff to investigate their audiences and simultaneously studying the organisation at work, is remarkably similar to Born's (1995) observations on being both researcher and composer at the *Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique.*

> Despite my explaining the purpose of my study as far as I then understood it, even my intellectual informants had difficulty at times conceiving what I might be doing or bearing in mind the 'double' nature of my presence. As one informant and friend said, 'I never know when we're talking if we're simply talking, or whether you're going back home to write it up as notes' to which I could only reply, 'both'. (Born 1995, pp.8–9)

Almost three years on, I have managed to forge a successful collaboration in spite of this 'double' identity, thanks to a number of factors. Firstly, I was persistent, coming in to the office every week in order to show my commitment to the project and to become a 'familiar face' in the office. Secondly, I was willing to help out with other work in the marketing team when staff were under pressure. While at times, this has led to difficulties maintaining a distinction between 'academic researcher' and not 'marketing officer', I am positive that this research project would not have happened had I not been able to free-up other people's time. Offering to 'muck-in' when people were over-burdened helped enormously with the development of professional and personal relationships. One of the most important things I have learnt in this research is that collaboration needs good will. I have learnt far more about the organisation, about how they perceive their audiences, and about the commercial arts industry from helping out and developing professional relationships with the marketing team.

However, this initial sense of unease around me as a researcher was also caused by the fact that I had no clear remit as to whether my research would be critiquing the practice of the organisation in the first few months of the project. As echoed by Born's (1995) comment above, this led to staff at times being defensive about their work when speaking to me. At first, I conceptualised the staff at the CBSO as gatekeepers to the research participants, with whom I had to work closely with them to negotiate access to their audiences. I saw my task of understanding the working practices of the organisation as a means to devise research questions that would be

relevant to the orchestra in order for them to be invested in the research. However, the more I learnt about the organisation, the more I wanted my research to address issues and challenge practices that would be valuable to the CBSO. The shift from viewing the CBSO as gatekeepers to research participants in their own right was subtle; it was only retrospectively that I was able to recognise my change in position.

Because I did not originally see this project as an investigation into the working practices of the organisation, I did not keep formal field notes of my interactions, although I did maintain an informal research journal throughout my three years with the CBSO. As the project comes to a close, I am unsure as to whether field notes would have been a valuable additional data source. Had I maintained field notes, I would have been able to identify with more certainty how I first became aware of certain ideologies within the organisation or assumptions about the CBSO audience. It may also have helped me to maintain a more critical distance from the organisation. Another option would have been to keep informal field notes and to follow this up with formal interviews. However, I believe interviews conducted early on in the project would have similarly had the effect of keeping me at an arms' length from the actual debates that were taking place within the organisation. Furthermore, conducting interviews later in the project would have been problematic. I would have had to decide whether or not to capitalise on conversations I had witnessed, at the risk of putting the interviewee on the spot or damaging my professional relationships. I believe the value of this project is that it was carry out working so closely with the marketing team, and therefore attempts to formalise my interactions with the CBSO may have distanced me from the organisation and, ultimately, been detrimental to this project's outcome.

Personally, I believe that the closeness of my working relationship has enriched this project, made it far more relevant to an industry and led to a far better representation of the organisation. There were great benefits to becoming an insider, in that it gave me greater access to customer data for carrying out statistical analysis, it led to me being invited to give input in strategic meetings, and it meant that I became something of a confidante to some members of staff, through which I learnt about ongoing debates and disputes within the organisation. In addition, by being an insider through this period of change meant that I was incorporated into the marketing team. Had I been an outsider through this phase, the upheaval may have made people more defensive about their work and may have made it more difficult to conduct this research.

All of these factors shaped the research questions and conclusions in subtle ways. My close relationship with the marketing team may have made me more sympathetic to the marketing team than to other members of staff in the organisation. I do not, however, believe this has made me any less critical in the suggestions I made, instead taking on the role of a 'critical friend' to the department. Overall, I believe I was able to capitalise on my identity as simultaneously an insider and an outsider to the organisation to have the project have a real impact (see Chapters 15.3 and 15.4). By being an 'insider', the CBSO staff could trust that my conclusions were rooted in a deep understanding of the organisation. By being an 'outsider', my critical distance with regards to audiences and the organisation's practices were taken seriously.

Conclusion

My role within the CBSO has shaped this project in many ways. The research question I chose was partly influenced by the CBSO's own research interests and gaps in knowledge, but I also felt that studying populist and core audiences would allow me to critique the organisation's practice and ideology. The three years of working with the CBSO involved a great deal of negotiation of my position as both insider and outsider. At times the research seemed to operate independently of the CBSO staff; at other times, I was effectively working for the organisation as an in-house audience researcher. This close working relationship has shaped the conclusions I have drawn and how they are presented. While this has the potential to threaten my impartiality as a researcher, the benefits are that findings are relevant to the organisation, couched in understanding of their place within the industry, and have led to the study being accepted and having impact at the CBSO (see Chapter 15.3 and 15.4).

4   Investigating Audiences

This thesis reports the findings of a three-year empirical research project on classical audiences, conducted in collaboration with the CBSO. At its core is a set of semi-structured interviews with 42 attenders of the CBSO's core and populist concerts. Many of the methodological decisions made in this project were shaped by the collaboration process as I had to work within the constraints of the time and resources of the marketing team to whom I reported while at the orchestra. As gatekeepers to their audiences, staff at the CBSO had final say on what research would be conducted. Over the course of this thesis, I hope that it will become evident how much this partnership has enriched this project; however, it has involved negotiating differences in knowledge, aims and research philosophy.

4.1   Academic research in the commercial arts industry

As I discussed in the review of literature (Chapter 2), commercial and academic research has very little interaction and there is limited awareness of the contributions of the sectors on either side. When I arrived at the CBSO, I had very little knowledge of the extensive body of audience research conducted within the industry. I spent much of the first six months familiarising myself with commercial research reports and the CBSO's own back-catalogue of audience studies. Similarly, marketing staff at the CBSO were not aware of the recent surge of audience research within academic musicology. Many of the difficulties faced in the early stages of this project came from a conflict in research ideologies and assumptions in academic research and commercial market research. My understanding of these difficulties was crystallised through reading Williamson, Cloonan and Frith's (2011) article on Knowledge Resistance. I have since published my experiences as a 'commissioned' article in *Participations* journal (see Price, 2015).

A qualitative project of this depth and scope would have been beyond the resources of the orchestra without this collaboration. Indeed, this was an important factor in the rationale for conducting in-depth qualitative research; not only was I confident that it could provide a new means of understanding the value of core and populist concerts, but I also believed it was one of the most useful things I could offer as an academic in terms of addressing the gaps in the CBSO's knowledge.

Given the time constraints of the CBSO, I quickly realised that the best way to make this research happen was to 'piggy-back' on areas they were planning to study. I therefore designed the data collection as a two-step approach, first sending a post-

concert survey out to audiences, and then using this to recruit participants for the semi-structured interviews. The survey was built around pressing questions in the marketing team, such as how audiences found out about concerts, who they attended with and whether they enjoyed the performance. In addressing more urgent research questions in the marketing team, the surveys raised the priority of my research in the allocation of resources. 'Piggy-backing' on the marketing team's research needs therefore gave me the access to their audiences that I needed in order to be able to explore engagement holistically and investigate ideas of cultural hierarchy. After respondents had volunteered their contact details in the survey, I was able to contact them as an academic researcher, detaching myself somewhat from the orchestra. In doing so, I could establish some critical distance from the organisation throughout the series of interviews which gave me the freedom to explore topics away from the pressures of business decisions. I devised the interview questions around my research questions, prompted by reviewing previous literature and understanding the CBSO's working practice, and was also free to mould the interviews around what was distinct, interesting and unusual in participants' accounts of concert-going using grounded theory 'lite' (discussed below, Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2004; Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Combining surveys with interviews therefore created a two-stage project, the first of which focussed on the organisation's aims, the second focussed on building new means of understanding audiences for academic and commercial researchers alike.

Designing the research as a combination of surveys and interviews therefore fulfilled the dual purpose of this project by providing actionable information to the CBSO and contributing new knowledge to the understanding of audiences. The surveys provided immediate findings for the marketing team, meanwhile the interviews produced results over a much longer time-span. I was keen, however, that the interviews would not confirm the idea that academics are only interested in deep thinking and not researching in this 'real world'. As I conducted the interviews, I therefore discussed findings informally with marketing staff, wrote emergent themes into actionable research reports, and, in March of this year, reported back to the staff as a whole. I was keen to show that the philosophical debate of audiences has real-life implications for the ideology and working practice of the organisation.

The two-stage research process of surveys and interviews was key to negotiating confidentiality and dissemination of knowledge from this project. At the start of this project, I had difficulty negotiating the dissemination of findings because of differing approaches to confidentiality in academic and commercial research.

Because market research is designed to make businesses more competitive, its value lies partly in its confidentiality (Williamson, Cloonan & Frith, 2011, p.461). Thus, the vast majority of the body of commercial research is not available to the public. Indeed, there is information at the CBSO that I have had access to as a collaborative researcher that I otherwise would not have seen. This is at odds with academic expectations of transparency and the dissemination of knowledge.

Data arising from the survey has different pressures of confidentiality than data arising from the interviews. Survey questions such as 'how did you find out about this concert?' are of limited relevance to the study, but are crucial for marketing strategy, and therefore the responses are commercially sensitive information. The survey data is consequently only included in this thesis where it is of relevance to the argument, with the majority of the findings remaining confidential to the CBSO. The same is true of my analyses of the CBSO ticket data, which I conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the organisation and therefore inform my research questions. Some data from this cannot be shared; the orchestra's sales reports, for example, must remain confidential. However, I have been able to use some statistics from these analyses when they are relevant to the argument. I have been able to judge which findings it would be inappropriate to report due to the long-term collaboration which has not only given me a good level of understanding about what is ethically appropriate to share, but has also meant that the marketing team are able to trust me to make the right decision.

In addition, I am using the survey data very little in this thesis because the data was compromised in collection. The surveys were primarily designed to provide immediate feedback to the CBSO and to recruit for the qualitative stage of the project. Each survey was based on a questionnaire template which I developed for the CBSO to use beyond the life of this project (included as Appendix 4). It was designed to be adaptable for future use, and each time the survey was sent out, it was tailored to their priorities for that concert to ensure the questionnaire did not become too long and that irrelevant question options were removed. These changes were made to try and prevent fatigue or annoyance from respondents which may have led to ill will towards the orchestra. In addition, making the survey as easy to complete as possible maximised the response rate; it was crucial that as many respondents as possible completed the survey because the invitation to volunteer for interviews was the final question.

The problem with having adapted the survey for each concert is that data is not comparable between all respondents; some questions were not asked of all respondents and some had different options to choose from in answering the question. This has meant that I am not able to use data from certain questions in the survey, notably, the questions on the decision to attend. Only questions which were asked of all respondents with identical question options are used in the thesis, where they contextualise the findings from the qualitative interviews (these questions are marked with an asterisk in Appendix 4). The survey is an example of how tailoring a research project to be useful for arts organisations can involve making compromises to the integrity of an academic study. Nevertheless, I was able to retain full control of the interview series, which is far more valuable in expanding understanding of audiences today.

I saw my role as an academic researcher as being not only to fill in gaps in knowledge at the CBSO, but to provide a critical distance on their practice. They had carried out many audience research projects before I arrived and had a nuanced conception of their audiences. I used my growing understanding of the ideology of the organisation in combination with a large-scale review of literature on audiences, to devise research questions that would challenge inherited ideas of cultural hierarchy at academic, commercial and organisational levels. Indeed, the research question arose precisely because I was embedding into the organisation and reviewing previous literature simultaneously, and it struck me that both researchers and organisation alike were grappling with the ambiguous role of populism. Carrying out an in-depth qualitative project brought a new means of understanding the core/populist debate that could be of use to both practitioners and researchers alike.

4.2 Studying music audiences

This research builds on previous work at the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (Dobson, 2010a; 2010b; Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Gross & Pitts, 2016; Pitts, 2016; 2014; 2013; 2005; Pitts & Burland, 2014; Pitts et al, 2013; Pitts & Gross, forthcoming; Pitts & Spencer, 2008) in the social psychology of music. It is aimed at understanding musical engagement and concert listening, taking what Clarke (2005) has termed an 'ecological' approach by understanding listening in situ. This approach to understanding listening contrasts with experimental music psychology which investigates individual elements of the listening experience often within laboratory conditions. There are many ways in which experimental psychology has

raised important questions for social psychological study of concert listening. There is, for example, a large body of work investigating emotional responses to music, such as Juslin's (2013) eight mechanisms of musically-induced emotion and the presence of 'thrills' or 'chills' during listening (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Gabrielsson, 2011; Huron, 2006; Huron & Margulis, 2011; Sloboda, 1991). However, there is still work to be done to understand how emotional responses are influenced by the concert hall, by the presence of other listeners, by live and recorded music, and even by the agency of the listener in selecting the music. As Clarke (2005) has said, 'there is no avoiding the "worldliness" of music' and therefore an ecological approach to concert listening leaves open the possibilities of how audiences value concerts (p.206).

This study takes the ecological approach one step further, not only contextualising listening but situating attendance within the participants' everyday lives. This phrase is most notably associated with DeNora's (2000) research on how participants use music recordings within their day to day lives. It stems from the assumption that musical experiences are not removed from mundanities of life and should be understood in relation to them. Increasingly, audience researchers are looking to situate live arts consumption in everyday life (Gross & Pitts, 2016; Walmsley, 2013). Hesmondhalgh (2013), however, has cautioned against dominating research with music in everyday life at the neglect of moments of profound engagement (pp.35–42). This study therefore aims to strike a balance between everyday consumption and strong experiences of music (see Gabrielsson 2011).

Practically, this was achieved through combining post-concert evaluation with life-history interview technique, which called on participants to retrospectively identify impactful events and to situate that particular concert within their overall engagement with classical music (see Carnwath & Brown, 2014, pp.76–83; see also Gross & Pitts, 2016; Pitts & Spencer, 2008). To put it simply, participants in this study were first asked what they thought of the concert that they had attended and about which they had received the post-concert evaluation survey. The interviews began with the question: 'what did you think of the concert?' and participants were prompted to comment on good and bad aspects of the performance, their decision to attend, with whom they had gone to the concert, and to describe their evening as a whole. They were then asked about their engagement with classical music over a lifetime, identifying particularly significant moments, describing how they had first become interested in this music, and recalling their first CBSO concert (interview

questions are provided as Appendix 3). In this way, special moments in their classical engagement were balanced against their experience of a specific concert, which may have been a special or mundane experience.

In asking participants to evaluate performances, to draw out special moments in their classical engagement, and to comment on the value of classical music in their lives, this research is concerned with how audiences make meaning of their concert-going experiences. Consequently, it is rooted in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009). The aim of IPA is not to achieve an objective 'truth' but to access something close to participants' subjective view of the world. IPA projects use in-depth qualitative methods to explore how participants make meaning of events in their lives; it is therefore ideal for studying the value of concerts for the individual. Using semi-structured interviews, I have tried to access an holistic account of all the ways in which a participant engaged with classical music, how they synthesised a variety of classical music experiences within their overall narrative of engagement, and how they then related this to their lives as a whole. The value of IPA is not in producing widely generalisable results, but at getting as close as possible to the way in which a participant makes sense of their experiences and, in this instance, of their engagement with classical music.

In line with Rubin and Rubin's (2012) theory of interviewing, these conversations were used to gain a deep understanding of participants' experiences and their arts engagement (p.38). Interview questions were devised with this in mind. They are provided as Appendix 3, but include such questions as 'how do you choose which concerts to attend?' and 'what do you get from a concert that you don't get from a CD?' Participants were then free to select what they felt was most important or valuable about these topics. The semi-structured format ensured that each interview covered the same broad topics whilst giving participants the flexibility to discuss what was most important to them.

Talk-based methods have been chosen for this study, despite recent researchers having questioned whether conversational methods can ever successfully access the listening experience (Baxter, 2010; Clarke, 2005; Reason & Reynolds, 2010; Reason, 2010; for a summary of these arguments, see Dearn et al., forthcoming). These arguments have centred on the role of conversation in mediating audience members' reactions in several ways: that participants often clam up when asked directly about their experiences as words fail to capture the ephemeral nature of listening; and that, especially for infrequent concert attenders, participants often

lack confidence in terminology and ways of expressing their experience. Furthermore, due to the profusion of market research in the arts industry and beyond, there is a danger that participants have become too accustomed to research questions. Hennion (2001) has claimed that audience members are becoming 'over-sociologised' to qualitative research (p.5), being too self-conscious and apologetic for highbrow consumption consequently leading to a false picture of engagement.

Nonetheless, this study has demonstrated the continuing value of talk-based methods to yield valuable new insights into how people make meaning of their engagement. Participants were refreshingly frank about their experiences at times. Perhaps this was helped by my dual role of academic researcher and researcher at the CBSO; in talking to a researcher, they could be more critical about classical music than they might have been had a member of CBSO staff been talking to them, yet my partnership with the orchestra meant that the interviews provided participants with a tangible means of improving their own concert-going experience. Furthermore, the interviews provided a space for reflecting on their concert attendance. Moments of reflection, correction, and censorship have come to be an important part of the analysis when uncovering the way in which audience members evaluate and assimilate their cultural experiences.

Through prompting the participants to reflect on their attendance, this research had the potential to change their opinions or influence their future engagement. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that taking part in audience research can deepen a participant's engagement with the art form and organisation (Pitts & Gross, forthcoming). There is, however, danger that this research could negatively impact on their concert-going. I was effectively representing the CBSO and therefore I was aware that any hint of judgement could reflect badly on the organisation, as well as inhibiting participants' responses. I was acutely aware of this in moments where participants were reflecting negatively on their own attitudes (see Chapter 7.2 for example); care was taken to encourage these reflections, but not to be seen to pass judgement on them as a researcher.

Nonetheless, a central principle of IPA is that the researcher cannot help but influence the collection of the data as well as bringing their own bias to the analysis and presentation of findings. Let me therefore acknowledge my own bias in this study. Firstly, my research is shaped by my personal background. Birmingham is my home town; I am invested in its arts scene, having been to many CBSO concerts before, previously stewarded at the CBSO centre, and been involved as a volunteer

with an arts festival in the city. As an insider, I may lack the critical distance and insight that an outsider could bring (Nettl 2005, p.151). However, I believe that my knowledge of the Birmingham arts industry has shaped and contextualised this study in many unseen ways, as well as enabling me to bed into the orchestra more effectively. In addition, I believe that my desire to see classical music flourish in Birmingham has helped me to remain critical of the running of the orchestra, even as I developed friendships with those who work there.

Furthermore, my view as a researcher is also shaped my academic background. I am an amateur classical musician and prior to this doctorate, my higher education was in musicology. I therefore have a great deal of knowledge and understanding of classical music which could put me in a difficult position when talking to new attenders. However, my interest in audience research is fuelled by my own discontent with classical concerts. Despite being, by all accounts, the target audience for classical organisations, I often find myself dissatisfied with live classical music compared to other arts events. While this has the potential to bias my research, I believe in reality, it has enabled me to maintain a critical distance, despite becoming increasingly embedded within the CBSO, and has served me well in empathising with less-engaged attenders.

My study was therefore designed in response to my observations of the working of the orchestra and the classical music industry, as well as pressing research questions around cultural hierarchy that are under-explored in academic audience research. I designed a study which utilised the CBSO's communication channels to reach the largest number of audience members from a range of different levels of engagement, recruiting via an online survey for a series of semi-structured interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, covering their musical engagement, past and present, with participants able to shape the conversation around what was most important to them.

4.3 Participants

Interview participants were recruited via a post-concert evaluation survey which was built in Survey Monkey. A link was sent out via an official CBSO email address to all audience members who had attended the chosen concerts and had given the CBSO permission to email them. As seen in Appendix 4, the survey ended with an option to leave their contact details and be contacted about an interview. As an incentive, completing the survey entered respondents into a prize draw to win one of three pairs of CBSO tickets and all interviewees were offered a pair of tickets to a concert

of their choice in gratitude for taking part. The aim was to find 40 attenders who represented a mixture of frequent and infrequent, core and populist attenders.

Having participants opt-in to further research biased the project towards people with higher engagement and a stronger relationship with the orchestra. Consequently, it was easy to find frequent attenders to interview; they were far more likely to complete the questionnaire, to opt-in to being contacted, and to agree to take part in an interview. It was more difficult to recruit infrequent attenders. This was caused not only by them being less likely to complete the survey or opt-in to interviews, but also because some people looked like infrequent attenders from the survey and their CBSO customer record, but turned out to be quite highly-engaged concert-goers during the interview. The disparity between ticket history as recorded by an arts organisation, and arts consumption as expressed during an interview is a running theme throughout this thesis.

A brief glance at the demographic information in Appendix 2 reveals that there were slightly more male than female participants (55% men and 45% women) and that most of the dataset were of retirement age. While this is a fairly representative sample of the classical music audience (DCMS, 2016b), a lack of young participants is a common problem in audience research (Dobson, 2010a, p.20; Pitts, 2005, p.98). There is therefore a danger that our understanding of audiences is only accurate for this older population. The recruitment methods employed in this study may have been biased towards retired audience members. The CBSO required me to call the respondents from an office phone which meant I had to call during the working day, favouring people who were not at work. I tried to offset this by asking volunteers to provide a daytime telephone number, but the vast majority of people I was able to speak to on the phone were at home, retired. To compensate for this, I emailed all respondents who I had not been able to reach, offering to meet them at any time to suit them. However, speaking to people on the phone yielded a much better rate of interview volunteers leading, overall, to a high rate of retired interviewees. Nevertheless, while this project failed in recruiting many young attenders, this was sacrificed in order to recruit infrequent attenders, as I discussed above, another group who are under-represented in classical audience research.

I aimed for 40 interviews and I interviewed 42 participants. Three interviews were conducted by email; Nicola, Veronica and Frank were keen to take part in the project, but were unable to commit to meeting for an interview due to work and holidays. I therefore sent over the interview questions for them to type their

responses. Married couple Veronica and Frank's responses were very brief, leading me to recruit two further participants for the dataset. Nicola, however, took the time to type four pages of comments, writing openly and honestly about her engagement and, consequently, her responses are featured strongly in this study. While face-to-face interviews provided far more consistent data, Nicola was proof that email correspondence can work, for the right participant.

Seven interviews were conducted with married couples. The time and place of all interviews were arranged to accommodate participants and make it as easy as possible for them to take part. Many interviews were organised to fit in with participants' pre-existing plans to be in Birmingham city centre, especially for participants who lived further away. Many participants chose to combine the interview with attending a concert, which often involved their spouses. Therefore, interviewing people as couples kept the disruption of their plans to a minimum.

The decision to interview couples together was therefore pragmatic, but these interviews transpired to be some of the most interesting in the dataset. Conducting research with couples together is much more common in family research where, as Bjornholt and Farstad (2012) have noted, couple interviews tend to provide more nuanced opinions on a topic, with participants often bringing on-going disputes into the interview. This was certainly the case with my study; couples would correct each other, disagree, ask for clarification, and compare their individual opinions and experiences with their spouses' comments. In many ways, they took on the role of interviewer for each other. In addition, they allowed me to see, in action, how they negotiated their individual tastes for classical music (see Chapter 10), and how they remembered musical experiences between them, functioning as an external memory for the other (see Gross, 2013, pp.77–83).

Care was taken to ensure that participants were comfortable with the research. Most interviews were arranged over the phone, where they were made aware of the aims of the project and had the chance to ask any questions. They were also told that their comments would remain anonymous and that they would be given a pseudonym in publications. In addition, all participants were emailed an information sheet and consent form before the interview, so that they came to the interview prepared with any further questions. Participants consented for their interview data to be used for publications and shared with the CBSO; indeed, many interviewees wanted reassurance at the end of the interview that I would pass their comments on to the organisation as promised. No participants were worried about the purpose of the

interview, though almost all the participants were intrigued by the collaborative nature of the project and asked a number of questions about this relationship, and my own career plans, at the end of the interview.

The decision to aim for 40 participants was partly determined by the amount of qualitative data I could analyse without the project being unwieldy; as it was, I had almost 20 hours of recording. By the final few interviews, I was also reaching 'theoretical saturation' of experiences and opinions (Morse, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p.112). While this is a founding principle of sampling in grounded theory, its application here is rather complex. My interviews aimed to uncover a holistic view of musical engagement, thus interviews tended to highlight the uniqueness rather than commonality of each interviewee's experiences. I have tried to represent this in the presentation of data that follows, showing both the overall trends or common opinions while maintaining the integrity of each participants' account.

4.4 Data analysis

Interviews were recorded using a portable audio recording device and then transcribed by the researcher. Care was taken to record their pattern of speech, hesitations, emphasis and mistakes. Where relevant, I also made note of non-verbal communication given by the participant. The transcripts were then analysed in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which in turn draws on the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Its application here may be better described as grounded-theory 'lite', as the analysis was not geared towards the development of a new theory (see Charmaz, 2004). As I conducted and transcribed interviews, I began coding them with emergent themes. This, in turn, influenced the focus of later interviews, as I began to hone in on the most interesting questions to ask. Over the series of interviews, I became quicker at identifying what was an unusual opinion on a topic or a less common form of engagement with classical music, and therefore would spend more of the interview exploring their unique viewpoint.

Having thematically coded the interviews, I then analysed them in two ways. Firstly, I analysed individual transcripts to explore musical engagement holistically and how concert-going fitted within the lives of each participant. One of the aims of this research project was to present audience members as rounded individuals rather than grouping them into over-simplistic segments. In order to do justice to this complexity, the analysis of the data that follows features numerous 'case studies' in which I present the experiences of one or two participants in detail. In addition, a

series of pen portraits follows this chapter, providing a brief summary of each participant's concert activity.

Secondly, the data was analysed thematically. I collated the interview data in each topic of study, which allowed me to identify when certain findings were true of all participants. I then coded these comments based on participants' frequency of concert-going and the type of concert they chose to attend. I was able to do this due to the collaboration with the CBSO which gave me access to their ticket histories. I compared their attendance history with their self-reported attendance from the interviews to establish when certain attitudes were defined along the lines of attendance and when they were driven by other factors. On many occasions when I did find a correlation between attendance and attitude, there were one or two participants who would disrupt the model. This style of analysis has been particularly significant in challenging assumptions made about different types of attenders from their ticket history alone. In this way, I have could combine verifiable ticket sales data with attitudes, opinions and 'meaning-making' of these 42 participants to present a much more nuanced, complex and, at times, contradictory account of core and populist concert-going today.

5 Populism as a Route to Classical Music Attendance

Populist concerts are used by arts organisations as audience development tools, in an attempt to attract new audiences to classical music concerts. At the CBSO, ticket sales suggest populist concerts are successful in attracting new attenders; in the 2014/15 season, over a third of tickets sold for populist concerts were bought by new customers, a far greater proportion than for core concerts. However, these statistics are not necessarily proof that populist concerts build new classical music audiences. Due to the limitations of what is captured on the customer database, it is not possible to tell whether the newcomers have been to a CBSO concert before as someone else's companion. It is therefore impossible to draw conclusions about a customer's previous engagement with classical music from ticket sales alone. A new customer is not equivalent to a new attender. Arts organisations are therefore limited in the assessment they can make about newcomers from their ticket sales alone.

In this chapter, I use the qualitative data from my interviews to explore the role of populism as a route to classical concert attendance. Firstly, I present the accounts of five participants who adhere to the audience development model, being Culturally Aware Non-Attenders or CANAs, (Winzenried, 2004) until they recently started attending populist concerts (the CANA group is listed in Appendix 2.3). I explore the conditions which led to their first attendance and consider whether they might, in time, cross over to core programmes. I then show that there are several participants who disrupt this model, some by finding other routes to concert-going, others by moving from core attendance to exclusively populist programmes. I suggest while the audience development model does explain the engagement of some attenders, it does not account for the majority of populist audiences. To conclude this chapter, I consider the idea that core and populist concerts attract two distinct audiences, as noted in the introduction (Chapter 1.1). This was a common belief amongst participants, even when it contradicted their own attendance habits. Ticket sales data from the orchestra, however, shows a significant overlap between core and populist audiences.

5.1 Routes to populist concerts

In the dataset, there were five participants for whom attending a populist concert at the CBSO was their first experience of live orchestral music: Emma, Gordon,

George, and Ben and Alison (a married couple). With very little knowledge of classical music, they are proof that populist concerts can succeed in attracting CANAs. Within this group, there were two distinct routes to attendance, both of which were connected to venue: Emma and Gordon found out about CBSO concerts by picking up marketing leaflets as they walked through Symphony Hall, whereas George, Ben and Alison crossed over to orchestral concerts from other non-classical events at the same venue.

> *What made you go to that first concert?*
>
> Emma   It was very accidental! [...] When I first moved down here, I was spending the weekends, sort of, wandering around Birmingham, learning the area, and then you stumble across something that's like 'Symphony Hall'. There are brochures!
>
> Gordon   I was made redundant about three and a half years ago. [...] Suddenly, I was faced with a lot of spare time on my hands and I – only by chance – I must've wandered in or picked up a leaflet or something.

For Emma, coming to the CBSO was part of getting to know a new city. Having grown up in a rural area, she wanted to make the most of the opportunities around her in Birmingham. She began looking for alternative things to do with her evenings because 'going out to bars' on a Friday night was getting 'boring'. Initially, her attendance was therefore connected to the day of the week; she was specifically looking for activities to do on a Friday night. The significance of scheduling populist concerts on a Friday night is explored in Chapter 11.1.

Like Emma, Gordon found out about populist concerts through marketing in Symphony Hall when he was looking for new things to do with his time. For Gordon, however, this had less to do with broadening his horizons and more about finding ways to occupy himself having been made redundant. The first concert he came to appealed to him because it featured Scarlett Strallen, who he knew as a famous singer in the West End. Even though Gordon had never been to an orchestral concert before, the artist and repertoire (West End songs) provided a point of familiarity. While this was not a CBSO concert, I have included his account in this analysis because it was still a populist concert at Symphony Hall which subsequently made him aware of the venue, of the CBSO, and of other populist programming.

Although Emma and Gordon's routes to attendance were shaped by their unique circumstances, there are two points of common ground. Firstly, they both found out about the concert by picking up a leaflet at Symphony Hall. This suggests that the physical presence of venue is significant in raising awareness of performances. The

hall is located in the West side of Birmingham city centre, housed in the same building as the International Convention Centre. There is a walkway which divides the two halves and acts as a thoroughfare between the offices and restaurants of Brindley Place, and Centenary Square, the new Library of Birmingham and the main shopping district. It is used by hundreds of people every day as a short cut between the two areas. As Symphony Hall's resident orchestra, the CBSO has permanent advertising in the walkway with banners, flyers and brochures on display. Emma and Gordon's routes to attendance suggest that the public accessibility of Symphony Hall plays a strong role in creating awareness of the CBSO amongst non-attenders.

The second factor that links Emma and Gordon's first attendances is that both were experiencing big upheaval in their lives: Gordon was made redundant; his motivation to go to a concert came from having more spare time and finding new ways of filling it. Emma had moved to Birmingham for work and was looking for alternative things to do with her evenings. Concert-going therefore began as their lives were being re-structured. This was accompanied by a change of priorities: with more free time, arts events moved higher on Gordon's list of priorities. Similarly, Emma's priorities were shifting as she became bored of going out to bars every week. Previous literature has shown that attendance changes drastically at different life stages, notably decreasing when people have children, and increasing when they retire (Andreasen & Belk, 1980; Belk & Andreasen, 1982; DCMS, 2015b; NEA, 2015). Emma and Gordon's comments highlight the importance of the junctures between stages of their life; it suggests that people may be more open-minded to trying new cultural activities at important turning-points.

Emma's first concert attendance was also driven by a desire to take advantage of the cultural offerings of the city, a sentiment echoed by several participants.

> Emma   It seems a shame to move somewhere where you've got so many different theatres and not go and see things! Where I grew up we had one little local theatre and you couldn't get to anywhere big. [...] So now it's like: 'I'm two train stations down, I have got no excuse!'

> Jackie   We moved into Birmingham city centre probably about six/eight years ago, and because it's on the doorstep, it seems criminal not to come! So we probably come a lot more frequently than we would if we had to travel.

> Julian   [Both me and my wife] are musically ignorant [...] because of awful, awful teaching at school, which put me off classical music for decades [...] CBSO was there, a world-renowned orchestra, we're fortunate enough to have disposable income and I suppose it was a different sort of cultural experience, if that doesn't sound too pompous.

For Emma, Jackie and Julian, the sense of privilege in living so close to Symphony Hall and the CBSO has overcome anxieties around classical music. Julian was a CANA until he started attending concerts around 20 years ago. He had been put off classical music at school until, like Emma, he started looking for alternative ways to spend his time and felt that he should take advantage of living so close to the CBSO. Jackie already had an interest in classical music, having been introduced to it at school, however she had not been to a concert in many years until she moved to Birmingham city centre. All three comments centre on the idea of being privileged to live in proximity of Symphony Hall. Emma and Jackie's comments have a sense of obligation to make the most of the opportunities they now have and, perhaps, that many other people do not have. Living near to Symphony Hall and being aware of the international reputation of the CBSO therefore overcame their misgivings about live classical music and made it a higher priority in their lives. There is undoubtedly a regional dimension to these comments; the idea of being lucky to live close to a concert hall is unlikely to resonate with arts attenders in London, where there are a number of venues in close proximity. While this finding may therefore not be generalisable to London audiences, similar feelings of pride and privilege may be found amongst audiences for concerts in other regional cities.

The Symphony Hall was also pivotal in George, Ben and Alison's decision to attend. For these three participants, populist concerts have gradually come to feature in their arts consumption via attending other events at Symphony Hall.

> *How did you start going to classical concerts?*
>
> George It was pop music first, because I hadn't really seen classical since I went with school to the old Town Hall, that was really the last time. [I've] seen Deacon Blue three or four times in [Symphony Hall]. But then you have a look at the programme, and thought 'ooh, I quite fancy that [classical concert]. Quite fancy that'.
>
> Alison We're members [...] of Symphony Hall and Town Hall and then they send us a programme, so we just look and see.

For George, Ben and Alison, attending non-classical events at Symphony Hall was the catalyst for their first orchestral concert. This was partly due to increased awareness of events at the hall; they received marketing material from the venue promoting a range of different events, which brought populist concerts to their attention. Crossing over from non-classical to orchestral concerts also seems to have been facilitated by their love of the venue. George described how he loves being in Symphony Hall, deliberately arriving 'at least 20 minutes early' to soak in the atmosphere. This suggests that the concert venue is an important factor in George's enjoyment and therefore in his decision to attend. The venue is even more

important for Ben and Alison, as Ben is in a wheelchair which places restrictions on where he and Alison can go to concerts. They know that Symphony Hall is easily accessible and the staff, 'accommodating'. This suggests that being comfortable in a venue can reduce the risk associated with trying a new type of event.

Perhaps Symphony Hall encourages crossover from pop to classical concerts more than other venues. The formality of the hall, with fixed seating on four levels, all of which face the stage, means that regardless of the nature of the music, audiences are limited in how much they can move around or dance. The difference in etiquette between a pop concert and classical performances is consequently much less extreme at Symphony Hall than in pop music venues. The venue may therefore have conditioned audience members to a more formal and non-participatory form of audience engagement, making crossover from pop to classical performances less of a culture shock.

The experiences of these five CANAs not only highlight the importance of venue in the route to attendance, but also suggest that populist programmes can succeed in attracting new CANAs. Nevertheless, it is difficult to draw conclusions about classical music audiences at large from the experiences of five attenders. Indeed, these five participants may not be particularly representative of the concert-going population; they seem unusually open-minded towards trying new cultural experiences, as I discuss in Chapter 8.3. In addition, ticket sales data from the orchestra show that, in the 2014/15 season, 79% of populist newcomers had not since returned to a second concert. 14% returned to a populist concert, 5% attended a core programme, and the remaining 2% engaged with other strands such as Christmas or Family concerts. This suggests that while populist concerts can function as audience development tools, they are only effective for a small minority.

My ticket analysis was carried out in December 2015, four months after the 2014/15 season had ended. It may therefore underestimate the level of re-attendance because newcomers may yet come back to a second concert. In addition, I have only analysed newcomers' first two concerts, and it may take more time to move from populist to core concerts. Nevertheless, in the data set, there were no CANAs who had made the complete transition from populism to core programmes, as all were still regularly attending populist concerts. These interviews and the ticket sales analysis raise questions about the time-scale of audience development. How long are newcomers expected to take to find a route to core attendance? Participants such as Anthony are still exclusively attending populist concerts years after their first

concert. Tracking individual attenders over multiple seasons is beyond the resources of most arts organisations, meaning ticket data may not be the best way of monitoring audience development. In addition, if no populist attenders had transferred to core programmes, what are the routes to core concerts? The data presented in this section has shown the complexity of assessing the success of audience development initiatives.

5.2   Challenging the link between knowledge and concert selection

The audience development model does not account for the engagement of every attender; in this dataset, this model is disrupted by six participants who challenge the idea that populist concerts attract CANAs. Peter, Matthew and Nicola have been attending concerts for several years. They were CANAs with little knowledge of classical music when they first started attending, yet all three participants bypassed populism, instead attending core concerts straight away. First, however, I discuss the experiences of Chris, Rod and Elaine, three knowledgeable attenders who have been active participants in music-making, but now exclusively attend populist programmes.

Chris and Elaine both used to be actively involved in making music. Chris played the violin in an orchestra and now sings in a choir. Likewise, Elaine 'did music' at college, playing the piano and a 'bit of' clarinet. Both used to attend core concerts in both their childhood and later in life, but now choose to concentrate their concert-going on populist programmes. Both Elaine and Chris have a great deal of experience and knowledge of classical music. It is safe to assume that they would not feel uncomfortable or alienated by the music at a core concert. Their decision to attend populist concerts is therefore conscious and informed, challenging the assumption that attendance at populist concerts is borne of ignorance.

> Chris   We've probably not been to classical – what I would call 'pure classical' – concerts. So, it tends to be the lighter things that they do.
>
> Elaine   Years ago, we used to [come to core concerts]. We tend to just come Friday nights now, if we come regularly, on the whole. […] What we call 'light' music […] We don't listen much now to more serious stuff, do we?

Concerts are a sociable activity for all three participants. Married couple Elaine and Rod attend together and Chris attends with his wife; I discuss in Chapters 10.3 and 11.3 how populist programmes are often viewed as more sociable occasions than

core concerts. The language that Chris and Elaine used is interesting; Chris described core concerts as 'pure' classical, and populist programmes as 'lighter' music. Elaine similarly described core programmes as 'serious stuff'. Their comments imply that core programmes are less fun than populist concerts and require more effort to enjoy. Chris, Elaine and Rod's decisions to focus on populist concerts implies a shift in how they want to engage with classical music. Previously taking it quite seriously through musical participation, they now seem to want it to be more casual, sociable and fun. The attendance of knowledgeable listeners at populist concerts may therefore demonstrate the changing priority of classical music in their lives.

On the other side of this knowledge-attendance relationship are Peter, Matthew and Nicola, three highly frequent core attenders who only discovered classical music in adulthood. They show that it is possible for CANAs with very little knowledge of classical music to bypass populist concerts and become frequent core attenders. Peter, having been 'terrible in music lessons' as a teenager, was introduced to classical concerts through a girlfriend as a young adult. Together, they would 'see Barbirolli in the Hallé one night and The Beatles the next night'. Later, his wife became a singer in the CBSO chorus. He initially went to concerts to support her but 'got hooked' on the CBSO and became a very frequent attender. Peter's journey shows that adult socialisation can be an introduction to concert-going and that being taken to concerts by other, more experienced attenders, may reduce anxieties around first-time attendance (the interaction of companionship and risk is discussed in Chapter 10).

Adult socialisation was an important motive for several participants, despite being overlooked by Bourdieu (1984) in his theories on cultural engagement (Upright, 2004). One such attender was Paul. As I described in the pen portraits (Appendix 2.2), Paul's first experience of live classical music was while visiting a friend in Vienna. Visiting a friend, being on holiday, and knowing the tickets were highly sought-after overcame any misgivings he had about classical music. Paul's sense of privilege at being able to get free tickets to an extremely coveted concert mirrors the sense of privilege that Emma, Julian and Jackie felt in living so close to Symphony Hall. This implies that feeling lucky to be able to access high-quality music-making that is out of reach of other people, through travel distance or the scarcity of tickets, can encourage non-attenders to take a risk with classical concerts.

Matthew and Nicola's routes to attendance were far more self-guided. When Matthew was 17, he built a record player and, by chance, the record he bought to test it was Holst's *The Planets*. This record got him 'hooked' on classical music, and the following year, he went to his first orchestral concert. His wife, Ruth, had grown up with classical music and described how they had 'always been to classical music concerts' as a couple. It is likely that their shared love of classical music acted as a stimulus to Matthew's concert-going. Likewise, recordings played an important role in Nicola's introduction to classical music. She got 'hooked' on hearing classical music around 30 years ago from seeing a production of *Romeo and Juliet* which used Prokofiev's ballet music. Her landlady had an 'awesome CD player' and so she collected classical and film music to hear on the sound system.

Interestingly, Peter, Matthew and Nicola all use the same phrase to describe their routes into concert-going: they got 'hooked' on classical music. The term 'hooked' suggests something addictive about the experience of listening to this music. For Matthew and Nicola, their comments describe the process of having their eyes opened to a style of music which they had previously overlooked, starting them on a journey of discovery in the genre. The way that they describe being 'hooked' on listening to the recordings suggests quite a deep aesthetic engagement. This challenges the way in which new attenders are conceptualised in audience research literature where, as I showed in Chapter 2.5, newcomers are often assumed to look for more extrinsic forms of value in attendance (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004; Brown, 2002). For all three of these participants, their first exposure to classical music was several decades ago, suggesting it may take some time to become a frequent core attender. However, their accounts are proof that, even without childhood socialisation, it is possible to become a highly-engaged core attender.

The six participants discussed in this section challenge the relationship between knowledge and attendance. Lack of knowledge of classical music does not automatically mean someone will be a populist attender. While I demonstrated in the previous section that populism does provide a useful route in for first-time CANAs, here, I have shown that it is possible to bypass populism and become a core attender, although it seems to rely on the attender being highly self-motivated to discover more about classical music through recordings and concerts. The connection between knowledge and attendance has also been challenged by Chris, Rod and Elaine, who are proof that populist attenders do not all lack knowledge of classical music. Their engagement demonstrates that there is value in populist attendance for a range of different attenders.

5.3   Who are populist audiences?

Scott (2016) has demonstrated that arts and entertainment audiences are often believed to be discrete groups of people. Participants likewise believed that core and populist attenders drew two different audiences, even when this contradicted their own engagement.

> Paul   I think the Friday night audiences are different from the midweek audiences.
>
> William   Friday Night Classics, with the lighting, you tend to get a different audience.
>
> Julian   The faces that we see at the Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday, whatever, tend not to be there on the Friday, by and large. And certainly, none of our friends who are more hard-lined as it were, as I put it, never go on the Friday.

The belief that core audiences attract a different group of people to populist programmes were partly based on participants' own social networks. In addition to the above quotations, Georgina was surprised not to see any of her friends who attend core concerts at a populist concert of Gershwin's and Bernstein's music. Similarly, Julian felt that the familiar faces he sees at core concerts are absent from populist performances. In addition, populist audiences were believed to be demographically different from core. In Chapter 2.1, I described how classical audiences are overwhelmingly white, well-educated, middle class and at least middle aged. Participants felt that populist programmes attracted a broader demographic.

> John   One thing we do notice is that [at populist concert] there is a much wider range of audience in terms of age, a lot of younger people on Friday nights than the staid crew that go to other concerts. Some of them are much more cross-cultural as well. You do see wider audiences from other sections of society as well, which is nice.
>
> Emma   The audience tends to be a bit different [at populist concerts]. I don't feel like I'm bringing the age quotient down quite so much on the Friday night ones. I've been to one or two of the classical ones where you're like 'I think I'm the youngest here by about 40 years!!'

Populist concerts were felt to attract younger and more ethnically diverse concert-goers. The survey results support the difference in age profile; while both core and populist respondents clustered around middle-age, core respondents were slightly older, with 51% being 65 or over, compared to 32% of populist respondents. John's use of the word 'staid' is interesting; his comments were not neutral observations about the demographic differences but were actively welcoming more diverse audiences. Participants wanted to see a much more diverse audience in age and ethnicity at classical concerts, which I discuss further in Chapter 9.1. Participants

also thought audiences at core and populist concerts differed in their cultural engagement.

> Emma   I think [populist audiences are] more people who tend to go and see musicals or are probably more the, sort of, Hippodrome audience coming over, rather than... I think the really classical ones are probably the people who do spend a lot of time at Symphony Hall.

> Georgina   We categorise people into Swan and Saga. Swan is the Swan Hellenic Cruise sort of people, and Saga are the coach trips. We don't like being part of Swan, but we have to say that, because of the fact that we do go to a lot of things, I'm afraid we come into that category and, I must say, there's too much Swan and too little Saga at most concerts. But not at the Friday Night Classics. The New York, New York one, that was much more Saga and I like to see that.

Both Emma and Georgina drew on ideas of high-, middle- and lowbrow cultural consumption. Emma believes that while core classical attenders are likely to be regularly attending classical music concerts, populist audiences are more likely to be found at the Birmingham Hippodrome. The Birmingham Hippodrome is the biggest theatre in the city centre. Though it does present more traditionally highbrow cultural events, being the home to the Birmingham Royal Ballet and regularly hosting performances from the Welsh National Opera, its programme centres on touring West End shows and musicals. Emma therefore suggested that populist audiences are more avid consumers of middlebrow cultural events.

Georgina is far more explicit about ideas of highbrow and middlebrow amongst the audiences using the analogy of cruise ships. Georgina claims that core attenders are the kind of people who go on Swan Hellenic Cruise ships, on which the emphasis is on cultural and historical sightseeing, with very little on-board entertainment. This contrasts with populist attenders who are likely to go on Saga coach trips, more focussed on entertainment and socialising rather than cultural engagement. Both Georgina's and Emma's comments therefore suggest a difference between core and populist audiences in the nature of their cultural engagement; core audiences consume highbrow culture, whereas populist audience consume middlebrow culture.

The survey data supports Emma and Georgina's assumptions. In the questionnaires, respondents were given a list of cultural activities and, in line with the ACE's Taking Part survey (DCMS, 2016b), were asked 'in the last 12 months, how many times have you been to the following?' A breakdown of results comparing core and populist respondents is given in Appendix 5. Core attenders were more likely to be regular attenders at museums and heritage, art galleries or art exhibitions, plays or drama,

and the opera. Populist audiences were more likely to regularly attend the cinema, musical theatre, pop concerts and comedy nights. In addition, as Bryson (1996) has noted the importance of expressed dislikes for defining cultural tastes, it is worth noting the activities that respondents claim to have never taken part in. Populist respondents were far more likely to have never been to the opera, whereas core respondents were more likely to have never been to a pop concert. Notwithstanding these discrepancies, both core and populist attenders were more avid cultural attenders than the English public. For example, 47% of core attenders and 39% of populist attenders had been to a play or drama at least three times in the previous year; in the Taking Part survey, only 22% of the population had been to a play or drama at any time in the previous year. Georgina and Emma's comments about the difference in cultural engagement link back to the idea of populism as an audience development initiative. Emma compared populist attenders who are at the Hippodrome with core attenders who are always at Symphony Hall. She therefore implied that populist audiences are not regular classical music attenders.

Nevertheless, despite the belief that there is a core audience and a populist audience, the two groups of attenders overlap considerably, with many people attending both core and populist programmes (Figure 2, data retrieved from the CBSO's customer database and ticket sales).

Figure 2: Proportion of customers who bought tickets to core and populist concerts in the CBSO 2014/15 season

10% of core attenders also went to a populist concert

Core attenders

Populist attenders

26% of populist attenders also went to a core concert
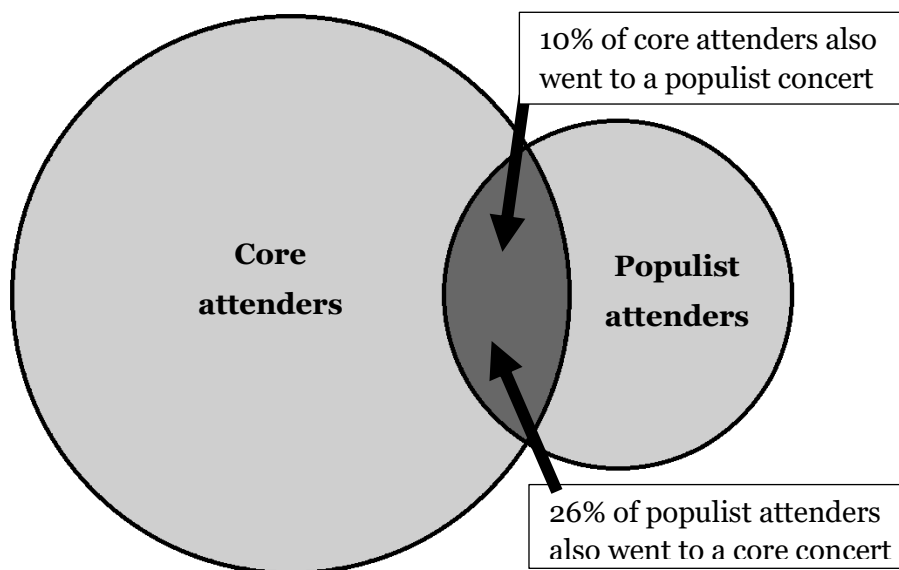
This data was taken from the CBSO customer database for the 2014/15 season; within the space of one year, over a quarter of all populist audiences also attended a core classical concert. Even amongst the 42 participants, over half had at some point attended both core and populist concerts (see Appendix 2). Crossing over between core and populist concerts is therefore incredibly common CBSO audiences, yet participants felt they were unusual for attending both.

> Cathy   I was here at a Beethoven concert and a man suggested to me that Tchaikovsky wasn't proper music, so I decided to shock him by telling him I was going to the Abba concert and he looked as though I was crazy.

> Nicola   The week of the Queen concert it was one of two that I attended, with CBSO doing Brahms and Beethoven the following night! This amused fellow audience members greatly. I was sat next to people who only go to the Friday night ones!

As participants cross between core and populist, they believe that they are moving between two different audiences. Such is the strength of the idea that core and populist attract two different sets of people, audiences believe in there being two discrete audiences, even when it contradicts their own engagement. This points to a continued belief in separate art and entertainment audiences for classical music, in line with Scott's (2016) commentary of other musical genres. Nevertheless, it is worth questioning whether this is a generalisable finding or specific to the population under study. The fact that the CBSO present both forms of programming may promote more crossover than would be found between orchestras which specialise in core or populist concerts. A number of UK orchestras and venues present both core and populist programming, therefore this situation is not unusual, but further research is needed to ascertain whether there is the same level of audience crossover when core and populist programmes are presented by different arts organisations.

This section has once again shown the complexity of understanding core and populist attendance. On the one hand, the anecdotal evidence of the more varied demographic audience for populist attendance points once again to it being a successful audience development initiative in diversifying the concert audience. The survey data also seems to show populist concerts being consumed as part of a middlebrow cultural diet, compared to highbrow classical music. However, these seemingly clear cut differences in the type of audience that core and populist programmes attract are disrupted by the finding that there is a substantial overlap between the two sets of audience members. This raises important questions around the value of populist concerts. If populist audiences overlap with core audiences,

then populist concerts must have a distinct appeal compared to core programmes for crossover audiences.

Conclusion

This chapter presents a complicated picture of populist concerts as audience development tools. When populist programmes can attract new CANAs, the concerts venue plays an important role in raising awareness and making audiences feel comfortable enough to try something new. An organisation's reputation can encourage local non-attenders to try their first concert, stemming from feelings of privilege of living near to a venue and an orchestra that others must travel to hear. Further research is needed to understand which events particularly stimulate crossover from other musical genres, and to what extent audience's experiences or attitudes determine their willingness to try something new.

Whether populist concerts grow core audiences is debatable. All five populist CANAs in this study were intending to try, or had already tried, a core concert. However, of the small number of participants who came to concert attendance through populist programmes, none have moved entirely to core concerts. In addition, the orchestra's ticket sales show that very few newcomers re-attend and most that do return to a populist programme. The large overlap of core and populist audiences within the space of a single season also raises doubts over whether there truly is a 'core' audience. Participants were unwilling to change their belief that there were two audiences for classical music, as is often assumed in audience research literature, even when they themselves crossed over between the two formats.

Most significantly for the progression of this thesis, the data in this chapter challenges the relationship between knowledge and concert attendance. I have shown that there are knowledgeable attenders who still choose to attend populist concerts, and that there have been CANAs with very limited knowledge of classical music who have yet bypassed populism and found a route in to attendance straight to core concerts. This shows that the decision to attend populist concerts is not borne of naivety. The next four chapters explore various factors in this decision to attend to better understand the motivation and anxieties around core and populist attendance.

6   Understanding the Decision to Attend

Why do audiences attend core or populist concerts? The large number of audience members who engage with both concert formats suggests that each type of programming has a specific appeal. Before I can consider why audience members choose each type of concert, it is necessary to explore how participants made the decision to attend, particularly since the inherited 'barriers' model is inadequate to explain the assessment of pros and cons of attendance. Indeed, very little of participants' non-attendance could be explained through 'barriers'. When I asked them 'why did you not attend this concert?' they struggled to provide a reason.

> Jackie   Perhaps if the name or the title didn't leap out at me.

Jackie's decision not to attend is not easily explained through 'barriers'; she was aware of the concert through CBSO marketing but it did not recommend itself to her. The concert did not become a high enough priority for her to take the necessary steps to attend.

In Chapter 2.3, I explored the inadequacy of 'barriers' as a means of explaining non-attendance, drawing attention to how the decision to attend must be understood through the priority of classical music within attenders' lives. The first part of this chapter presents a new framework for understanding the decision to attend based on perception of effort, risk and reward. This framework emerged out of my systematic analysis of the participants' complex accounts of the decision to attend and in this chapter, I demonstrate how it provides a window onto the priority of classical music within attenders' lives.

However, it became clear during the interviews that the decision to attend a particular concert is rarely taken in isolation. In the second half of this chapter, I show how participants' overall frequency of attendance impacts on the decision to attend a particular performance. The decision to attend a specific concert is always considered in relation to other concerts that participants are attending. Arts organisations have long known this and offered loyalty schemes and frequency discounts to encourage audiences to attend more often (see Kotler & Scheff, 1997, pp.262–263; Newman, 1977). Nevertheless, the ways in which overall frequency of attendance impacts on the choice of individual concerts has not been fully explored. Here, I show that while many people have a maximum concert 'budget', a small group of participants additionally had a mental quota for a minimum number of concerts they would like to attend in a year. All participants demonstrated some

sense of weighing up of the specifics of a programme and their overall frequency of attendance in the decision to attend.

6.1   The effort-risk-reward framework

As I discussed in Chapter 2.3, the decision to attend has often been conceptualised in terms of 'barriers' to attendance. However, I suggest that this term is inadequate. Firstly, it does not account for lack of interest in attending an arts event. Secondly, though when asked, non-attenders often give practical reasons for not going to an arts event, this often disguises a deeper sense of misgiving or lack of priority of arts within their lives. 'Barriers' seemed of little relevance to the accounts of the decision to attend provided by participants in this study. The decision to attend was a topic that they returned to frequently in the interviews, often revising, clarifying or providing exceptions to their previous comments. In my attempts to synthesise these 42 complex accounts, I began coding at a granular level, but then found that these themes clustered into three overarching categories: effort, risk and reward.

'Effort' describes the investment needed from attenders to go to a concert. It is an investment both of money, in buying tickets, transport, refreshments, and paying for a babysitter, and it is an investment of time, in choosing concerts, organising the evening, travelling to the venue, as well as time spent in the concert hall. Spending that time and money on a concert necessarily means prioritising concert-going over something else. Baker (2000/2007) has described these limits on capacity as audiences' time and money 'budgets' (p.42–43). Going to a concert places demands on these budgets and consequently takes resources away from other activities. Concerts are assessed on whether the expected enjoyment will warrant the time and money demanded. Consequently, audiences may have ample free time and disposable income to attend a concert, and yet still decide that it is not worth the investment. 'Effort' is a useful term because it encapsulates not only the monetary outlay implied by 'investment', but also the time and energy put into concert-going.

Likewise, 'reward' is used here as an umbrella term to signify the predicted enjoyment and value of attendance, beyond purely aesthetic definitions. The significance of this framework is its emphasis on the attenders' perception of value in concert-going, drawing on their knowledge and experience of the art form. It places emphasis squarely on the decision-making process itself, rather than the outcome of attendance. As I show below, the primary 'barrier' to attendance is that concert-going requires a great deal of effort without the guarantee of a reward.

Understanding how people balance effort and reward provides insights into how much of a priority classical music is in their lives.

'Risk' is then defined as the level of certainty that the attender has that their effort will pay off with enjoyment (reward). Each concert carries with it some level of risk that their effort will not 'pay off' because there are many factors that cannot be controlled by either attender or the organisation; for example, the audience member could spend the whole concert feeling ill, or there could be a road accident that prevents them from ever getting to the concert hall. However, the greater number of factors that are familiar to an attender (i.e. music, performer, venue) the more confidence they can have in predicting their enjoyment.

To illustrate how effort and reward are balanced in different ways, I explore how a decision to attend was reached by two very different participants: Ken, a core attender who lives two hours' train journey away from Birmingham; and Jackie, an infrequent attender at core and populist concerts, who lives in Birmingham city centre. I have chosen Ken and Jackie to illustrate this point because the location of their homes means that concert-going is a far greater effort for Ken, and therefore their experiences highlight how effort interacts with perceived value to determine attendance.

As described in the pen portraits (Appendix 2.2), venue is incredibly important to Ken's enjoyment of a concert. He claims that he needs 'perfect silence' to be able to enjoy a performance and therefore only attends concerts at Symphony Hall. It is for this reason that he regularly makes a four-hour round trip to CBSO concerts. During his interview, Ken talked about a concert that he was, at the time, trying to decide whether to attend.

> Ken   I'm a bit careful about what I choose. I suppose everybody is. There's a concert of Spanish music coming up, and they play [Manuel de Falla's] *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, music I have always loved, ever since I first heard it. But whether I should come just for that piece, which is short, no more than 25 minutes, 20 minutes perhaps. But the rest of the concert, they're music I know and like well enough, but whether I would come from a distance, because I live about 40 miles away, is… If that was one of the package, then I would add it on gladly, but I wouldn't pay £30 for it for such a short piece of music.

Ken was sure that he would enjoy hearing *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, however, it is a short piece and therefore his decision rests on whether the other 70 minutes of music will be worth the journey. He likes them 'well enough' but clearly is not as confident of his enjoyment. There was probably not enough guarantee of enjoyment

to warrant the effort he would have to make to attend. However, if it was 'one of the package', which I believe refers to the free bonus concert offered to early package bookers, and he could attend for free, that would reduce the effort sufficiently that he would not mind the journey.

While concert-going is far less effort for Jackie, who lives 'around the corner' from Symphony Hall, it is also far less of a priority in her life. Although travelling is not an issue, Jackie is more cautious about spending her free time and money on concert-going.

> Jackie   Then the price gets a bit prohibitive, so I tend to keep it for things like gifts and use it for that.

For Jackie, living in the city centre, and the reduction in effort that brings, means she goes to concerts far more frequently than if she had to travel from further afield as seen in Chapter 5.1. However, she does not want to spend that much of her time and money going to concerts. She describes how she uses concert tickets as gifts for friends and family, implying it is too expensive to regularly do just for her own enjoyment. This also suggests that concerts are made more worth the effort when they are social occasions, an idea I explore in Chapters 10 and 11.1. By socialising at concerts, Jackie increases the potential value of concert-going and therefore reduces the overall risk that her investment of time and money will not pay off. I explore socialising as a risk-reducing strategy in more detail in Chapter 11.1 and 13.1. Despite having very different circumstances, Ken and Jackie both show that the decision to attend is made by weighing up the effort required with the potential enjoyment.

Ken and Jackie's discussion of their decisions to attend are rooted in the geographical context of the study. When deciding whether to attend a concert, Ken has to consider the long journey he will have to undertake in order to attend a performance at the Symphony Hall. His experience may resonate with other classical music fans in rural locations without easy access to professional music-making. However, Ken's account would bear little resemblance to the experiences of London residents with multiple, high-quality concert halls on their doorstep. Similarly, Jackie's comments are rooted in the regional context of this study. As also seen in Chapter 5.1, the feeling of privilege to live in a regional city with a concert hall of the quality of Symphony Hall and an orchestra of the quality of the CBSO encouraged Jackie to attend concerts on a semi-regular basis. If she had lived in London or in another country with a greater density of professional symphony orchestras, she may not have had the same incentive to attend. Regional pride is

therefore shown here to be motivating behaviour, creating a sense of obligation to attend.

For arts organisations to persuade new audiences to attend concerts, they can influence the balance of effort, risk and reward in the framework in one of three ways:

- reducing the effort
- increasing the potential reward
- minimising the risk (i.e. the unknown factors of attendance)

Sigurjónsson (2010) has noted that most audience development strategies involve reducing the unknown factors of a concert. In addition, arts organisations regularly attempt to minimise the effort of attendance, for example by offering cheap tickets or playing in smaller, local venues (see Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's Field Notes project in Kawashima, 2000). There are a few examples of this system in action over the course of this thesis. I have already discussed in Chapter 5.2 and above with Jackie how living close to the venue, with the minimal effort required to travel to a concert, can encourage people to take risks. Gordon's comments in Chapter 8.3 show how reduced-priced tickets can encourage risk-taking. These are steps that organisations can take to make audience members more likely to attend.

Nevertheless, in trying to understand the decision to attend of these 42 participants, it became clear that attenders have their own risk-reducing strategies to ensure the reward is worth the effort of attendance. The various ways in which attenders try to minimise the cost of attendance is discussed in the following section and taken up in Chapter 11.1 where I show that some attenders take great pains to get the 'most concerts for their money'. The risk of attendance was also reduced by listening to pieces in advance. While only one attender, Anita, listened to pieces before deciding whether to attend, in Chapter 13.1 I show how many attenders listened to recordings between buying their ticket and attending the concert itself order to help them to engage more deeply with the pieces and thereby increase their enjoyment. In Chapter 10, I explore how socialising can be a risk-reducing strategy, showing that most attenders are willing to make aesthetic compromises to attend with companions. This is developed further in Chapter 11.1, where I show that extending the evening and 'making a night of it' was used as a risk-reducing strategy to ensure the night was enjoyable when participants were less confident in the programme. Each of these tactics supports the effort-risk-reward framework, by showing how participants decrease the effort or increase the potential reward of attendance.

What if an arts event required no effort to attend? Audiences are prone to believe that they would attend anything if the effort was reduced.

> Jill   I think if money wasn't an object, I think I'd have a flat right next to Symphony Hall and I'd come down here, if there was CBSO concert on every night, I'd come down.

If the cost and effort of travel was minimised, Jill claimed that she would go to a concert 'every night', in other words, regardless of the programme. However, Jill stated on several occasions in the interview that she does not like to have to sit through contemporary or niche music. She feels strongly that artists should play 'the music that they are well-known for'. It seems unlikely, therefore, that Jill would go to every CBSO concert regardless of her budget or travel-time. Jill therefore demonstrates that even if the time and money outlay of concert-going is minimised, there is still a great deal of effort involved in committing to sitting in the concert hall and concentrating on the music.

The effort-risk-reward framework is therefore a useful tool for highlighting the various forms of investment, uncertainty and value in concert attendance. It is used throughout this thesis as a way of understanding the decision to attend. The way in which participants negotiate effort and reward, as well as their attitude to risk, reveals a great deal about their engagement with classical music and the priority of concert-going in their lives.

6.2   Determining frequency of attendance

As seen by Jackie's account of decision-making, participants' frequency of attendance was related to how much of a priority classical music was in their lives. Most participants had some sense of a maximum amount of time and money that they were willing to spend on attending performances.

> Peter   I think, probably, with a Thursday subscription, and just one or two extra concerts as well, that's probably enough. I don't think it would be fair at home if I started going to many more concerts!

> Michael   They talk about golfing widows, mine's a classical concert widow! [...] Divorce papers in the post if I'm not too careful!

Neither Peter nor Michael attend concerts with their spouses and their maximum frequency of attendance is consequently shaped by the amount of time they spend away from home. Both acknowledge that concerts take time away from their families, inferring that concert-going is somewhat self-indulgent. While they both provided a tangible reason for having a limit on their concert-going, other participants were vague about what prevented them from attending more often.

> Georgina   We write down about 10 or 12 [concerts to go to in a season] and then say 'come on', you know, 'we can't go to that many!'
>
> Julian   We used to go [to BICS] but we found increasingly, there's less that's attractive. But also, I think we are booked up with the CBSO, and there's a limit…

The reason for this upper limit was not given by Georgina or Julian, nor did they indicate what would be their maximum number of performances. Furthermore, they did not comment on the expense of tickets or a lack of free time, so their maximum limit does not seem to be directly limited by their resources. In addition, unlike Peter and Michael, Georgina and Julian always attend with their spouses so they are not conscious of being away from home too much. Their upper limit of concert-going therefore seems to reflect the priority of CBSO attendance in their lives rather than being imposed by any external limiting factors.

While many participants expressed some sense of the maximum number of concerts they would attend in a season, over the course of these interviews, there emerged a small group of participants who had a firm idea of the minimum number of concerts they wanted to attend. Again, this was determined by how much of a priority concert-going was in their lives. As I demonstrate below, for some participants this was a numerical figure, often associated with accessing higher levels of concert package discount. For others, however, their minimum frequency was more of a vague sense of how often they would like to be at a concert. One such couple was Mark and Sandra. As described in the pen portraits (Appendix 2.2), Mark and Sandra are a married couple who started regularly going to CBSO concerts when they took semi-retirement. They go to the CBSO's matinee series, usually with Sandra's sister.

> *How often do you go to CBSO concerts?*
>
> Mark   The cost is structured so if you go to more than 10 concerts [you access a better discount], so we've gone over 10 this time […] whereas previously, we've just tipped over and just had 10, just to take us into that bracket to make them cheaper. […] Partly one of the reasons why we've only done the 10 concerts in the past, because sometimes it's been a struggle to think 'well, which 10 will we like?'
>
> Sandra   I would quite like more of the, you know, popular-type music. Like the Christmas Classics, or the… you know, shows or… the more lighter ones.
>
> Mark   It doesn't really matter too much what the programme is. I would prefer popular stuff but then the matinees are convenient for us; it's a day out. […] It's just I've got into a routine now of doing a matinee. I'll be home by half past five, six o'clock. […] This is enough for me anyway, I come here more than once a month now.

> Sandra   Comes round very quickly actually, two weeks.
>
> Mark   It's sufficient.

Mark and Sandra's concert frequency is shaped by two forces: discounted tickets and their routine. As I discussed in Chapter 3.2, the CBSO's concert packages offer increasing levels of discount depending on how many concerts are booked. Indeed, in some instances, the additional discount could mean that the extra concert is virtually free. I believe Mark and Sandra meant that they look for 11 concerts to attend; booking 11 performances not only increases their discount from 10% to 15%, but also entitles them to free tickets to an additional concert if they book promptly. These discount brackets have encouraged Mark and Sandra to attend more concerts, even when they are not convinced about the programme of music. In other words, the package discount increases the lower limit of their concert frequency. Mark and Sandra were not alone in eventually selecting concerts to attend that they would not immediately have chosen in order to access a better level of discount on their concert tickets (for example, Cathy in Chapter 11.1). The chance to get more concerts for their money can override misgivings about the programme.

In addition, Mark and Sandra's routine determines their frequency of attendance. For them, concert-going is inextricably linked to having a day out in Birmingham with Sandra's sister. Therefore, despite both wanting to see more popular programmes, they sacrifice their preferred 'lighter' classical music for the sake of their routine, making the decision to only attend performances in the matinee series. This, in turn, limits them to around 12 concerts in a season. The social routine of their attendance sets its own upper limit on concert-going, as there is only so often that Mark and Sandra want to venture into Birmingham city centre. A little more than once a month is 'enough'. Their concert-going is therefore influenced by their home being in a regional town which lacks regular, high-quality music performances but is within travelling distance of Birmingham. Attending a concert has become inextricably linked to the effort and reward of visiting the local big city. For Anthony, too, frequency of attendance was not conceived of as a numerical figure, but a sense of regularity and routine.

> Anthony   We get the email to say that the tickets are going on sale, trundle down on the list, have a look at holidays and blot out the ones you can't do, and then we try and find, about every five or six weeks, we tend to come in.

Anthony's concert-going routine is as much social as aesthetic; he goes to a range of arts events with his wife, sister and brother-in-law on a weekend evening. The desire for regularity implies that they would miss a concert they were interested in if it was

too close to another performance; correspondingly, they might be tempted to go to a concert they were not particularly confident about to maintain their routine.

Perhaps, therefore, for Mark, Sandra and Anthony, the value of concert-going is far more about socialising and enjoying a night out at Symphony Hall than it is about hearing specific pieces of music. I explore the idea of making a 'night of it' in Chapter 11.1. For these attenders, 'extrinsic' forms of value seem to have overtaken aesthetic considerations in the decision to attend. Concerts could be seen as having become a lifestyle choice and leisure activity, rather than a form of learning and discovery. As I discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), aesthetic engagement has been privileged as the most important and significant means of engaging with an arts event; it may be difficult for arts organisations to reconcile their efforts to be aesthetically world-class with the notion that some audience members are unconcerned about the music. Mark and Sandra are particularly interesting in terms of their concert routine because, as high-frequency core attenders, they may have been assumed to be driven by aesthetic value.

Due to their matinee routine, Mark and Sandra choose their concerts by a process of exclusion. Some participants who, like Mark and Sandra, had already decided that they would attend many concerts in a season selected performances by ruling out those they disliked or were unable to attend. The most obvious example of this is fixed series package bookers (see Chapter 3.2 for explanation of the CBSO's concert packages). The fixed package booking process forces audiences to commit to buying tickets for every concert in a series, with the chance to opt-out at a later date by exchanging their tickets. The structure of the season provides fixed series bookers with around one concert per month.

> Helen   Booking a whole series, to say: 'I'm going to go to everything, I'm not going to pick and choose and think "oh, no, I don't fancy that" because I don't know it and I have never heard of that composer' because you don't know until you try it. [...] I very rarely swap them, because my view is to try everything.

The exact programme of a concert becomes virtually irrelevant in the decision to attend. Instead, fixed package bookers know that they will have tickets to a concert roughly once a month on a pre-determined night of the week. These concert packages by nature attract very open-minded attenders who are willing to listen to whatever music is being played. However, what is surprising is that other participants employed a similar exclusion process only with their own criteria.

Robert	I'm finding that, as I get older, I can't hear top sopranos [...] anything, sort of, sung, really, I tend not to come to. But most other things, I tend to come to. [It's] excluding rather than... [...] it's exclusion rather than choice, I think.
Gordon	I think, in a season, they normally have about eight [populist concerts] and I figure I have gone to about seven out of eight in the last two or three years. [...] Usually seven are quite popular and appeal to me, but there's usually one that it's a bit too esoteric and I just don't fancy it.
Elaine	We go [to populist concerts] as often as we can [...] but we go away a lot, and an awful lot of when we're here, or an odd night, we can't do. It's mostly governed by that, really.

The process of choosing by exclusion seems to once again show participants prioritising frequency of attendance over the specifics of a particular concert. It could be said that the decision to attend any one concert becomes less important with the more concerts that are booked. In Chapter 2.3, I showed that this sort of open-mindedness was often associated with high-frequency, knowledgeable, and, implicitly, core attenders. However, Gordon and Elaine challenged this by being populist attenders who choose by exclusion, filtering their options down to populist programmes where they were comfortable with the effort, risk and reward then taking risks on concerts within this safety zone. It is not possible to say whether this form of decision-making would also be found amongst London audiences. On the one hand, the enormous cultural offering in the capital suggests that there would be too many concerts available to be able to choose by exclusion. On the other hand, London audiences may go through the same process of filtering down to specific venues or orchestras. More research is needed to test the generalisability of these findings beyond a regional context.

This discussion has demonstrated that the decision to attend any particular concert cannot be understood in isolation. Most participants had a sense of a maximum number of concerts they want to attend; if there were too many appealing concerts in a season, they ruled out performances that they believed they would have enjoyed. On the other hand, participants with a lower limit on their concert frequency selected performances that they were less confident in enjoying in order to reach their quota. Frequency of attendance is inextricably linked to routine and is determined by the priority of classical music in the lives of each attender.

Conclusion

The decision to attend is best understood as a weighing up of the effort and reward of a concert. Concert-going requires a great deal of effort on the part of the listener and enjoyment is never guaranteed. Here, 'risk' is therefore defined as the

uncertainty of whether the effort will be matched by the reward. This framework not only accounts for apathy as a reason for non-attendance, but is also useful for understanding how individuals value concert-going. The amount of effort participants were prepared to make to attend a performance was indicative of how confident they were of enjoying the evening. The priority of classical music in audience member's lives can be understood further by considering their frequency of attendance. When participants were asked how often they attended, their responses touched on ideas of routine, socialising, and shed light on the balance of extrinsic and aesthetic factors in their enjoyment. In addition, it shows that a myriad of other factors can override aesthetic considerations when choosing a concert.

This chapter detracts from the primacy of aestheticism in understanding the decision to attend for both populist and core audiences. Understanding concert-going in terms of effort, risk and reward has also highlighted the large number of factors that must be considered in deciding whether to attend. This framework is therefore employed over the next four chapters to explore how participants chose both core and populist concerts. The first two of these consider the musical programme, first looking at the interaction of familiarity and risk in participants' assessment of a concert programme. The second focusses this discussion more firmly on populism, especially on the accounts of the five CANAs from Chapter 5.1. Following this, Chapter 9 explores how the orchestra and soloists are considered in the decision to attend, including ideas of philanthropy, community and reputation. Finally, discussion of the impact of socialising on concert choice forms Chapter 10.

7   Familiarity and Risk

The most important factor in the decision to attend a concert has been found to be the musical programme (Baker, 2000/2007, pp.41–42; Brown, 2004c, p.22). Brown (2004c) has specifically highlighted the importance of familiarity in persuading listeners to attend a performance. However, King and Prior (2013) have rightly noted that familiarity exists on a spectrum, with listeners having different levels of familiarity for different pieces, which can be developed through passive exposure or active engagement. There is little understanding of how listeners assess their familiarity with a piece of music when making the decision to attend. Furthermore, as seen through Ken's experiences in Chapter 6.1, audience members must weigh up their familiarity and preference of multiple pieces in a concert. There is little known about how listeners assess various pieces in a concert and use this to decide whether to attend.

Musical familiarity is explored over the next two chapters; in this chapter, I add further weight to the importance of familiarity in the decision to attend. First, I show that audiences of all levels of engagement primarily look for familiarity in concert programmes because recognisable pieces are what recommend a concert for attendance. Unknown pieces present a higher risk because audiences are less able to assess whether they will enjoy listening to them and therefore whether it is worth the effort of attendance. In the second section, I show that, when participants were asked to reflect on familiar and unfamiliar music in the interview, many became critical of themselves for being conservative in their programme choice, reverting to ideas of effort and reward to justify their choices. Finally, I consider how the fact that concerts usually consist of multiple works affects the assessment of risk and familiarity in deciding to attend. In Chapter 8, I apply these findings on familiarity to understand the choice of core and populist concerts.

7.1   Familiar and unfamiliar music in the decision to attend

When I asked participants how they chose which concerts to attend, in line with previous research, they all said that it was the musical programme first and foremost. As I have shown in the previous chapter, this is more complex in reality, as external factors such as routine and socialising can overtake the programme in importance. However, what is clear is that, except for a very small number of participants who used concerts to discover new classical music, attendance was driven by the desire to hear familiar music.

> Eric   We tend to pick [a piece] we know well. Then you can understand it more. I think, probably, some of the classics are probably a bit beyond me. I don't know, I haven't tried it! I'm hooked on Elgar so...

Would you go to hear something you didn't know?

> Eric   I don't know... No, probably not, no. It's probably something I know. Then you can appreciate it.

Eric described how he would choose his attendance based on pieces that he knew 'well'. For him, concert-going particularly centres on Elgar, which he is 'hooked' on. This is the same term used by participants in Chapter 5.3 who, like Eric, had little knowledge of classical music but who have, through self-driven discovery, become high-frequency core attenders. Eric similarly had very little prior experience of classical music beyond the last few years. 'Hooked' therefore seems to be a term used to describe a new passion being ignited for classical music. Interestingly, it also suggests an immediacy in their engagement, contrary to the learned engagement associated with music appreciation (Horowitz, 1994, pp.202–213; Hund, 2014; Prictor, n.d.).

Eric expressed a belief that he would not enjoy unfamiliar music as much as he does familiar pieces. There is some psychological precedent for this, as the Inverted-U model of familiarity shows that enjoyment increases with familiarity (Greasley & Lamont, 2013; Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987). The admission that he 'hasn't tried' unfamiliar music reveals that he has assumed that he will not be able to engage with unfamiliar music, implying fear of unknown pieces. The risk of not enjoying an unfamiliar piece puts him off attendance; he therefore avoids it when making his decision to attend.

Eric's comments also provide an example of how ideas of familiarity and musical preference are amalgamated by audiences. He described how his concert choice is focussed on pieces he knows well, explicitly acknowledging his level of familiarity but implicit in this statement is that they are also pieces that he enjoys. What is familiar is not always what is enjoyed. The Inverted-U model shows that enjoyment decreases when music becomes too familiar. In addition, as Greasley and Lamont (2013) have noted, familiarity is not only developed through self-selected listening, but also through passive exposure to music in everyday life, therefore music may be familiar without the listener ever choosing to listen to it. Audience researchers have not adequately resolved familiarity and preference either. Brown (2004c) sets out the decision to attend as a series of 'relevance' checks which effectively merge familiarity and preference within in the same decision.

I suggest that familiarity and preference can be reconciled through the concept of risk. When a listener is familiar with a piece, they can make an informed decision about whether they will enjoy listening to it in a concert. They can exclude pieces that they know they do not enjoy, although it is worth noting that preference can change over time and they may unduly reject a piece that they would have enjoyed. Their familiarity reduces the unknown factors in a concert, thereby reducing risk of attendance. For unfamiliar pieces, it is not known whether they will enjoy listening to it, increasing the perceived risk of attendance.

Nevertheless, as familiarity operates on a spectrum (King & Prior, 2013), a piece can be stylistically familiar without the listener knowing the specific piece of music. Attenders are therefore able make educated guesses about whether they will enjoy an 'unknown' piece of music using their knowledge of pieces by the same composer, in the same style or of the same period.

Denise	I have been to new things but it does tend to be... maybe I don't know the piece but I do know the composer.
Paul	Normally, [when I choose a concert], it will be what I'm familiar with, a composer that I'm familiar with, that I know I'm going to enjoy the style of music.
George	[I choose concerts based on] composers that I, you know, I have heard of and I like some of their music, and things like that.

These participants use their existing knowledge of their musical preferences to make educated guesses about whether they will enjoy a piece in a concert. Liking other pieces by the same composer means they are reasonably confident that they will enjoy another work. For participants, using their existing knowledge and choosing pieces that are similar to other music they have enjoyed could be seen as a risk-reducing strategy. This is quite a sophisticated process because it involves recognising that there are common traits between works by the same composer. Indeed, for attenders with very little knowledge of the culture of classical music, it also entails understanding the distinction between composer and performer. Making an 'educated guess' is reliant on knowledge; therefore, lack of knowledge can lead to increased anxiety around unknown music.

| Paul | There's, like, this style of composers that come out with the... there's this one sound and it takes me back to, like, royal times and I despise it and I can't listen to classical music that's like that. I don't enjoy it. |
| Jackie | [Contemporary music] could be, you know, something that I would find a cacophony of noise, or it could be something that's really quite soothing. |

Both Jackie and Paul's anxieties stem from a fear of the unknown; what stops them from attending is that they have a worst-case scenario, knowing that there is a type of music that they would hate to sit through in a concert. Paul is aware that there is a style of classical music that he 'despises' but he does not know how to identify it by composer, genre or period of music. Therefore, any unknown piece in a concert programme could be that type of music, causing him to only choose concerts which he can be confident that he will enjoy. For Jackie, her anxieties are fixed on contemporary music; preconceptions about contemporary music were incredibly common amongst the participants, who variously described it as 'discordant', 'clashing' and 'rather weird'. While most acknowledged that some contemporary pieces could be enjoyable, they had largely been put-off listening to any new commissions because of the fear that it would be difficult to listen to. These comments highlight how unpleasant participants found it to be stuck in a concert hall listening to music that they did not enjoy.

Nevertheless, lack of knowledge could have the opposite effect on attendance, making participants more open-minded in their choice of programme.

Julian	[Our concert attendance] is very eclectic. Partly because of our own ignorance, you know, we don't know what we're letting ourselves in for.
George	I came to an opera, once, which was quite illuminating because I hadn't done opera before. […] It was Baron something's castle? The theme appealed to me. […] Was that quite modern, was it?

Until Julian and George started attending classical concerts, 20 years ago and two or three years ago, respectively, they both had very little knowledge of classical music. George mostly attends populist concerts, but went to a programme of music by Janáček and Bartók that, given the comments on contemporary music above, may well have intimidated a lot of core attenders. George chose to attend the concert because he liked the sound of the story of *Bluebeard's Castle*, not knowing that Bartók was a modern composer and that other core attenders may find it difficult to engage with his music. Both Julian and George have a lack of prejudice about the music they listen to, due to their lack of musical knowledge. This suggests that when participants make educated guesses about unknown music, they also carry prejudices about certain styles or composers that they assume they will not enjoy. A lack of knowledge can therefore make participants either more open-minded, or more conservative in their choice.

While this study supports the idea that concert attendance is driven by familiarity with the musical programme, there are different forms of familiarity that impact on

the decision to attend. When participants were somewhat knowledgeable about classical music, they could identify pieces that would be stylistically familiar and therefore can be more confident that they will enjoy the programme. Familiarity also provided participants with the ability to rule out pieces they believed that they would not enjoy, however this could lead to participants being prejudiced towards contemporary works and avoiding unfamiliar music altogether.

7.2 Conservatism

Several core attenders who expressed their anxiety towards contemporary music also reprehended themselves for being conservative in their programme choice.

What are your thoughts on contemporary music?

Robert   We have to move on otherwise where does music stop? [I will listen to contemporary music] if it's part of an overall concert. Probably wouldn't pick it out otherwise, so I'm contradicting myself here!

Georgina We're awfully conservative but I do like to be open-minded. [...] One's forgotten who the most modern composers are in classical music, we're not very good at it. We don't understand it. It is a pity. We ought to have tried harder.

Ken   As for new music, I don't listen to it very much. That's a question of age, I suppose. Perhaps. And being lazy! That comes into it, you know. Not devoting an hour to listen to new music.

What kind of concerts do you tend to go to?

Joanne   Nothing terribly modern, really, probably. [sighs] I don't know. No, it's a bit of a prejudice really, I should sort of open my eyes a bit, but having got to my age, I sort of think 'no, I know what I like, pretty much'.

In these comments, the participants acknowledged their prejudices towards contemporary music. They had decided that they would not enjoy contemporary music and therefore they avoid it in their selection of concerts. There were many similar comments I could have quoted from core attenders in the dataset who, like Robert, Georgina and Ken were highly-knowledgeable and familiar with a large number of canonical works. As a populist attender, Joanne complicates the picture as she is not particularly knowledgeable about classical music and yet still judges herself for not engaging with new music.

The difficulty of engaging with unfamiliar music is evident from these quotations. Their comments are couched in language of work and effort; Georgina said that she 'should have tried harder' and Ken described himself as being 'lazy' in not 'devoting an hour to listen to new music'. Their comments imply that a certain amount of investment is needed to be able to engage with unfamiliar pieces. In line with the

Inverted-U model of familiarity and enjoyment (Greasley & Lamont, 2013; Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987), participants suggested that unfamiliar music is not immediately enjoyable, and requires effort to become familiar with the music and begin to enjoy it (discussed further in Chapter 13.1). These participants judged themselves for not being open-minded enough to select concerts featuring new works. Indeed, after Jackie reflected on her concert choice in the interview, she sent me an email the following day pledging to 'endeavour to listen to music I would not usually choose'.

Nevertheless, these comments are not just about open-mindedness as Robert revealed another dimension to this perception of conservatism. He linked contemporary music to the future of classical music. His guilt in not engaging with classical music is therefore connected to the continuation of the art form. Similarly, Ken said that he was 'contradicting' himself, by saying that audiences should engage with contemporary music but not doing so in his own concert-going. This 'contradiction' is interesting; he believes that audiences in general should engage with contemporary music, but does not particularly want to himself. It suggests a disparity between Ken's conception of the ideal classical attenders and his own engagement.

Except for Jackie, the sense of guilt around not engaging with contemporary music was restricted to core attenders, yet self-criticism for not engaging with unfamiliar music in general was found across the dataset: Anthony described his attendance as 'playing it safe'; Denise said that she was 'not terribly experimental'; and Jennifer described how she would encourage her pupils to hear unfamiliar music, but would select her own concerts based on pieces she knew. Once again, there is a sense of disjuncture between the 'perfect' audience member and their own engagement. This suggests a deep sense of ethics in classical music engagement, that audiences felt that they ought to work hard at listening and choose more challenging types of music over what was safe and familiar.

Having criticised themselves for being conservative, participants were, however, keen to justify their choice of familiar music, reverting to the language of effort, risk and reward to do so.

> Joanne   I do look at the programme sometimes and think 'I might enjoy that, but on the other hand I might not' so I'm not going to spend money on stuff that I…

Anita	I think probably I might try something different in the future but at the moment it's a case of: do you pay for something that you're not quite sure that you're going to engage with or like?
Anthony	I only probably go about once a month because of the cost. Not just the cost of the tickets but the cost of the evening out around it as well, so that makes you selective. [...] It probably encourages you to play safe, you know. So, if I am going to do 12 shows a year, probably 10 of those are going to be safe. A couple, I might dabble with.

Each of these quotations focussed the monetary investment of concert-going. Joanne, Anita and Anthony justified their conservative tastes in terms of whether they could be confident enough in enjoying the concert to warrant the cost of the evening. This lends further support to the effort-risk-reward framework, showing how unfamiliar music increases the perceived risk of attendance because participants were less certain of their enjoyment. The above comments come from participants with a range of types of engagement; Joanne and Anthony mostly attend populist concerts and their comments are a justification for choosing populist rather than core concerts. Ideas of conservatism and populist attendance are explored in the following chapter (Chapter 8.1). Anita attends core concert and her comments justified her choice of familiar and 'tuneful' music, a term used by several core attenders to explain their concert choice.

Anita	I have been listening to the Schumann on YouTube and, again, it's tuneful. It's very tuneful. So, at the moment, I think I'm going for the tuneful bits!
Ken	I really do like a tune, more than anything. [...] I guess that's what I'm looking for, the tunes. It's really not much more than that.
Cathy	I'm quite wary of new music. Probably too wary of it. [...] I can't really cope with music that is dissonant. That's not what I go to music for. [...] I turn to music to be uplifted, calmed, entertained, thrilled. I don't go to be made to feel uncomfortable so it's that simple really.

There is a sense in these comments that the participants want to engage with music that is enjoyable, pleasant, perhaps even easy to listen to, rather than something that is difficult or challenging. The term 'tuneful' is an interesting one, especially with Ken having said that he was looking for 'not much more' than a good tune. It suggests that these participants are trying to describe a lack of sophistication in their listening, downplaying their listening skills to justify conservative concert choice through their inability to engagement with music that is more difficult. Justifying conservatism in terms of the monetary cost of attendance may be a means of masking their anxiety of sitting in a concert hall while they are not enjoying the music.

A small number of participants did choose to hear unfamiliar music at concerts.

> Yvonne   I think probably I was brought up in a good way really, because the Hallé used to do very traditional concerts but they'd always put a new piece on. [...] You had to sort of sit through things that you probably didn't like, or you thought you weren't going to like, perhaps, is a better way of putting it. So, yes, I think it's good not to be, sort of, stuck in a rut, to open yourself to other things because sometimes it's surprising, isn't it?

> David   We were very conscientious [with minimalist music], sitting through 'plinky-plonk' music, as we called it [...] We tried to be conscientious but a lot of it was very difficult to take.

The idea of conscientious engagement once again draws on the idea of the 'perfect' classical attender. To engage with new and unfamiliar music is 'conscientious', to avoid it, 'lazy'. It is worth noting the comparison with other audience members in Yvonne's comments; for her, conscientiousness is not an only a personal choice but something she believes that all audience members ought to do. By 'plinky-plonk' music, David meant contemporary works, once again suggesting a sense of duty of audience members to engage with new music. In addition, Yvonne highlighted the role of the multi-work programme in exposing audiences to new music; their attendance would be driven by familiar music, but would have to 'sit through' unfamiliar pieces in the same programme.

> Lawrence   When we come here, there's always usually a piece that we've never heard before. [...] [A familiar piece] is what tends to bring us, or bring me, and then whatever else there is, we listen to. 'Goodness me, I haven't heard that before, that was good'.

> Joanne   I quite like trying the odd new thing that I have never heard or piece that I have never heard, but actually, on the whole, I look for [familiar pieces].

> Cathy   I have a policy of doing some things that are familiar and some things that may be slightly outside of the comfort zone, but I find that the way the concerts are put together, it forces me to do that anyway. So, I have come across new music or unfamiliar music or stuff that I'd forgotten, so it works very well for me.

> William   It's rare, and it's our own fault, that we'll think 'we haven't heard any of those' and think 'we'll go to that', just in case we don't like it. It does tend to be that there is something that we are attracted to in the programme, and if that does have other things on, that's a bonus.

Cathy's 'policy' of hearing familiar and unfamiliar music suggests that she balances the new and the old not only within a concert but also across a season. This bears a striking resemblance to Anthony's comments above, where he described choosing 10 'safe' concerts over the course of a season and a couple of bigger risks. For Anthony in particular, it seems that the effort and risk of attendance is therefore distributed

across a season, with the safety of familiar music compensating for the risk of unknown works. This lends further weight to my proposal in Chapter 5.2 that the decision to attend any particular concert must be understand in the context of wider classical engagement. Nevertheless, across these quotations, the ratio of familiar music to unfamiliar music is clear: participants look for a large amount of familiarity and a small amount of risk. Indeed, while some participants welcomed exposure to new music within a concert, Mark did not appreciate having to sit through unknown music in order to hear pieces he liked.

> Mark   I'm not sure of any other form of music where you can say, well, 'pay £30' or whatever, 'but we're going to play something that you might like and you might not', you know.

Mark's comment highlights how familiarity fits within the effort-risk-reward framework. It is expensive to attend a concert and the multi-work programme means that audience may not know or enjoy all the music they are played. Multi-work programmes may therefore present a greater risk than other art forms with just one piece being performed.

The multi-work format is not unique to classical music, but is certainly more common than in other art forms. In theatre or opera, for example, many productions have only one work. In live popular music, there may be some unknown songs or new material, but they will be similar in style and they will be carefully balanced with old favourites. Indeed, Jackie's description in the previous chapter of contemporary music having the potential to be a 'cacophony of noise' is evidence that core concerts are not often stylistically homogeneous. For this reason, participants described having to assess their familiarity with all programmed works, and avoiding unfamiliar music that they felt they would not enjoy, even if that meant missing a performance of a familiar work.

7.3   Managing familiarity

The emphasis on familiarity from all participants raises questions around repetition and over-exposure to pieces of music. The Inverted-U model shows that enjoyment increases with familiarity until the music becomes too familiar and the listener tires of hearing it (Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987). Greasley and Lamont (2013) have shown that listeners carefully regulate their exposure to musical recordings to avoid this boredom, but how this is achieved within concert attendance is unknown. Some participants were happy to hear the same pieces played regularly at CBSO concerts.

Michael	Even if I saw a piece like the Eroica [Symphony] a couple of years ago or even last year, I'd come back and see it this year!
Mark	There is such a wide range with Beethoven, really. You don't hear them that often and it's not something I play every night at home so, you know, even though it's very well-known, I think you can get away with doing it once a year.
Ken	I would always come to hear [Bruckner's Seventh Symphony]. Even if they played it every year, I would still come.

Mark claimed that he does not reach over-saturation with Beethoven's music because he rarely listens to it at home. This suggests that, for audience members whose classical music listening almost exclusively occurs in the concert hall, they are unlikely to tire of pieces of music, even if they are programmed every season. His belief that the CBSO could 'get away with' playing Beethoven symphonies annually is slightly puzzling; perhaps he believed that there are other audiences like him who would happily hear it played every season. Furthermore, as Mark fervently rejected hearing unknown music, his request to hear Beethoven every year seems to be a plea for the orchestra to stick to music that the audience knows and enjoys.

Mark, Michael and Ken's comments once again draw attention to the interaction of preference and familiarity. While Ken claims he would be happy to hear Bruckner's Seventh each year, he did not make similar comments about any other piece of music. Their requests were not for narrow programming, but for more frequent performances of pieces that they love, conflating familiarity with preference. There are undoubtedly pieces with which they are familiar but that they would not want to hear every season. It suggests that the Inverted-U model may need to be adapted for music that is particularly enjoyed by listeners, who can perhaps hear it far more often without growing bored.

Nevertheless, some other participants did become tired of pieces that they had heard too often, adhering more closely to the Inverted-U model of familiarity. Trevor was the most vocal about this; interestingly, in contrast to Michael and Mark, he specifically singled out Beethoven symphonies as pieces he did not want to hear again.

Trevor	We're starting off next year with all the Beethoven symphonies, but you know I could really do without [that]. There are two or three of them that I really, really like, but the 'Pastoral' Symphony, if I have to hear it again…! [They played] *Pictures at an Exhibition* last year. That seems to come around every year and I always enjoy it when I listen to it, but after we'd heard in the first half of that concert something that was new and really exciting, I didn't feel as if I wanted to sit through *Pictures at an Exhibition* again.

Trevor was particularly prone to becoming bored with the same pieces being played repeatedly. He offered an interesting counter-argument to the above discussion of the risk of unfamiliar music, contrasting the staid predictability of over-familiar pieces and with the vibrancy of new works. In actively seeking out new music, Trevor was in the minority amongst the participants; it is worth nothing that Trevor has been a highly frequent attender for decades and has therefore heard Beethoven's symphonies performed live more times than most. Nevertheless, other less frequent participants agreed that they did not want to hear the same works each year.

Gordon	In fairness, it does get boring that I have gone to about three or four of these movie [programmes] over the last three years and the same themes... you get the same John Williams pieces come up every time.
Julie	We looked once or twice in some of the concerts last year although it's film themes is almost the same films we've heard two years ago under a different banner. [...] Do you go and do that again, or something you haven't seen or heard before?

As some participants justified their conservatism through the effort-risk-reward framework, so too did Julie justify choosing to hear new music in concert. She claims she would rather spend her time and money hearing a piece that she has not heard live before. This is however complicated by the fact that Julie's husband, William, was quoted above as saying that they 'rarely' go to music that is unfamiliar. Julie's comment therefore draws attention to a distinction between live and recorded music in the perception of familiarity. Participants were especially keen to go to concerts that featured works they knew well from recordings but had never heard live; I explore the role of live performance in the regulation of familiarity in Chapter 12.1.

The relationship between musical tastes, familiarity and knowledge means that concert programming cannot please everyone. The same piece may be over-familiar and boring to one person, an exciting opportunity to hear something live for the first time for another, and a risk-filled unknown for a third audience member. Even people with similar musical tastes and knowledge of classical music may differ in how often they want to hear the same piece repeated. Likewise, while some enjoy concerts that expose them to new pieces, others wish that the orchestra would only play pieces that they know and enjoy. When deciding whether to attend a concert, participants bring both their own knowledge and experience of classical music, and their own views on whether they want to hear familiar or unfamiliar music in order to determine how confident they are that they will enjoy their listening experience.

Conclusion

Across the dataset, concert attendance was driven by familiarity, regardless of participants' level of engagement. Familiar music reduced the risk of attendance because participants could have more confidence about whether they would enjoy a performance. Discussion of familiarity often disguised musical preferences, as participants did not simply look for familiar music but for music that they knew that they liked. For unfamiliar music, participants used their knowledge of other pieces to make educated guesses about whether they would enjoy a concert. Sometimes this led them to try music they had not heard before, but were still confident that they would enjoy because they liked other pieces of a similar style or by the same composer. Other times, participants brought preconceptions about musical styles to their decision to attend, believing they would not enjoy certain pieces, despite not having tried listening to them before.

Lack of knowledge could make people more open-minded or more conservative in their tastes. As participants were asked to reflect on their concert choice, many became aware of how focussed they were on familiar music, judging themselves for being too conservative, one even vowing to try harder with unfamiliar music after the interview. Nevertheless, they justified their conservatism through the effort-risk-reward framework which again highlights the sense of investment and commitment involved in concert-going, especially in comparison to listening to recordings at home. How do these ideas play out in populist attendance? The following chapter considers ideas of familiarity, risk and conservatism across core and populist programming.

8 Risk and Conservatism in Populist Attendance

Investigating familiarity is important to understand the value of populist concerts because they are designed around music that is assumed to be familiar to a large proportion of the UK population. Indeed, it could be said that they are built on music that is familiar through passive exposure rather than active listening. In the CBSO's 2013/14 season, there was a 'Friday Night Classics: Television and Advert Classics' concert. For each piece played, they advertised the name of the piece, the composer of the music, and the television programme or advert from which it would be familiar (for example: Prokofiev – Montagues and Capulets – The Apprentice). In other words, it was marketed as classical music 'you didn't know you knew'. This style of programming is bound up with the function of populist concerts as audience development. Audience development initiatives, as Sigurjónsson (2010) has noted, tend to focus on reducing the risk of concert attendance by making it a less alien experience for new audiences. Are populist concerts successful in reducing the perceived risk of attendance? Is attendance at populist concerts an inherently conservative choice? This chapter applies the findings on familiarity and conservatism from Chapter 7 to understand the choice between core and populist attendance.

I begin by briefly exploring the experiences of three participants for whom populist concerts were a conservative or 'safe' option given their level of knowledge and experience of classical music (previously discussed in Chapter 5.3). I suggest that their choice of populist over core programmes is evidence of classical music taking a lower priority in their lives. I then, however, show that populist concerts can represent a great risk for newcomers, not only in terms of the programme, but also in relation to concert etiquette and culture. This supports previous research on the anxieties of CANAs (Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Kolb, 2000), adding much more nuance to how different programmes can be more or less alienating to newcomers. In the final section, I explore an interesting feature of this dataset; all five CANAs expressed a desire to try core concerts and three had already done so. Their accounts provide a fascinating glimpse into anxieties around core attendance. As all five CANAs appear to be very open-minded about trying new arts experiences, I question whether audience development is ever truly initiated by arts organisations or whether it originates with the individual attender.

8.1 Populism and conservatism

In Chapter 5.3, I introduced Chris, Rod and Elaine, three audience members with experience of participating in amateur classical music who can therefore be assumed to have a fairly high level of knowledge of the art form, but who choose to exclusively attend populist concerts. As with Ken in Chapter 6.1, I was able to get an insight into Chris's concert selection through discussion of a concert that he was still trying to decide whether to attend. It was a concert in the 2015/16 season, with a programme of music based on the works of Shakespeare.

> Chris   It wouldn't be a safe bet, as far as I was concerned, it would be a case of 'I'm hoping I'm going to enjoy this because it's music based on Shakespeare's plays and I enjoy Shakespeare' but does that necessarily mean I'm going to enjoy, you know, the composer's view of the play? I don't know. [...] I'd have to suck that one and see. [...] You sort of think: 'well, we know we're both going to enjoy that [populist concert]. I would probably enjoy that [Shakespeare concert], but we're not sure. The tickets are £35/£40, so let's just go to the, sort of, lighter concerts'.

Chris's comments are enlightening because he directly compares the decision to attend a populist concert with the decision to attend a core programme. Populist concerts are 'safe'; in his mind, he and his wife are guaranteed to enjoy them, whereas the core programme is uncertain and so he would have to 'suck it and see'. Once again, the decision to attend is related back to the effort, risk and the confidence of reward. Chris has considerably less confidence that he will enjoy a core concert compared to a populist programme. He is even less confident that his wife would enjoy a core concert, which seems to be the final straw for them attending. He justifies his unwillingness to take a risk with core concerts in terms of the price of the tickets; £35 is too much to spend on a concert that he is not confident he will enjoy. The safety of populist concerts and the risk associated with core attendance was echoed by Rod and Elaine.

> Elaine   I just think because we <u>know</u>, we know the content of all the concerts that we've been to. I think we're just getting a bit lazy...
>
> Rod   Yeah, I think we are really!
>
> Elaine   ...and thinking 'do we want to sit through...?' you know. No other reason than that, that we prefer the music these days. [...] The thing is, it's not a really cheap night, is it? To come to a concert and to eat, so you've got to have something you're definitely going to enjoy. We don't risk anything too heavy that we think 'no, we wouldn't want to sit through it'.

Rod and Elaine justified their choice of populist over core concerts in terms of effort and reward. They spend a lot of time on holiday and going to sports events, thus leaving them with little free time for other activities. They justify choosing a safe

choice of programme through the expense of the tickets, however, they also told me that they always went for dinner at a nearby restaurant when they came to a concert, thereby increasing the overall cost of their evening. They could choose not to spend money at a restaurant in order to lower the effort and risk of attendance (discussed further in Chapter 11.1), but would rather spend additional money going for a meal beforehand, choosing a concert they are 'definitely going to enjoy' to guarantee the effort will be worthwhile.

Given Chris and Elaine's previous experience of music-making, I suggest that they would both be able to engage with core programming; indeed, Chris, Rod and Elaine all used to attend core concerts, but have since moved over to populism. Elaine describes this choice as them being 'lazy', echoing the ethical language of participants in Chapter 7.2. This analysis of their decision to attend suggests that classical music has taken a much lower priority in Chris, Rod and Elaine's lives in recent years. There is also a sense in both of their accounts that they are not primarily driven by aesthetic engagement in their concert choice as all three participants make aesthetic compromises in order to have more sociable evenings (as explored in Chapter 10). Their shift from core to populist attendance, against the flow of audience development, is a sign of classical music taking on a more social role in their lives.

8.2   Concert culture and anxieties of new attenders

Nevertheless, for the five CANAs in Chapter 5.2, populist attendance represented a significant risk, especially at their first concert (the CANA group is listed in Appendix 2.3). Partly, this was because they were not familiar with many classical pieces, having previously believed that classical concerts were 'not for them'.

Alison	I don't think if we'd have tried, perhaps, the John Williams one, we probably still would've been thinking 'ooh, perhaps that's not for us'.
Paul	[Looking at the marketing] If I didn't know classical music I'd be like 'yeah that's nothing to do with me'.
Gordon	They also usually do an opera gala night which I've gone to and thought 'what do I know about opera?' I don't go to opera normally. And I recognise things like *Carmen* and the drinking song in *La Traviata*, I've heard it somewhere. You absorb it.

Alison and Ben believed that they would not enjoy classical music concerts until they heard a concert of John William's film music. Gordon assumed that he would not engage with opera, as he knows very little about it, until attending a populist opera gala at the CBSO. I have also included a quotation from Paul's interview; throughout

this section, I am including comments from Paul who, though not strictly a CANA when he first came to a CBSO concert, mirrored the experiences of the CANA group in many ways. He did not grow up with classical music, his CBSO attendance is very infrequent attendance at mostly populist concerts, and he echoes the same anxieties around classical attendance.

Paul's comment was in reference to the 2014/15 season brochure, which featured members of the orchestra in core concert dress (men in tails and women in long black dresses) photographed around Birmingham city centre. He felt that this projected an image of formality and elitism that he would not have felt welcoming if he was not already interested in classical music. Alison did not give a reason why she previously though classical music was not for her, but believed that young people would think it too 'highbrow' which perhaps betrays her own misgivings. For Gordon, the anxiety of going to an opera gala was based on his lack of knowledge of the music; his comment suggests that he would be unable to engage with the operatic music because he was unfamiliar with the pieces. Given the assumption from all three attenders that classical music was not 'for them', it is easy to see that their first concert would involve taking a great risk. Due to these CANAs' lack of knowledge of classical music, programmes could include works that were unfamiliar or music that they did not recognise from the advertised title.

> Gordon   In terms of film music, I will hear something that I know very well [at a populist] because I've grown up seeing the movies. There will also be a few pieces that I have actually never heard of before, so same thing, it introduces me to at least a few new pieces.
>
> Alison   Sometimes we're brave! We go 'ooh, I don't know what that will be like' and we come to that, don't we?

All three comments reveal how much can still be unknown about a populist concert, even when the music is intended to be familiar. Alison describes how, with her husband Ben, they have been 'brave' in choosing populist concerts where they are unsure if they will enjoy it or not. Gordon has been attending populist concerts for longer than Ben and Alison, and therefore feels safe in the knowledge that he will hear some familiar music, and some new pieces that he has not heard before. Here, as in previous chapters, the perceived risk of a concert is determined by the relationship between knowledge and the musical programme, meaning populism can still be risk-filled for CANAs. However, the musical programme is not the only source of anxiety for newcomers. It is impossible to consider the risk of their first concert attendance without considering their anxieties around concert culture.

Winzenried (2004) has claimed that anxiety over the etiquette of concert-going was one of the primary reasons for non-attendance for CANAs. Because this study focussed on existing attenders, I could not trace the apprehensions around attendance prior to the first concert, I could only ask participants to reflect on them retrospectively. Interestingly, in the interviews, several CANAs or low-engagement participants still reported feeling some discomfort around the formality and etiquette of concert-going despite having attended a number of concerts. Emma provided a vivid description of how alienating the etiquette of concert halls can be to a first-time attender. She compared the more relaxed etiquette of populist concerts with audience behaviour at a core concert.

> Emma   [I remember] going into that first [concert] going 'okay, there's a random person coming in, I've got to clap them now. Okay, I don't know quite why I'm clapping him but everyone else is clapping him' and then you, kind of, get used to it. […] After two or three, you sort of get used to the beats and how it works, but it's not really very intuitive. […] You, kind of, get the feeling sometimes with [core concerts] that there are rules and you have to learn the rules to take part, like when you clap the conductor, when you clap at the end of the song… […] When you're in the really traditional ones, everyone sort of does it without thinking, and then you sort of do get a few people in the [populist concerts] that are like 'why are we applauding the conductor?' […] You almost feel that going to the musical theatre [populist programmes] and stuff, that they're a bit more relaxed. If you clap at the wrong bit, then never mind!

Emma's first concert was an alienating experience. The fact that she calls the conductor a 'random person' is evidence of a lack of knowledge of the concert format and of an orchestral set-up. She recalled that she 'did not know why' she was clapping the conductor, suggesting that, for Emma, the etiquette of concerts was mystifying and not 'intuitive'. In addition, she says that she had to 'learn the rules' in order to 'take part' implying the traditional classical audience etiquette was not optional at core programmes. Emma compared her experience to those around her, speaking of a sense of discomfort about not knowing what to do when all other audience members knew how to react, as also seen in Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs study. Emma's discussion of concert etiquette centred around when to clap in the performance. Indeed, across the dataset, clapping seemed to be used as a short-hand for the rules or etiquette of the concert hall. In particular, this centred on whether it was acceptable to clap between movements of a piece (see Chapter 15 for further discussion of attenders' views on concert etiquette).

Interestingly, Emma's comments suggest that the etiquette of core and populist concerts are not radically different, but that they are less strongly enforced in populist concerts. In both formats, the audience clap when the conductor walks on

stage and at pre-determined times between pieces, but Emma felt that clapping in the wrong place was tolerated at populist concerts. She makes an interesting comparison between core and populist audiences. Core audiences clap the conductor 'without thinking' whereas populist audiences find it strange. This suggests that she sees core audiences as being more experienced attenders, as she also expressed in Chapter 5.3. In addition, the use of the phrase 'without thinking' implies a naturalness in the concert hall, not dissimilar to Bourdieu's (1984) theories of cultural consumption, in which those who have been exposed to classical music from a young age will always be more at home in the concert hall than those who come to it in later life. The idea that populist concerts are more welcoming because they have a more relaxed etiquette is explored further in Chapter 11.

The combination of not knowing the etiquette as well as perceiving the rest of the audience to be demographically different in age and class, had the potential to leave CANAs feeling alienated by the experience.

Emma	I've been to one or two of the classical ones where you're like 'I think I'm the youngest here by about 40 years!!' You get a bit embarrassed the first time around but after that you just get over it!
Paul	I'm a working-class person. Sometimes you feel like you shouldn't be there. [...] All of my experiences of going [to Symphony Hall], [the] typical [audience] is OAP. It's really a OAP brigade that go there and so you do, I like to think of myself as young, although not as young as I used to be, you do sort of feel out of place. [...] [If] you want to go for the young professionals, young working couples, you should advertise the same places as clubs and why not?! They're not going to be turning up there getting drunk!

As the two youngest participants in the dataset, it is unsurprising that Emma and Paul felt out of place with an audience that is largely middle-aged and older. Paul's comments centred on feeling out of place as a young, 'working-class' person. He felt that the rest of the audience were more affluent than him, in addition to being older, and consequently felt 'out of place' within the concert hall. It is interesting to note that neither Paul nor Emma have let this put them off concert attendance. However, given this study only focussed on the views of current attenders, many more newcomers may have felt alienated enough by this demographic disparity to not return.

Paul's comments are particularly interesting because they connect the sense of formality of concert-going to the demographics of the audience. Kolb's (2000) research with young CANAs similarly found that they associated the formality of the concert etiquette with an older audience. The last of Paul's comments quoted above

is particularly revealing; he felt that the current audience did not actually want a younger audience in the concert hall for fear that they might not behave appropriately. There is a sense of snobbery, a word Paul used several times during his interview, that is tied up with formality, etiquette and a feeling that audiences want to only see people like them in the concert hall.

Nevertheless, while the etiquette of populist concerts was off-putting, core concerts were far worse. Throughout the interviews, participants compared populist to core concerts in terms of programme, etiquette and concert culture.

> Alison   I think if we came to something that was perhaps [by] a classical composer, whether you'd have... I don't want to say 'more serious' audience participation, but I do think perhaps you'd have people who wanted it in its purest form. I do wonder if it might be a bit older...? [...] I think it will probably be more formal, maybe. Whether it would be more sedate, I don't know really.
>
> Ben   We've heard that the attendance is maybe lower as well.
>
> Alison   Maybe people feel it is a bit highbrow.

Alison and Ben were concerned that a core concert might be less enjoyable than populist in being more formal, 'sedate' and with a smaller audience, suggesting perhaps less of an atmosphere. This also suggests that, while Emma and Paul above felt that they did not quite fit in with a classical audience, Alison and Ben feared that this would be the case at a core concert. While these five CANAs were anxious about the possibility of feeling uncomfortable at a core concert due to the expected etiquette and difference in demographics, they were more concerned that they would be unable to engage with core programmes with lengthier pieces and less well-known pieces of music.

8.3   Core programmes, populism and risk

Of the five CANAs, three had, by choice, gone on to attend a core concert.

> Emma   I have tried a few of the really traditional classical ones [...] I try to be very open-minded and kind of go with the... If I don't know if I'll like it, I'll give it a go and then I'll figure out later if I like it or not!
>
> Gordon   [Populist concerts have] got me interested in classical music and opera music [...] I have gone to operas at English National Opera in London since then.
>
> George   I'll probably graduate to doing a full, you know, sort of, half-hour, three-quarters of an hour pieces, gradually, but not yet!!

The remaining two, couple Ben and Alison told me, without prompt, that they were planning to go to a core programme soon.

Alison	We're gonna come and do a more, sort of... serious classical night.
Ben	Yes, it's on the list, isn't it?
Alison	It's on the list of things to try. Now we've dipped our toe in the water! That's what we're gonna do next, isn't it?

At first glance, their comments seem to confirm the progression of CANAs through populist to core concerts. The phrase 'dipped a toe in the water' suggests that populist concerts have for them been a safer option that has allowed them to test out whether they enjoy classical concerts without having to commit to core. As Ben and Alison until recently did not believe that classical music was 'for them', populist concerts have broken down that misconception and they wanted to try different forms of classical music and discover what they enjoy. Nevertheless, it is difficult to know how generalisable these findings are as these five CANAs are very open-minded about their concert-going, raising questions about whether their 'audience development' is a product of the orchestra's initiatives, or whether it is driven by the attenders themselves.

Emma	I suppose [concert attendance] is almost personal development, learning what sort of things I enjoy, what sort of things I don't enjoy. It's getting to experience things you wouldn't normally experience and then going 'okay, I enjoyed that, I'll go and see a few more of them' [or] 'really didn't enjoy that but actually it was interesting to know that!'

Emma described how she uses concerts as a means of discovering what classical music she enjoys and which she does not. Ben, Alison and George's desire to try core concerts similarly speaks of personal development as an arts consumer, discovering types of classical music, establishing their tastes and developing as listeners. These accounts suggest that while CANAs can progress through populist to core programming, what is absent from each of these comments is any intervention from the orchestra. The decision to attend core concerts, in all cases, came from the participants themselves, rather than from persuasion from the organisation. While there may have been subconscious or unacknowledged influence from the CBSO's marketing, audience development seems to have worked for these participants precisely because they were so open-minded and therefore development was driven by their own sense of discovery, not due to organisational pressure to 'improve' their listening.

These five CANAs provide incredibly useful accounts of the risk associated with core attendance. Indeed, it was difficult to isolate how they perceived the risk of populist attendance because it was almost always articulated in comparison to core concerts. Populist concerts could be risky, but were a safer bet than core programmes. In line

with previous discussions of the decision to attend, Gordon expressed the risk of populist and core attendance in terms of the expense of concert-going. Although he has tried core concerts at the CBSO and has been to full-length productions at the English National Opera, Gordon told me that he would be cutting back on core concerts in the future.

> Gordon   I would like to go to more CBSO classical concerts here. [...] I used to experiment and to try to go to some classical concerts for the first time but only because there are special offers on or I have been on the half-price, restricted view seats. But since they're got rid of some of the half price seats to make them full-price, it's deterred me from going. [...] I'm just sticking to concerts that I'm 99% guaranteed that I know the music [and] that I'm going to enjoy it. I can't afford to take a chance, for example, going to see Andris Nelsons conduct some Beethoven symphony for the very first time.

His comments once again highlight the intersection of knowledge and risk. His lack of knowledge of classical music is demonstrated by his reference of 'new' Beethoven symphonies; it is highly unlikely that they will be a 'new' Beethoven symphony performed, therefore Beethoven is used as a shorthand for unknown core repertory. Furthermore, Beethoven's symphonies are stalwarts of core programming, with a number being played in every CBSO season (as seen in Chapter 7.3). What would be safe repertory for a core listener is risky for him. Because ticket prices have increased with each season, Gordon was less likely to try a core concert at the time of the interview than in previous years, suggesting that as the effort in the form of monetary outlay increased, the risk became greater. Gordon was unwilling to spend his limited income on concerts that he is unsure if he will enjoy. However, for George and Emma, the risk of core attendance lay not in the cost of attending but in their lack of confidence of enjoying the listening experience.

> George   The one thing that concerns... say if I came to a [concert] where it was basically three pieces of music, and it scares me that... that if I don't like of those pieces, I'll be bored by the time the others came. Basically, I'm scared of coming to a concert and sitting there and thinking 'I don't like this'. Whereas if you come to the lighter ones, where it is *Bolero* and things like that, that... okay, if you don't like one, they're only fairly short pieces.

> Emma   I have found it quite nice going to [populist concerts] because you recognise the music but you still get the whole orchestral experience. That's what I struggle with some of the more, sort of, typical classical ones. If I don't recognise the music, you, kind of, sit there going: 'this is nice, I have no idea what it is!' [...] I have tried a few of the really traditional classical ones. [...] For a lot of the classical pieces, you could be there for half an hour, just listening to music straight. I find I zone in and out often, whereas if you have that, sort of, slightly shorter pieces with a bit of interaction in between [from the presenter], it keeps people's attention if you start losing them, they come back. [...] Apparently, I'm not very good with just instrumental music all the way through!

George and Emma's comments reveal that the anxieties which new populist attenders face around core concerts mostly centre on the concert experience. Although the monetary and time effort is repeatedly given as a reason for not going to a concert, the concern that they will have to 'sit through' music that they are not enjoying is far more pressing. George uses incredibly powerful language to describe his anxieties around core concerts. He is 'scared' of not enjoying a concert, with a sense of being trapped or stuck in his seat, having to continue to listen to music he does not enjoy. He also makes an interesting point that feeling bored during one piece can ruin his enjoyment of the whole concert. Emma's justification of choosing populist over core programmes similarly revolves around boredom. In core programmes, she 'zones out', criticising herself for being unable to concentrate, which I explore in far more detail in Chapter 12.2.

George and Emma's evaluations of populist concerts focussed on the length of pieces. One of the defining features of populist programmes is that they contain a large number of short pieces. The significance of piece-length can be seen in Emma's comments where she also hints at a relationship between length and familiarity in enjoyment. She does not mind hearing short unfamiliar pieces, but when she has attended core concerts where she did not know the piece, that is when she 'zoned out'. This suggests that it is easier to engage with shorter unfamiliar works, but that long pieces of unknown music are difficult to engage with. I explore the relationship between familiarity and the difficulty of listening in Chapter 13.1. It is interesting that both George and Emma spoke so vividly about their apprehensions around core attendance, considering they had both attended core concerts. This suggests that their anxieties are not simply preconceptions around core concerts, but are evidence of a disjuncture between their listening skills and what is demanded of them in a concert.

George felt that over time he would transfer to being a core attender, 'graduating' to longer pieces of music. The word 'graduate' has connotations of education and personal development; George felt that it would take time for him to move on to core concerts, suggesting that he felt he must develop as a listener in order to be able to engage with pieces of that length. This development has less to do with familiarity and more to do with being able to engage with longer pieces in a concert. Emma made a similar point, never explicitly saying that she gets bored in a core concert, but she did say that she 'struggles' with longer pieces and that she tends to switch off. Emma felt that short pieces, because they break up a concert more with talking

from a presenter, helped her to maintain concentration for longer. This points to a need for listener development in order to move from populist to core.

Core concerts are not only depicted as being harder to engage with, but the music is also much less familiar to both Emma and George, thereby presenting a much greater risk. Emma was anxious that she would not recognise or enjoy the music in a core programme. Populist concerts are marketed to reassure people without classical music knowledge that they would still recognise some of the music being played, which for Gordon, lowered the risk of attendance.

> Gordon When you watch television and adverts, the soundtrack to a lot of adverts and film music is by great composers so you've absorbed it and its familiar to you. [...] You go a television and advert classical concert and you think 'I don't know who composed it or what it's called, but I recognise that, I've heard it on television'. But then there will also be a few pieces that I've actually never heard of before, so same thing, it introduces me to at least a few new pieces.

The marketing for populist concerts aims to reduce the risk of attendance by reassuring potential attenders that they will recognise some of the pieces played, even if they do not recognise them by name. In addition, the themes of populist concerts could be seen to guarantee that the music will be enjoyable. Populist concerts are themed not only by genre (musicals, film music, popular classics) but also often by mood. Perhaps the themes of populist concerts offer a guarantee of the homogeneity of programming that is lacking in core concerts, providing a sense of logic to the programme. In addition, the themes may reassure unknowledgeable audiences that the music will not only be recognisable but also enjoyable. There is no such guarantee with core concerts, where potential attenders must use their knowledge of classical music to make educated guesses about whether they will enjoy the performance.

The mood programming of populist concerts and the use of short pieces that are intended to be familiar to a large section of the population render populist concerts a much safer choice than core concerts. The anxieties around core attendance amongst the five CANAs in this dataset suggest that populist attenders must develop their listening skills a great deal in order to be able to engage with core concerts. This is related both to maintaining concentration during longer, unfamiliar pieces, but also developing the classical music knowledge to be able to assess whether they will enjoy core programmes without some of the marketing aids of populist promotion.

Conclusion

The fact that three out of five CANAs who found a route into classical music through populist concerts have since gone on to core programmes raises interesting questions about the role of audience development. On the face of it, this suggests that populist concerts do function successfully as audience development initiatives, however, their willingness to try core programmes could also be attributed to their own open-mindedness rather than any initiative from the part of the organisation. These CANAs' continued anxieties around core programmes, despite three having tried a core concert, imply that their difficulties are not simply preconceptions, but are borne of a disjuncture between the intensity of listening demanded by difficult and lengthy pieces, and their own listening skills. It is also worth reiterating at this point that no CANA had moved through populist concerts to being entirely a core attender (Chapter 5.2).

The data presented in this chapter confirms the idea that populist concerts do generally present a lesser risk than core. I have also shown that the perception of risk is a product of knowledge, with populist concerts having the potential to be either a conservative or a risk-filled choice. When participants understood the principles of populism, they were comforted in the knowledge that they would be presented with accessible music, some of which they would recognise, most which they would enjoy, and that the piece would be short either way. While CANAs were reassured by this style of programming, their attendance still represented a risky option because of their continuing anxieties around concert culture. In this chapter, I have begun to consider how other aspects of the concert experience (etiquette, venue, artist socialising, and communal) interact with programme in the decision to attend. In the following chapter, I continue this discussion by analysing the attitudes towards artist and venue amongst the core and populist attenders in the dataset.

9   Loyalty, Artists and Venue

While the musical programme is the most influential factor in the decision to attend, the artist playing and the venue in which the concert is being held are nonetheless important factors in concert selection, particularly in relation to loyalty (Baker, 2000/2007, pp.41–42; Brown, 2004c, p.22). Loyalty, or the intention to re-attend, has received a great deal of attention in audience research, partly due to concerns over the declining number of subscribers in America (Kolb, 2001a). The traditional model of loyalty has focussed on developing audience's emotional commitment to an organisation through relationship marketing (Kotler & Scheff, 1997, pp.262–263; Rentschler et al., 2002). Nevertheless, empirical audience research has shown that loyalty can take several forms, including emerging from habit and routine (De Rooij, 2013; Gross, 2013) as well as re-attendance based on satisfaction with previous performances (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hume & Mort, 2010; Johnson & Garbarino, 2001).

Loyalty at the CBSO is a complex issue. On the one hand, the orchestra has a strong base of loyal supporters; on the other, there are many one-time attenders on the customer database who have never returned, suggesting another, far more transient audience for the orchestra. Indeed, a recent project between THSH and Birmingham City University reported that there were 50,000 audience members who had attended one concert at THSH in the three years prior and had not since returned (Long et al., 2015). Furthermore, as the CBSO play the vast majority of their Birmingham concerts in Symphony Hall, there are questions of how to separate the concept of loyalty to the orchestra from the concept of loyalty to the venue. Finally, as seen from the tagline of their 2014/15 season: 'a world-class orchestra, at home in Birmingham', the CBSO negotiate a dual identity of local and international orchestra. Chapter 5.1 showed how the international reputation of the orchestra can encourage attendance, but it is unclear how audiences view this interacting with their identity as Birmingham's orchestra.

In this chapter, I consider how different forms of loyalty manifest in attendance for core and populist attenders. First, I present the accounts of a small number of participants who exhibit a traditional sense of loyalty to the orchestra, connected to a sense of philanthropy and parasocial interactions (Dibble, Hartmann & Rosaen, 2016). I then demonstrate that 'loyalty', defined in a much broader sense, can be seen throughout the dataset. This was partly shaped by habit and routine, but the intention to re-attend was also a result of participants being satisfied with the

quality of previous performances. In previous literature, this idea of loyalty being produced through satisfaction with performances has been seen as the domain of the single ticket buyer (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hume & Mort, 2010; Johnson & Garbarino, 2001). In this study, however, this form of loyalty was present in many accounts of concert-going across different levels of engagement. In the final section of this chapter, I consider the place of visiting artists in the classical ecosystem in Birmingham. The impact of resident and visiting artists on the decision to attend has not been explored before; here, I show that the CBSO's identity as a local and international orchestra can act as both an incentive and a disincentive to attend.

9.1   Philanthropic loyalty

For a small group of participants, their concert attendance was linked to a desire to support the CBSO and help to ensure the future of classical music in Birmingham. Michael was one such attender. He described what motivates him to donate money to CBSO, BICS and the Orchestra of the Swan.

> Michael   While I can afford it, I give to charities and I also support the orchestras. [...] [It's a way of] keeping the orchestras going. [...] I would be distraught if they [closed]. I don't want to take up golf! I'd go further afield, probably, but I couldn't do it on this sort of regular basis.

Michael is not motivated to donate by practical reasons such as priority booking, but neither is his donation entirely selfless. He wants to see the orchestras survive so that he can continue going to concerts. As he spends a few evenings each week at classical concerts, his donation is a way of ensuring that he can keep spending his time in this way. Nevertheless, Michael's comments imply a desire to support music-making in Birmingham. Robert similarly donates to a number of different classical organisations who play in Birmingham, in part to ensure the continuation of the concerts he attends multiple times each week, but also to ensure the future of classical music in the city. These could be seen as examples of 'cultural citizenship', found by Gross and Pitts (2016) in their study of contemporary arts audiences in the city. They found that participants understood their own arts engagement as part of their identity and social involvement in the city and were interested in how the arts might contribute to the life of the city.

This sense of civic support may be a generated by the regional location of the orchestra. In Chapters 5.1 and 6.1, I showed how participants felt lucky to be living in a regional city with a professional symphony orchestra and a world-class concert venue. Therefore, their desire to support the orchestra through attendance and

donations stems from a sense of civic pride and a feeling of privilege in living in a regional city with its own professional symphony orchestra. For most participants who donated to the CBSO, their desire to support the orchestra came from concern over classical music's future and, particularly, the lack of young people in the audience.

Peter [The audience] seems to be getting older, doesn't it?

Rod It is worrying when you think… when all of us lot aren't around, who's going to be in the audience? Because they do tend to be mostly our age.

Jackie I'm nearly 60. There seems to be a lot of people my age and above, I don't know how many concert-goers that are, sort of, a generation below me

Julian [A typical CBSO audience member is] white, middle-class, I think by definition quite affluent. I find it quite worrying. Oh, and elderly as well, I forgot that bit. So, the demographic must be a bit, sort of, shifted.

Denise You've got to get the youth… […] Where are you going to get your young audience from? Where's the audience of the future going to be?

Young audiences seemed to represent the future of the art form; participants were concerned that classical music would not continue once their own generation were no longer able to attend. Jackie's comment raises questions about how 'young people' are defined in classical music; she is concerned that even the 'generation below' her, presumably in their late 30s/40s, are not attending concerts. These participants wanted to ensure that the art form continued beyond their lifetime but also that it reached other sections of the local public, as Birmingham's young and ethnically diverse population (Birmingham City Council, 2013) is not represented in the concert hall.

On the other hand, some participants felt that there was no need to worry over the future of audiences because young people would automatically become attenders as they got older.

Anthony I would say [classical music] has always struggled to get to [young people and ethnic minorities to attend concerts]. I think whichever area of the performing arts you're in, I think you could always see a reason to have bigger audiences, so I'm not sure that the classical scene has got a unique problem.

> Nicola   Many of the friends I have made at CBSO concerts have been going to classical music concerts for 60 plus years and they say when they started going, they would be amongst the few young people with mostly older folk, just as it now can sometimes be. So, absolutely expose children and teenagers to classical music when you can, and hopefully the audiences will keep having that turnover… Even if most people don't go so much until they're retired, or more settled at work or whatever. Don't worry so much maybe?!

Some participants felt that the lack of engagement from younger generations was not restricted to classical music. Gordon pointed out that audiences were equally homogenous for plays in the city, whereas Lawrence noted the lack of young people at churches and Rod told me of the difficulties of finding younger members for his rotary club. In addition, participants felt that young people would automatically become attenders when they became older. This is the very assumption that Kolb (2001b) challenged in her analysis of American NEA and English ACE arts attendance data. On the one hand, there is research on arts attendance over a lifetime which suggests that arts attendance does increase with middle-age and retirement (ACE, 2015; Belk & Andersen, 1982; NEA, 2015). However, as I discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), Kolb (2001b), Stern (2011) and researchers at League of American Orchestras (2009) have all demonstrated that the youngest generation are not attending with a comparable frequency as those who are now middle-aged or older.

Nevertheless, some of the most dedicated CBSO supporters were concerned enough about the homogeneity of the audience to take matters into their own hands, promoting the orchestra through their social networks and bringing new people to concerts in an attempt to create new audience members.

> Philip   I do try to promote it through my own social media because I think that's important. […] As a patron, I think we ought to be, possibly, we ought to promote it ourselves. […] We're the ones who can actually sell it. […] I'd like to see more young people coming to our audiences. […] I'm a governor at a school, and I did make contact with the music teacher there and actually they have sent their students to concerts.

Philip felt that current audiences were best placed to attempt to reach new attenders. Indeed, Ruth and Matthew seem to agree, as they regularly bring non-attenders with them to concerts. They were recruited for this study from the Beethoven Week concerts, during which they brought nine people to the final performance.

> Ruth   We're trying to bring people to concerts […] because I think classical music – a lot of classical music – well-played, is just a stunning experience and we want to persuade other people of that.

> Matthew   And the ticket price helps the CBSO continue.
>
> Ruth   Absolutely, and that's essential.

Ruth and Matthew felt that bringing new audience members could have a two-fold effect for the orchestra; firstly, as Matthew noted, it means he and Ruth spend more money on tickets and therefore increase the CBSO's income. They are also introducing new people to the orchestra with the potential of converting them into being regular concert-goers. O'Sullivan's (2009) earlier study of CBSO audiences similarly found audience members who were attempting to convert non-attenders by bringing them along to concerts. I showed in Chapter 5.1 that friends and family could be an important route to attendance for newcomers, something I discuss further in the next chapter.

Participants who were attempting to grow the audience through their own contacts also often expressed feelings of community amongst the CBSO audience, characterised by the establishment of friendships and a sense of belonging (discussed in Chapter 10.3). The CBSO encourages feelings of support, community and loyalty through their patron schemes in which audience members are given greater benefits with the more they donate to the orchestra. Some benefits are practical, such as the ability to book tickets for concerts before they go on public sale, however, the orchestra also provides patrons with opportunities to socialise with other patrons at afternoon teas and interval drinks, means of building community amongst the audience members. However, the benefit that is promoted most strongly, and that is most dependent on the amount that people donate, is the opportunity to meet musicians.

> Sandra   We like to recognise a picture in the programme of a member of the orchestra.
>
> Elaine   We've seen [the musicians] so much, we know them by sight as well so that's lovely.
>
> Veronica   We do like going to the CBSO and recognise members of the orchestra now. It makes us feel part of the family of the CBSO.
>
> Nicola   Andris has a lovely way of making it feel like a community and welcoming people in with his little chats!

Growing familiar with members of the orchestra fosters feelings of community and support. Veronica makes this connection explicit, but for others this sense of ownership was evidence from the language they used; Philip and Helen used the pronoun 'we' when talking about the orchestra. Philanthropic and emotional connection to the orchestra therefore emerged from a number of different motives. The future of the art form was a concern to some participants, who promoted and

donated to the organisation in an attempt to secure its future, both out of a sense of social duty to ensure classical music survived in the city, but also to guarantee that they will be able to keep attending concerts in the years to come. Nevertheless, this form of philanthropic loyalty was limited to a small group of participants who were mostly frequent core attenders.

9.2   Other forms of loyalty

For a larger group of participants, loyalty was borne of habit and satisfaction with the quality of concerts (as seen in Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Garbarino, 2001). All participants had signed up to the CBSO's postal or electronic mailing list in order to find out about future performances, implying an intention to re-attend. For some in the dataset, the decision to attend a CBSO concert was made many years ago.

> Cathy   What would motivate me [to attend a CBSO populist concert]? Given that I'm already sold on the CBSO and I don't need to be told what a brilliant orchestra it is and how it's a significant part of life in Birmingham… I know all that, I've got all that. What will bring me to the concert, or not, will be the music choices.

Cathy's comments show the complexity of the decision to attend. While this comment supports the finding from Chapters 7 and 8 that the musical programme is the most important factor in the selection of concerts, she also shows how certain factors can stop being consciously considered when planning her musical engagement. The CBSO and Symphony Hall have almost become a pre-requisite for attendance. Cathy's loyalty to the CBSO did not appear to be an emotional commitment to the organisation, instead being based on a much more commercial, even habitual, relationship with the orchestra. This suggests that Cathy will continue to be loyal to the orchestra as long as she continues to enjoy their performances. The difference between this transactional form of loyalty and the philanthropic commitment discussed above is not easily distinguished through ticket sales alone. While donations to the orchestra may give a better indication of the audience member's attitudes, this in itself is not enough to distinguish between philanthropic and transactional loyalty, as attenders may donate for the more practical benefits. Qualitative research is needed to interrogate the nature of customer loyalty.

Another example of how frequency of attendance is not automatically accompanied by emotional commitment to the orchestra is found in married couple Mark and Sandra. They are highly-frequent attenders of the matinee series, but their loyalty is shaped by routine rather than emotional commitment. As I demonstrated in

Chapter 6.2, Mark and Sandra's concert-going is built around having a day out in Birmingham with a concert in the afternoon; this routine is seemingly of greater importance to them than the musical programme being played. In Chapter 7.2, Mark was quite critical of the orchestra for playing obscure music, and yet he and Sandra continue to attend the matinee series because it is so convenient for their routine. In this context, loyalty is defined as the intention to re-attend, however Mark and Sandra's engagement raises another important question for understanding loyalty: when is loyalty exclusive to one organisation? Booking concerts at the start of the season encourages Mark and Sandra to exclusively attend CBSO concerts.

> Mark   [We find out about CBSO concerts in their] brochures through the post. [...] Occasionally pick up [a leaflet for another concert] here, but we don't need to because we've booked for the whole year. [We'll] occasionally take a leaflet for something else coming up, but we can't fit them all in so end up not coming.

Mark and Sandra's exclusivity to the CBSO is encouraged by the orchestra's concert package option. They subsequently book a large number of concerts before the start of the season, guaranteeing their time and money is spent at the CBSO. It may seem surprising that Mark and Sandra are exclusive to the CBSO in their concerts attendance given their lack of emotional loyalty. Nevertheless, across the dataset, it was infrequent and populist attenders who tended to be exclusive CBSO attenders, whereas many of the more frequent, committed attenders such as Michael and Helen also attended concerts elsewhere. Mark and Sandra, as well as Cathy above, complicate the idea of loyalty to the orchestra. Their repeat attendance at the CBSO was a decision made a long time ago, a product of habit and satisfaction with the concerts they had previously attended. They do not attend classical concerts programmed by any other organisation, yet their exclusivity is not borne of an emotional commitment; the CBSO fulfils their desire to hear classical music and they therefore have no need to look elsewhere. It is difficult to say whether the exclusivity of Mark and Sandra's loyalty can be attributed to the fact that the CBSO is the only resident professional orchestra in the city. However, the Symphony Hall and Town Hall regularly host performances from visiting orchestras, suggesting that this loyalty is connected to the ensemble, rather than just being a produce of their regional location.

Loyalty is inextricably linked to the quality of CBSO performances. Across the entire dataset, all participants agreed that the CBSO produced consistently high-quality

performances. This was recognised even when participants did not like the choice of programming.

> William [CBSO concerts] are always good! I don't think we've ever been to a bad one.
>
> Alison Musically, the orchestra, as always, was very good. Well, brilliant, in fact.
>
> Trevor It's such a magnificent orchestra that I'd be disappointed if I went anywhere else!

For Alison, William and Trevor, the CBSO's concerts were 'always' good. Indeed, if the orchestra has been consistently good in the past, this suggests that, when deciding whether to attend a concert, there would be little risk of the music being played poorly. A performance by an unfamiliar ensemble would not carry the same guarantee and would therefore carry a greater risk. Trevor's comments are particularly interesting, not only because he compares the CBSO favourably with other orchestras, but also because he compared orchestral concerts with football matches, suggesting that CBSO concerts carry far less risk than going to the football, because concerts are much more consistent in quality and enjoyment. Robert and Philip similarly compared the attendance at CBSO concerts with sporting events.

> Trevor The thing that makes [having a CBSO concert package] different to having a season ticket for a football team is that you rarely get a bad concert.
>
> Robert [The concert package discount] brings the average price down to about £11 a ticket for a world-class orchestra. I can't go to sport for that. I'm a member of Warwickshire [County Cricket Club], and if I want to see the Ashes next year, the cheapest ticket for me is £65 and that's for six hours.
>
> Philip [CBSO tickets are] not bad value when you consider the cost of going to a football match and the quality is probably going to be infinitely better! Because it can be a really boring game, a nil-nil score. [Here] you know you're going to get two hours of first class music, aren't you?!

These comments can be understood through the effort-risk-reward framework. Football tickets were believed to be more expensive than concert tickets, though it is worth noting that all three participants who made the comparison were benefitting from large concert package discounts. Robert and Philip compare not only the level of enjoyment but also the price of tickets to a cricket and football match respectively. Football tickets were seen as a greater investment, and yet concerts were thought to offer a greater likelihood of enjoyment. There is also, I believe, an implicit reference to social status within this. Many participants acknowledged the fact that concert halls tend to be filled with affluent people. In noting that ticket prices are equally as

expensive as sports games and yet attract a much more diverse audience in terms of social status, Philip implies that the price of concert tickets should not be prohibitive to many non-attenders. In other words, Robert and Philip were noting that concerts being 'too expensive' was rarely ever the reason for non-attendance.

The quality of performances at CBSO concerts was discussed not only in relation to the orchestra but also with regards to the quality of Symphony Hall. Since the CBSO play almost all their Birmingham concerts at Symphony Hall, it is difficult to disentangle loyalty to the orchestra from loyalty to the venue. George, Ken and Paul's comments reveal three slightly different attitudes to venue loyalty.

> George   This is the only place I come to. [...] I get in there at least 20 minutes before the start because I just love the atmosphere of the place. I mean, it's a brilliant concert hall. It's just absolutely... brilliant.
>
> Ken   I don't go very many other places for music. [...] Even [if] it was a touring CBSO, I wouldn't necessarily go for that. So really, I'm fixed mostly on Birmingham.
>
> Paul   I'm not saying I wouldn't go anywhere else it's just, this is on my door step, isn't it?

For George and Ken, their loyalty to this venue centred on the unique characteristics of Symphony Hall. Ken travels long distances to be able to hear concerts at the venue due to its acoustical properties (see Chapter 6.1). For George, his desire to attend concerts in this venue is related to the atmosphere of the hall (see Chapter 5.1). Paul's comments, however, more closely resemble Cathy and Mark's above; he attends concerts at Symphony Hall because it is easy to get to and, as he likes the venue well enough, he has no need to look elsewhere.

If loyalty is demonstrated by exclusivity, there may a greater sense of loyalty towards the venue than the orchestra. Ken claims that he would not attend a concert elsewhere even if it was the CBSO playing, suggesting that his loyalty is to Symphony Hall rather than to the orchestra. Other participants, such as George, Chris, and Ben and Alison, attend non-classical concerts at Symphony Hall, again implying loyalty to the venue over the orchestra. Paul, elsewhere in his interview, said that he would go only to Symphony Hall for classical concerts and would go to other venues for other genres of music. Exclusivity to the CBSO is therefore impossible to separate from loyalty to the venue.

The relationship between orchestra and venue in the minds of the audience is therefore a complex issue. This is partly because the CBSO and Symphony Hall were often not consciously considered in the decision to attend; the orchestra and venue

were prerequisites to attendance, thus the deliberation over whether to attend a particular concert instead focussed on the programme and practical arrangements. The appeal of Symphony Hall was most commonly revealed when participants compared them to other venues and, likewise, compared the CBSO to other orchestras. The rest of this chapter will therefore explore the relationship between the local orchestra and visiting artists as a means of uncovering tensions in the CBSO's identity as both a local and international ensemble.

9.3   Local and international artists: negotiating identity

CBSO concerts often feature visiting conductors and soloists, yet when discussing the influence of artists on the decision to attend, many participants initially claimed that visiting artists did not affect their choice of concert because they did not have enough knowledge of classical artists to know who they were. Over the course of many of the interviews, however, this developed into a more nuanced sense of the role of the artist on the decision to attend.

> *How do you choose which concerts to attend?*

> Lawrence   The programme, really. I can't say that it's the artist because I don't know most of them.

Nevertheless, as the interview went on, Lawrence began naming a number of artists who he would actively choose to hear in performance.

> Lawrence   If ever Brendel was playing, I'd come and listen to Alfred Brendel, there'd be no doubt about that. And the erm... Anne Sophie Mutter. They are the good ones – I perceive as the good ones – stick in the mind.

> *What about conductors?*

> Lawrence   No, it still tends to be the programme [...] I like Gergiev, I don't know much about him but he's just... his presence. [...] I'd always listen, go and see Gergiev.

Several participants said that visiting artists were not important to them, but then named a few people for whom they would make an exception. I have noted before that one of the benefits of in-depth interviews was that participants returned to previous topics and revised their answers, building a more nuanced picture of their engagement. For the vast majority of visiting conductors and soloists, participants were not aware of who they were and therefore it had very little impact on their attendance. However, almost all core attenders had one or two soloists who were the exception to the rule.

Participants tended to have become aware of soloists from owning CDs and consequently wanted to hear them perform live. For conductors, more often than not, participants had seen them perform before and were so impressed that they made an effort to see them again. This was largely restricted to the most frequent and knowledgeable attenders, however it is worth noting that conductors mattered a great deal to populist attenders' enjoyment, because they often fulfilled a dual role of conductor and presenter (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 13.1). The final part of Ken's comment, that he would 'always go and see Gergiev', implies that he would hear him conduct repeatedly. It also suggests that, for a superstar soloist or conductor, the artist can become more important than the programme; they become unmissable. John and Debbie made similar comments about hearing Lang Lang play, that being a big part of the reason for them becoming 'friends' of THSH in order to get priority booking for his concert. Similarly, Stephen and Georgina felt that the visiting artists in the Birmingham International Concert Season (BICS) made BICS concerts unmissable.

Stephen	The [Birmingham] International [Concert Season] ones tend to be 'mustn't miss' concerts.
Georgina	[With CBSO concerts there is] a bit more flexibility I would say, yes.

Each season, audience members have a limited number of opportunities to hear international artists perform live in the UK. As Stephen and Georgina are over 75 and have problems with mobility, their concert-going is restricted to venues in Birmingham, meaning they have very few chances indeed to hear artists, who may only perform in the city once every few years. Compared to this, the CBSO perform multiple concerts each week. The disparity between the number of opportunities to hear superstar artists and the number of chances to see the CBSO means that visiting artists are far more unmissable than the local orchestra.

In addition, audience members may believe that internationally-renowned artists would give a better performance than the local orchestra. Ruth felt that many audience members assumed international artists were better than the CBSO.

> Ruth   I have never been to a bad CBSO [concert]. I have been to a not-brilliant one, but the thing that really gripes both of us is that you come to the [Birmingham] International Concert [Season], and there've been some very bad ones of those, you know, poor orchestras and poor conducting. And yet the audience is there! Because it's international, they think it has a higher status, and so you get packed audiences, you get multiple encores and even standing ovations, when it absolutely doesn't justify it. And they don't see the CBSO as an international orchestra. The fact that the CBSO is an international orchestra [is] not sold to the local [public]. I think they assume 'it can't possibly be [international], because it's local, it can't be'. And so, the name is not on people's tongues in the way that the BBC orchestras are and things.

Ruth was concerned that because the CBSO is the local orchestra, it is not seen as being of the same standard as visiting, international orchestras. Several other participants worried that the international reputation of the orchestra was not being conveyed to a local audience.

> Lawrence   Get them in the top 10 of world orchestras. But they won't because it's a provincial orchestra, they just keep flying to London and going 'LSO'. [...] The critics don't come very often. Although now *The Guardian* and *The Times* seem to be here a little bit more often.
>
> Denise   I think that's one of the things that's fallen away is the promotion of the CBSO since [Rattle] has gone. [...] [Now] whereas you've got fantastic conductors coming in and the orchestra's still as good, something's lost in that front-line promotion.

There was a belief that the CBSO was not appreciated as a world-class orchestra by the local population. Lawrence suggested that their identity as a local, regional orchestra was somehow at odds with international acclaim. These comments must be understood, as Denise mentions, in the context of Simon Rattle's directorship and the building of Symphony Hall. At that time, the CBSO was receiving media attention internationally and the orchestra was at the forefront of classical music in the UK (Coulson, 2015). In comparison, today the orchestra received less media attention and occupies a somewhat less prominent position in the city.

Each of these comments strike to the heart of the tension between the CBSO's dual identity as both an international and a local orchestra. As Lawrence noted, the London-centric nature of arts and culture journalism can mean the regions are overlooked as locations of high-quality music-making. Therefore, the CBSO's identity as a 'local', regional orchestra may threaten to their desire to be seen as a world-class symphony orchestra. In addition, CBSO being the resident orchestra mean that audiences have many opportunities to see them perform each season. The CBSO performs in Symphony Hall, week in, week out, meaning that if audiences choose not to attend one concert, they know they will be performing again within a few days. Furthermore, if audience members choose not to attend a performance in

one season, there is a good chance the orchestra will play stalwarts of classical repertoire again within the next few years. If BICS concerts are unmissable, the CBSO performances are distinctly 'missable'.

Nevertheless, this research has shown that the CBSO's reputation is still known amongst some portions of the Birmingham population, attracting some newcomers to their first concerts (Chapter 5.1). Many participants expressed a sense of privilege of living near to the venue and to the CBSO.

> Paul Symphony Hall and the [CBSO], they're world renowned. I mean, Symphony Hall, I understand to be one of the most acoustically advanced symphony halls in the world, isn't it? So, we're quite lucky really to have that, so I make the effort and go.
>
> Chris We're very fortunate living where we do and having access – fairly easy access – to such a fantastic auditorium with such a fantastic orchestra [...] Symphony Hall is the jewel in the crown [of Birmingham], really, and we get there as often as we can.
>
> Cathy "You're very lucky to be here, such a brilliant place and having this fabulous music. Just enjoy it!"

To analyse these comments in terms of effort and reward, concert-going required little effort for Paul, Chris and Cathy in terms of travelling to Symphony Hall as they live so close to the venue, reducing both the time and cost of attendance. However, the recurrent use of the word 'lucky' positions their situation in comparison to other audience members; implicitly, other people would have to make much greater effort to see the same quality of music-making. The orchestra's local and international identity can therefore act both as a prompt and as an inhibitor to attendance amongst local audiences.

Conclusion

This chapter has challenged how researchers conceive of loyalty and the appeal of performing artists when understanding the decision to attend. If loyalty is defined as repeated attendance, then almost all the participants in this dataset could be classed as 'loyal'. However, if loyalty is defined as exclusive attendance at one organisation, then it is more commonly found amongst infrequent and populist attenders, whereas frequent core attenders tend to also be audience members at other organisations. There is no means of telling whether loyalty stems from an emotional commitment to the orchestra or from habit and routine using customer data alone, as some participants were both frequent attenders and donors and yet had a transactional rather than emotional relationship to the orchestra.

In terms of understanding core and populist attenders, this chapter has added yet more layers of complexity. Populist attenders did not exhibit a sense of community and philanthropic support for the orchestra, but neither did most core attenders. In addition, while soloists were rarely mentioned in relation to the decision to attend a populist concert, conductors could be of surprisingly high importance through their role as comperes who introduce the pieces from the stage, which I discuss in Chapter 13.1. Overall, the impact of the artist, venue and loyalty on the decision to attend is not clearly delineated by core and populist attendance. The next chapter, the final discussion of the decision to attend, explores how social context shapes concert selection.

10   Social Factors in the Decision to Attend

Most audience members do not attend CBSO concerts alone; by analysing the CBSO's ticket sales, I was able to find that the average party size for a concert was two or three people. Customer databases only hold information on the one person in each party making the booking. This means that, for any one concert, the customer database only records information from less than half of the attenders sitting in the hall. Surprisingly little is known about who attends concerts together and how socialising impacts on the decision to attend. Socialising is an extrinsic factor in concert attendance, therefore if the previous literature is to be believed, it will be far more important to less-engaged attenders (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004; Brown, 2002; see Chapter 2.5). The survey responses support this theory, as populist concerts had far fewer people attending alone (Figure 3, data from the post-concert evaluation survey).

Figure 3: Comparison of core and populist concert companions as reported in post-concert survey
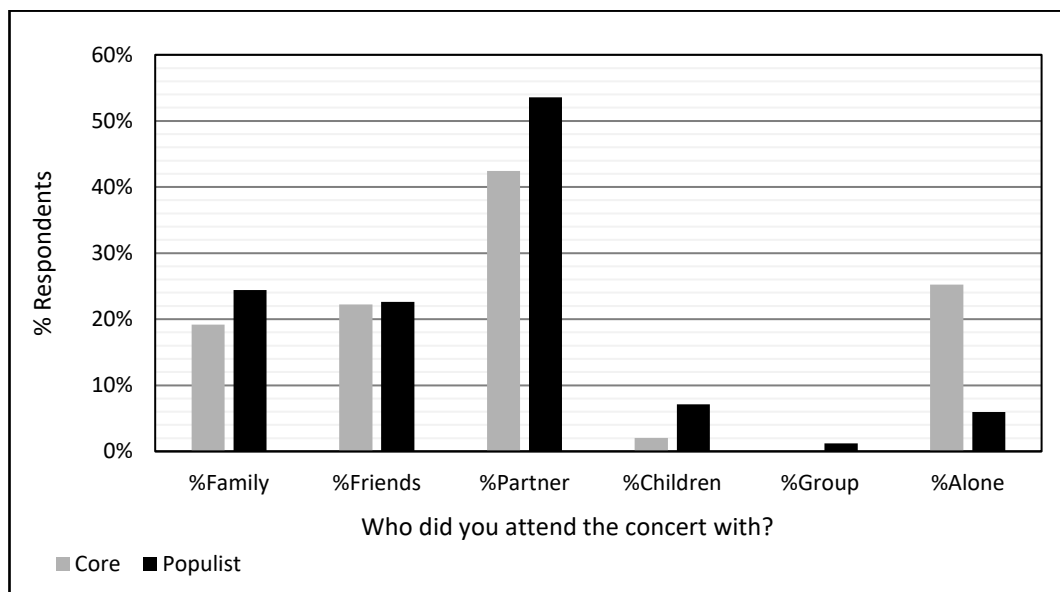
This chapter explores the role of companions on the decision to attend. Through conducting in-depth interviews, I was able to explore how companions differ between concerts and the impact this has on concert choice. I draw heavily on Brown's (2004a) initiator-responder model, in which he claims that there are two types of attenders within the classical music audience: initiators, who choose performances and organise the tickets, and responders, who essentially go along for the ride. In this chapter, I show that socialising directly affects the selection of

concerts for all attenders, at times taking precedent over the kind of aesthetic elements of a concert. I first explore the initiator-responder model in action and the role of regular companions on the decision to attend, and then look at the decision-making process of participants who attend with a range of different people. Not wishing to claim that audiences always attend with companions, I end the chapter with an exploration of audiences who choose to attend alone. Does this make them immune to social influences? I argue that their lack of companions is often forced upon them and that their comments highlight the desire of attenders to discuss their arts experiences with other people.

10.1   Concert companions: the initiators and responders model in action

Cathy provided a particularly rich example of the roles of initiator and responder, as well as the impact of companions on the decision to attend. Having 'ended up' in charge of music and theatre activities of a University of the Third Age (U3A) group, she regularly acts as an initiator by taking a range of people to concerts.

> Cathy   I'm quite prepared to come to a concert on my own, and on many occasions, I have done, but in the last two years, I have joined a very new U3A group, and I have ended up chairing the music and theatre group. So, I actually, what I do is I choose my 20 plus concerts, essentially, and then I email everybody and say 'I'm going to these […] I'm perfectly happy to come on my own, but it's quite nice to come also with other people and the whole ethos of the group that I chair is that by sharing our favourite concerts and our favourite musicians, then we help each other and we'll all end up going to stuff that we wouldn't normally go to.

As Cathy decides which concerts she will attend before discussing it with others, the tastes of her companions impact very little on her decision. In the U3A group, she offers the opportunity for people to join her for her own choice of concerts, but does very little to accommodate their individual tastes, as she is happy to attend alone if no other member wishes to join her. The final decision comes down to each companion and, as Cathy is happy to go alone, she will attend the concert either way. Cathy had a rather different arrangement for populist concerts, which she would often attend with her husband. Later in the interview, when she told me she had booked tickets to another populist concert, I asked whether she was attending with anyone else.

> Cathy   It's going to be with a plus one, yet to be finally confirmed. But it'll happen!

Unlike the U3A trips, here Cathy had decided that she will take a companion with her, without knowing who it would be. Indeed, this suggests that she may have to persuade someone to join her for that particular concert. Cathy was therefore happy to attend core concerts alone, but wanted a companion for a populist concert, suggesting that populist concerts are a more sociable experience, in line with the survey findings reported above. Cathy's account of socialising at concerts shows the diversity of initiator-responder relationships possible in concert attendance, as well as highlighting how the same attender can have different social interactions at different performances. In addition, Cathy's account of concert-going provides a particularly illuminating example of the impact of companions because, in addition, she described in detail the experience of being a responder.

> Cathy   I also came to Verdi's Requiem here, which somebody said would be very good for me. [...] I really didn't want to come, because I really think I don't like choral music very much. [...] A friend said 'oh, it's the most incredible conductor and the most incredible choir and the most incredible orchestra; you will never, ever, ever see the Verdi [done better]!' and I thought, 'well, having been sold to me like that, I ought really to come'.

Cathy's companion persuaded her to attend a concert that she would not ordinarily have chosen. In fact, she was so unsure about the concert that she listened to the music on Spotify beforehand to help 'convince' herself that she would enjoy it (listening to recordings before attending a concert is discussed further in Chapter 13.1). In Cathy's earlier comments, she described the purpose of the U3A group to 'go to stuff that we wouldn't normally go to', in other words pushing each other to try new things. Perhaps, as chair of the group, she felt obliged to take her own advice and try something that she was not confident in enjoying. Attending with companions therefore resulted in Cathy, as a responder, being pushed out of her comfort zone, suggesting that initiator-responder relationships can stretch the tastes of the companions.

Although Cathy's role in the U3A makes her an unusually active initiator, I have described her experiences in detail because they raise several issues that are pertinent across the dataset. First and foremost, Cathy is a frequent, core and populist attender who is happy to go to concerts alone, and yet the social context of concert-going still influenced her attendance. I will demonstrate over the course of this chapter that socialising affected the concert choice of all participants in the dataset. Secondly, Cathy's account shows how initiator-responder relationships require a negotiation of taste that often pushes responders beyond their comfort zone. Thirdly, it seems from Cathy's account as well as the survey data that populist

concerts are more sociable experiences. Lastly, Cathy raises the issue of when and how people are happy to go alone, and how that experience differs from attending with companions.

While Cathy occasionally attended populist concerts with her husband, several participants would only ever go to concerts with their spouse. In this situation, there was not always an obvious initiator and responder, with couples taking a much more democratic approach to concert selection. A number of participants described how they and their spouses would choose concerts by each reading through the season brochure, ticking the concerts they were individually interested in, and then find an agreement between the two.

> Lawrence   I go through the [brochure] and tick what I like. I hand it to my wife and she'll go through the [brochure] and tick what she likes. And then we'll either come together or we won't.

> Georgina   I tick off all the ones I like and I double tick all the ones I like especially much and then [Stephen] looks through and through long years of marriage, we tend to agree mostly! Which is just as well! Or else he's very loving and giving and he goes for the ones that I have already ticked!

These processes, honed over years of concert attendance, vividly demonstrate how tastes are negotiated between married couples. Julie and William, as well as Georgina and Stephen, only ever attend together and therefore attending a concert requires them to find common ground in their musical preferences. Lawrence and his wife will happily go alone and therefore make fewer compromises. Georgina's system of double-ticking some concerts implies that, from the outset, she knows that she will have to make sacrifices and that they will not be attending every concert that she is interested in. The double-ticked concerts are perhaps the ones she will fight harder to go to or be less likely to cut when they realise they have too many (as described in Chapter 5.2). As Georgina described their decision-making process, she realised that she had assumed Stephen agreed with her musical choices, but he may just be 'loving and giving' and indulging her tastes. As they always attend together, they have no choice but to come to an agreement on what they will attend, but whether this is arrived at through having very similar tastes or through making compromises for the other person, Georgina herself is not sure.

John and Debbie also attend as a couple and choose their concerts together, but do not reach this decision so easily.

> John   Given time, we get our heads together and look through [the brochure]. [...] We have quite a long rabbit about it before we actually choose.

Debbie   And if I say 'no', he doesn't.

John may book the tickets, but it is Debbie who has the final say. She is a lot more cautious than him around unfamiliar music and described how, during performances of particularly difficult pieces of contemporary music, she has had to put her fingers in her ears because she has disliked it so much. While John is happy to try new pieces, Debbie's bad concert experiences have her very cautious about her programme choices. John and Debbie show that even regular companions make compromises on the aesthetic content of concerts in order to attend with other people. These regular companions can push each other to try things out of their comfort zone (Debbie) or be more conservative in their programme choices (John).

I have spent the last three chapters exploring the importance of programme, artist and venue on the decision to attend, yet this section has shown that socialising can be as important to these participants as the programme of music. They are willing to make concessions around their musical tastes in order to attend with companions, suggesting that the social value of going to a concert with other people more than compensates for aesthetic compromises. While this data has started to build a picture of populist concerts being more sociable than core programmes, nevertheless even the concert choices of more frequent core attenders like Georgina and Stephen are affected by the social context.

10.2 Choosing concerts for a variety of companions

As seen with Cathy's account of concert selection, the decision to attend a performance can be rather different for participants with a range of potential companions. These initiators choose concerts for a variety of different people, tailoring their concert choice to their companions' tastes.

Nicola   I go [to concerts] with different people. Some friends won't try much beyond Beethoven and Mozart and some will try everything and anything, if they're available to do so. Some only like Friday Night Classics too. Some will only go to CBSO or other symphony orchestras; others prefer chamber music. Some will only go to the opera-in-concert ones. So, since I love lots, it is about finding the right person for each particular concert, and sometimes nagging them to try something outside their comfort zones.

Jackie   [Which concerts I attend] depends who I'm bringing. I tend to think 'oh, my mum'll like that'. [...] There are some people you come with and you would know that it had to be of a particular nature for them to enjoy it and if they aren't enjoying it then you don't enjoy it.

In choosing concerts for different people, initiators look for ways in which their tastes overlap with their companions' preferences. Nicola's comment about 'loving

lots' of different types of concerts seems to make her ideally suited to be an initiator because she is able to find things that she enjoys that her responders will appreciate as well. However, as seen in the previous section, Nicola also tried to use her role as initiator to 'nag' companions to try new things. There seems to be an ethical dimension to this comment, linking back to the idea from Chapter 7.2 that the 'perfect' audience member is one who is willing to try unfamiliar music. By pushing her companions out of their musical comfort zone, Nicola seems to take on the risk of attendance on their behalf, not only reducing the effort that her companions have to put in by organising the evening, but also offering some sort of guarantee of enjoyment. Perhaps it is through this mechanism that audience members are able to convince new attenders to try their first concert, as in Chapter 9.1. Because initiators are having to convince responders that they will enjoy a concert, initiators need confidence in the programme. Michael, a high-frequency core attender, described how he has never particularly enjoyed Webern's music, and therefore would not take a companion to a programme of this nature.

> Michael   I have been to concerts with Webern['s music] which is a bit on the dodgy side, if that's the technical term for classical music! [laughs] [...] It's not one you say 'right come along with me now'.

The topic of conversation in the interview had been contemporary music, not socialising, however Michael instinctively related his lack of confidence with Webern's music to whether he would consider taking a companion with him. It also suggests that initiators are willing to tolerate a higher level of risk if they are attending alone but need to be far more sure of enjoying a programme to invite a responder to join them. These differing levels of confidence and risk are particularly evident in Jill's experiences of concert-going. Jill used to regularly attend core concerts with her sister but, when her sister became ill and unable to attend, Jill transferred to populist concerts.

> Jill   I [used to] come with my sister. [...] She books a lot of the tickets. [...] My sister, she can read music and she plays instruments and stuff, and things I don't know, she'll explain things to me. [...] I say 'what does that mean?' 'Well, it all sounds interesting, tell me a bit about the history of these things'.

Jill's sister seems to have had a much greater understanding of classical music and would help Jill to engage with the music by telling her interesting bits of information about the pieces being played. Although Jill told me that their concert selection was a mutual decision, given her sister's much wider knowledge of classical music pieces, I suspect this was an initiator-responder relationship. Jill and her sister have 'experimented and gone to something way-out' in the past, but Jill has

not enjoyed it and strongly believes that the CBSO should play more popular, well-known pieces.

Since Jill's sister has been unwell, Jill has had to select and book concerts on her own and now exclusively attends populist programmes. Without her sister there, Jill has evidently become much more conservative in her choice of programme which adds more weight to the conclusion that Jill was, in fact, acting as a responder. Jill brings friends to populist concerts. Having taken on the role of the initiator, it is Jill's responsibility to choose the concerts and 'pitch' them to responders, suggesting that her transition from core to populist concerts was prompted by a lack of confidence in being able to choose core concerts that she, or her friends, would enjoy. Populist concerts were often chosen by participants to appeal to their responders. For at least eight participants, bringing companions was the primary reason for attending populist concerts.

> John   What we particularly like about the Friday concerts, it's music we can share with other people. [...] [Debbie's] sister, who we have quite close ties with, lives up in Leeds and isn't really into classical music. She'll enjoy a glitzy, fizzy concert. And so, it's an opportunity to share some music with her and her husband.

> Chris   We have been in the past to purely classical concerts and I enjoy that. My wife isn't as classically, sort of, minded as I am, so she's keener on the lighter side of things. So, I think, more recently, we've probably not been to classical – what I would call 'pure classical' – concerts. So, it tends to be the lighter things that they do.

These descriptions of why populist concerts are valuable for bringing companions echo many of the sentiments behind populism as an audience development initiative. They are believed to be more accessible and to appeal to a broader audience than core programmes. In addition, Jackie suggests that populist concerts might lend themselves more to socialising because they have more informal etiquette, conducive to greater social interactions, a topic I discuss in Chapter 11.3. This is evidence that concert companions can be crucial in introducing new audiences to events they might otherwise have avoided. This implies that there may be far more newcomers at populist concerts than is revealed through ticket sales data, as they are attending as companions.

10.3 Going alone

Some audience members do, of course attend alone. As seen with Cathy at the start of this chapter, this can mean that solo attenders do not have to make aesthetic compromise to accommodate the tastes of their companions. Nevertheless, I will

show that their musical engagement is still affected by the social context. Socialising can be a difficult factor to understand for frequent attenders, as shown by Peter, a long-term fixed package-booker, who knows a few other CBSO audience members.

> Peter   Usually I chat to people at the interval, people I know. I used to sit next to one of my wife's former teaching colleagues and her husband. [...] I have got former work colleagues and [my wife has] got other friends and I have got a friend in Newport I share with occasionally.

Peter's concert experience can be seen as incredibly sociable as he 'usually' chats to several different people in the interval. Being a fixed package booker, Peter can be sure that a number of other regular attenders will be there on a concert night. In addition, he regularly bumps into people that he knows from others parts of his life and used to have his package seat next to his wife's ex-colleague so was guaranteed to see and talk to her at a concert. While Peter's acquaintances are primarily people he has met through other parts of his life, some attenders had developed friendships with people they met in the concert hall. Over time, this has helped them to feel part of an audience community, as mentioned in Chapter 9.1.

> Michael   Gradually I've got to know a number of people who I can chat to. [...] For the first probably two years, I'd walk around like a lemon upstairs, twiddling my fingers and thinking 'I'll pick up that magazine and read that book again'. [...] [Now] most concerts I come to, I speak to somebody I know. [...] It's a social occasion as much as listening to the music, which I love anyway.
>
> Ruth   We're getting to know a few familiar faces. [...] They are people who, like us, share that passion and interest in music, and although we're not musicians, we can talk logically and intelligently about music. [...] I'm not very good at chit-chat, [but] when you're meeting people here, you know you've got something in common to talk about.

Michael vividly described the process of integrating into the audience community. At first he was an outsider, but has gradually got to know several people in the audience. This is aided by the fact that Michael is a fixed package booker, therefore regularly sits next to the same people at each concert. In the space of a few years, he has gone from 'twiddling his thumbs' to defining concert going as an equally sociable and aesthetic experience. Michael's account therefore challenges the assumption that highly-engaged attenders are primarily driven by aesthetic engagement (see Chapter 2.5), as he spoke of the social value of attending a number of times in his interview.

Ruth, with her husband Matthew, have similarly begun to recognise other audience members. While they are not fixed package bookers, Ruth and Matthew are high level donors to the orchestra and, consequently, are regularly invited to friends'

drinks in the concert interval, thus having that same sense of recognising familiar faces that Michael gets from his fixed concert package. In discussing the social value of attending, Ruth highlighted the importance of their shared interest in classical music for being able to start conversations with other attenders; indeed, she requested more opportunities to be able to talk about the music with a wider pool of audience members. Furthermore, Michael noted that one of the benefits of getting to know other audience members is that they would tell him information about the pieces being played. He claimed that he would not buy a programme for certain pieces, because he knew that his 'next door neighbour' would give him a far greater understanding than the programme notes. In this way, the social and aesthetic value of attending were inextricably linked for Ruth and Michael.

Nevertheless, this emphasis on having conversations about music with other audience members raises questions over the nature of these audience friendships. Pitts and Spencer (2008) found similar interactions within a chamber music audience, but noted that many of these friendships never left the confines of the concert venue (p.4). They suggest that these relationships may be best understood as 'adult friendships' (Blieszner & Adams, 1992), friendships formed later in life around shared hobbies rather than disclosing details of their lives. While a small number of participants had the odd friendship that had developed through concert-going and translated out of the venue, these were the exceptions. Most of the socialising that took place at concerts could be better understood as 'friendliness' rather than true friendships. It may be for this reason that Peter downplayed the significance of socialising at concerts, as did O'Sullivan's (2009) participants.

> *You've mentioned the social side of going to a concert a few times.*

> Peter   It's not that much. It's good to go to meet former work colleagues and friends of theirs and people at the interval. I'd miss it if I didn't see them. [...] I could come to a concert and not meet anybody. You know, if we came on a different night, I probably wouldn't know a soul. I'd still enjoy it.

In Peter's interview, I highlighted the number of times he had mentioned socialising at concerts, yet Peter was unwilling to attribute his concert-going to social factors. 16 participants told me they were happy to go to concerts alone. While they were disproportionately high-frequency core attenders, there were still a number of low-frequency or populist audiences, such as Anita and Emma. Furthermore, there were highly-engaged attenders like Ruth and Matthew who never attended on their own. Going alone was therefore not determined by level of engagement but, for most participants, appeared to be a last resort.

Anita   I [attend] on my own because people I know, day to day, aren't interested. They aren't interested so there's no point in dragging them off to it. [...] I think there's no point in trying to force an issue. And no point in trying to stop yourself from coming because nobody else is coming!

Helen   Most of my friends aren't into classical music, the one that is will only come to the bits she knows so I don't bother [to invite her].

Emma   I go to most of these things on my own so I don't really care who else is going, but... but I wouldn't take my friends to some of them. [...] I couldn't imagine going to the group of them 'let's go' to sort of... a CBSO classics thing on a Wednesday because they'd just look at me like I was insane. [...] 'Do you wanna go and listen to three hours of Queen?' – yes! 'Do you wanna go and listen to three hours of an orchestra?' – no!

Anita and Helen did not know anyone who lived nearby who was interested in classical music. Emma's situation was quite similar, except for the odd occasion where, it seems, she went to a concert as part of a work night out. She did not often try to convince friends to join her for concerts because she believed that they would not be interested, especially not for a core concert. Emma is therefore accustomed to going to concerts alone. In Emma, Anita and Helen's comments, there is a sense that they have resigned themselves to attending alone and consequently no longer look for potential companions. Nevertheless, for attenders who sometimes do have regular companions, it was common for participants to say that they would be happy to attend on their own if the programme was good enough.

Anthony   I particularly like the Viennese Waltzes and Polkas. [...] I'm Billy no-mates, I come on my own on New Year's Day.

Lawrence   [My wife and I] will either come together or we won't. [...] I can get on with Shostakovich you see, and Prokofiev, as an example, and she can't. So, she won't do that.

As with Emma and Helen, there was a sense here that participants have stopped looking for companions to join them. Anthony knew that no-one would go with him on New Year's Day to hear Viennese waltzes, because there are always similar programmes in the subsequent days and the implication was that Anthony's wife felt it was not worth the effort of attending a concert the day after New Year's Eve celebrations. Lawrence, a very high-frequency core attender, knew if he wanted to hear Shostakovich, he would have to attend on his own. I have shown throughout this chapter that the additional value of attending with companions compensated for having to make aesthetic choices. Here, Anthony and Lawrence were happy to attend a concert without the opportunity to socialise because they believed that they would enjoy the music sufficiently to warrant the effort. This lends support to the

proposition that audiences make the decision to attend through assessing the overall potential 'reward' of attendance, which can consist of multiple forms of value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the social context of concert-going impacts on the decision to attend for all participants, regardless of level of engagement or whether they were comfortable attending alone. Indeed, attending alone was often a last resort, as participants preferred to share the experience with companions. Developing Brown's (2004a) model of initiators and responders, I have demonstrated that many audience members act in both roles. In addition, initiators have been found to push respondents out of their comfort zone, persuading them to hear unfamiliar music or event to try classical music for the first time. However, to do this, initiators must be confident that the respondents will enjoy a concert, leading them to often use populist concerts as a means of introducing new attenders to the concert hall. Socialising may therefore be a route into attendance and a form of audience development that is hidden from the sales records of arts organisations. It is worth noting that while participants were influenced by social context across all levels of engagement, there did seem to be a greater level of socialising at populist concerts, which I explore in the following chapter.

This analysis has pointed to socialising being a means of increasing the value of a concert evening, enough to cause participants to compromise on their aesthetic preferences. What is missing from this study is understanding of why attending with companions is so sought-after. There is no doubting that participants highly valued attending with companions, but when I asked them what was different about attending alone or together, they clammed up and were unable to give me an answer. However, more details about the social value of concert-going came out through participants' descriptions of the live concert experience. These are explored, along with the spectacle of concert-going, in the next chapter.

11   Sense of Occasion

To understand what motivated a participant to attend a concert, it is necessary to explore their experience of being in a concert and how it is valued. Previous chapters have focussed on what is quantifiably different in core and populist performances, notably the programme format, artist and who is attending. Throughout the interviews, however, participants noted a subtler, qualitative difference in atmosphere and 'feel' of the two forms of programming. The following three chapters explore various components of this difference in the live concert experience.

As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), the value of the live performing arts as distinct from mediated, digital arts has been well-documented (Auslander, 2008; Baker 2000/2007; Brown & Knox, 2016; Earl, 2001; Radbourne et al, 2014). However, aside from the assumption that less-engaged attenders are more concerned with extrinsic aspects of concert-going (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004; Brown, 2002), there is little understanding of how different audiences might place varying importance on these attributes. Nor is there any evidence about which attributes are more important for classical music audience as opposed to theatre, dance or popular music consumers, or for populist classical music compared to core concerts. The value of live concert-going was expressed vividly by all participants, who saw a clear distinction between the live performance and a recording, as seen by Nicola's description of the concert experience.

> Nicola   Nothing beats live classical music. CDs can be wonderful reminders of fantastic concerts, but there is a buzz, an ethereal energy, a total thrill at hearing things live, seeing people work their instruments, and watching friends' enthralled faces, that just can't be reproduced at home.

This chapter addresses the sense of occasion of concert-going. In the first section, I explore a phrase used by many participants: 'making a night' of concert-going. I show that this was a shorthand for extending the concert into an evening of activity, with the potential to increase their overall enjoyment. Following this, I explore the excitement of being at a concert through ideas of atmosphere, communal listening, co-presence with the musicians, and spectacle, building on Chapter 10 by exploring other facets of the social value of concert-going. As such, this chapter could be seen as addressing the 'extrinsic' value of live concert attendance (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004; Brown, 2002; see Chapter 2.5). Overall, this study did find that extrinsic factors are valued more by populist attenders than core audiences, giving support to

the argument that less-engaged attenders are more concerned with the non-musical features of a concert. However, as will become clear, these 'extra-musical' elements were never divorced from aesthetic engagement, and had the potential to make a core concert a special musical experience.

11.1 'Making a night of it'

Many participants talked about 'making a night' of concert-going. This phrase was mostly used by populist attenders, however, some core attenders such as Michael, Mark and Sandra 'made a night' of their concert-going as well. As discussed previously (Chapter 5.1; see also pen portraits in Appendix 2.2), populist attender Paul became interested in classical music when visiting a friend in Vienna. His friend had got hold of free tickets to the Vienna Musikverein, tickets which Paul describes as 'gold dust' and 'a bit like watching the cup final when they put something big on'. For this, he and his friend 'had to go in black tie'. The combination of being on holiday, dressing in black tie and securing incredibly scarce tickets meant that this first concert was a very special occasion for Paul. Indeed, these extrinsic factors were pivotal in getting Paul to his first classical concert. Since then, he has gone quite sporadically to classical concerts at Symphony Hall. While he sometimes attends with a friend, most of the time, Paul makes CBSO concerts into a 'date night'.

> Paul   I end up taking people who have never been [to a concert before], believe it or not, because I want to introduce them to it. [...] You get the typical questions, 'what do I wear?' and things like that. Just smart casual is absolutely fine but I find that if they are female that I take, I find that they want to dress up for it anyway, I'm just like 'really, you don't, you'll stand out like a sore thumb!' [...] I make an effort – the suit jacket and the jeans. I feel that's what you should do you. You're on a night out, aren't you? [...] I think the Friday night audiences are different from the midweek audiences. Well, Friday night is a night where you tend to dress smarter anyway so you treat it like night out. [...] You go and get a meal, that's why it becomes a very expensive date night!

Paul's companions are usually not classical attenders themselves. They often want to dress up more than core audiences, suggesting that these new attenders want to make more of a special occasion of concert-going than regular audiences. He connects the desire to dress up to the scheduling of populist concerts on a Friday night, suggesting that the performances are more of a special occasion because they are at the weekend. 'Making a night' of concert-going was often shorthand for going out for a drink or a meal before or after the concert.

Elaine	We usually go for a meal first and… you know, it makes a nice evening.
Veronica	[CBSO populist concerts] are always an event for us. We come in from Shropshire, parking is easy at Brindley Place. We have a meal and then go to the concert. Perfection, especially the gin and tonic at half time.
Cathy	I thought 'Friday night, Birmingham, probably make a bit of an evening of it'. We went for drinks and stuff around the corner and it was a very nice evening. […] Really, it's very easy to come to a ridiculous amount of concerts in the autumn and the winter, but come the summer there's not really that much on.

As noted by Veronica, 'making a night of it' means turning a concert into an event. Going for dinner or drinks extends the evening beyond the two hours of the concert. Matinee attenders such as Mark and Sandra similarly spoke of 'making a day of it', but this seemed to have a slightly different meaning; it certainly would include a meal, but could also involve shopping, visiting museums or art galleries, and generally spending time in the city. A 'day out' and a 'night out' have rather different cultural connotations. A 'day out' is known as a 'leisure day visit' within tourism research; in 2015, the British public made 1,525 million day visits, 6% of which involved attending a live music concert (VisitBritain, 2016). A 'night out', however, is a rather different form of tourism, as Evans (2012) has noted the massive growth of urban night-time economies in recent years. Ashworth and Page (2011) define a 'nightlife' city has both cinemas, concert venues and theatres, as well as nightclubs and bars. This suggests that 'making a night of it', looking beyond concert attendance, is implicitly connected to going to restaurants or bars, as reflected in the participants' comments above.

In addition, 'making a night' of concert-going was implicitly social. In Chapter 10, I demonstrated that audiences are willing to make sacrifices around the concerts they attend in order to attend with companions. With the exception of Michael, who often goes for a meal at Strada alone, going to a restaurant before a concert provided a chance to socialise with companions. Therefore, extending the evening by 'making a night of it' provided longer opportunities to socialise, increasing the social value of the night as a whole.

The act of turning a concert into more of a social event could be seen as a risk-reducing strategy (see Chapter 6.1). As I showed above, Paul's motivations for attending that first concert in Vienna were far more centred on the extrinsic elements of the concert: he was on holiday, it was a special event that few people had access to and he was required to get dressed up. He would have been unlikely to go to a concert without these circumstances, suggesting that 'making a night' of a

concert may help to reduce the risk of attendance for new audiences. Cathy also used social drinks as a risk-reducing strategy. She claimed she 'would not have started' with this particular performance in choosing her concerts for the season, but the scarcity of concerts in the summer, and the need to 'find 20' concerts in order to access the best level of discount, persuaded her to attend. The decision to turn the concert into a 'night out' seems to have been part of the rationale for attending. 'Making an evening of it' compensated for a lack of confidence in the programme itself. By extending the evening to include drinks and a longer opportunity to socialise Cathy increased the potential enjoyment of the evening as a whole.

If 'making a night of it' can increase the value and reduce the risk of concert attendance, why don't all attenders 'make a night' of concert-going? I suggest that this is because 'making a night of it' increases the overall effort of an evening, particularly in terms of cost. For the occasional concert, this is worthwhile; the extra time, energy and cost invested increases the social value of the evening thereby reducing the risk of attendance. However, as I discussed in Chapter 6.1, attenders have a budget of how much money they are willing to spend on concert-going, and therefore increasing the cost of each evening is likely to reduce the overall number of concerts they attend.

> Anthony   I only probably go about once a month because of the cost. Not just the cost of the tickets but the cost of the evening out around it as well, so that makes you selective.

If audiences always turn concert-going into a night out, then their perception of the cost of attendance includes these added extras. The value of a concert is inextricably linked to socialising, the sense of occasion, and having a night out. There was a strong correlation between 'making a night' of concert-going and buying more expensive tickets. Infrequent and populist attenders were more likely to buy more expensive tickets and to spend money going for dinner before the concert. Frequent and core attenders tended to buy cheaper tickets and not spend money on eating out.

> Yvonne   [Tickets are] about £15/£16 something like that, but it's still cheap really. [...] We usually have a sandwich on the train or something like that!
>
> Lawrence   [Tickets are] not cheap. That's why I always sit up in the gods. Always in the great tier. [...] If I come on my own, I'll probably just have a sandwich before I leave.

This suggests that frequent core attenders are far less interested in by peripheral activities than infrequent populist attenders. There were, of course, exceptions to

this rule in core attenders Michael, Mark and Sandra and populist attenders Emma and Gordon. Michael is a slightly strange case, in that he chooses to sit in cheaper seats, but then adds extra expense to the evening by dining in a restaurant alone before most concerts. Mark and Sandra, however, mirror the actions of populist attenders, buying some of the most expensive tickets and going for a meal before a concert. I have discussed Mark and Sandra several times in this thesis because they are frequent core attenders, but align much more closely to populist attenders in their attitudes. They could be described as reluctant core attenders, preferring populist programmes but prioritising the routine of a 'day out' in Birmingham over programme choice. Their core attendance is therefore determined by the time of day of the concert, not the programme on offer. Nevertheless, two populist attenders, Emma and Gordon, also minimise the cost of attendance to get the most for their money.

| Gordon | I used to go for some of the half-price restricted seats so that I could see more concerts and try to listen to a new type of music. |
| Emma | The cheaper seats I get, the more I go to see. I'm getting the same music experience! |

Neither Emma nor Gordon 'make a night' of their concert-going. This could partly be attributed to their lack of companions; if 'making a night of it' is implicitly social, then adding dinner or drinks increases the cost of attendance without enriching the social value of the evening. This is where Michael's behaviour seems particularly puzzling as to what he is gaining by the extra expense of concert attendance, as one would imagine that going for dinner or drinks would make the evening costlier without adding any social value.

Emma and Gordon are, however, exceptions; it seems that most populist attenders would rather spend more money of a concert evening to be sure that they will have a good night, even if that means that they subsequently attend fewer concerts. This supports Brown's (2004b) theory that people will spend 'virtually anything' for the guarantee of a good night (p.2). Given that 'making a night of it' could function as a risk-reducing strategy, it implies that populist attenders are less confident in the music to entertain them and therefore seek to diversify the types of value they hope to get in an evening. Frequent core attenders can therefore be seen as being more confident that the music alone will entertain, reducing the cost of the evening in order to hear as much music as possible for their budget. Understanding where people are willing to spend money is therefore revealing of their priorities when it comes to concert attendance.

11.2 Spectacle and co-presence with musicians

As noted at the start of the chapter, the sense of occasion of a concert is not only contained in the peripheral activities, but appears to be intrinsic to the performance. The visual spectacle of the orchestra is vividly described in Denise and Anthony's comments.

> Denise   There's a thrill in watching a whole orchestra. [...] It's something very special, seeing the instruments, seeing the sparkle, seeing the shine on the wood or the brass or whatever and hearing that sound.

> Anthony   It's the theatre of what you're seeing. [...] The most obvious thing is just the sheer impact of when the orchestra starts, seeing 30-odd people doing their bit towards whatever sound you're hearing. However knowledgeable you are, whenever you're listening to a CD, you can't appreciate the impact of... it's the visual impact but it's also the sound of everyone... and it hits you there. [...] The impact of watching the violins, the whole string section and whatever is happening in the back row, whether there's a strong brass section that night. It's the theatre of it, it helps bring it to life.

The visual spectacle of the concert is partly produced by the size of the ensemble and the number of people on stage; Denise describes seeing 'the whole orchestra', Anthony, seeing '30-odd people doing their bit', though in reality, given the concerts he has attended, this would be closer to 100. Anthony's description of the visual spectacle seems to be entirely focussed on the musicians whereas Denise is more drawn to the instruments and the sense of sparkle and glitz. It is interesting to note that Denise only attends core concerts, suggesting that it is not only populist concerts that have the 'glitz' of the performance described by John in Chapter 10.2. Anthony directly compares this to classical music recordings, claiming that it is impossible to conceptualise the visual and aural impact of hearing an orchestra live when listening to a CD, a topic which is taken up in the next chapter. Both Denise and Anthony's comments compare the visual spectacle of an orchestra with the power of the sound. This suggests that while the spectacle is partly visual, it is never divorced from what audiences are hearing, therefore making it a distinctly musical spectacle, supporting Addo's (2009) theory of spectacle being a product of sensory overload.

This study suggests that the spectacle of concerts may be particularly powerful to new attenders. Cathy described how she took her daughter-in-law to her first classical music concert, a screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey* with live soundtrack.[2]

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[2] This was not a CBSO performance, but a concert at Symphony Hall with the Philharmonia and Ex Cathedra providing the live soundtrack to the film, 14 June 2013.

> Cathy   My daughter-in-law sat there in this gorgeous venue and looked at the orchestra all lining up and getting ready and she looked over and she said 'I think I'm going to cry' because she was just so overwhelmed with what was going on. Then, of course, the film came and the music came and I think she did cry a bit, actually, because it's just a wonderful spectacle.

Cathy's story suggests that new audiences, who have never seen a classical orchestra before, might be awed by the experience. The sense of occasion of concert-going may be more important to new audiences or people who do not typically engage with classical music. Similarly, John described how he would invite his sister-in-law to populist concerts because, although she is not a regular classical attender, she does enjoy a 'glitzy, fizzy concert' (see Chapter 10.2). By using the word 'glitzy', John implies a sense of spectacle, as opposed to a core concert where the focus is more squarely on the music. These comments contradict Brown (2004b) and Kolb's (2000) belief that newcomers are visually under-stimulated by concerts.

It is worth pausing to reflect on how 'spectacular' populist concerts are at the CBSO. Some populist concerts from other arts organisations are designed with spectacle in mind. Indeed, one of the most prominent populist series in the UK is Raymond Gubbay's touring 'Classical Spectacular' concerts, in which popular classics are combined with special effects such as dancers, fireworks, lasers and cannons. CBSO concerts do not contain any of these special effects, however, they do still have slightly more spectacle than core concerts, featuring colour washes and lighting effects, female soloists wearing ball gowns, and pieces are often introduced by a presenter who will include amusing anecdotes to engage the audience and bring an air of 'showmanship' to the proceedings.

The level of spectacle at CBSO concerts is dependent on the programme. In every season, the CBSO programme an orchestral pop concert. Previous programmes include Abba Symphonic Spectacular, Songs from the Sixties, Symphonic Disco Spectacular and Queen: A Rock and Symphonic Spectacular (from which 14 of the interviewees were recruited). At these concerts, the orchestra are permitted to wear fancy dress which many of them do, enthusiastically. Of the interviews that took place after the Queen concert, 11 out of 14 participants commented on the orchestra's costumes.

> George   What I like about the CBSO is [...] they're not afraid of sending themselves up, you know, with Brian May wigs and things like that. Which is brilliant! The artists said 'they're absolutely wacky'! Well, why not?! [laughs]

> Veronica [I enjoyed seeing] the orchestra dressed up – it was fun. Especially the male violinist in high heels and net stockings!

Jackie	I enjoyed the music, of course, and I enjoyed it because it had a much more informal atmosphere about it. Seeing all the people in the orchestra in costumes. It just had much more of a party feel about it, more much informal. [...] They looked as if they were enjoying the fun of it.
Helen	It was absolutely fab and the orchestra were really getting into the spirit of it. Because seeing them let their hair down or put hair on (!) was great fun. [...] They were clearly having such a ball that... that to me, made it part of it as well.

The orchestra's costumes were interpreted as an outward display of anti-elitism. Their willingness to dress up was taken as evidence that, despite how formally the musicians may behave at a core concert, they do not take themselves too seriously and are willing to make themselves look silly for the audience's amusement. It is not clear whether the audience are aware that the musicians have individually decided whether to wear a costume, but participants seem to assume it was a personal choice of each of the players. These popular music concerts therefore counter the formality of core classical music concerts. In addition, the fact as an organisation, they are willing to programme popular music challenges the perceived superiority of classical music. As Cathy said about the Abba Symphonic Spectacular: 'I never thought I'd see an orchestra of such seriousness and skill being a backing band for an Abba tribute!'. In playing non-classical music, and entering into the spirit of the evening by dressing up, the musicians challenged some of the negative stereotypes about classical music.

In addition, these populist concerts were valued for showing a different, more relaxed and fun side to the musicians. The phrase 'letting their hair down' suggests not only that they were more relaxed than usual, but even that they were having a good time or that there was a party atmosphere. As I mentioned above, these concerts are on a Friday night; even though the musicians are obviously working, these participants transferred ideas about it being the weekend and a chance for them to relax after a working week. There is no telling whether the musicians are truly enjoying the performance or just 'putting on a show', but participants seemed to believe in the musicians' enjoyment, valuing populist concerts for the opportunity to see a more rounded, human side to these otherwise very formal musicians. Perhaps this is part of the parasocial interactions of audience and musicians (Dibble, Hartmann & Rosaen, 2016), as participants valued getting a glimpse into the players' personalities. The fact that one of the above quotations came from Helen, a frequent core attender, suggests that this opportunity to see a less formal side of the orchestra may be a key motive for dedicated core attenders to cross over to populism.

Another way to understand these comments is that participants fed off the enthusiasm displayed by the musicians. In this way, they could be seen to 'catch' the musicians' enjoyment, as music psychologists have claimed it is possible to 'catch' the emotion of pieces of music (Juslin, 2013; Reason & Reynolds, 2010; Sutherland et al., 2009). In addition, being able to watch the musicians seemed to enable participants to feel more actively involved in the performance.

| Trevor | I have sat in the same seat here for 20 years, since the hall opened, and it's there because I'm so close to the orchestra that I can see faces, and if I come to a concert where I'm further back, I don't get the same enjoyment because I almost feel as if I'm sitting in the orchestra there and that adds to it. |
| Jill | We were near the front where I like to be. I know acoustically-wise, you're supposed to sit half-way back but I like to look at the costumes and the faces and the make-up and, you know... I like to be part of it. |

Jill and Trevor's desire to be near to the orchestra centred on seeing the musicians' faces. Being able to see their faces seemed to humanise the orchestra, transforming the concert from an aesthetic experience to a much more human encounter. On the one hand, this was linked to the desire to see the enthusiasm of the musicians; on the other hand, it may be evidence of parasocial interactions (Dibble, Hartmann & Rosaen, 2016) and wanting to feel a false sense of intimacy through getting to know the players' personalities in their playing. I suggest that what the participants seem to enjoy is seeing the musicians as humans, but it is a musical humanness; they wanted to see the inner workings of the orchestra, to notice whether the musicians are enjoying the performance, and to discover what they did before they joined the orchestra via the CBSO website. Linked to this feeling of intimacy was the sense that the musicians were playing directly to participants as audience members. Emma particularly highlighted this as a special factor of liveness in classical music.

| Emma | Being at the cinema and you're watching something, you're, sort of, very detached from what's going on. [...] Here, and they're real people doing this for real. [...] Especially because you do get the, sort of, little things that go wrong and you get the... yeah, that whole experience of: they're playing for you. They're not sort of performing and then it's being played for you, [there's] that, sort of, yeah, connection. Real people doing real things there for you for that one night, it's a one-off experience. [...] If you're at a rock gig, it's like 10,000 people and you're just one of the crowd. Whereas actually being able to be in something that intimate, and you get the feeling that actually they see you in the audience, you're not just one of a mass of people. |

Emma provided the most striking account of parasocial interactions of the study, describing a perceptual connection between herself as an audience member and the musicians. Her comments border on fandom, a concept more commonly associated

with popular music (Cavicchi, 1998; Hills, 2002) but which previous audiences have exhibited in high art forms such as opera (Benzecry, 2011) and chamber music audiences (Dearn & Price, 2016; Pitts & Spencer, 2005). Indeed, Emma's previous musical attendance has tended to be at popular music performances in large arena venues. Compared to the thousands of audience members who can attend that type of performance, a concert in Symphony Hall felt comparatively intimate, suggesting that intimacy is related to the ratio of performers to audience members. Compared to a band in an arena, an orchestra in Symphony Hall produced a much greater sense that the musicians are playing for individual audience members.

Ideas about distance and participation are woven through a number of these comments on the nature of liveness. Emma described how when watching a film, she felt 'detached' from the experience, unlike the closeness she felt in a concert. Anita similarly felt that there was a 'distance' between listener and recordings, whereas live performances felt closer. This implies that live performances make audiences feel more involved than recordings. Similarly, at the start of this section, I noted how participants struggled to imagine the spectacle of a concert when listening to a recording. Live concerts were therefore valued for their immediacy and for the intensity of engagement (which I discuss further in the next chapter), as the visual spectacle was captivating and being able to see the musicians made them feel more involved in the performance. Behr, Brennan and Cloonan's (2014) theory of liveness as spectacle and intimacy therefore seems entirely appropriate to understanding the value of live classical music attendance, however, there were far more factors that made a live classical concert special for the participants, as shown in the remainder of this chapter, and the discussion of live listening that follows.

11.3 Communal listening and atmosphere

In a concert, audience members are able not only to watch the musicians, but also to see other audience members. Indeed, when I asked what distinguished a concert from a recording, the most common response was the opportunity to share the listening experience with other audience members.

> *What do you get from a concert that you don't get from a recording?*

> Julian   I think it's that collective experience. [...] Do you know that phrase about the cinema: 'the dream that kicks'? I suppose it's the same sort of experience, it's being together in the dark. Shared yet individual experience that makes it quite different from anything else.

> Denise   You are participating in that experience. And you're sharing... it's a shared experience. [...] If you've got people around you who are silent but you get the sort of vibration that everybody's enjoying it and there's something very special about that.

In both comments, they reflected on concert listening being at once individual, private, insular, and social, shared, communal. In O'Sullivan's (2009) study of CBSO audiences, he drew this out as a source of tension in concert attendance. O'Sullivan's participants 'defended' their 'private space' of listening, not only for the therapeutic qualities of listening, but also in that they wanted to maintain their freedom of being able to tune in and tune out of the music (p.216). Nevertheless, O'Sullivan's participants described how the communal context of listening provided moments of sublimity in the concert experience. This finding is supported by both Julian and Denise's comments, for whom the impact of other audience members on their listening was characterised by an absence of stimulation or distraction. Denise described the absence of sound from other listeners as evidence of their engagement with the music. Similarly, Julian described being 'in the dark', unable to clearly see other audience members, yet knowing that other listeners were around him.

Enjoyment of a concert is therefore shaped by other audience members. The atmosphere in the hall and how much participants perceived other listeners to be enjoying the concert could positively or negatively impact on their own experience. This seems to be particularly true of populist concerts as seen by Alison's evaluation of the Queen concert. However, unlike Denise and Julian, Alison expected to be part of an active, responsive audience, and was disappointed when other attenders were sitting quietly.

> Alison   Our only, sort of, criticism [of the Queen concert] would be: it was the first time ever we didn't think the sound was very good in the first half. There was something not quite right. [...] And there wasn't quite the atmosphere, was there? In that first half, somehow. People were a little bit more... just sitting and watching.

Alison attributes the dull atmosphere to people 'just sitting and watching' the performance, in other words, to the audience passively listening to the music. When the audience started actively engaging with the concert by dancing in their seats, the atmosphere improved. At a core concert, the audience would be expected to be still and listen, whereas at a populist concert, this was taken as a poor reception to the music. This reveals a difference in expected behaviour at core and populist concerts, with populist audiences listening in a much more active, even participatory, way.

> John   [Populist audiences] are more enthusiastic, vocally. You know [claps], they'll stand up and shout and whistle. Not over the top, but yes, it's more of a reactive audience, I think, on a Friday night.

Cathy	What I found is that the atmospheres are very different for the [populist] concerts. [...] People do wonderful things like clap before it's actually finished and it's great!
Eric	They were dancing in the choir stalls [at the Queen concert]! So, it's got to be good.
Paul	Everyone smiles [at populist concerts]! [...] Everyone was up and they're all dancing. [...] You did have people talking around you but you expect that because they've recognised the song and they want to tell 'oh this is...' so you just let it go, don't you?

Populist audiences are depicted as much more responsive audience that are more actively engaged in the music than at core concerts. Expected etiquette differs between core to populist performances. Cathy's comment about listeners clapping before the piece has finished depicts populist audiences as far less concerned about the traditional etiquette of core concerts as noted in Chapter 8.2. It is worth questioning where these differences in rules originate; they are not, to my knowledge, policed by the venue staff unless someone is particularly disruptive. Jackie mentions in Chapter 14.3 that she is uncomfortable with audience members reprimanding each other for clapping in the wrong place, suggesting that audiences may police their own etiquette. This links to Emma's comment in Chapter 8.2, in that populist audiences are far less concerned if people do not adhere to traditional concert etiquette.

This difference in behaviour may explain Jackie's comment that she chose to attend a populist concert because it was 'more informal' and less 'insular' than core, consequently making it better for socialising. Due to this more relaxed audience behaviour at populist concerts, they were seen by populist attenders as being more fun than core concerts.

Jill	I think the pop ones are a bit more up-beat so I'm bringing friends who are not really... not very bothered about classical music. My husband's not very bothered about classical music, doesn't like classical music that much. He prefers something like the concert I went to, the Queen [concert]. But my sister, she prefers something a bit more sedate, a bit more relaxing.
Helen	That's what I like about the Friday night concerts is, you know, after a week at work, they're a bit of fun, they're not as serious as a Shostakovich symphony or something like that. So, they are great fun, I enjoy going to them.
Cathy	I do find the Friday evening ones in particular very reassuring in terms of you know the age of the audience, what the audience are wearing, how much fun they're having.

Populist concerts were described as 'fun' and 'up-beat' compared to core concerts, which were variously described across the dataset as 'sedate', 'formal' and 'serious'.

However, the idea of populism being 'fun' can be read in two ways. Populist concerts could be seen as more 'fun' than 'boring' core concerts. Conversely, populist concerts could be 'just a bit of fun' compared to substantial, challenging core concerts. I explore the role of entertainment and education in populist and core concerts in Chapter 14.3.

While populist concerts sink or swim on their atmosphere and this was less crucial to core programmes, the most memorable core performances were those that had a real sense of atmosphere. The 'Beethoven Week' mini-festival that the CBSO used to launch the 2014/15 season was remarked upon for this reason.

> David   It was an enormous ovation at the end. Not quite a standing one, but there were yells and erm... a bit like a Proms concert. [...] But at both those ones that particular night, [the audience] were entranced and it's... it's a two-way thing. If you're with an indifferent audience, it affects you, and it affects the orchestra, obviously. But we really were with them that night.

As with populist concerts, the sense of atmosphere was articulated in terms of active audience participation and the enthusiasm of players. For this core concert, the responsiveness of the audience was only expressed after the piece had finished. The atmosphere of the Beethoven Week concerts impressed many post-concert survey respondents in addition to the interviewees. This atmosphere was evidently a factor that made the week particularly special and remarkable compared to other core concerts. In contrast, populist survey respondents were more likely to complain about the atmosphere than to compliment it. This lends further weight to the idea that where a core concert can be improved by a good atmosphere, it is a pre-requisite of enjoyment at a populist concert.

Listening with other audience members was a key factor in what made live performances special for participants compared to listening to a recording. An absence of distraction from other audience members signalled deep engagement for core concerts, although the most memorable core performances were ones in which the audience were incredibly responsive when the piece had ended such as in the Beethoven Week concerts. Populist audiences, on the other hand, were expected to be responsive throughout the performance; Alison complained that the atmosphere of the Queen concert was not good because audiences were just 'sitting and watching'. It therefore seems that while active engagement from the audience can improve a core concert, it is a pre-requisite to enjoyment of a populist programme.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored some of the 'extrinsic' forms of value at live classical concerts. I have shown that many populist and some core attenders choose to 'make a night/day' of concert-going. This involves turning their attendance into more of an event, often through going for dinner or drinks which in turn increased the social value of the evening. For some attenders, the value of concerts was inextricably linked to 'making a night of it', and the more relaxed etiquette and 'fun' atmosphere of populist concerts was seen to make this form of programming more suitable for socialising than core concerts. Core attenders were comparatively less concerned with 'making a night of it' preferring to minimise their cost of the evening in order to attend the most concerts for their money. While populist attenders do seem to be far more concerned with extrinsic forms of value, core attenders are not unaffected. Extrinsic forms of value enhanced participants' enjoyment of core concerts, whether through sensing the engagement of other audience members or 'feeding off' the enthusiasm of the musicians.

Across both core and populist participants, accounts of 'extrinsic' forms of value were never divorced from aesthetic enjoyment. The visual spectacle of watching musicians, for example, was always connected to the fact that they were producing the music participants were hearing. In the next chapter, I consider the way in which participants listen during a concert. While the focus shifts from extrinsic to aesthetic forms of value, I continue to show that the two factors of concert attendance are inextricably linked.

12 Concert Listening

Having considered the 'extrinsic' value of attendance in the previous chapter, I now turn attention to aesthetic engagement in the concert hall. Aesthetic value has historically been privileged over extrinsic factors and, additionally, has been assumed to be the realm of frequent, core attenders (see Chapter 2.5, ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004). In this chapter, I challenge the assumption that lesser-engaged audience members, whether defined through knowledge, frequency or concert choice, are denied access to aesthetic engagement. The subject of this chapter is perfectly summarised by Anthony's description of concert listening. Anthony is a populist attender whose motivations for attending classical concerts are bound up with socialising (see Chapter 6.2). He described how he looks for a concert every 'five or six weeks' to attend with his wife, sister and brother-in-law and concert-going is just one of a myriad of cultural activities they do as a group at weekends. Despite these extrinsic motives for attendance, and Anthony's lack of knowledge of classical music, he described the experience of being in a concert in both extrinsic and aesthetic terms.

> Anthony   The theatre of [a concert] helps bring [the music] to life and having got yourself into that zone where: 'it's 7:30, the concert's started, we're okay to listen for a couple of hours', actually the visuals pull you in even more. [...] What never ceases to amaze me is that, I haven't got the best of hearing, but every now and then, you'll see someone just pluck a harp or brush a drum and you can hear it! And that, after all these years, that still staggers me. If you're paying attention, and you're looking and you're watching, you can hear it as well. It encourages you to listen for that sound or the brush of the drum when you then listen to the CD [again]. [...] One of the positives of coming to Symphony Hall or a venue, is [that] it's almost permission to... you know, you can't have your phone on, there's no emails, there's nobody knocking the door. [...] One of the things that would put me off trying to listen to classical music away from the theatre is that I'm always so busy, and I think you need quality time to sit down and try and get into it. With the best will in the world, that doesn't happen in normal life.

There are two important factors in Anthony's description of aesthetic engagement. Firstly, live performances make familiar pieces fresh again. Watching the musicians enabled him to hear parts of the music that he had not noticed before and which he was subsequently able to identify on a recording. Secondly, for Anthony, being in a concert hall allowed him to listen with an intensity that is rarely achieved in everyday life. In this chapter, I first consider how live listening makes music 'fresh' again and is consequently used as a tool for regulating familiarity (Greasley & Lamont, 2013). While this freshness was partly brought about by new musical

interpretations, it also emerged from the visual input of being able to watch orchestral musicians, as well as the intense focus afforded by the concert hall. In the second half of this chapter, I explore the nature of concentration in concert listening and the ethics of distraction. Throughout this chapter, I build on the finding from Chapter 11 that extrinsic and aesthetic forms of value are inextricably linked.

12.1 Musical 'freshness'

Live concerts were valued by participants for bringing a sense of freshness to a familiar piece of music through a new interpretation. Beethoven Week was frequently evaluated in these terms and interview participants were impressed that musicians, particularly conductor Andris Nelsons, could bring something new to very familiar pieces.

> Ruth   When you listen to Andris playing, you never know what to expect and the first Beethoven we heard him do, we came and you listen to it and you think 'oh, well, I know that [piece]' and then when he plays it, 'well actually, I don't know it!' You always hear something new and fresh.

> Michael   Andris Nelsons [has] just got that ability to do something with one or other of the pieces that I have heard where you think 'my God, I have never heard it played like that before' [...] I mean there's been other conductors that – don't ask me names – but other conductors that have appeared here, when I have listened to pieces and I'm thinking 'oh gosh, the way he just held the orchestra back a tiny bit, delayed that movement slightly...' or the strength of the brass in it or something you hear from the recording you've got at home. It doesn't mean your recording's any better, it's just that hearing it in a different way...

Seemingly, the more familiar the piece, the more audiences value the freshness brought by a live performance. Ruth, Michael and John all attributed this freshness to the conductor. I showed in Chapter 9.2 that only the most highly-engaged participants chose concerts based on the conductor. As conductors seem to be valued for their ability to do something new with a familiar piece of music, perhaps the ability to select concerts based on the conductors is dependent on being familiar enough with pieces of music to hear a difference in interpretation. Conductors consequently appeal to only the most knowledgeable core attenders, and to populist attenders for their dual function as comperes (Chapter 13.1).

In part, this musical freshness is brought about by the interpretation of the artists. As no piece of music is entirely encapsulated in either score or a performance (see Bohlman, 1999), each performance brings a new angle on the work. It is worth noting that interpretation has grown to its current importance due to the prominence of recordings which have afforded greater comparison of different

interpretations of the same piece (Davies & Sadie, 2016). Now audiences who are familiar with a piece may compare the concert version with the recording they know well, therefore hearing a performance as a 'version' of the piece in a way that would have been alien to historical audiences. Burkholder (2014) has claimed that, due to the narrowing of the repertoire programmed in concerts over the last century, interpretation now fulfils the audience's 'desire for variety' (p.127). This once again justifies why audiences are happy to hear familiar pieces repeatedly, because it is not wholly familiar to them once it is in performance.

As discussed previously, the Inverted-U model of familiarity shows that enjoyment of a piece of music has been found to increase with familiarity until the listener becomes too familiar with it and grows bored (Greasley & Lamont, 2013; Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987). Greasley and Lamont (2013) have shown that listeners carefully regulate their exposure to pieces of music to avoid over-saturation. They do so by 'putting the music away' for a period of time to regain some distance (pp.21–22). The freshness afforded by live performances could be seen as another way to achieve this distance from familiar pieces of music; live performances could allow an audience member to enjoy a piece of music that had previously become too familiar.

As this type of 'freshness' is dependent on familiarity; newer attenders without a thorough knowledge of classical music did not hear freshness in the same way in concerts. They were unable to recognise a new interpretation of the work. Nevertheless, freshness was heard in terms of the difference in sound between a live orchestra and recordings they had heard previously. Indeed, most new and populist participants were impressed by the difference in sound between a recording and a live performance. Three interviewees spontaneously mentioned Ravel's *Bolero* as an example of when live music can bring an entirely new dimension and appreciation for classical music. One of these descriptions of *Bolero* was provided by Helen, a very knowledgeable core attender. However, the other two comments came from Alison and George, two populist attenders who, as I discussed in Chapter 5.2, had very little knowledge or experience of classical music before they started going to CBSO concerts in the past couple of years.

> Alison   One of the most phenomenal things that stood out for us, we came when they did Ravel's *Bolero* and I never really appreciated until I watched an orchestra like the CBSO doing it, how it builds up to that wonderful crescendo at the end. […] It was just stunning, wasn't it? To watch all the little bits build up. […] When I hear it now, I just visualise that CBSO build-up. That's what I can see now. I don't see Torvill and Dean now! I see the CBSO!!

George   *Bolero* surprised me, because obviously, we've heard it through Torvill and Dean and that sort of thing, but when you listen to the long piece, you think of it as a rousing piece, but it starts off very slowly, doesn't it? And gradually builds up to the crescendo.

These participants were passively familiar with the piece already due to its use in the gold-medal-winning figure skating routine in the 1984 Winter Olympics. Therefore, Alison and George, despite having very little knowledge of classical music, could notice a difference between the live performance of *Bolero* and recordings they have heard. As their knowledge of *Bolero* was therefore based on passive exposure, the perception of freshness was not based on identifying nuances in musical interpretation, but was a result of the live sound of the orchestra. Alison and George's particularly comments focussed on the crescendo throughout the piece, suggesting that something of the impact of these dynamics are lost in recordings. The volume of the music was an important aspect of liveness for core attender Ken.

Ken   The sound is overwhelming sometimes [in a concert], and I don't know why that is. You can turn the volume up on a device as loud as you like and it would deafen you and that's all it will do. But the volume turned up here to three 'f's is something somehow different. It's not as real, it's hanging on at the very edge of what they can do. You can see them working so hard that they are – particularly the fiddles – they work so hard! And the sound gets a little bit ragged and that's the exciting part I think. I was hearing it tonight with this Bruckner. It's not quite there, not like the Berlin might be, or the Vienna, with the sumptuous sound which stands up to any sort of volume. Here, right at the very limit, there is a degree of excitement.

For Ken, part of the value of a live performance is in the risk that something could go wrong, unlike a recording, where any 'roughness' and flaws would be edited out. This has been identified as an exciting factor in the live experience by previous authors (Baker 2000/2007; Brown & Knox, 2016; Earl, 2001; Radbourne et al, 2014). Given Ken's observation of the players 'working so hard', I suggest that his comments are also related to seeing the humanness of the players, as discussed in Chapter 11. Perhaps there is also a link back to the local identity of the orchestra discussed in Chapter 9.3; Ken seemed to suggest that the CBSO were not as good as other world-class orchestras, but that perhaps there was a joy in their slightly less polished playing. This implies that, in contrast to the participants wanting a guarantee that the performance will be of good quality, there may be more value in a performance that is of a slightly lower standard.

As I discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), 'liveness' studies have found that listeners observe a qualitative difference in live and recorded sound (Baker 2000/2007; Brown & Knox, 2016; Earl, 2001; Radbourne et al, 2014). There is a

sense in Ken's comments that something of the sound is lost in recordings. Partly this was the volume of the music, which seemed to enhance Ken's emotional reaction to the music; music psychology experiments have likewise found that louder music provokes more intense emotional responses in the listener (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Sloboda, 1991). For Ken, listening to recordings as loud would be unpleasant, therefore that intensity of emotional response is only possible in a concert hall. In addition, recordings could produce a different sound to the piece because certain elements of the piece could become inaudible; hearing pieces live gave listeners a chance to listen for new elements in the music, which could be more or less audible depending on where in the hall they sat.

> John   Depending on where you sit, there'll be a slight emphasis on… and you think 'I have never heard that in the piece of music before', a bit of staccato from a… and you think 'crikey, I have never really heard that bit before'.

> Yvonne   We love that because we sit on the stage, in the choir stalls. […] I know the balance isn't quite the same. […] You hear things that you don't hear when you're sitting [in the rest of the concert hall].

Sitting very close to the orchestra seemed to particularly distort the balance of the sound. While participants acknowledged that this meant that they did not always get the true sound of the whole orchestra and soloists were especially affected, other instruments would be more audible. This phenomenon occurred because participants were in the room with the musicians, where the sound is being produced by a three-dimensional orchestra rather than a speaker.

Hearing a piece of music live, with the freshness of a new interpretation and three-dimensional live sound could prompt an intense, emotional and physical response in the participants.

> Gordon   I could feel a tear welling up at one point!

> Trevor   It sends a shiver down your spine sometimes. There are particular pieces of music that I just feel the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. […] A piece of music that I'm forever playing is the chorus in [Wagner's] *Tannhäuser*, I just go all tingly when I hear it.

> Michael   It's just that hearing [a piece of music] in a different way… and I always know because I get a tingle down the spine. Sometimes the music is just like an electric shock.

> Robert   The hairs on the back of your neck stand up, especially when Andris is performing.

These accounts seem to be describing 'thrills', physiological responses to 'peak experiences' in music that have been studied a great deal by music psychologists (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Gabrielsson, 2011; Huron, 2006; Huron & Margulis, 2011;

Sloboda, 1991). Interestingly, accounts of physical responses did not seem to be determined by engagement; both core and populist attenders reported having shivers down their spine or tears in their eyes. In line with previous research, these thrills do seem to correlate with familiar pieces. Music psychologists have found that, on the one hand, thrills can reliably occur with familiar pieces of music, but on the other hand, that they are provoked by surprises or subversions of expectations in the music (Huron, 2006; Huron & Margulis, 2011; Sloboda, 1991). These participants' emotional responses could be seen to fit this model, in that they occur when hearing familiar pieces in a new way. The idea that performances could bring something new to familiar music, which could, in turn, provoke an intense emotional response, was reiterated in some way by almost all participants and appears to be one of the most valuable things about concert attendance, supporting the argument that live performances bring freshness to an over-familiar piece.

This section has therefore demonstrated that it is not only musical interpretations that bring a sense of freshness to a familiar piece of music; the live sound within a concert hall could cause participants to hear the music in a new light. This qualitative difference in sound was identified by participants, regardless of their level of knowledge or engagement with classical music. The freshness brought about by a live performance was used to regulate familiarity and enjoyment of well-known pieces, with the potential to provoke strong emotional responses to music of which listeners have previously grown tired.

12.2 Focus and distraction in concert listening

Nevertheless, it was not only differences in the physical sound that made a piece 'fresh' for the participants; being in the concert hall altered how participants heard the music. Watching the musicians play provided a visual focus to their listening that enabled them to hear previously unheard aspects of the music.

> Sandra I like to identify where the sound is coming from, from what instrument. You just accept the sound if you're listening to [a recording], and it makes you a lot more aware, when you are seeing the orchestra, where that sound's coming from.

> Robert You look at an instrument, either anticipate, like the timpani for example, and you really hear the timpani because you're looking at somebody, or a cello. You can look at the general orchestra and still pick that out by looking at them directly, it almost magnifies the sound. It doesn't, obviously, because the sound acoustics in Symphony Hall are world-class. But just by looking at it, concentrating, it seems to bring it out as well. And you don't get that on the CD.

> Emma   With, sort of, being able to see the orchestra, you can pick out which instruments are actually playing which bits of [the music], whereas if you're just hearing it on the radio or something, you don't really distinguish 'oh that's being played by that', 'oh they're playing that'. I just really enjoy finding out how things are put together.

Participants could identify the sound of individual instruments by looking at the players in the orchestra. It is worth noting the high level of musical knowledge that some participants displayed here and which is discussed in Chapter 13.2. Being able to watch the sound being produced by various instruments encouraged participants to listen to the music in a different way, to interrogate the sound they were hearing, rather than passively 'accepting' it. In addition, Robert links this mode of listening to the quality of the acoustics in Symphony Hall as discussed in Chapter 9.2; whereas some elements may become inaudible on a CD, in the hall, there is the potential to hear every sound if audiences hone in on it. Being able to see the musicians therefore allowed participants to hear new elements in a piece that they have not heard on recordings, bringing a freshness to the piece in a different way.

In addition, as seen in Anthony's comments at the start of the chapter, participants were able to listen in a more focussed way in the concert hall than was usually possible in everyday life.

> Robert   When you're at home and you listen to music, you don't listen to music because you're doing something else, whether it's reading, Sudoku, crossword, but when you're at a concert, you listen to the music.
>
> Anita   I tend to have the radio on all the time which again is very superficial because it's background. [...] Occasionally I'll put on CDs and things and try and concentrate but I find I don't concentrate so well at home because I'm usually distracted. But here, it's different. You focus. [...] You can't go off and make yourself a cup of tea or decide you've just got to do that dusting that you've noticed. You're sitting there and listening.
>
> Lawrence   To sit and listen intently to Mahler [at home] would probably be difficult, but coming here and listening isn't difficult.

Listening requires self-discipline that few participants could achieve in their everyday lives. The concert hall removes distractions, forcing listeners to do nothing other than sit in their concert seat, though, of course, audience members could be mentally pre-occupied with other things. Each of these responses stems from the question of how concerts differ from recordings, however, it is worth noting that many participants told me that they rarely listened to classical music in a concentrated way outside the concert hall.

Jackie	I would never just sit, probably, and listen to a piece of music, I would be doing something else at the same time.
Gordon	In the last 10 years, [...] I have fallen out of love with listening to the radio anymore or buying CDs so probably the only time I switch off from everything else is when I come from a concert.
Sandra	We don't play records very often. [...] Unless you've got the radio on, [concerts are] a nice way to keep up with the music. [...] You feel when you've come out sometimes, that you ought to go back and start playing your records, you know, play them again.

While previous research on the value of live performances has always articulated liveness in relation to recorded or mediated art, this study suggests that, for many audience members, concerts are the only time in which they listen in a concentrated way to classical music. Part of the value of concert-going therefore seems to be that it carves out a time in which to engage with classical music in a concentrated way. This is backed up by Anthony's comments from the start of this chapter, where he describes concert-going as 'permission' to switch off from daily life and focus on the music. Indeed, participants valued concerts as a way of removing the distractions of everyday life, not only in order to listen better but also as a tool for wellbeing.

Peter	It's a way of relaxing. Particularly when I was working, it was just fantastic to come here after work and just sit there and just lose yourself in the experience.
Cathy	The live experience is just maximising everything that's going on in an hour and a half, two hours. It's saying 'right now, this is where my brain is, this is what I'm doing, I'm focussing on this, I'm not trying to do anything else. This is it. This is what I'm doing. Don't fidget, don't think about anything else, just enjoy this and be lifted'.

Cathy's use of the term 'maximising' linked her concert listening to the effort-risk-reward framework; when she has made the effort to attend a concert, she wants to enjoy it as much as possible and get as much out of the experience as she can. It is also related to her belief that she is 'lucky' to have the opportunity to go to concerts (Chapter 9.3), whether she means in terms of them being available within travelling distance, or in having the disposable income to be able to afford to attend, she believes she must make the most of her opportunities, much like Emma in Chapter 5.1. These are interesting quotations because not only did participants highlight the relaxing nature of concert-going, but this therapeutic quality seemed to be entirely intertwined with aesthetic appreciation in their accounts of listening. It suggests that to engage with music aesthetically, even when it requires great effort to 'focus' and 'not fidget', is an act of relaxation. Peter's description of relaxing in terms of 'losing himself' in the music is linked to ideas of captivation and flow, state of intense concentration characterised by a loss of self-awareness (Csikszentmihályi,

1975; 1990). A small number of participants' accounts of listening described experiences of flow in listening.

> Anita   You get lost in [the music].
>
> Jackie   [My mum] just gets lost in it. It's… once you're in there, you can just relax and enjoy what's in front of you.
>
> Alison   I guess you really are absorbed and lost in that music and that build-up in that music.

A small number of participants, smaller than may have been expected given the attention that 'flow' or captivation has received in audience research literature, described themselves getting 'lost' in the music when listening. Linking back to the idea that focus is achieved much more easily in a concert hall than listening to a recording, it could be expected that flow is also more readily experienced within the concert hall. There is however a distinct difference in tone between these comments, and those of Sandra, Gordon and Jackie above. Here, the experience is far more passive; the participants 'lose' themselves, suggesting a sense of surrender to the music, that the music is somehow in control. Sandra, Gordon, Jackie and Lawrence, on the other hand, described listening as work, making a conscious effort not to think about anything other than the music. As I noted in the literature review (Chapter 2), ideas of concentration and captivation, and their opposites, distraction and boredom, have not been adequately understood in audience research (Chapter 2.5). Gritten (2014) has claimed that no account of engagement is complete without considering boredom or distraction, and Gross' (2013) research at the BBC Proms noted that boredom is always a possibility in the concert hall. In this study, some participants felt guilty for these lapses in concentration, taking it to mean they had failed as listeners.

> John   When I was at work as a teacher and a head teacher, I remember once I went to City Hall, Sheffield to a concert I was particularly looking forward to enjoying and about half way through I suddenly realised I'd spent the entire concert solving the problem of this kid and his relationship with his parents and I thought 'well damn me! I didn't switch off, I brought my work with me'.
>
> Emma   There was one where I think it was… I can't remember which one it was, it was like 40 minutes long, and about half an hour in you, sort of, zone out completely and then zone back in and you're like: 'I think they're still playing the same piece'. Yeah, I think I was in the choir [seats], so you end up sort of audience-watching and then you think 'okay, I feel a bit bad, okay, there's an orchestra playing, they're still going'.

Both John and Emma's comments are couched in ethical language as they seemed to judge themselves for not listening well enough. John was annoyed that he thought

about work, like Cathy, he felt that he had not made the most of being in the concert. Emma's criticism, on the other hand, was directly related to the musicians. She felt guilty that the players were working hard to produce this music to which she was not paying adequate attention. In Chapter 8.2, Emma described herself as being 'not very good' with core concerts, lending more weight to the idea that she rationalised her lapses in concentration as her failing as a listener. Her comments betray a sense of insecurity about her engagement with classical music. Dobson and Pitts (2011) found that CANAs assumed classical music to be inherently good and therefore, if they did not connect with a piece of music, it was because they themselves were at fault. This suggests that the difficulty that new attenders can face in engaging with the music may translate into feelings of inadequacy as listeners. A small number of long-term attenders, on the other hand, blamed the orchestra, not themselves, when they became distracted.

> Ruth   I think it's a pretty poor performance if I think about something else [other than the music].
>
> Mark   It is nicer if it's a popular programme, but we still come, we just don't fall asleep!

While Mark and Ruth are both long-term, frequent core attenders, they have radically different attitudes to the orchestra and programming. Ruth is highly-knowledgeable about classical music, believing herself to be a good listener; any lack of enjoyment is therefore blamed on the musicians. Ruth can be seen to demonstrate what Bennett et al. (2009) have described as 'cultural confidence' in the inherent rightness of her own evaluation and choice of arts engagement (p.66–71). Because she is confident in her own judgement to discern between good and sub-standard performances, she attributes any periods of boredom to the inadequacy of the playing. Mark similarly blamed the musicians or programme of music for his moments of disengagement, but this stemmed from his belief that the orchestra should entertain him. He seemed to want to be captivated in a concert rather than having to work to listen. Though Mark and Ruth's relationships to the orchestra are vastly different, they both seem confident in their ability to judge the quality of the performance, whereas Emma believed that any lack of enjoyment was caused by her failure as a listener.

Nevertheless, distraction or disengagement from the music was not always seen as a bad thing. Indeed, Pitts' (2016) recent study with CANAs and O'Sullivan's (2009) research with orchestral audiences both found that their participants 'defended' their right to 'daydream' (Pitts, 2016, p.12) or to 'switch off' from the music as they

wished (O'Sullivan, 2009, p.216). Indeed, for Helen, losing concentration was not the fault of either the orchestra or her listening, but a natural part of concert-going.

> Helen   I mean sometimes you can just, because you just chill, you just wanna sleep! But hey, that's part of it. If it's relaxing me from work or something like that, that's a good thing, isn't it? Okay, yeah, I'm sorry if I fall asleep, but I have never snored! But you know, it's one of those things, everybody says they do it at times. You just chill, relax, close your eyes for a moment and that's it, you're away. And the orchestra take you away. So, I just view that as part of the process.

If daydreaming, or actually dreaming, is a natural part of concert listening, then once again the line between aesthetic and therapeutic qualities of concert attendance are shown to be blurred. Helen's comment that she has 'never snored' suggests that she believed herself to be within her right to sleep if it did not impact on anyone else's listening. She cannot be sure that she has never snored so this statement is interesting, striking at the ethics of listening discussed in Chapter 2.4 (Gross, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2009). These comments once again reinforce the ethical nature of concert etiquette and judgement for audience members who impair others' listening. Helen cannot be sure that she has never snored, but is keen to assert that she does not disturb other people.

While the concert hall was valued for its affordance of focussed listening, which could bring freshness to a piece of music, listening in a concert also had ethical implications for participants. Indeed, how participants reflected on their own concert listening was determined by a number of different factors. For some, they judged themselves for being unable to listen because they had failed to 'make the most' of their concert experience. Having put in a great deal of effort to attend, they had then restricted their enjoyment by thinking about things other than the music. For others, whether they attributed their distraction to failing as a listener or to an inadequate performance was determined by cultural confidence (Bennett et al., 2009). Experienced arts consumers were confident in their ability to concentrate on and engage with the music, whereas newcomers, like in Dobson and Pitts' (2011) study, felt any disengagement was a failing on their part.

Conclusion

Live performances were valued by participants for bringing freshness to familiar pieces of music. They do so in two distinct ways: firstly, the music can physically differ from a recording in interpretation, or in the quality of the live sound; secondly, the concert hall setting allows audience members to listen to the music differently, through being able to see the musicians and concentrate harder.

Although new attenders may not be able to identify different interpretations, they were still able to identify that the live orchestral sound differed from a recording. In addition, they still articulated the value of being able to watch the musicians play and the opportunity to listen in a concentrated way in the concert hall.

I have shown that while listening can be made easier in a concert hall, it is still often conceptualised as effort or work. More experienced participants reconciled moments of distraction as either a natural part of listening, or as the fault of the performers, but other participants, especially Emma, judged themselves for not being able to maintain concentration for the duration of a concert. In Chapter 8, I described how CANAs felt that it was easier to maintain concentration at populist concerts than at core concerts, due to the shorter length of the pieces and the greater familiarity of the music. In the next chapter, I draw these findings together by exploring how ideas of knowledge and familiarity interact in concert listening.

13 Musical Listening, Musical Learning

As I discussed in the introduction (Chapter 1), a significant difference between classical radio stations BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM is their attitudes to music knowledge and the level of understanding needed in order to engage with classical music. Classic FM and, by extension, populist programming is built on the premise that classical music can be immediately enjoyable and requires no specialist training to appreciate it (Classic FM, 2009). Radio 3, on the other hand, is founded on the belief that some knowledge and understanding of music can deepen engagement (BBC, 2010). This could be seen to have its roots in music appreciation, a discipline built on the belief that listening is enhanced by a working understanding of music theory and history, as well as developing familiarity with a piece of music to begin to appreciate its complexities (Horowitz, 1994, pp.202–213; Hund, 2014; Prictor, n.d.). Programme notes provide audience members with contextual or analytical information about pieces of music, but Margulis' (2010) empirical research with listeners, found that these programme notes can hinder rather than help engagement. In Brown's (2002) study of classical music audiences, 78% of classical listeners identified themselves as 'casual listeners', with only 10% describing themselves as 'critical' listeners. In other words, most classical music listeners believe that they do not engage in a deep way with the music. Beyond the suggestion that musicians listen differently to non-musicians (Clarke, 2005; Pitts, 2013; Seung et al., 2005), there is little evidence of how more- and less-engaged audience members listen in a concert hall.

In this chapter, I continue the discussion of the listening experience by considering how knowledge impacts on how participants listened in the concert hall. Firstly, I look at knowledge as familiarity, and report on participants' attempts to increase their familiarity with pieces of music and subsequently enhance their enjoyment. Whereas Chapter 7.2 addressed how familiarity could reduce the risk associated with attendance, here, I demonstrate that participants felt that familiar music could be intrinsically more enjoyable than unfamiliar pieces. Following this, I explore knowledge as technical understanding of classical music, considering how participants perceive themselves as listeners and how much knowledge they believe themselves to have. In agreement with Brown's (2002) study, most listeners, regardless of the extent of their knowledge, believed that other audience members know a great deal more than them. However, as I explore in the final section,

participants were not in agreement as to whether more technical understanding would lead to greater enjoyment.

13.1 The impact of familiarity on musical listening

In Chapter 7, I demonstrated that concert attendance was driven by the desire to hear familiar pieces because they represented less of a risk to enjoyment than unknown works. Moreover, participants felt that familiar music was inherently more enjoyable than unfamiliar pieces.

> Trevor If you go to see a piece that you know really well, there's very much an anticipation of what's to come. […] There's the anticipation of waiting for a big theme, or something like that, that's coming.
>
> Mark It's nice to be able to… not sing along but, sort of, you know, recognise it and to know what's coming next because you're familiar with the piece.
>
> Ken If you're familiar with it, of course, there's always something around the corner. Another tune's coming along in two or three minutes' time, and you know it.

Trevor, Mark and Ken's accounts of listening were very similar, centring around ideas of anticipation when listening to familiar pieces. Participants can be seen to anchor their listening through various key moments in musical works. Prior (2013) has shown that as people repeatedly listen to pieces of music, they develop 'schemata', mental representations of the work broken down into large-scale sections and articulated by 'cues' which help listeners to keep track of the progress of the piece. The above comments seem to exactly fit the schemata model, as Trevor, Mark and Ken listen out for cues which trigger memories of prior listenings and allow them to orientate themselves in the piece.

With unfamiliar music, listeners do not have schemata around which to orientate their listening which could leave participants feeling lost. Cathy demonstrated how audiences sometimes listen to recordings of unknown pieces before attending to give themselves some familiarity with a piece. Cathy would listen in advance of a concert if she was not confident of enjoying the music, as with her attendance at a performance of Verdi's Requiem discussed in Chapter 10.1.

Do you ever listen to pieces before a concert?

Cathy   Yes, occasionally I do that. [...] Sometimes if I'm feeling – it sounds very defensive really – if I'm feeling not very confident about a concert, and I don't want to find myself in the, kind of, 'are we there yet?' mode, I'll listen to some of it first or, at least, I'll see it on the screen and I'll see it's 25 minutes [for example]. [...] My research is far more to convince myself that it's all going to be okay, so I don't feel like very occasionally I used to 'what on earth am I doing here? Why am I sitting here with all these people, listening to this? I could be at home, doing the ironing!' There have been times in my life where I have felt completely alienated from the whole process.

Cathy's comments provide a powerful image of what it is like to listen to unfamiliar music. The phrase 'are we there yet?' is an interesting one; as a colloquial phrase associated with impatient children on a long journey, it conveys a sense of disorientation. Listening in advance seems to help Cathy to orientate herself through the piece by beginning to develop these 'cues' of schemata. In addition, when Cathy is unfamiliar with a piece, it leaves her feeling disengaged, indeed, alienated from the music. This is another powerful term, suggesting a perceived distance from both the audience and musical experience. Perhaps while she has become disengaged with the performance, she believes the rest of the audience are engaged and therefore she feels a psychological separation from the audience as well. In contrast, Mark's comment above about being able to mentally 'sing-along' to a familiar piece suggests a sense of participation in the music. Familiarity therefore appears to facilitate active involvement with the performance.

Listening to the music beforehand for Cathy can be seen as a risk-reducing strategy (see Chapter 6.1). Interestingly, Cathy's listening took place after having made the decision to attend; listening in advance was intended to increase the chances of enjoyment once she had already committed to attendance. Indeed, only one participant, Anita, reported listening to recordings before making a final decision on whether to attend. Listening in advance therefore seemed to be a tool for maximising enjoyment of a concert participants had already committed to attending, rather than a means of assessing the pieces before buying tickets. The knowledge that participants can listen to the music in advance and become more familiar with the pieces may therefore be enough to lower their perception of risk without doing so before the decision to attend. What Cathy's comments show is that the benefit of familiar music is not only in providing a safe option because audiences can assess whether they enjoy the piece, but the very fact that it is familiar made it more enjoyable, because becoming familiar with a piece of music also allowed participants to listen in a 'deeper' way.

Do you ever listen to pieces before you come to a concert?

Ruth   If it's something I don't know very well, I will. Like when they were doing the Lutosławskis, we got a CD of that and listened to it a few times. And although I knew the Mahler, before the Mahler cycles, I made a real effort to really get to know them.

Matthew   You listen to the nuances far more.

The purpose of Ruth and Matthew's listening was rather different from Cathy's account; for them, listening was not a risk-reducing strategy, as they did not seem to be anxious about attending, but was a tool to increase their enjoyment. Matthew explained that listening in advance allowed them to pick up the 'nuances' of the music far more. He did not explain this in any more detail, but from how he used the word 'nuance' in another part of the interview, I suggest Matthew was referring to being able to recognise the musical interpretation; listening in advance enables him to hear what is new or different about that particular performance. Matthew's comments once again link to the concept of schemata (Prior, 2013). In being familiar with a piece, he can conceptualise the structure of the work and perceive more of the detail of the piece, in this instance, comparing it to other versions he is familiar with.

If listening to a piece beforehand decreases the risk associated with unfamiliar works and helps to deepen engagement in the concert, why don't all attenders listen to recordings in advance of a performance? I suggest that it is because listening in advance requires a great deal of effort. The participants who chose to listen to pieces before attending a concert conceived of this process as work.

Trevor   I used to [listen to the pieces] quite religiously before [a concert]. [...] I used to do this about a month in advance. I really used to study for my concerts! I can think of one of Shostakovich's symphonies that I didn't know, and I went and got a recording of it, taped it and played it in the car for about three weeks before the concert, and I think that does help. I'm a bit lazier these days.

Ken   I will try newer things. [...] It's not always very easy. As you probably know, it's hard work. I think any piece of music needs two or three or four hearings. [...] You've got to devote some time to it and then the rewards are very great. [...] By making that initial investment, you get a lifetime's enjoyment. [...] I have invested the time in listening in the beginning, two or three times, and having got that hurdle out of the way, I know it comes... it stays for the rest of your life.

Trevor used to 'study' for his concerts, language which suggests a great deal of effort put in to listening in order to maximise the concert experience. His comments were couched in ideas of work and effort, increasing the overall effort involved in concert attendance in the belief that they will get far greater enjoyment from having put in

this 'work'. Ken described unfamiliarity as a 'hurdle' to get over; there was a sense running through all of these comments that listening to unfamiliar music requires far more effort to engage with and is less enjoyable than familiar music, in accordance with the Inverted-U model of familiarity (Greasley & Lamont, 2013; Hargreaves, 1984; King & Prior, 2013; Russell, 1987). When deciding whether to attend a concert, unfamiliar music was therefore a risk to participants' enjoyment in several ways.

This level of 'studying' of unfamiliar works was restricted to a small number of the most frequent core attenders. Populist attenders did not at any point discuss listening to pieces of music in advance. Both populist and core participants agreed that familiar pieces were more enjoyable, but those who engaged solely with populist programmes were primarily interested in hearing pieces familiar through passive exposure. They were happy to hear the occasional unknown piece in the concert, but were not interested in following this up with listening to recordings.

> Paul   When it is something that you're familiar with, I don't think you need a certain patience, you don't need as much of an appreciation for classical music because you already know the tune and you're familiar with it.

Paul therefore suggested that familiar music does not demand the same level of classical music knowledge as new pieces. Classical music that is in the public domain does not require research to enjoy. His use of the term 'patience' alluded to the idea of listening as work or having to put in a lot of effort to enjoy a piece. Perhaps therefore music that is familiar through passive exposure has enabled non-attenders to develop schemata already, although more work could be done on how schemata for excerpts translate into listening of entire pieces of classical music.

Programme notes have an interesting role to play in listening to unfamiliar music. Most participants said that they would buy a programme for every concert, especially when it featured works they did not know.

> Ruth   I do like it when the programme notes also help you follow through and tell you what to listen for.

> Mark   I always read the programme just before it starts or while they're playing so I can follow like the storyline or what they're trying to interpret through the music

Programme notes help core attenders to 'follow' the music. Spatial metaphors have come up several times in this chapter, as participants tried to explain the experience of listening to a piece of music. Ruth and Mark's ability to 'follow' the music through the programme notes offered a direct comparison with Cathy being 'lost' with

unfamiliar works. Programme notes signpost the sections of the piece, seemingly providing Ruth and Mark with the equivalent of schemata, suggesting that these commentaries bypass some of the effort of getting to know an unfamiliar piece. This study therefore challenges Margulis' (2010) findings which have suggested that programme notes reduce enjoyment compared to listeners just hearing pieces of music without a commentary. However, Margulis' research took place under experimental conditions; this study suggest that perhaps, in natural concert listening, programme notes can help listeners to navigate their way through pieces, provided they are pitched at an appropriate level of understanding. For populist attenders, presenters could fulfil a similar role.

> Alison   They explained to us that it was a piece of music written and it was looking out over the white cliffs of Dover, wasn't it? He talked about the skylark, and you could almost see this bird soaring through the sky, the way they built up the sound from the orchestra. [...] I do find it quite useful as well, when you get a bit of history as well as to why that piece of music was written. Because there was some about the war poets, wasn't there? And they talked about the war poets and why they'd written the pieces of music. And you could see the imagery then, that they were trying to create, because you had a little bit of history behind it.

> Ben   You've got to be careful it's not too highbrow, because you lose the audience then, but definitely an explanation of what the music's about as well, you know, what's it's trying to... project [or] produce for you.

Being informed of the subject matter of these pieces gave Ben and Alison something on to which to anchor their listening. The presenter therefore guided their listening, giving them specific things to look out for and enabling them to engage better with the music. Their account of listening depicted a very active form of engagement; Alison 'pictured' the scene and 'saw' the imagery. Alison and Ben's comments therefore reinforce the point made by Cathy that being able to navigate the piece facilitates a more active, inclusive form of engagement. Presenters therefore can deepen engagement and to make the concert more memorable. For Paul, the presence of a presenter was understood as a means of helping attenders, especially newcomers, to engage with the music and feel included.

> Paul   Not everyone in [the concert hall] is probably in to classical music so they might not know anything about Beethoven. They might not know anything about what inspired the piece of that music, why not tell us?

For Paul, the presenter also seems to be inextricably linked with a more egalitarian approach to classical music. By speaking to the audience, conductors seemed more human and less detached from the listeners. In Paul's words, the conductors broke

down the 'glass wall' between the orchestra and the audience and 'invited the audience in'. Speaking to the audience signalled an acknowledgement that not every person in the audience would know a great deal about the pieces. It is worth noting that the five CANAs had very little specialist knowledge of classical music; they could name key instruments in the orchestra, but would not be able to talk about technical aspects of the music, styles, periods or genres (the CANA group is listed in Appendix 2.3). This contrasted with most of the higher-frequency core attenders, who casually mentioned technical music terms, taking their knowledge for granted. Presenters were valued by populist attenders for the same reason that programme notes were valued by core attenders: they provide new ways of understanding a piece, help audiences to feel more involved in the music and effectively bypass some of the time needed to become familiar with the music.

In this section, I have shown that participants find it easier and more enjoyable to listen to familiar music. This therefore means that when I demonstrated in Chapter 7 that concert choice was driven by familiarity, this was not only driven by a desire to minimise risk but was also a means of increasing enjoyment. Some of the most dedicated core attenders would 'study' in advance of concerts to increase their familiarity and engage more deeply with the music. Programme notes and presenters could, in contrast to Margulis' (2010) findings, aid engagement with unfamiliar pieces. Both core and populist attenders were keen to stress that this additional information should not be too highbrow. This raises questions about how much technical knowledge participants have of classical music and how this impacted on their listening.

13.2 Musical knowledge and ways of listening

During the interviews, through asking questions about familiar and unfamiliar pieces and enquiring whether participants had ever played an instrument, I was able to gain an understanding of how they assessed their own knowledge of classical music. Apart from a very small number of core attenders, most participants felt that they did not have any technical understanding of classical music. This made some of them quite anxious about taking part in an interview; it was common for participants to qualify their answers by reiterating how little they knew about classical music. In particular, participants often told me that they 'could not read music', which seemed to function as shorthand for them not having technical knowledge of the art form. The two most extreme examples of this were Jill and Lawrence's interviews.

Jill	I just want to let you know I'm a total novice, I can't read music, I just know what I like and... and I just love coming to performances, really. I'd come every day if I could!
Lawrence	Something you might ask later but I'll answer it now: I can't read music. I don't understand music. But I just... it's the sound on my ear that's just great. [...] As I say, I'm not an expert, I just enjoy listening to the music. [...] As I said, I'm not an expert, it's just looking at the orchestra to see whether you think that they're enjoying it [...] [My wife and I will] say 'what did you think of that?' 'I think that', but not in any great depth because we don't know what depth of the music there is! It's just great listening to it. [...] We understand that [the quality of performance], in simplistic terms, but not whether they hit every note correctly, whether you can hear.

Firstly, these statements demonstrate insecurities about being interviewed for this research. Both Lawrence and Jill told me how little they knew about classical music before I had the chance to ask about their musical background. Indeed, Jill's comment about being a 'total novice' was the first thing she said, just after I had started recording. In addition, on the following day, she emailed me to say how 'nervous' she had been about taking part in the interview. I believe these admissions of not being 'an expert' served two purposes; Jill seemed concerned about how I would react to her lack of knowledge and therefore wanted to be clear from the outset how little she knew. Lawrence, on the other hand, seemed to want to ensure that I knew that this opinion was his own and that he did not speak on behalf of the audience. Many other participants, like Lawrence, emphasised the superficiality of their knowledge and listening.

Peter	I can imagine there are people who know the works backwards and, I haven't seen it very often these days, but in the past I have seen people sitting there with scores and that is just beyond me!
Jackie	Perhaps it's because I'm not an experienced musician [...] [but] I don't pick up particular different nuances in music, I just sit and focus on it and I love to watch the instruments being played.
Anita	[My interest in classical music] is uneducated and I think my listening is quite superficial at the moment. [...] The way I try and understand things is to try and be a bit of a practitioner. [...] I don't think one year [of piano lessons] is going to make me a superb, sort of, person who understands it. But it's a start! It's a start. And it's a way of trying to get into it and try and understand a little bit more deeply than just a pretty tune.
Julian	I think it's like anything, isn't it? If you have a technical understanding it does enhance it. It's like watching a football match or a cricket match. If you know something about the techniques, the skills, competencies, yes, it changes the way you perceive what's going on, hear what's going on.

Anita described her listening as just enjoying a 'pretty tune'. Descriptions of music as 'tuneful' came up in Chapter 7.2, as participants used this term to justify their

conservatism. Here, it refers to a lack of sophistication in listening, implying that conservative choices are related to not having the listening skills to engage with more difficult unfamiliar music. Indeed, there was a belief that audiences needed greater knowledge of classical music to appreciate core programmes, and more knowledge again to engage with contemporary music. This sense of superficiality of listening transcended differences in engagement; Julian reported having very little classical music knowledge, whereas Peter had been a subscriber since the 1980s and yet both feel that there are audience members who engage much more deeply with the music. Jackie, Anita and Julian all believed that more technical knowledge about music would enhance their listening. The assumption is that there is more to the music than what they are hearing, as expressed by Dobson and Pitts' (2011) CANAs at their first classical concert. Jackie used the term 'nuance' like Matthew above, perhaps again, referring to the interpretation of a particular performance. However, this vague term shows the difficulty participants faced in articulating what it is that would change as they became more familiar with a piece.

Moreover, these comments reveal a culture of self-deprecation in classical music listening that transcended differences in engagement. Perhaps this also explains the overwhelming majority of respondents in Brown's (2002) study identifying as 'casual' rather than 'critical' listeners. This seems to be part of a wider culture ethical language around engagement; I showed above that participants judged themselves for choosing conservative programmes (Chapter 7.2) and for becoming distracted (Chapter 12.2). It seems that, whether audience members subscribe to these 'rights' and 'wrongs' of engagement, they were deeply aware that their listening had an ethical dimension. Some participants, though acknowledging their lack of technical knowledge, defended their musical engagement, believing that greater knowledge came to the detriment of enjoyment.

> Lawrence   If I understood it a bit more, maybe, whether I'd enjoy it any more? I don't think so. I just don't think so, I think being naive as far as the reading of the music is concerned, is probably a help.

> Georgina   My cousin [is] very serious and he knows an awful lot about music, but he doesn't get the tingle factor. I think he's low on emotion. But he's very, very good on facts, he knows every fact there is about every piece of classical music.

> Helen   I once met somebody who'd done a music degree [...] and I said 'when you listen to music now, do you sometimes find yourself going into "Oh, this is a major seventh" and lose the enjoyment of the music?' and she said 'yes, I do sometimes'. And to me that would be devastating! I have sort of thought sometimes 'should I learn music better' but actually, I don't want to be listening to a piece and suddenly go into analysing it to that n^{th} degree of 'oh, this is a major seventh and a minor...' and breaking it down into its constructed parts, I want to enjoy music for music.

Lawrence, having informed me many times during his interview that he was not knowledgeable about classical music, later claimed that he did not want to know more about the art form. Georgina implied that intellectual understanding can be an obstacle to an emotional connection with the music. Furthermore, Helen's comments suggested that technical knowledge of the music may impinge on captivation and emotional responses to the music. This view is at odds with the ethos of music appreciation (Horowitz, 1994, pp.202–213; Hund, 2014; Prictor, n.d.), but seems to echo Bourdieu's (1984) theories on cultural engagement.

Bourdieu (1984) distinguished two forms of arts engagement: the first form, instinctive appreciation, is acquired somewhat passively through childhood exposure; the second form is a learnt appreciation, acquired through formal education. Like Bourdieu, these participants seem to believe that this instinctive appreciation was a far more authentic form of engagement, and better than appreciation developed through education. The three participants who felt that technical knowledge would hamper their engagement were socialised into classical music as children. On the other hand, the four participants who felt that knowledge would enhance their listening all came to classical music later in life. This therefore suggests that those who have a 'natural' engagement with classical music are happy to listen without more knowledge, or are confident enough in their own listening not to want additional information. Those who came to music in later life, on the other hand, believed that additional support would deepen their engagement.

I believe that part of the reason for many participants telling me that they had no technical understanding of music was to challenge the assumption that all audiences have training in classical music. Jill was keen to make this explicit in her email, in which she told me about two friends who were patrons of the CBSO but again, had no technical expertise. Emma, a relatively new populist attender, spoke of how other audience members regularly assume she is a music student.

Jill	I do know friends who are current Trust and Foundation supporters of the CBSO [...] Neither couples who are sponsors are musically trained like me. [...] The point I am trying to make is that to enjoy seeing a superb orchestra and conductor, you do not have to be a musical expert.
Emma	Because I tend to go to [concerts] on my own, you end up in conversation with the people around you, you see, and there's quite a lot of people that... especially young people my sort of age, that want to be on the stage, so I think they get a very different view of it from me [...] It's amazing the amount of people [in the audience who you speak to] who do assume you have some kind of musical or theatrical background, going to see them. You're just like 'no, I think I actually manage to appreciate it more in that I'm not wanting to be up there'. [...] I can just appreciate it for what it is and the skill they have without feeling any kind of 'I want to do that when I grow up'.

Emma's comments can partly be attributed to her age; she is under 35 and there are very few audience members of her age group in concert halls across the country (see Chapter 2.1). Indeed, there was a widely-held belief in the dataset that most young people at classical concerts were music students. Emma compared her own engagement with young audience members who were attempting to become professional players, claiming that music students enjoy concerts vicariously, imagining themselves to be on the stage rather than truly engaging with the music. She believed that she enjoyed the music more due to being able to listen without an ulterior motive. Her comments feed into the same binary between intellectual and emotional engagement. With musical knowledge and participation, audiences are seen as being more detached from the performance, not being able to lose themselves in the music.

Technical understanding of music therefore has an ambiguous role to play in music listening. Most participants felt that they lacked musical knowledge compared to other audience members; there seems to be a culture of self-deprecation and belief that most audience members are highly knowledgeable about classical music. In addition, participants seemed to assume that other attenders were engaging with the music on a much deeper level. There was a lack of consensus about whether this hampered enjoyment. Those who had been exposed to classical music as children were more confident that they could enjoy the music without any form of technical knowledge, whereas those who came to it later in life felt that they only engaged with pieces in a superficial way and that their listening would be aided by greater understanding. Lastly, listening has once again been shown to have an ethical dimension with participants judging themselves for not engaging 'well' with the music.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that musical 'knowledge' should be broken down into two different types of understanding: musical familiarity, and technical understanding of music. While participants were undecided of the impact of technical understanding on enjoyment, all were certain that familiarity with a piece of music helped them to engage more deeply and feel more actively involved in a performance. Very few participants were willing to work to become familiar with new pieces, meaning that most core and populist attenders were driven by familiarity in their attendance, the difference being in their listening skills and repertoire of known works.

This exploration of musical knowledge has brought issues around the ethics of listening to the foreground. Participants judged themselves and other people for engaging in the 'wrong' way, whether that manifested itself through failing to concentrate on the music (Chapter 12.2), listening superficially (Chapter 13.2), or choosing conservative programmes to attend (Chapter 7.2). Each of these factors are important to understanding distinctions between populist and core programmes, but are also revelatory in exploring participants' misgivings about classical music. In the final data analysis chapter, I explore participants' reflections on the culture of classical music today.

14 Reflecting on the Culture of Classical Music

Having asked participants to reflect on themselves as listeners, I ended each interview by asking them to comment on the current state of classical music, relating their own cultural choices and experiences back to wider questions about the art form. While the concerns about the size and demographic of audiences for classical music were common, participants' comments also touched on issues of audience etiquette, programming, funding, education and participation. Here, I limit discussion to how ideas about the health and future of classical music had shaped, and were shaped by, their views on populist and core concerts.

Over the course of this chapter, I build a nuanced picture of cultural hierarchy in classical music as perceived by contemporary audiences. Firstly, I show that populist attenders perceive core audiences to 'sneer' at populist concerts, but that core attenders did not endorse those views. Secondly, I show that participants across all levels of engagement were aware of the audience development imperative of populist concerts, often articulating the value of that programming format through its ability to build audiences. To conclude, I explore how ideas of snobbery towards populism reveal misgivings about the perceived formality, difficulty and elitism in the classical music industry more widely.

14.1 Attitudes to populism

The belief that core attenders in general looked down on populism was expressed not only by populist attenders, but by participants across a wide range of levels of engagement.

Chris	[That's] probably why they're doing Friday Night Classics, really, to appeal to a bigger audience. Some people may think that's dumbing down. I mean, big, sort of, fans of CBSO would probably think '[scoffs], Friday Night Classics?! I don't think so! Star Wars?! Songs from the Musicals?! No, no, give me Shostakovich any day'.
Cathy	I think that CBSO do a great job in pulling all kinds of people into this brilliant venue and I get very impatient with people who are terribly snobbish about music. I was here at a Beethoven concert and a man suggested to me that Tchaikovsky wasn't proper music, so I decided to shock him by telling him I was going to the Abba concert and he looked as though I was crazy.
Robert	[John Wilson has been] introducing so-called 'light music' which is fine, world-class music by some superb composers and, because it's 'light', the ordinary concert-goer tends to sneer at it. And he's made it acceptable, if you like, in classical circles. Yes, I think it's good, fantastic.

Aside from the belief that core audiences 'scoff' at populist concerts, what connects these three quotations is the negotiation of what does and does not count as classical music. Chris believed that core attenders would be horrified at film music and pop music being played by the orchestra because they would see it as 'dumbing down'. Robert cited the example of John Wilson, who has made a name for himself as a conductor by putting on concerts of Broadway musicals, big band pieces, and programmes of excerpts of well-known British music. Cathy provided a somewhat extreme example of this purist approach to classical music: a core attender who felt that Tchaikovsky did not qualify as classical music, let alone the Abba concert she was attending the following night. These comments painted a picture of core attenders having a more purist approach to classical music. Yet, in the dataset, there were only two core attenders who explicitly objected to populist programming of excerpts. The strongest of these views was provided by David, with Anita being unsure but not entirely dismissive of populist programming.

> Anita   Do I think [populist concerts are] a good idea? I think they are. I think the thing is people enjoy music for a number of different reasons and I tend to be a bit sniffy about it, probably wrongly, and it's completely crazy to be sniffy about it. There was a conversation between Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said and they were talking about 'people don't have a musical education anymore' and you think 'yes!' but heck! Music is for enjoyment as well, therefore you enjoy what you like and if people only like the popular bits, extracts, go for it!

> David   I don't like [playing excerpts] very much, at all. It's sort of acceptable when you've got someone like Rob Cowan doing it – who's a man who knows about everything – but you still think 'is that the right thing to do?' On the other hand, you can say that's just a bit stuffy, that some movements do extract quite nicely. Umm… [pause] Yeah. If it's a way in for someone to find out more… but then, the levels at which you can appreciate things vary infinitely, so a person who doesn't get much beyond famous classics is not to be sneered at because he doesn't like Stockhausen or hasn't gone to see the Beethoven last quartets! But no, I don't like [Classic FM's] method of presentation. […] The bleeding chunks is, err… well, that's actually not fair, if you're taking a whole movement out, but playing a little bit of a movement and then fading out is not acceptable, I don't think. But… there again, I mean, it may be, for a lot of people, a way into something… heard a Scherzo or…

Both Anita and David's views on populism have been shaped by senior figures in the music industry. In David's interview, he used the phrase 'bleeding chunks', a term coined by musicologist Donald Tovey to refer to excerpts of Wagner operas played in the concert hall (Kennedy, 2006; Ridley, 1993). Tovey's oft-cited phrase likened full works to living animals, which are rendered lifeless slabs of meat by chopping them down into excerpts. Anita's comments drew on an interview she had read between

Barenboim and Said where they suggested that more people needed to learn about classical music. Both David and Anita's opinions were therefore shaped by criticism of populism in musicological literature and in the media.

I have quoted both David and Anita at length to demonstrate how much they were thinking as they spoke, moderating themselves and reflecting on whether they totally agreed with these opinions. Each time they made a damning statement about populist music, they quickly revised them to be less controversial. Both David and Anita's comments resonate with what Hennion (2001) has described as the 'sociologising' of research participants (p.5). Hennion claims that as studies in the sociology of music has become popular amongst the general public, participants have become too apologetic over their opinions, 'decod[ing] and anticipat[ing] the meaning of what they say' as they say it in the interview (p.5). There is therefore a danger that core participants presented censored versions of their opinions and, in everyday life, are more disparaging towards populist concerts. However, the way in which David hesitated over certain sentences and revised his opinions suggests that the interview had provided a space for him to reflect on his views and reconsider whether he did still believe his initial statement. His views were not diluted by the end of the quotation above, but were more refined, criticising only one aspect of populism rather than the whole style of programming. Similarly, Anita admitted to being 'sniffy' about the concerts, before criticising herself for not being more open-minded. Once again, interviews can be seen to create a space in which participants realised their own engagement was at odds with how they believed audiences should behave (as the discussion of conservatism in Chapter 7.2).

Aside from David and Anita, core attenders in the dataset were not disparaging towards populist concerts. Indeed, when core attenders explained to me why they chose not to attend populist concerts, they gave much more even-handed responses.

> Denise That's not my bag really, the Friday Night Classics. I can see that it would be appealing but it's not my sort of thing.
>
> Peter I'd rather listen to something a bit more meaty, I think, but I can see a role for these Friday night concerts and the value of them. [It's] more a question of time than anything, I'm committed to coming on Thursdays with the subscription ticket then I have not really got that much more time to dedicated to extra things.
>
> Ruth I think we're coming to 42 this year but not the Friday night ones, I don't like that kind of music. [...] I don't like lots of little bits, I want to listen to something... either something I'm very familiar with and I want to hear a good performance or it's something I'm unfamiliar with, and I want to get to know it.

Denise and Peter both immediately qualified their lack of interest in populist programmes, making a conspicuous effort not to appear disparaging. Indeed, Peter justified his lack of attendance at populist concerts in much the same way that participants in Chapter 7.2 justified conservatism. Despite taking great pains not to seem dismissive of populism, Peter's comments still touch on the cultural hierarchy of these two forms of programming. He described his preference as being for something 'more meaty'. The dictionary definition of 'meaty' is something that is 'full of substance or interest' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2001), suggesting that core concerts are more stimulating or more intellectually engaging than populist programmes. While Peter did not want to be dismissive of populist concerts, this term still implies a hierarchy between the two forms of programming. However, while populist concerts may not have been core attenders' choice of programming, they recognised that populist concerts could represent as much of a challenge to populist audiences as core concerts were for them.

> Julian   A lot in Friday nights is actually just re-evoking the very familiar, but presumably people on the other nights are listening to things [that are very familiar to them] so why should they be any different?
>
> Georgina   Classical music is jolly nice as long as people don't think it's superior and they're not going to understand it. I suppose they feel about Beethoven as I feel about Lutosławski or somebody. I'm just too, I'm not, it's not familiar, it's unknown.

Julian and Georgina's comments touched on the complex relationship between knowledge, familiarity and concert choice explored in Chapters 7 and 8. Julian assumed that core programmes are as familiar to core audiences as populist concerts are to populist audiences. He thus implies that all audience members are being conservative in their choice, engaging with music that they already know. Georgina draws a very similar relationship between knowledge and performance choice, believing core could be as big a risk to some as contemporary is to her. This is another example of core attenders not treating populist concerts as a lesser form of engagement, but acknowledging the similarities between populist listening and their own engagement.

The widespread belief amongst both core and populist attenders that core audiences look down on populism was not endorsed by the majority of core attenders. Only two participants in the dataset expressed this view, and even they quickly toned-down their views when they realised that were repeating inherited ideas from the music industry. Core attenders were careful not to appear disparaging towards

populist concerts, and often articulated the value of populist concerts in terms of their audience development potential, as discussed in the next section.

14.2 Populism as an audience development tool

Participants were aware of the audience development mission of populist concerts, often articulating the value of this style of programming in terms of broadening the audience and making classical music more accessible.

Helen   I think doing some of the popular stuff increases people's awareness of the CBSO so then, people might think 'oh, I'll have a look what else they're doing, I'll come along to something else'.

Anthony   It gives you a taster of what a bit more formal music might be. [...] I would imagine that there are lots of people who come as a taster session on Friday night that then dip a bit further into it.

Chris   I think variety is the spice of life, definitely, and while CBSO are doing the Friday Night Classics-type concerts and people are going along, then that's a potential audience for a more classical concert. They might think 'oh, I really enjoyed that, I wonder if I would enjoy Shakespeare or I wonder if I would enjoy, you know, sort of... a Christmas-type thing' or something else that they might be doing.

Helen and Anthony's comments demonstrate that belief in populism as audience development transcended differences in engagement; Helen was a high-frequency core attender who also enjoyed going to populist concerts, while Anthony was exclusively a populist attender. Helen is also considerably more knowledgeable about classical music than Anthony, yet both saw populism as a means of building and diversifying the CBSO's audiences. Helen, Anthony and Chris all believed that populist concerts could raise awareness of the orchestra's core programming. In other words, they suggest that audiences would be tempted by the programme of a populist concert, but through that, would be more aware of the CBSO and would look out for future concerts by the orchestra or at the venue. Helen, Anthony and George's comments all centre on the idea that populist concerts can break down CANAs' preconceptions and tempt them to become core audience. In Anthony's words, populist concerts are a 'taster' of core concerts, a low-risk means of sampling classical music to decide if they enjoy it. Other participants suggested that populist concerts could break down preconceptions about classical concerts.

George   Once you get people there, they'll say 'oh, the *William Tell Overture*, I know that because of *The Lone Ranger*' and then they hear the whole piece and they think 'ooh', you know, 'perhaps it's not as boring as I thought'.

George drew a connection between programming familiar music and challenging stereotypes of classical music, linking back to Paul's comments in the previous

chapter (Chapter 13.1). What Paul and George suggest here is that this well-known music does not have those same connotations of an elite culture, perhaps because instead, audiences are bringing associations of films, media or memories of that music from their own experiences. These comments echo earlier findings in which non-attenders assumed they did not know any pieces of classical music (Kolb, 2000, p.19). Programming music that is regularly heard in the media and therefore familiar through passive exposure prompts new audiences to reconsider their views.

The belief that populist concerts can challenge preconceptions of classical music brings an uncomfortable implication that audiences are mistaken in their views on the art form. George suggested that 'once you get people there', they see that classical music is not boring. This implies that new attenders have to be, at best, persuaded, at worst, deceived into attending their first concert, where they then discover that classical music is not as difficult, boring or elitist as they once believed it to be. This idea was expressed by populist and core attenders alike, as seen in Anthony's comments above and Emma's comments below. Emma is a populist attender who, until attending her first concert at the CBSO 18 months before the interview, was a CANA.

> Emma   Some of the very traditional classical probably does have a bit of an image crisis in that it doesn't necessarily appeal to the younger generation. [...] I think it is just getting that awareness for people of, 'actually, classical music can be quite nice to listen to' because people might not go straight in if you just go: 'boom, three hours of classical music'. Go: 'actually, you've got two hours of modern music and a bit of classical' and they go 'actually, I quite liked that one'. [...] Once you get them in the door, sort of work them down to... 'This [concert] has two modern pieces and lots of classical ones'. [...] I think that's almost what [populist concerts] are doing, because you are getting people in, subtly going 'look, come and listen to television themes, movie themes, by the way, there's an orchestra playing them'. Some of these are actually classical music!

Overall, Emma's argument was that many more people would enjoy classical music than believe they would, but that they need to be gradually exposed to classical music in order to dispel their preconceptions. She implies that core concerts are intimidating and therefore need to be both programmed and advertised in the right way to attract new audiences. Indeed, Emma believed that she might be able to persuade her friends to go to a populist concert, but would struggle to convince them to attend a core programme (as described in Chapter 10.3). The language she used here is powerful; organisations were described as 'subtly' getting audiences to hear an orchestra, then 'working them down' to classical music. These terms suggest that organisations are manipulating audiences to find ways around their anxieties and pre-conceptions about classical music. Emma's comments therefore raise

important questions about the entitlement of classical music organisations to coerce non-attenders into concert-going, part of the problematic ideology of audience development as discussed in Chapter 2.2. Anita raised a similar issue.

> Anita   [sighs] Is it a case of, 'we're going to tell you what you don't know you want'? I don't know!

Anita's comment came from a discussion about whether it is important for classical music to find new audiences. The sigh at the start of this quotation was telling; it spoke of a resignation to this needing to happen to ensure the future of the art form, but her not being comfortable with the rhetoric. What is striking about Anita and Emma's comments is that they came from audience members who were relatively new to concert attendance. Did they feel that they needed to be coerced into attending? Similarly, as quoted above, Anthony felt that attending populist concerts would encourage people to try core programmes, and yet he himself, at the time of interview, had attended 16 populist concerts but no core programmes. These comments therefore demonstrate the deep-rooted sense of cultural hierarchy between populist and core concerts, with populism being understood as a tool to build core audiences, even when it contradicted participants' own engagement.

Participants were highly aware of the rhetoric of audience development that surrounds populist classical music concerts. I have shown elsewhere that audiences are concerned with the absence of younger and more ethnically diverse audiences (Chapter 9.1), and that they believed that populist concerts attracted a more diverse audience (Chapter 5.3). Populism was therefore inextricably linked to ensuring the continuation of the art form. However, the comments on the progression from populist to core are complex; most participants hoped that newcomers would progress to core concerts even when they had not done so themselves. Participants' views on the audience development properties are therefore as similarly confused as media articles and previous research as to whether populism acts in audience development as progression or as simply drawing a wider audience to classical music. What is clear, however, is that their articulation of the value of populist concerts is inextricably linked to the sustainability of concert audiences and the future of classical music.

14.3 Future directions for classical music

I invited participants to comment on what they saw as being the problems in classical music today. Interestingly, their responses clustered around ideas of formality, difficulty and elitism, the exact topics that have been at the core of

CANAs' anxieties in previous audience research (Chapter 2.2). Participants felt that classical music could be improved by becoming more informal, accessible and less elitist; some comments were based on factors they felt would help their own enjoyment, while others were more focussed on what they felt would attract more newcomers.

Participants felt that classical concerts would benefit from the etiquette being relaxed within reason.

Georgina	I don't mind if people clap between movements, which they don't tend to, but if they do I think that's alright. [...] We're a bit too well-behaved, I think, but on the other hand, it's all very well in Mozart's day, they would have gone on with their lives in the background, but if you go to hear the music, that could be distracting.
Robert	I think we get too precious about things. Like clapping in-between movements. Yeah. Some people clap because they don't know! They don't know the... because people used to, years ago, used to clap.
Jackie	I sometimes get quite uncomfortable if I see people reacting to other people who perhaps aren't [clapping in the right places] and I think that's a shame. [...] People should be allowed... not in any way to interfere with the concert or the production, but does it really matter? [...] It's an expensive thing to pay for if you don't know what to expect and don't know what... to come through the doors. It's an unfamiliar, it's unfamiliar territory.

As in Chapter 8.2, discussion of 'knowing when to clap' was shorthand for concert etiquette as a whole. Jackie recognised how alienating this could be for new attenders, and seemed to use 'not clapping between movements' as an example of an arbitrary rule of concert behaviour that was not necessary to enjoy a concert. Both Jackie and Georgina wished to see this etiquette relaxed but imposed a limit on how much rules could be changed: at no point should the audience be allowed to 'interfere' with other attenders' listening. Their comments reinforce the sense of ethics to listening behaviour seen in Chapter 12.2. As Wilson and Brien (2014), O'Sullivan (2009) and Gross (2013) have noted, it is seen as unethical amongst concert audiences to distract another listener. Linking back with ideas of listening and work from the previous chapter, distracting people could be seen as both making their concentration harder to achieve, or disrupting the possibility of being captivated and achieving flow. Their comments imply a distinction between etiquette which is arbitrary (clapping in the right places) and etiquette that is respectful to other audience members and conducive to good listening. There is a tension between wanting to make concerts more accessible by breaking down the rules of etiquette, and wanting to maintain the space for focussed listening and the potential for O'Sullivan's (2009) 'access to the sublime'.

A similar tension between making classical music more accessible and maintaining the integrity of the art form was noted in concert programming.

> George   Other than the CBSO, a lot of people won't try to popularise… perhaps they think it's a bit of a dirty word to popularise. […] You worry sometimes that… populism? Popularity isn't, generally, perhaps, what they're aiming for. It's more musical excellence. [At] the Queen concert, they put wigs on and there was one gentleman up there who was obviously a bit older than the rest, who decided that he was having none of this, so he sat there while everybody else… and looked quite straight-faced. I was at the back of the hall and he was on woodwind or something, if I remember, and he was having none of this, he was just there to play the music.

George believed that arts organisations were more concerned with musical excellence than popularity or, implicitly, the audience's enjoyment. It is unclear where George was getting this impression; it could be his own assessment of programming at other organisations, or it could be from comments from the figures in the music industry (as seen in Chapter 14.1) or in the media (Chapter 1). The CBSO musician's decision not to dress up or enter into the spirit of the populist concert caught George's attention. Having described in Chapter 11.2 how the orchestra's costumes challenged stereotypes of the elitism of classical music, this one musician who refused to dress up seems to have convinced George that there are still classical musicians who object to populist concerts. The mention of the player's age implies a generational difference in attitude and some sense of the 'old guard' resisting adaptations to the traditional concert model. Furthermore, George not only addressed the musicians' attitudes but also the willingness of organisations to programme popular music. Like George, several participants felt that classical music organisations shied away from deliberately popular programmes in favour of artistic integrity, prioritising excellence over enjoyment. Jill and Mark interpreted this as a deliberate disregard of the audience, objecting to organisations programming difficult, rather than enjoyable, classical music.

> Jill   I think [they could play] maybe more popular music? You know, that people would recognise. […] A lot of people my age have got the money, and I think if they appeal to those sort of people, who want to go out and have a good time […] We're the buying public, now, aren't we? We've got money to spend.
>
> Mark   I'm not sure of any other form of music where you can say, well, 'pay £30 or whatever, but we're going to play something that you might like and you might not', you know. If I go and see a comedian like Al Murray, I expect him to entertain me, not, sort of, read his thesis from when he was at university or something, you know? It is about entertainment, isn't it? […] We're not here to satisfy the orchestra, are we?

Neither Jill nor Mark were particularly knowledgeable about classical music, and they objected to having to sit through difficult, unfamiliar pieces when they have paid to be 'entertained'. While Jill suggests that playing more popular music would help organisations to attract a larger audience, both her and Mark's pleas for more enjoyable music to be programmed were largely to improve their own concert experiences. Their comments are couched in highly commercial language, both describing the decision to attend as a commercial transaction. Jill claimed the market is demanding entertainment and, if CBSO want to fill their venue, they should lean towards a more populist programme. As discussed in Chapter 6.2, Mark and Sandra only attend matinee concerts, but Mark did not understand why he should have to attend Friday night populist concerts in order to be entertained.

Jill and Mark's comments articulated a power struggle that has been underlying many of the interviews from this project: who is an orchestral concert intended to please, the industry or the audience? This is an ideological difference which underpins debates of audience development and populism. In employing audience development models, organisations effectively attempt to develop a market for the art they wish to programme. On the other hand, much of the criticism of populist programming accuses arts organisations of diluting or dumbing down the art form to match the tastes of the existing market. In examining populism as a case study, it is impossible to ignore the issue of whether the classical music industry believes it is the art form or the audience who must adapt in order for the art form to survive. This is not unique to classical music; it is part of the rhetoric around many high art forms. In comparing classical music to comedy, Mark suggests that high art forms believe themselves to be above the need to entertain their audiences. Several participants felt that classical music saw itself as superior to other forms of art and culture; they found this sense of elitism distasteful.

Jennifer	I think people can be a bit snooty, can't they? About classical music. There's no reason! At all!! [...] At the end of the day it's only music.
Anita	We've got all these pre-conceived ideas about [puts on a posh voice] 'oh classical music, good, isn't it? And all the rest is [not]'. It's not, is it? Music is different everywhere and you've got really good stuff in different places. [...] [My piano tutor] said 'oh, did you see that wonderful programme on Kate Bush the other night?' And you think 'yeah, that's music as well!' Why not?
Chris	There will always be people who worry about [the future of classical music], because, you know, they see concerts at Symphony Hall by The Overtones, for instance, or by Jools Holland and '[gasps] what is it coming to?!'

Chris' observation of snobbery in classical music centred on concert audiences. He felt that existing core attenders looked down on populism, as discussed at the start of this chapter, but here, Chris claimed that highly-engaged audience members also felt that classical music was superior to other musical genres. He drew on the idea of purity, questioning whether audience members were happy for non-classical performances to take place in the same venue. There is a striking comparison between Chris' comments and Levine (1988) and DiMaggio's (1982; 2012) accounts of the establishment of highbrow culture in the nineteenth century. In this process, highbrow art was purified from the denigration of lowbrow culture, partly by removing the two forms of culture to different venues. Chris's comments can therefore be interpreted as a concern amongst some audience members that classical music may be contaminated by 'lower' forms of music. Chris did not suggest that all audiences, or that the industry as a whole, supported such views, but he did believe that there would 'always' be people who thought this way.

The participants' comments in this section have interrogated the very aspects of the concert experience that newcomers in previous studies have found most alienating: elitism, difficulty, and formality. Although participants believed that these attributes prevented new audiences from engaging with classical music, for the most part, their desire to see change in classical music culture stemmed from their own dissatisfaction with concert culture. Their views were not exclusively related to populist programming; this suggests that participants believe that core concerts could benefit from a more relaxed form of etiquette, more accessible music and a less elitist approach to the art form.

Conclusion

Despite a wide-spread belief that core audiences looked down on populism in classical music, very few core participants expressed negative opinions towards populist programmes. Most wanted to distance themselves from what they perceived to be snobbery towards lighter classical music. Indeed, they were keen to articulate how valuable they felt populist concerts could be for attracting new attenders, diversifying the audience, and ensuring the next generation of concert-goers. Participants disagreed on whether populist concerts could build new core audiences, or whether they were the means of the classical music industry adapting to the changing tastes of non-attenders. On the whole, they felt that classical music could benefit from becoming less formal, difficult and elitist, partly to attract more audience members, but also to benefit their own listening, believing that organisations put too much emphasis on educated listening over entertainment.

15 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the value of core and populist programming to current audiences, as a means of examining the significance of cultural hierarchy in classical music today. To this end, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 42 members of the CBSO audience. Exploring their musical engagement in some considerable depth, these interviews covered their routes to concert-going, their decision to attend, the way in which they experienced live concerts, and their view of the classical music industry. The intention of this research was both to add the voice of the audience to the overwhelmingly theoretical debate around the role of populism in the classical music industry, and to understand how recent developments in the understanding of highbrow and lowbrow cultural consumption play out in classical music. Through these interviews, as well as a series of surveys and data analysis of ticket sales at the CBSO, I have shed new light on how audience members perceive and negotiate the core/populist divide.

15.1 Valuing engagement and understanding the decision to attend

As I demonstrated in the opening chapters of this thesis, populist programmes are assumed to act as audience development tools, building new audiences for live classical music. By investigating participants' routes to attend, I found five attenders who were previously CANAs (Winzenried, 2004; the CANA group is listed in Appendix 2.3), evidence that populist concerts can be successful in converting non-attenders into audience members. CANAs have been found to respond well to populist programmes in previous intervention studies, but this is the first qualitative evidence that populist concerts can succeed in creating new audiences in natural environments. In addition, these five CANAs had all, or were intending to, try a core concert. However, the success of this audience development is not absolute; no attenders who had originally come to classical music through populist concerts had converted entirely to core attendance, instead continuing to attend populist concerts as well. In addition, the size of the sample limits how much these findings can be generalised to the whole classical music population. These five CANAs seem particularly open-minded, which raises questions over the agency of the CBSO in their routes to attendance. Perhaps, therefore, audience development only occurs when it is driven by the attenders themselves.

In terms of the classical music industry, this finding suggests that while organisations should provide clear routes into concert-going and through to more challenging forms of engagement, they should also be aware that strategic audience development promotions may not influence people who are disinclined to attend. Further research is needed to understand the interaction of attenders' attitudes and marketing strategies in CANAs' routes to attendance. Longitudinal studies following newcomers' engagement after their first attendance would be particularly fruitful. In addition, there is much to learn from 'oncers' who attend a populist concert and do not return, to understand how people with the incentive to attend once are dis-incentivised to return. Whatever the approach, future research should seek to supplement intervention studies with CANAs with research on new attenders who are there by choice.

Even from this small pool of participants, this study has generated new insights into the decision to attend. One of the most significant, but unexpected, outcomes has been a new framework for understanding arts decision-making. I became aware early on in the project that the concept of 'barriers' was inadequate to explain non-attendance, but it was not until I attempted to synthesise these 42 accounts of attendance that I realised that I needed to develop a new framework. Previous research has understood the decision to attend through frameworks of motivation, value, barriers and risk, but has failed to adequately accommodate these various positives and negatives of concert-going. Furthermore, I was unable to reconcile lack of interest in attendance under any one of these headings. The effort-risk-reward framework not only resolves lack of interest in the decision to attend, but is a useful tool for analysing individuals' decisions to attend.

This tool could be used by arts organisations as a framework to examine their cultural offering and the needs of their target market. I believe the value for arts organisations of this framework is that it shifts the emphasis of audience development strategies away from reduction of risk and effort (Sigurjónsson, 2010). Instead, it highlights the need to maximise the perceived reward of attendance. In addition, this framework is useful for future studies of the decision to attend, as researchers could probe each factor in turn, testing the validity of the framework and uncovering new relationships between the decision to attend and the perceived value of attendance.

The effort-risk-reward framework proved to be a useful tool in understanding the importance of familiarity in participants' accounts of concert-going. In this study,

concert attendance was driven first and foremost by the musical programme, and within this, largely by familiar rather than unknown music. I was able to show that familiar music not only reduced the risk of attendance, but also increased the perceived reward. Concert listening seems to follow the Inverted-U model of musical familiarity, in that enjoyment increases with more familiar music until it became too familiar. However, this rarely occurred in concert listening, because live performances made music fresh again through new musical interpretations and as a result of the focussed listening afforded by the concert-hall. In this way, concert attendance can be seen as a part of listeners' regulation of their over-familiarity with well-known music. For arts organisations, these findings highlight the importance of familiarity in programming, both in the decision to attend, and in the enjoyment of a concert. However, as familiarity is dependent on musical knowledge, programming is unlikely to please every audience member.

The importance of familiarity in concert attendance was brought to light by the depth of the interview discussions and the holistic approach to investigating musical engagement. Through exploring both the decision to attend and the value of the live concert experience with the same concert-goer, I was able to link musical familiarity both to risk reduction and to ways of listening in the concert hall. These findings could be expanded into a larger study on live and recorded music listening, an area which is in need of further exploration. Future projects could look longitudinally at how familiarity is built and regulated in concert attendance.

By investigating both the decision to attend and the perceived value of attendance, what became clear is that there are multiple factors which drive concert engagement. They are rarely defined along extrinsic and aesthetic lines. The extrinsic value of attendance has emerged as a much more important factor in attendance in this study than in previous research. For populist programmes, the spectacle and sociability of a concert evening seem to be a prerequisite to enjoyment. While core concerts could be enjoyed on largely aesthetic grounds, they are rendered far more memorable, powerful experiences when the aesthetic value is matched by these extrinsic elements. A key example of this is the CBSO Beethoven Week mini-festival, where core attenders commented on the atmosphere and the standing ovation as much as the quality of the music. This suggests that, for both populist and core audiences alike, arts organisations would benefit from turning concerts into more of an 'event'. In Chapter 11, I showed how several participants would 'make a night' of attendance; arts organisations could promote package offers with local restaurants and provide more social spaces to prolong the evening. Future

research projects could be conducted to explore how added-value events impact on both the audience who decide to attend and their enjoyment of the evening.

This challenges the presumed hierarchy of aesthetic over extrinsic value laid out in both the introduction and literature review (Chapters 1 and 2), adding further weight to Hennion's (2002) claim that the true value of the arts cannot be defined by aesthetic or social value in isolation. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this distinction between extrinsic and aesthetic forms of value is one that I have adopted from previous classifications; participants rarely distinguished between these forms of value, instead merging aesthetic engagement with therapeutic value, social value, atmosphere and spectacle.

As part of the extrinsic factors of concert attendance, the social value of concert-going has emerged as a strong influence on concert choice in contrast to previous assumptions about the insular nature of classical music listening (Johnson, 1995; Sennett, 1977). In this thesis, I have suggested adopting the term 'concert companions' to describe people who plan to attend performances together. Across all levels of engagement, participants reported making compromises on what music they would like to hear based on the tastes of their companions. This study therefore develops Brown's (2004a) model of initiators and responders, by showing that initiators often push responders out of their comfort zone. The initiators are often 'playing it safe' to do so. Audiences can therefore be seen to take audience development into their own hands by inviting newcomers and persuading companions to try new things. While some participants were happy to go alone to concerts, this was never their preferred option but a last resort, and participants who regularly attended on their own looked for other opportunities to socialise through striking up conversations with other audience members.

These findings suggest that arts organisations should maximise the sociability of concert-going. For attenders who go to concerts on their own, arts organisations could increase the value of their offering by providing social spaces at concerts and opportunities to socialise and meet like-minded people. Arts organisations should also promote companionship at concerts, as this could not only increase ticket sales through large group sizes, but also seems to promote greater risk-taking in musical programmes. The CBSO has previously trialled an 'ambassador' scheme (reported in Baker, 2000/2007, p.66) in which audience members were recruited to promote the orchestra and bring large numbers of companions to concerts. The scheme was not particularly successful, suggesting that a less formalised and more detached

approach, such as offering discounted prices for companions for poorly-sold concerts, may yield better results.

The importance of socialising has further ramifications for understanding the aesthetic and extrinsic value of attendance. As attenders were willing to make aesthetic compromises in order to attend with companions, this implies that socialising must implicitly add a great deal of value to a concert evening. Furthermore, I showed in Chapter 11.1 that participants would make concerts more sociable when they had less confidence that they would enjoy the musical programme. This finding once again detracts from the primacy of aesthetic engagement in articulations of value, instead highlighting the range of forms of value sought by populist and core audiences. It is worth noting that while I could establish that social context had a strong effect on attendance, it was incredibly difficult to get participants to describe how companions altered the concert experience. More research is needed on the spontaneous discussions that take place before, during and after a performance in a natural context. This would also help to establish the importance of socialising amongst the larger concert-going public, as this style of qualitative research may have been biased towards more sociable attenders. Research into spontaneous post-concert discussions could yield more understanding of the social value of attendance.

Overall, this study has drawn attention to audience members' idiosyncratic motivations behind concert attendance. The in-depth interviews have demonstrated that similarities in attendance patterns are not automatically accompanied by similarities in attitude. This research challenged the propensity of organisations and researchers to segment audiences into a highly-engaged segment who seek aesthetic engagement with the art and a less-engaged segment who look for entertainment. As both core and populist audiences are affected by extrinsic forms of value, these findings suggest that concert-going could be improved by being made more of an 'event' or special occasion, which seems to reduce pressure of the music to entertain. Understanding listening in context appears to rebalance the importance of aesthetic and extrinsic factors in the articulation of the value of concert-going.

15.2 Art, entertainment and the classical music industry

This study has revealed a more nuanced picture of ideas of art and entertainment in the consumption of classical music today, suggesting that core and populist programming continue to occupy an ambiguous place in the cultural hierarchy. The idea of there being discrete art and entertainment audiences for classical music has

been challenged in this study; there is a considerable overlap between the two audiences, despite what participants believed. Nevertheless, the survey revealed that core and populist audiences do differ slightly in terms of demographics and cultural consumption, suggesting that there is still some distinction between the two. In addition, as I discussed in the previous section, the association between art and aestheticism, and entertainment and extrinsic value has been found to be blurred, though not entirely dissolved in these accounts of listening.

The cultural hierarchy in classical music was perceived far more strongly amongst less-engaged participants than amongst frequent, core attenders. In the introduction, I discussed Biron's (2009) claim that audiences no longer see a distinction between high-, middle- or low-brow in their consumption. In this study, the distinction was present but was conceived from the bottom up; populist attenders believed that core programmes would be too difficult for them. They were anxious about their lack of knowledge and listening skills. Furthermore, they felt that core concerts were too formal and elitist, and that core attenders looked down on them as populist audiences. Core attenders, however, would not endorse snobbery towards populism which, overall, they seemed to view as a valuable and legitimate form of consumption. These findings may, however, be specific to the CBSO as a result of their long-standing populist series. Further studies could develop this picture by studying audiences at organisations who exclusively programme core or populist concerts; it would be particularly interesting to document the establishment of a populist series at a symphony orchestra and the competing ideas of audience development and snobbery that surround its reception.

This lack of snobbery seems to support the cultural omnivore theory, in that those who are engaging with highbrow core concerts report high levels of tolerance and open-mindedness towards low-brow cultural events (Peterson, 1992; Peterson & Kern, 1996). However, this may also be a result of 'over-sociologised' participants (Hennion, 2001, p.5), who are aware of the association between elitism and core classical music attendance and do not want to appear snobbish towards populism. Desirability bias may have muted ideas of snobbery within these interviews. Furthermore, interview-based research may have attracted people who were more open-minded, or, given the concerns over the future of the art form and belief in the audience development potential of populist concerts, who wanted to go on record supporting populism and challenging the perceived elitism of classical music. However, interviewees were frank in their criticism of classical music in other topics

of conversation, which leads me to believe that they felt comfortable enough to have spoken honestly in the interviews.

It is interesting to note how these findings on the cultural hierarchy came about in the interviews. Partly, they emerged from a question I asked at the end of the interview: 'how do you think classical music is faring today and what are its issues?' However, many of the responses that I have presented in this thesis came from much earlier in the conversations, when I asked participants whether they attended core concerts and populist concerts, and to describe the difference between the two. At this moment, many related their own attendance back to wider debates in classical music, demonstrating a surprising level of awareness for the issues facing the industry today. It is difficult to know whether to interpret this as evidence of widespread awareness of these issues in classical music audiences or whether this study attracted participants who were more engaged with the debates. Though this research may have been biased towards those with an interest in the future of classical music, the range of levels of engagement with classical music that were present in the dataset points to a general awareness of these debates amongst the concert-going public.

This study suggests that populism has an important role to play in challenging the perceived elitism, formality and difficulty of classical music. These ideas came as much from CANAs as from core attenders, both of whom believed that populism challenged stereotypes in several ways. By featuring music in populist concerts that is not strictly classical, arts organisations present a challenge to the idea that those in the classical music industry felt it to be superior to other forms of music. This is particularly powerful when musicians are seen to enjoy playing these other musical genres. The inclusion of a presenter at populist concerts counters ideas of both difficulty and elitism as it sends out a message that newcomers, with little knowledge of classical music, are welcome. Lastly, the more relaxed etiquette of populist performances shows classical music organisations as willing to reduce formality of concert-going; most participants thought the rules of concert behaviour were irrelevant providing audience members did not disturb one another.

The fact that these comments were echoed by both long-term and new attenders supports the principle of populism as audience development. In line with previous studies (Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Kolb, 2001), new attenders found it much easier to engage with populist concerts than core programmes. Furthermore, populism was believed to break down preconceptions around formality, elitism and difficulty in

classical music. Of course, given the small sample size, more work is needed to establish whether this can be generalised to the whole concert-going public. Future research projects should look to study the reactions of first-time attenders who are there by choice, and to look longitudinally at their changing opinions and attitudes after the concert.

What came across strongly in the discussion of elitism, formality and difficulty in concert-going was a sense of the ethics of classical music engagement. Ethical language has previously been found in discussions of concert etiquette (O'Sullivan, 2009; Wilson & Brien, 2014) and listening (Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Gross, 2013; Pitts, 2016), but this research also revealed a sense of ethics in the decision to attend, as participants felt that they were being too conservative by choosing to hear familiar music. This research suggests that audience members believe it is right to try unfamiliar music, especially contemporary music as this was understood to be the future of the art form. They are however unwilling to do this themselves. This disjuncture between the 'ideal' attender and their own engagement caused participants to reflect negatively on themselves as listeners. Furthermore, this assessment of conservatism was arrived at by weighing up the difficulty of the music and their listening skills. They felt guilty when listening to music that was 'easy' for them. Consequently, guilt was not associated with a type of attendance, being found in both populist and core attenders, but rather to the relationship between musical knowledge and programme choice.

I did not intentionally set out to make participants feel guilty about their own concert-going; the tendency of participants to spontaneously criticise themselves speaks of a deep sense of ethics in classical music engagement. Indeed, the three factors that cause anxiety around new attenders – elitism, formality and difficulty – all seem to rest on ideas of correct and incorrect ways to engage with classical music. Given this, it could be said that the anti-elitism, informality and accessibility of populist concerts offer a direct challenge to the ethics of classical music consumption. Indeed, this seems to explain why populism is simultaneously described as a threat to classical music and the future of developing audiences.

Overall, the cultural hierarchy of core and populist music does not seem to be important to more frequent, core attenders. It is however important for populist attenders, for whom it is a source of anxiety, causing them to believe that core attenders look down on their engagement. Attenders at all levels of engagement want to break down the negative stereotypes of core classical music that are

associated with the hierarchy – elitism, formality and difficulty – suggesting that they feel it is important to disrupt the hierarchy to attract the next generation of audience members.

15.3 Relaying findings back to the CBSO

The learning from this project was both formally and informally shared with the CBSO. While in the office, I would draw on findings from this project and my knowledge of other audience research to inform discussions. While many of the findings I reported back to the CBSO in this manner can be found in this thesis, this more informal means of dissemination also enabled me to make use of findings that I have not included here. This include topics more directly related to marketing activities, such as: views on marketing materials, the CBSO website, and programme notes; issues with the box office and concert hall facilities; more extended discussion of ticket pricing; and evaluation of specific performances. They have been omitted from this thesis partly due to commercial sensitivity, but also because they did not enrich the discussion of how audiences perceive and negotiate the core/populist divide.

In addition, I regularly carried out statistical analyses on customer data using Tessitura and T-Stats. The benefit of being an independent researcher was that I had the capacity to explore the capabilities of this new software. At times, the marketing team asked me to carry out specific analyses in order to inform the decisions they were currently making. We were, in a sense, trialling how data-driven decision-making would work within the team. This was valuable to the CBSO, who were able to make use of their statistics software at a time when they otherwise lacked capacity. Although many of these analyses have been omitted from this thesis due to commercial sensitivity, these interactions were still incredibly valuable for me as a researcher and to this project as a whole. I gained a great amount of insight into the CBSO audiences. Furthermore, this process helped me to understand the role of audience research within arts organisations and I was able to better articulate the distinct value of qualitative research in comparison to ticket sales analysis.

I presented my findings formally to the CBSO on 9th March 2016. This was half way through my third and final year with the organisation. I had completed my data collection four months previously and was in the process of analysing and writing up the findings. This formal presentation was instigated by the marketing team, who not only wanted to put aside time to engage with my findings and discuss their implications, but also wanted an open forum in which other members of the CBSO

staff could find out about the research I had conducted. The presentation consisted of two sections. First, there was a one-hour 'Learning Lunch', framed as the first in a series of talks from various members of staff, providing insight into the roles and responsibilities of their team and current challenges being faced within the industry.[3] An invitation to the Learning Lunch was sent to all staff and orchestral players. No orchestra members were present, but the presentation was well-attended by CBSO staff from across all departments, with all of the Senior Management Team present including the Chief Executive. I spoke for 40 minutes followed by 20 minutes of discussion.

Following this Learning Lunch was a two-hour session exploring findings in more detail. This was more specifically intended for the marketing department but while the majority of the Senior Management Team were unable to stay, I was pleased to see that a number of members of the development team and orchestral management stayed for the whole afternoon. I prepared enough material to be able to speak for most of the two hours, with time for discussion, however the Learning Lunch had ignited so much debate that this two-hour session became an open, free-flowing conversation. I did not lead the discussion to particular topics, but did share additional data and findings when they were relevant to the topics. I have not included a transcript of my presentation in this thesis, as I drew on a number of ticket sales analyses that I am unable to publish here due to commercial sensitivity. In lieu of a transcript, what follows is a detailed description of the presentation, including references to where the data can be found in the thesis. Chapter 15.4 reports on the discussion that followed.

I began the presentation by explaining the nature of my relationship with the CBSO. While I had become a familiar face in the office, there seemed to be a persistent sense of confusion about whether I 'actually worked here'. Given the length of time I had spent at the organisation, and the many personnel changes that had taken place over that period, I wanted to elucidate what it was that I had been doing and the working relationship I had developed (as discussed in Chapter 3.4). In addition, I wanted to prove my credentials with regards to the organisation, to make explicit the close working relationship I had developed with the marketing team, in order to avoid 'knowledge resistance' (Williamson, Cloonan and Frith, 2011) around more controversial or provocative aspects of my presentation. I went on to explain that my

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[3] Further Learning Lunches have included talks from the development team and the finance department, and an introduction to the new season from the Chief Executive.

research, in a broad sense, had been concerned with understanding why people go to concerts, specifically in relation to core concerts and populist Friday Night Classics performances.

The purpose of this Learning Lunch was not to convey every finding of the research but to provoke conversation around the role and value of populist concerts within the CBSO season. I presented a mixture of quantitative ticket sales data, interview quotations, relevant findings from other audience studies, and headlines from debates in the media. I discussed audiences' routes to CBSO attendance, the relationship between and overlap of core and populist audiences, the fact that populist attenders' perception of risk regarding core concerts was strikingly similar to how core audience members felt about contemporary music, and participants' views on the state of the classical music industry today.

The first topic I discussed was the routes newcomers take to classical music concert attendance at the CBSO. I showed, as in Chapter 5, that populist concerts do attract larger proportions of newcomers to each performance compared to core concerts. I then drew attention to the fact that only a small proportion of newcomers return for a second concert, leaving a large number of one-off attenders on the CBSO database. While discussion as to the means of attracting new audiences was common at the CBSO, I suggested that they should instead focus attention on how to get those newcomers to return for a second concert. I pointed out that most new populist audiences who did return come back to a second populist concert, asking the CBSO staff what it was that they hoped newcomers would attend: were they happy for people to forever remain populist attenders or was audience development only successful if it created new core attenders?

I suggested that there was a lack of clarity as to the purpose of the Friday Night Classics series within the programming strategy. On the one hand, they were viewed as a commercial endeavour, as part of the CBSO's financial sustainability. On the other hand, they were designed to attract new audiences as part of the desire for accessibility. However, there was a further question over whether attendance by new audience members was a desired outcome in itself, or whether the ultimate goal was to encourage populist audiences to attend core concerts. The aim of this Learning Lunch was to provoke the CBSO staff to question how they conceptualised populist and core concerts, whether this was influenced by any of their own prejudices, especially since many of the CBSO staff are musically literate, and how this may be shaping the programming or marketing of the orchestra.

I then explored in detail the relationship between core and populist attendance. I devoted quite a large proportion of the presentation exploring the difficulties faced by populist attenders in deciding to attend core concerts as discussed in Chapter 8. I presented this data in a slightly different way than it is laid out in this thesis: as a demonstration that the difficulties faced by populist attenders at core concerts (Chapters 8.2 and 8.3) mirror the difficulties faced by core attenders when listening to contemporary music (some of which is found in Chapter 7.1 and 7.2). As many members of staff at the CBSO are musically literate and are comfortable with core concert attendance, I wanted to help them to empathise with the anxieties of populist attenders at core concerts by drawing on their own experiences of contemporary music.

I demonstrated that, for populist attenders, core concerts represented as great a risk as contemporary music did to many core attenders. The perception of risk in both of these situations was centred on the same factors. Firstly, participants felt that they lacked the knowledge to make informed decisions about what pieces they would enjoy listening to and, secondly, they felt that their listening skills did not match what was demanded of them. Because of these two factors, the risk was perceived to be too high to warrant the investment of time and money involved. At the time of reporting back, I had not fully formalised the effort-risk-reward framework, but I spoke about how audiences balance the effort required and that the risk of attendance was brought about by a lack of confidence that they would enjoy the concert experience, later amalgamated into the concept of 'reward' (Chapter 6.1).

The final section of the presentation explored participants' views on classical music today. I showed that participants were concerned about the homogeneity and aging of the audience CBSO and wanted to see bigger, more diverse audiences. Some participants were concerned by the lack of young people in attendance, while others felt that young people would naturally become attenders with age (as in Chapter 9.1). I took this opportunity to discuss the statistical analyses from the US that suggests a generational shift away from classical music concert attendance (Kolb, 2001b; League of American Orchestras, 2009; Stern, 2011). In particular, I showed a startling graph from the League of American Orchestra's (2009) analysis which vividly shows the decrease in attendance with each younger generation (p.16).[4] I concluded the presentation by demonstrating, as in Chapter 14.2, that participants

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[4] This graph has since been shown to the CBSO board and the CBSO Chorus as part of presentations by the Director of Marketing.

felt that populist concerts had an important role to play in growing and diversifying the CBSO audience.

The benefit of doing this formal presentation is that I was able to share my research beyond the marketing team, who had engaged with the research informally throughout the three years. However, there were compromises that had to be made in order to do this presentation. The Learning Lunch was only 40 minutes long, which meant I had to focus on topics that I thought would provoke debate, rather than reporting back the full spectrum of research findings that appear in this thesis. In the two-hour discussion that followed, when most of the senior management team had left, I sacrificed presentation of findings in order to allow open discussion, as I felt this dialogic approach was far more conducive to this research having an impact within the organisation. It was necessary to present the findings verbally to set aside time for staff to engage with the research. This means that there are many findings within the thesis that were not relayed to the organisation.

In addition, the timing of the Learning Lunch placed limitations on what was reported. This presentation took place in March, effectively two-and-a-half years into the project. I was still very much in the process of writing my thesis, and therefore some of my ideas and analyses were not fully developed. I made changes to how I presented the data between the presentation and the thesis. Therefore, had my Learning Lunch taken place later in the process, I may have presented the data differently, or even chose to focus the presentation on a slightly different selection of findings.

However, it was necessary for the presentation to take place at this time to capitalise on interest in my research from within the organisation. After this point, I began to extract myself from the organisation, spending less time in the office in order to concentrate on writing. Had I waited until later in the summer, I would probably have missed my opportunity to have this level of impact as my research. In addition, the timing of this talk was fortuitous. In marketing, the team was settling down following a restructure. In programming, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla was due to begin as Music Director and has since shown an interest in experimenting with concert programming and presentation, with audiences at the forefront. As a result, across the organisation, data-driven decision-making had become more embedded, meaning that the findings and discussion arising from this Learning Lunch could have a significant impact on their working practice.

I have shown earlier drafts of this thesis to the marketing team. They found that the effort-risk-reward framework (Chapter 6.1) and the notion of elitism, formality and difficulty being the primary points of difference between populist and core concerts (Chapter 14.3) particularly resonated with their experience. In order to compensate for the presentation taking place before my analysis and conclusions had completely developed, I have been invited to give a second presentation to coincide with early stages of planning the 2018/19 season.

15.4 Impact of this study on the CBSO

After I had presented these findings, questions and challenges to the CBSO staff, there was 20 minutes of discussion amongst all of those present. These debates continued with a smaller group for another two hours after the Learning Lunch, during which I occasionally contributed additional findings and knowledge of other literature where it was relevant to the discussion. What follows below is an account of the debates which took place, organised by topic rather than chronologically, with acknowledgement of where I specifically intervened in the discussion.

Having demonstrated that CBSO is successful in attracting large numbers of newcomers each season, discussion turned to how CBSO could persuade new audiences to return for a second concert. Since this discussion also touched on how audiences came to be at a concert in the first place, I shared data from Chapter 5.1 about the routes to attendance for populist audiences, as well as Paul's experience of attending a concert with a friend in Vienna from Chapter 11.1. Paul's story struck a chord with the CBSO staff. They drew attention to Paul's decision to buy a CD of the same symphony after the concert, noting that while it was his friend that had initiated his first concert attendance, it was this active step he took in listening to the music again that ensured he came back to a second performance. This prompted discussion about how the CBSO could encourage newcomers to take this next step, to extend and deepen their engagement with the music and to encourage them to return to another concert. It was suggested that post-concert emails could be sent to attenders with reviews of performances, additional information about the pieces and with linked to recordings whereby they could listen again. Post-concert emails had recently been trialled at the CBSO, and now play a key role in their e-marketing strategy. Therefore, engaging with my research directly shaped conversations around the purpose and content of this initiative.

However, it was also noted that the issues around re-attendance might imply a sense of dissatisfaction with the concert experience. We discussed what more could be

done on a concert evening to help audiences to get more out of the music. In particular, we discussed how having conductors and presenters speak from stage could be beneficial for deepening the engagement of new audiences. I shared findings from previous studies (Dobson & Pitts, 2011; Kolb, 2000) and data from Chapter 13.1 on the positive impact of spoken introductions for populist audiences and newcomers. This led to an extended discussion about how the CBSO provides audiences with additional information about the pieces being performed. Pre-concert talks were acknowledged to attract the most highly-engaged attenders, suggesting that they were not the right format to provide information for newcomers. We debated how this information might be offered to newcomers without seeming like a lecture, with one member of staff mentioning TED talks as an example of how a talk can be educational but still enjoyable, demanding little effort from audiences. Given that some participants were keen to stress that knowledge was not necessary to enjoy classical music (see Chapter 13.2), I suggested that the CBSO needed to be careful not to insinuate that this knowledge was somehow necessary for enjoyment or expected of audience members.

As part of this discussion around the additional information that the CBSO provides about musical works, the marketing team shared how programme notes were obtained and described the additional expense of commissioning new writing compared with using existing stock programme notes. This is a good example of the value of disseminating this research in the form of dialogue and debate as opposed to handing the CBSO a report of the findings. It would have been easy for me to suggest that programme notes need to be better tailored to the needs of less-knowledgeable attenders, given the impact of this additional information on participants' engagement with unfamiliar music and further criticism from participants regarding the complexity and impenetrability of some programme notes. Being able to hear from marketing about the expense of radically changing the style of their programme notes allowed us to broaden discussion out to other forms of communicating information. However, even if it would be impossible for CBSO to implement sweeping changes to their programme notes, this debate at least prompted them to examine their practice and consider other options.

The discussion of presenters and pre-concert talks formed part of a larger dialogue about how to make concert-going into more of an event. I showed data from Chapter 11 about how enjoyment of populist concerts seemed to be dependent on the evening having a good atmosphere and being a spectacle, but that core concerts were similarly memorable when they too had a sense of occasion. I spoke about the

concept of 'making a night of it' from Chapter 11.1, demonstrating that increasing the social value of attending and making concert attendance into a full evening of activity could act as a risk-reducing strategy when attenders were less confident that they would enjoy the programme. This led to a discussion around the role of companions in the decision to attend. I explained Brown's (2004a) concept of initiators and responders and showed data from Chapter 10 which demonstrated how responders could be encouraged to take risks by initiators.

In the discussion around socialising at concerts, members of staff proposed initiatives very similar to the ambassador scheme (mentioned in Chapter 15.1; Baker, 2000/2007, p.66) in which audience members were recruited by the orchestra to bring new responders to concerts. There was only one member of staff at the discussion who remembered this scheme being implemented, but as I had read internal reports on the scheme, I was able to share what I knew of its outcomes as well, that ultimately it was successful but unsustainable. This shows the benefit of having conducted an audit of previous audience research at the start of the project; had that member of staff not been present, I would have been the only person who was aware that this initiative had been tried before. In addition, once again this showed the benefit of disseminating findings as dialogue, as I was able to contribute further information to their ideas that were sparked by the research findings. I suggested that, given the informality of the initiator-responder relationships documented in my thesis, the CBSO may want to consider less formal means of encouraging companionship.

Combined with the discussion of 'making a night of it' above, we had a long debate about how concerts could be made more sociable experiences. This was a key finding of my thesis and one that I have discussed in other publications (Dearn et al., forthcoming; Dearn & Price, 2016). It was encouraging to hear the CBSO staff engaging so readily and enthusiastically with the importance of socialising for concert audiences, since this is a factor that has been so ignored in debates around the value of classical music (Chapter 2.5). I spoke about: the impact of companions on the decision to attend (Chapter 10); the value of 'making a night of it' (Chapter 11); and findings from other audience research literature which demonstrated the power of discussion for deepening engagement (Chapter 4.2).

The CBSO staff talked about the potential value of keeping venue spaces alive after the concert to promote socialising and spontaneous post-concert discussions. Furthermore, they felt that encouraging the audience to stay in the venue may

promote re-attendance as they would be more likely to take active steps towards attending another performance, such as picking up leaflets, visiting the box office, or speaking to a member of staff. However, as the CBSO does not own its performance venue, they have very little control over when the bar is kept open or whether audiences are allowed to stay in the venue after a concert, both of which would incur additional staffing costs for Symphony Hall. Therefore, without securing additional funding, it is unlikely that the CBSO would be able to implement this finding. Nevertheless, there was also discussion around how CBSO could make concerts more sociable by making it easier to 'make a night of it' through partnering with bars and restaurants to provide pre- and post-concert activities.

The idea of risk in concert attendance was one to which I devoted a great deal of time within the Learning Lunch, as described above. Consequently, there was a long discussion about how CBSO could persuade audiences to take a chance on a concert outside their normal comfort zone. Suggestions which emerged were: creating bridging concerts that were somewhere between populist and core concerts in nature; promoting concert themes and suggesting concerts selections that would appeal to different listening tastes; making more of the season preview to help reduce the perceived risk of unfamiliar musics; and using online presence to share players' favourite pieces of music.

Despite the fact that my thesis and my presentation critiqued the 'drug dealer' model of audience development (ACE & Morton Smyth Ltd, 2004, p.9; see Chapter 2.2), discussion still centred on how to persuade populist audiences to attend core concerts. The CBSO staff were happy to acknowledge that not every populist attender would engage with core concerts, however the ultimate goal did seem to be to grow core audiences. This presentation challenged members of staff at the CBSO to think about how they conceptualised core and populist concerts in a way that they may not have consciously considered, reflecting on potential prejudices and preconceptions that they brought to this debate. Since the Friday Night Classics series remains financially viable and does attract new audiences (see Chapter 5.1), there had not been any urgent need to critically examine the series' purpose, value or how success was being defined. My Learning Lunch therefore began conversations, taking CBSO staff out of their particular roles and providing a space to step back from daily pressures to consider the programming strategy and mission of the organisation.

From my demonstration that CBSO attracts a large number of newcomers but struggles to tempt them back to a second concert, we began to discuss whether traditional concert formats were suitable for all types of attender. In particular, this was discussed in relation to the demographic homogeneity of audience. Populist audiences may be somewhat more diverse, but still attract an over-representation of middle-class, middle-aged, well-educated, white attenders from the Birmingham population. One particular proposal that was discussed at length was programming one-hour concerts. The CBSO had performed a one-hour concert only two months prior to the presentation. This unusual concert format had come about through logistical necessity, but a number of members of staff had successfully persuaded friends and family to attend who would not ordinarily go to concerts, purely because it had been short and therefore presented a lesser risk.

This was a particularly interesting topic which was returned to a number of times during the afternoon. It was the most radical suggestion that was made, and all the staff present engaged readily with this concept, exploring an idea that they would not usually have the time or space consider. The pressures of programming so many concerts in each season mean the CBSO, as most symphony orchestras, adhere to inherited concert formats and often do not have the space to consider other alternatives. These one-hour concerts also create challenges around determining rehearsal time and setting financially viable ticket prices. From this, we moved on to discuss more broadly the potential benefits of introducing a variety of different formats into the CBSO season. Indeed, the dominant finding of this thesis is that audience members' relationships with classical music and the CBSO are incredibly varied, that their selection of concerts and their reasons for valuing classical music are an idiosyncratic mixture of aesthetic and extrinsic benefits, and that these are not easily distinguishable through the frequency or nature of someone's concert attendance. The CBSO therefore seemed to recognise the need for a diversity of programme to appeal to a diverse audience. Nevertheless, as the Chief Executive noted, there is a need to systematise these changes, to employ them for long enough periods of time to monitor their effectiveness, and to thoroughly research and evaluate the outcomes.

I believe the most significant impact of my research for the CBSO was that it ignited discussions and set aside a space in which staff could critically examine what they were doing and explore radical changes to their way of working outside staff roles and away from the daily pressures of their work. The value I brought as a researcher is that I had the time, freedom and critical distance from the organisation to be able

to draw attention to unspoken assumptions and implicit ideologies in their practice. I hope that these discussions, in which no suggestion was disregarded, will help CBSO continue to make audience-focussed decisions, supported by ongoing research and evaluation.

15.5 Limitations of the data

The conclusions drawn from this study are inextricably linked to the location of the orchestra in a UK regional city. As discussed in Chapter 3.2, the orchestra faces requirements for both artistic excellence and accessibility from their funders, therefore there is an imperative to diversify their audiences that may not be present within organisations who are less reliant on state funding. In addition, their status as the only resident, professional, symphony orchestra between Bournemouth and Manchester mean that the CBSO feel the need to appeal to diverse tastes across a wide geographical region. The fact that the CBSO present both core and populist concerts may affect how audiences perceive and negotiate this distinction in forms of programming. The findings in this thesis therefore add a great deal of understanding of regional concert audiences, but further research is needed to test the conclusions amongst audiences in the capital or further afield. Indeed, the regional nature of this study draws attention to the assumptions of generalisability in other audience research, suggesting the need for more research into the influence of geographical location on audience engagement.

The value of this study lies in the in-depth accounts of concert-going of 42 participants. However, the small size of this sample means that I am limited in the conclusions I can draw about the wider concert-going public. This is most significant in moments such as Chapter 5 and 8, where I explore the CANAs of this dataset in more detail, at which point, I am only able to draw on the accounts of five audience members. It was necessary to keep the sample small as more participants would have been unmanageable; conversations with just these 42 participants, with some being interviewed as couples, yielded over 19 hours of recordings and more than 150,000 words of transcription. I used the principle of theoretical saturation to ensure my sample was representative. However, it was difficult to assess when theoretical saturation had been reached because the nature of these in-depth interviews highlights the uniqueness, rather than the commonalities, of participants' experiences. Furthermore, I employed grounded theory lite in conducting the research, meaning that later interviews were more focussed on the emerging research questions, which was problematic because, for some more detailed

questions, I did not have comparable responses from the full dataset. Having identified the research questions that are pertinent to classical music in this study, further research could be extended to a wider sample size or, more usefully, to audience members at other organisations, to be able to say with more confidence what is unique to the CBSO and what is found across larger populations of classical music audiences.

What is also problematic is the demographic homogeneity of the sample group. They are mostly white, and middle-aged or retired. The method of recruitment may have biased towards retired attenders, however, as described in Chapter 4.3, I took steps to compensate for this and allow working attenders to take part. Nevertheless, the dataset does represent the age profile of the concert hall, with mostly middle-aged and retired people and a small number of young people, represented here by Emma and Paul. My findings on populism and accessibility could be tested further by focussing on young people and ethnic minorities' experiences at core and populist concerts.

I did not actively attempt to recruit from other demographic groups; I instead focussed efforts on recruiting participants with a range of levels of engagement with classical music. In particular, I sought participants who attended infrequently and who concentrated on populist programmes. The experiences of these attenders are largely absent from previous literature on classical music audiences, which reported far more of the experience of those at the extremes of engagement: non-attenders and high-frequency attenders. Highly-engaged attenders' experiences are over-reported in audience research generally, in part because they are far more likely to volunteer. The propensity for the most engaged audience member to volunteer for research was repeated in this study; it was far easier to recruit those who were more invested in the organisation. The benefit of working closely with the CBSO was that I could look at their customer records and use their ticket history to try and recruit a range of levels of engagement.

However, this recruitment process only served to highlight how misleading ticket history can be. Customer data only provides a record of attendance at one organisation and therefore presents a distorted picture of classical engagement. For example, Rebecca had only attended three populist concerts at the CBSO, but transpired to be a music teacher and practising cellist who regularly attends classical concerts elsewhere. Furthermore, being able to compare participants' past attendance to their comments in the interviews highlighted the fact that their

attitudes to classical music could not be assumed by their ticket history. For example, Mark and Sandra surprised me by their attitudes; despite being very frequent attenders, classical music plays quite a casual role in their lives and they were incredibly critical of the orchestra. As I analysed the interview transcripts, I was careful to code up participants' comments with their ticket history at the CBSO and at their description of their classical music engagement more widely, to look for times when attitudes could be differentiated by attendance, and times when attendance did not account for differences of opinion.

Nevertheless, while I sought to represent a range of levels of engagement and attitude, the recruitment process meant that this project is biased towards attenders with certain attitudes towards the CBSO. First, I could only recruit those who had given the CBSO permission to email them. Secondly, the survey was sent out by email and, in order to respond, it relied on recipients opening the email, following through to the survey and, in order to volunteer for an interview, completing the survey to the end. Those who got this far are therefore likely to be of higher engagement, with a greater sense of investment in the CBSO. It may also have attracted audience members with strongly negative experiences who wanted to give critical feedback. To incentivise people with a wider range of experiences to complete the survey, the CBSO offered three pairs of tickets as a prize draw for each questionnaire. Collaborating with the CBSO, sending the survey out from an official CBSO email address, being able to offer a ticket prize draw for respondents may have put some people off from taking part, but probably increased the response rate overall.

The final way in which this study was limited by the sample of participants is through the lack of non-attenders in the dataset. My findings on the anxieties of concert-going and routes to attendance are based solely on audience members who have chosen to attend, excluding the experiences of those who have chosen not to return to the CBSO. This was partly a pragmatic decision; working with the CBSO gave me far greater access to their audiences than in many audience research projects, of which I wanted to take advantage. In addition, I felt that there was a lot to be learnt, both academically and organisationally, from studying these less-engaged attenders, who are under-represented in audience research. Furthermore, as I mentioned above, there have been several interventionist research projects involving taking non-attenders to their first concert, but far less known about newcomers who had chosen to attend concerts but had a low level of engagement with the organisation. This somewhat ambivalent relationship with the orchestra

has yielded new light on both the value of live classical music and its problems today.

Overall, while the relevance of this study is impaired by the small and demographically-homogenous sample, its value lies in the depth of the accounts of concert listening from attenders with a range of levels of engagement. This relatively small sample size has nevertheless yielded new ways of understanding classical music engagement, highlighting the value of researching those who are less-engaged with classical music. Future research on classical music audiences should strive to represent infrequent and less-knowledgeable audience members. Comparable research projects with other organisations studying in-depth the musical engagement of a range of different attenders, would provide points of comparison and better means of understanding populism, diversifying the way in which the value of classical music is articulated today.

15.6 Studying audiences: limitations, evaluation, learning

The value of this research project has stemmed from the depth of responses I gained from semi-structured interviewing. Understanding engagement holistically enabled me to make connections between seemingly disparate parts of participants' classical music engagement. The effort-risk-reward framework is a direct result of this approach. One of the first topics I covered in the interviews was how participants make their decision to attend, however participants continually circled back to this topic throughout the conversation, to add detail, to note exceptions and to provide examples. This built layers of complexity and contradictions that produced 42 incredibly nuanced accounts of the decision to attend. It was necessary to create a new framework to amalgamate these accounts, a framework which can now be a useful tool for understanding the decision to attend in other populations. This is a key example of how in-depth qualitative research can yield usable findings for future research and marketing strategies.

These semi-structured interviews provided a space for participants to reflect on their own engagement. As they repeatedly revisited topics, they revised their opinions, amending previous answers, reflecting on why they had said certain things, retreating from controversial viewpoints and considering other points of view as seen in Anita and David's comments in Chapter 14.1. Furthermore, at times, participants commented that they 'hadn't thought of that before'. The most striking example of this is in Chapter 7.2, where participants judged themselves for being conservative as they realised their own engagement did not match what they

expected of other audience members. Not only does this raise questions about the audience development or public engagement potential of reflective research, but offers insight into how audience members process their own and others' engagement.

These moments of reflection reveal that participants were insecure about their interview responses. They often qualified comments by saying that they only spoke for themselves and did not represent the views of the audience as a whole. Participants seemed to be particularly insecure about their level of knowledge of classical music, believing that other attenders were more knowledgeable than them, and therefore that I should take their answers with a pinch of salt, as seen in Jill and Lawrence's comments in Chapter 13.2. In addition, as in other research, participants seemed to struggle to be able to articulate their arts experiences, often resorting to analogies with other arts and sporting events (as in Chapter 9.2). Together, these findings seem to betray deep-seated insecurity amongst classical music audiences. This might present a barrier to open, honest discussion in group research methods, such as focus groups, and may have caused attenders with even less confidence to choose not to take part in the study. In future research, I would try to acknowledge this as part of the recruitment process, explicitly telling possible participants that they did not need any particular knowledge or experience to take part.

As I discussed in Chapter 4.1, my collaboration with the CBSO has significantly influenced the design of this research project. I chose to conduct in-depth qualitative research because the CBSO would not have had the resources to be able to do this research, being so time-intensive, I therefore felt that this was the most significant form of research I could do with the time and critical distance afforded by being an academic researcher in the organisation. It is also due to this collaboration that I chose to recruit participants using post-concert surveys which subsequently became the least successful part of the project. As I discussed in the methodology, the survey results were compromised due to the questionnaire being adapted for the specific research questions that the CBSO had for each concert. This has meant there is only a limited amount of survey data that I have been able to use in this thesis. It was a difficult compromise to make; adapting the questions made the completion of the survey as easy as possible and maximised completed responses. However, data from some of the questions, especially the decision to attend, would have provided useful contextualisation for some of the discussion in this thesis.

My close working relationship with the CBSO led me to adopt the categories of 'core' and 'populist' programming, though the latter was referred to as 'Friday Night Classics' series within the organisation. There is a danger that I adopted these programmatic categories too readily and uncritically. However, given the population under study was current CBSO audiences and that the orchestra clearly position their Friday Night Classics series as something other than core concerts through their marketing, style of programming, orchestral dress, and the feature of a presenter, I decided it was indeed appropriate to refer to these categories in this thesis. In addition, when participants were asked 'what kind of concerts do you go to?', they themselves used the core/populist distinction to describe their engagement, though they struggled to find appropriate terms, instead saying things such as 'light', 'popular', 'Friday night concerts', or 'serious', 'heavy', 'traditional'.

Making the collaboration work involved a steep learning curve, and over the three years, I have discovered several factors that have helped it to become a successful working partnership. The first, as I have mentioned above, was recognising that there was a great deal of expertise in the organisation. I learnt a great deal about their audiences, the arts industry and previous commercial market research from being around the marketing team while they were working. Through this, I also came to understand the way in which decisions were made in the organisation and the constraints in which they were working. I was consequently able to design research questions that addressed their gaps in knowledge and produced useable findings for the organisation, tailoring the project to challenge assumptions they made about their audiences.

Moreover, I have learnt that a collaboration sinks or swims on individual working relationships. This is not only because it demands investment of time and energy from individuals within the organisation, but also because it requires the organisation to trust the researcher to represent the company in an appropriate manner, keeping sensitive business information confidential and carrying out the research in a professional manner. Related to this is the need to 'muck in' and help when the team is stretched beyond their capacity. From experience, academic research can appear quite a selfish endeavour, requiring arts workers to invest a great deal in the project with a long wait before there are any results. Offering to help seems to alleviate hostility and place everyone on a more even ground. These situations were also often when I learnt the most about the organisation and was given greater access to audiences, ticket data or planning meetings.

This collaboration has been successful because I was able to embed into the organisation. Indeed, now at the end of the three-year partnership, it feels strange to write about the CBSO staff in such a detached way; to me, they are now colleagues and friends. This of course raises issues around becoming too close to the organisation and not maintaining a critical distance. Yet, in a report back to the whole staff in March, I was still able to be critical about their work and raise difficult questions about the ethos and aims of the organisation as a whole. My observations and research findings have since shaped marketing and programming decisions, as well as prompting conversations on alternative concert formats that the organisation may trial in the future. I believe it is the length of this project that has enabled me to maintain a dual identity as researcher and colleague, with CBSO staff growing accustomed to the fact that I am at once working with them and simultaneously observing their practice. I have also gained skills in conducting research within an arts marketing team, using research to inform day-to-day decisions and producing reports of research findings, quickly, that are tailored towards an urgent question in planning. This research project has been far more interesting, far more informed and far more useful through this working relationship.

Final thoughts

The presentation of classical music as a form of 'entertainment' is not a modern phenomenon, however concerns over recruitment of the next generation of audience members have brought debates around the legitimacy of core and populist programming to the fore. While non-attenders in this study did appreciate populist programming as a more accessible form of classical music consumption, the presence of more knowledgeable audience members at populist concerts suggests that this form of programming has appeal beyond accessibility. Indeed, given that participants criticised the culture of formality, difficulty and superiority in classical music, populist concerts appear to be valued precisely because they present classical music in a more informal, accessible and less elitist way. The fact that these two forms of programming have co-existed for over a century implies that the 'dumbing down' of populist classical music is unlikely to be a threat to core classical concerts. Nevertheless, in this current climate of crisis in classical music, this study suggests that arts organisations could learn a great deal from populist concerts about how to attract new audiences by turning concert-going into more of an event and reducing the ethics of engagement.

Appendix 1: Executive summary

This executive summary provides a brief overview of the findings from each chapter. This is a common feature of commercial research reports, where it provides readers with the main findings of the study so that they are able to decide whether or not it will be worthwhile reading. As I have noted elsewhere (Price, 2015), it is unusual for academic research publications to be so forthcoming with the conclusions of a research project, which makes it difficult for non-academic readers to recognise its contribution to knowledge. This executive summary therefore makes the findings of this project clearer for non-academic readers, as well as aiding readers to navigate to the chapters within this thesis that are most relevant to them. Including an executive summary, which is unusual for a PhD thesis, is designed to make the text more easily usable to a variety of readers and therefore have a greater impact.

1 Introduction: Classical Music and its Audiences

The future of classical music is uncertain. Audiences are ageing and arts organisations are struggling to find the next generation of attenders. Populist classical music programming has been used as a means of reaching a larger audience; this consists of shorter pieces of excerpts of classical music, often well-known to large proportions of the general public, and promoted as being enjoyable without much knowledge of the art form. Populist programming has, however, been criticised in the media for 'dumbing down' classical music, suggesting that it represents a threat to the future of the art form.

Nevertheless, populist concerts have been in existence as long as 'core', traditional classical concerts. Since the establishment of the division of highbrow art and lowbrow entertainment in the nineteenth century, populism has always been perceived as a threat to the integrity of classical music. This criticism is linked to ideas that there is a 'correct' way of presenting and engaging with classical music. As criticism of populism is linked to ideas of a cultural hierarchy, recent questions over whether the cultural hierarchy is still relevant today call into question ideas of legitimacy in populist and core programming.

Is populism a threat to the integrity of classical music? Or is it a means for the art form to find the next generation of concert-goers? What role will populism have in the future of classical music?

2   Understanding Audiences

Both academic and commercial researchers have carried out research into classical music audiences, but know very little of the outputs of the other field. Studies within each sector often differ in research aims, in presentation of findings and in attitudes to the relevance of historical research.

Commercial research has demonstrated that classical music audiences are overwhelmingly highly-educated, affluent and predominantly white. The audience is ageing and while there is evidence that arts engagement does increase as audience members reach middle-age, analysis of longitudinal audience studies suggests that there is a generational shift away from classical music engagement. There is a large potential market for live classical music of people who engage digitally but do not venture into concert halls.

Audience development initiatives are being carried out by arts organisations across the country in an attempt to build and diversify concert audiences. These schemes, however, are ideologically problematic, as they contribute to ideas of cultural hierarchy; audience development is not carried out for lowbrow forms of culture.

Previous studies with Culturally Aware Non-Attenders (CANAs) have demonstrated that their anxieties towards concert-going are centred on live classical music being too formal, difficult and elitist. The decision to attend is often considered in terms of 'barriers' but this model does not account for indifference or a lack of perceived value in attendance.

There are many previous studies exploring the perceived value of concert attendance. The live arts experience is understood to be qualitatively different to digital or mediated work in several ways, but there is little known about which of these may be significant to classical music audiences, or how this differs between core and populist forms of presentation. The value of live concert attendance has been distinguished into aesthetic and extrinsic forms of value. These have subsequently been attributed to different levels of attendance; aesthetic value is sought by highly-engaged, frequent attenders, whereas extrinsic factors are valued by new or infrequent audience members.

The listening experience in a concert hall has been understood in terms of concentration, distraction, captivation and boredom, but these different forms of engagement and disengagement have not adequately been reconciled. In addition,

boredom has been found to be important in understanding the experiences of first-time attenders yet, as a concept, is under-explored.

This study aims to understand the decision to attend and perceived value of attendance from a group of participants with a range of levels of engagement.

3   Understanding the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

The CBSO is based in Birmingham, a regional city in the UK with a thriving arts scene. The orchestra, having built an international reputation under the directorship of Simon Rattle, regularly perform overseas but have their home season at Symphony Hall in Birmingham. This study focussed on audiences for the CBSO's core and populist programming strands. Core concerts make up the majority of the CBSO's season, with around 40 evening concert and 13 matinees each year. They are focussed around canonical symphonic repertory, with a small number of contemporary pieces and premieres each season. In addition, there are approximately nine populist 'Friday Night Classics' concerts in each season. These consist of programmes of orchestral pop, jazz, blues and big band nights, songs from the musicals, and film soundtracks including an annual live soundtrack for a silent movie.

My close working relationship with the orchestra provided me with access to previous audience research and ticket sales data that is otherwise kept confidential within the organisation. I designed my research question and methodology to address a gap in knowledge in both the organisation and in audience literature around how attenders engage with populist and core programming. In addition, I hoped this research topic would provoke discussion at the CBSO around the purpose of populist concerts in the orchestra's programming strategy.

My role within the CBSO was unlike that of any other researchers they had worked with previously and involved a difficult negotiation of my status as both insider and outsider. While my closeness to the CBSO had the potential to threaten my impartiality as a researcher, ultimately, it has been incredibly valuable for gaining contextual understanding of the organisation and arts industry. I believe it has led to a more relevant and valuable study with greater impact on the CBSO.

4   Investigating Audiences

At the heart of this study is a series of semi-structured interviews with 42 members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) audience. Conducting in-

depth interviews revealed new connections between difference aspects of engagement, showing how an audience members' routes to concert-going, concert choice, perception of value in concert attendance and attitudes to the classical music industry are all shaped by one another. In addition, these interviews provided a space for participants to reflect on their concert-going, which not only has the potential to deepen their engagement, but also revealed the sense of ethics inherent to classical music listening.

Speaking to less-frequent and populist attenders illuminated the problems of concert-going, diversifying current understanding of the concert experience by showcasing the views of people who have chosen to attend but do not make classical music a priority in their lives. This study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to understand how participants evaluate and assimilate cultural experiences into their everyday lives.

5   Populism as a Route to Classical Music Attendance

Ticket sales data at the CBSO demonstrate that populist concerts are more successful than core concerts in attracting new attenders. However, the low rate of re-attendance implies that populist concerts may not build new audiences. For the five CANAs in this study, their routes to attendance were strongly influence by the venue, which was instrumental in raising their awareness of CBSO concerts.

A small group of participants had bypassed populism in their route to attendance, instead going straight to core concerts. A second small group had recently changed from being core attenders to choosing populist programmes. This suggests that there is not a straight-forward link between prior experience or knowledge of classical music and concert choice. This is complicated further by the fact that there is a significant overlap between core and populist audiences, with a large group of audience members attending both forms of programming.

6   Understanding the Decision to Attend

The decision to attend a concert is best understood through the effort-risk-reward framework. 'Effort' encompasses the time and monetary outlay of attending a performance, in addition to the energy needed to engage with the music. 'Reward' is an umbrella term, used to signify all forms of value in attendance perceived by the audience member. 'Risk' takes into account how confident the audience member is that the reward will make the effort worthwhile. Perception of risk is dependent on the attenders' prior experience of concert-going and the number of aspects of the

performance that are unfamiliar. The way in which audience members assess the effort and reward of attendance is revealing of the priority of classical music in their lives.

In addition, the decision to attend any single concert must be understood in the context of audience members' overall frequency of attendance. Participants have a sense of a minimum and maximum number of concerts they would like to attend in a year. For some, this is a numerical figure; for others, it is a vague sense of how regularly they would like to be in the concert hall. Individual performances are selected by attenders to fill this 'quota'.

7 Familiarity and Risk

Consistent with previous literature, this study found that the decision to attend a concert was primarily focussed on the musical programme. As most concerts feature multiple musical works, the likelihood is that some pieces will be less well-known to audience members, therefore it is familiar works that recommend the concert for attendance. Familiar pieces present a much smaller risk in the decision to attend, as audience members can make more informed assessments of whether they will enjoy listening to the music in the concert hall.

Audience members make educated guesses about their enjoyment of unfamiliar works using knowledge of similar music, but they can also bring prejudices to the decision. Consequently, lack of knowledge of classical music can either make attenders more conservative or more daring in their concert choice. During the interviews, participants often noticed that they were not as daring in their music listening as they felt audience members ought to be. They criticised themselves for their conservatism, but justified their choice of familiar music in relation to the effort required in concert attendance. Only a very small number of participants reported getting bored of hearing the same music repeatedly and actively sought unfamiliar music.

8 Risk and Conservatism in Populist Attendance

Populist programmes are based on music that is familiar to a large segment of the public. For three participants who had previously engaged with core programming, attending populist concerts was a conservative choice. For CANAs, however, attending a populist concert presented a large risk. This was partly due to the CANAs feeling alienated by concert culture, not knowing how to behave and 'when

to clap'. Furthermore, two young CANAs felt uncomfortable at the demographic disparity between themselves and the rest of the audience.

The five CANAs in this study had either tried or were intending to try attending a core concert. They seemed particularly open-minded audience members, which suggests that they may not be representative of CANAs in general. In addition, there was no mention of intervention from the arts organisation in their accounts of attending core concerts. This leads to questions of whether audience development is led by the arts organisation, or whether it is only successful when initiated by the attender themselves. The five CANAs had apprehensions about core attendance, namely around not knowing how to identify music they might enjoy and fearing being bored, implying that their musical knowledge and listening skills were not matched to the demands of core programmes.

9   Loyalty, Artist and Venue

The importance of the performing artist in the decision to attend varied across the participants. A small group of frequent, core attenders displayed an emotional commitment to the CBSO and their accounts of concert-going were couched in philanthropic terms. This was often accompanied by the participants being donors to the organisation, by attempts to promote the orchestra through their own social networks, and by feelings of community with other audience members.

For most participants, however, loyalty to the CBSO was borne of a sense of satisfaction with previous performances and therefore finding no need to look elsewhere. It was hard to disentangle loyalty to the orchestra from loyalty to the venue amongst this group.

CBSO concerts could sometimes be overlooked in favour of hearing international, visiting artists perform. These superstar artists seemed to be 'unmissable', rendering the CBSO, who play multiple concerts at Symphony Hall each week, distinctly 'missable'. There were concerns that the world-class quality of the CBSO was not being conveyed to the Birmingham population, however, several participants were persuaded to attend due to this reputation. While CBSO may not have the excitement of visiting artists, they were seen to offer a better guarantee of quality performances.

10 Social Factors in the Decision to Attend

CBSO ticket sales show that most audience members attend concerts with companions. These companions influence their choice of concert, as each decision to attend involves negotiation of musical tastes. Initiators, who would plan the evening, often pushed responders out of their comfort zones, but had to be confident that they would enjoy the programme in order to 'sell' it to their companions. To what extent participants compromised on their own tastes was dependent on how willing they were to attend alone.

Populist concerts appear to be more sociable occasions than core concerts. The survey results showed that fewer audience members attended on their own for populist programmes. Populist programmes were believed by participants to have a broader appeal and were therefore more likely to satisfy the tastes of companions. In addition, the atmosphere and etiquette of populist concerts were seen to be less 'insular', offering greater opportunity to socialise.

11 Sense of Occasion

When attending a concert, many participants would 'make a night of it'. This involved extending the evening through dinner or drinks and creating more opportunities to socialise. Some participants would attend concerts less frequently and spend more money on each occasion by buying more expensive seats and 'making a night of it' with dinner or drinks with their companions. These were often, but not always, populist attenders. Frequent attenders, on the other hand, would minimise the cost of concert-going to get the 'most music for their money'.

'Making a night of it' added more of a sense of occasion to a concert evening, which was more important to populist attenders than to core audiences. Populist audiences valued the sense of atmosphere of a concert, which was created through active audience engagement and in seeing the visible enthusiasm of the musicians. These factors seemed to be a prerequisite of enjoyment of populist concerts. While core concerts could still be enjoyed without this sense of occasion, performances that did have more of an atmosphere were more memorable and special events.

12 Concert Listening

Listening to live performances brought a sense of freshness to familiar pieces, helping to mitigate over-exposure. This freshness was partly brought about by new musical interpretations. In addition, the live three-dimensional sound elicited a

more emotional response and enabled participants to hear instrumental lines that were inaudible on recordings.

The concert hall afforded a much more focussed form of listening than was possible in everyday life, another way in which participants were able hear the music in a new light. While participants were asked to compare the experience of listening to recordings with attending a live concert, it was clear that, for most, concert-going was the only time they dedicated to listening.

Participants tried to stay focused throughout a concert to get the most enjoyment out of attending. When moments of distraction did occur, some would blame themselves for being inadequate listeners, once again revealing an ethical dimension to concert-going. Others would blame the orchestra for not keeping them captivated, demonstrating a greater level of confidence in their own listening skills. However, others felt that moments of disengagement were a natural part of concert listening and highlighted the therapeutic qualities of zoning in and out of the music.

13 Musical Listening, Musical Learning

There are two forms of musical knowledge that shape concert listening: familiarity with the pieces being played, and technical understanding of classical music. Familiar music not only represented less of a risk in the decision to attend, but was also thought by participants to be inherently more enjoyable than listening to unfamiliar pieces. Some participants would listen to pieces in advance of the concert in order to deepen their engagement with the music. However, only one participant listened to pieces of music before deciding to attend.

Programme notes and presenters' introductions at populist concerts could enhance engagement with the music by effectively bypassing the time and effort required to become familiar with a piece. Presenters were also perceived to make concerts more welcoming to new attenders, by acknowledging that some audience members would not be knowledgeable about classical music.

Almost all participants were insecure about their level of knowledge or the superficiality of their listening. They commonly believed that the rest of the audience were more knowledgeable or skilled listeners. Participants who had started engaging with classical music later in life felt that developing some technical knowledge of classical music would enable them to engage more deeply in listening. However, participants who had grown up listening to classical music, despite being insecure about their listening skills in comparison to other audience members, did

not want to build their technical understanding of music for fear of this impinging on their emotional responses to the music.

14 Reflecting on the Culture of Classical Music

Participants felt that core audience members looked down on populism, as did the media, arts organisations and key figures in the classical music industry. Core participants, however, would not endorse these views, instead praising populist concerts for their audience development potential. Populist concerts were believed to break down preconceptions about classical music and raise awareness of the orchestra.

Overall, participants wanted classical music to become more informal, less elitist and more accessible, both to encourage new attendance and to improve their own enjoyment. Some strongly objected to arts organisations programming challenging and unfamiliar works, which they interpreted as the organisations' disrespect for the audience and their enjoyment of concerts. Participants did not in any way endorse a sense of superiority in classical music over other genres or art forms.

15 Conclusion

The conclusion considers the impact of the findings on the CBSO (Chapters 15.3 and 15.4) and the limitations and benefits of the methodology employed in this study (Chapters 15.5 and 15.6). What follows below is a summary of the main conclusions from this research project.

This study has found examples of audience development occurring through populist concerts, however, in these accounts, there is a distinct absence of intervention from arts organisations, suggesting it is only successful when driven by the audience members themselves. Arts organisations should signpost routes through to core attendance for interested audience members, but should be careful not to insinuate that populist programmes are an illegitimate form of classical consumption.

Audience members attend concerts when they believe the potential reward of concert-going will outweigh the perceived effort of attendance. While arts organisations can continue to encourage attendance by reducing effort and risk, more attention should be paid to increasing and diversifying the perceived value of the evening as a whole. In particular, increasing opportunities to socialise and giving concerts a greater sense of occasion would be beneficial to both populist and core programmes.

These listening accounts reveal a deep-rooted sense of ethics to classical music engagement. This was first seen in the historical criticism of populist programmes which implied that there are 'right' and 'wrong' ways in which to programme classical music. In addition, participants seemed to conceive of a 'perfect attender', who was more daring in trying unfamiliar and contemporary music, who behaved appropriately in the concert hall, and who listened attentively throughout the concert without becoming distracted.

A sense of cultural hierarchy is still perceived in classical music today. It is particularly significant for less-engaged attenders who believe there to be a great deal of snobbery from core audiences towards populist programming. Nevertheless, core attenders would not endorse these views or any sense of superiority and elitism in the art form.

Participants felt that classical music would benefit from becoming less formal, elitist and difficult, all of which seem to have strong links to both the ethics and the cultural hierarchy of classical music engagement.

Given the long co-existence of both core and populist concerts, it is unlikely that populism threatens the future of core classical programming. Nevertheless, this study suggests that arts organisations could learn a great deal from populist concerts about how to attract new audiences by turning concert-going into more of an event and reducing the ethics of engagement.

Appendix 2: Participant information

42 participants took part in an interview for this study. 16 participants were interviewed as couples (38%) and 3 participants were interviewed by email (7%)

- 23 participants were male (55%) and 19 were female (45%)
- 95% of participants reported to be White (British).
- Participants were largely middle-aged and older, with 88% over 55.

**Figure 4: Age distribution of participants**
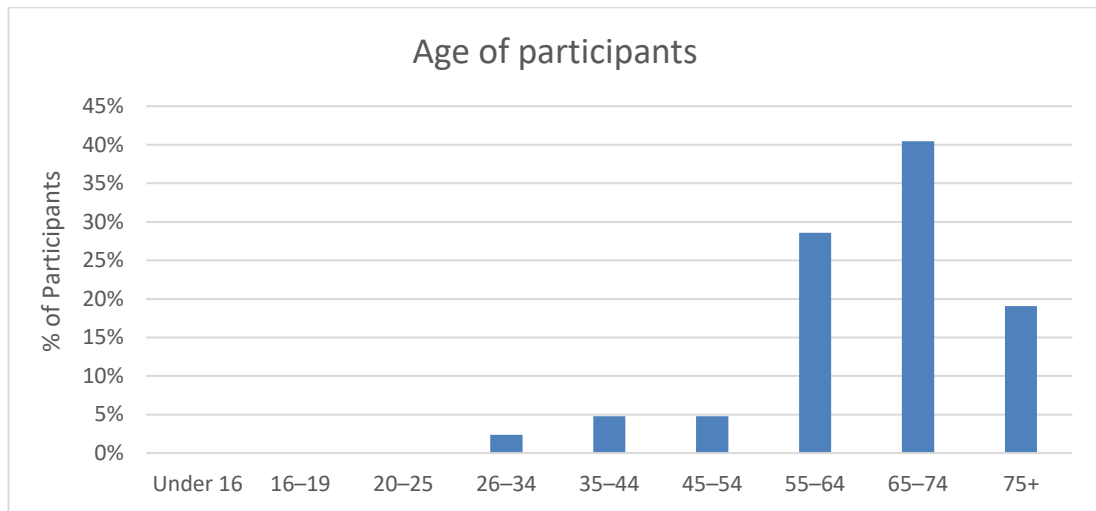
The participants represent a variety of different types of engagement with the CBSO's concert series with 33% having attended fewer than 10 CBSO concerts and 19% having attended more than 100 CBSO concerts. The following descriptive statistics must be referred to with caution; as is evident from the pen portraits that follow, the attendance record captured by the CBSO's customer database does not account for classical music engagement outside the orchestra, nor is it able to capture attendance when a companion has bought the tickets.

- Core concerts made up 80% or more of the attendance of 16 participants (38% of the sample).
- Populist concerts made up 80% or more of the attendance of 11 participants (26% of the sample).
- 11 participants (26%) had never been to a CBSO core concert, according to their customer record, while 8 participants (19%) had never been to populist concerts.

Figure 5: Number of CBSO concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview
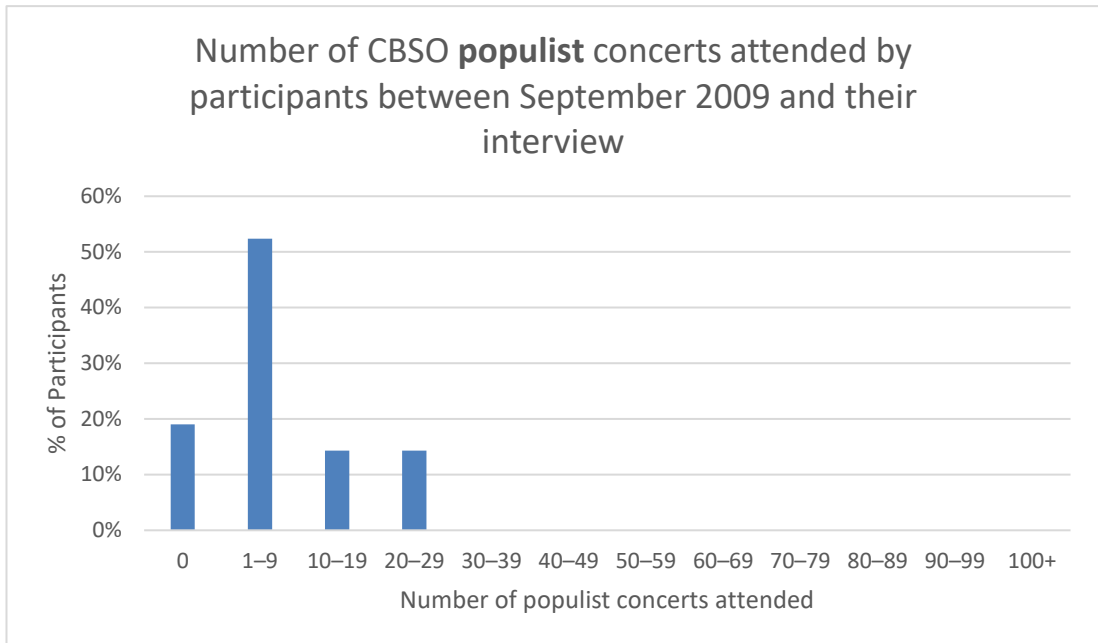

Number of CBSO concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview
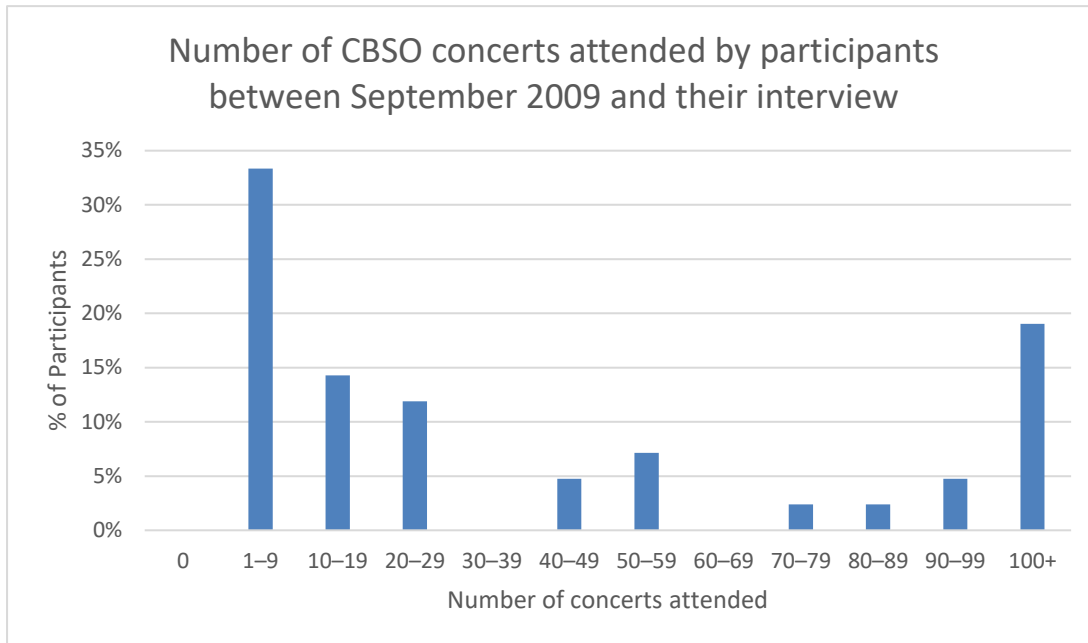
Figure 6: Number of CBSO core concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview

Number of CBSO **core** concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview
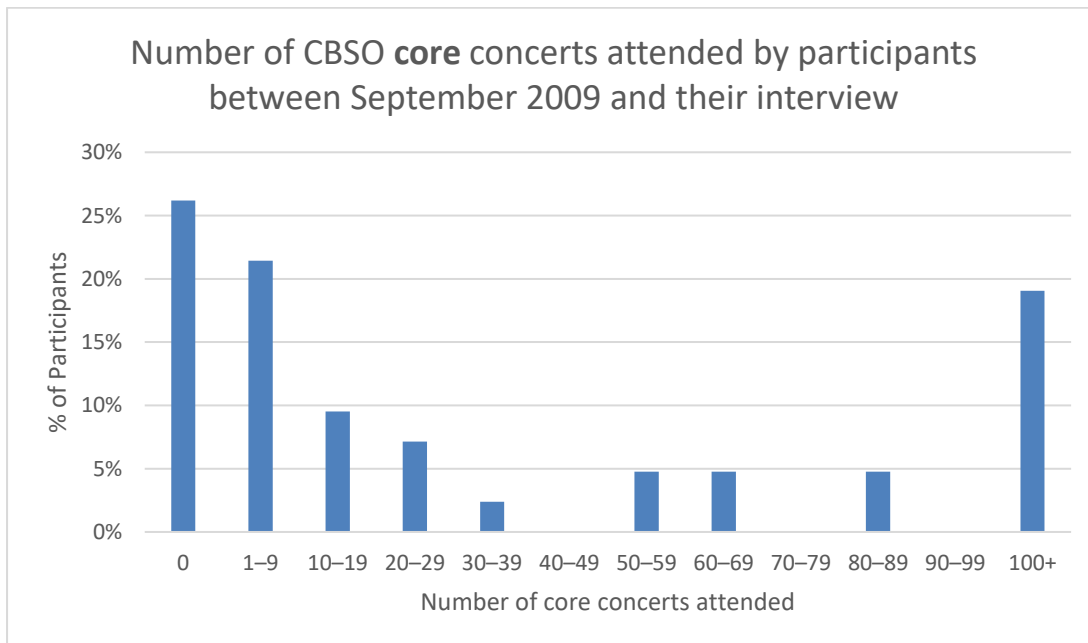
Figure 7: Number of CBSO populist concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview

Number of CBSO **populist** concerts attended by participants between September 2009 and their interview

Appendix 2.1 Demographics and attendance of the participants

Pseudonym	Sex[5]	Age	Ethnicity	No. CBSO concerts attended[6]	No. core attended	No. populist attended	% core	% populist	Concert from which they were recruited
Alison	See Ben & Alison[7]								
Anita	F	55–64	White British	3	3	0	100%	0%	Core: Beethoven Week
Anthony	M	55–64	White British	16	0	16	0%	100%	Populist: Queen
Ben & Alison	M / F	55–64	White British	3	0	3	0%	100%	Populist: Queen
Cathy	F	65–74	White British	55	39	11	71%	20%[8]	Populist: New York, New York
Chris	M	65–74	White British	11	0	10	0%	91%	Populist: Star Wars
David	M	75+	White British	4	4	0	100%	0%	Core: Beethoven Week
Debbie	See John & Debbie								
Denise	F	65–74	White British	4	4	0	100%	0%	Core: Mozart's Mass C minor

[5] Sex, Age and Ethnicity were recorded via the post-concert survey (Appendix 4)

[6] Total number of performances booked at the time of interview, going back to September 2009. Attendance statistics were obtained from ticket sales history recorded on the CBSO's customer database.

[7] Couples are listed together because demographic information captured in the survey and ticket sales history captured from the CBSO database only recorded information from one participant in the couple. For each couple, the participant who completed the survey and volunteered for the interview is listed first.

[8] Remaining 9% of attendance was at the CBSO's other concert strands, such as Christmas, Family or chamber music concerts.

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	No. CBSO concerts attended	No. core attended	No. populist attended	% core	% populist	Concert from which they were recruited
Elaine	See Rod & Elaine								
Emma	F	26–34	White British	9	2	7	22%	78%	Populist: Queen
Eric	M	65–74	White British	4	0	3	0%	75%	Populist: Queen
Frank	See Veronica & Frank								
George	M	65–74	White British	13	2	11	15%	85%	Populist: Queen
Georgina & Stephen	F / M	75+	White British	25	21	1	84%	4%	Populist: New York, New York
Gordon	M	55–64	White (Other)	7	0	7	0%	100%	Populist: Heroes & Superheroes
Helen	F	45–54	White British	275	228	27	83%	10%	Populist: Queen
Jackie	F	55–64	White British	6	2	4	33%	67%	Populist: Queen
Jennifer	F	45–54	-	3	0	3	0%	100%	Populist: Star Wars
Jill	F	65–74	White British	9	0	9	0%	100%	Populist: Queen
Joanne	F	65–74	White British	13	7	2	54%	15%	Populist: New York, New York
John & Debbie	M / F	75+	White British	27	18	5	67%	19%	Populist: Heroes & Superheroes
Julian	M	65–74	White British	92	67	21	73%	23%	Populist: New York, New York
Julie	See William & Julie								
Ken	M	75+	White British	26	23	1	88%	4%	Core: Beethoven Week
Lawrence	M	65–74	White British	120	103	0	86%	0%	Core: Beethoven Week

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	No. CBSO concerts attended	No. core attended	No. populist attended	% core	% populist	Concert from which they were recruited
Mark & Sandra	M / F	55–64	White British	56	56	0	100%	0%	Core: Beethoven Week
Matthew	See Ruth & Matthew								
Michael	M	55–64	White British	186	167	1	90%	1%	Core: Mozart's Mass C minor
Nicola	F	35–44	White British	288	240	23	83%	8%	Populist: Queen
Paul	M	35–44	White British	1	0	1	0%	100%	Populist: Heroes & Superheroes
Peter	M	65–74	White British	89	88	0	99%	0%	Core: Beethoven Week
Philip	M	55–64	White British	74	68	1	92%	1%	Core: Beethoven Week
Robert	M	65–74	White British	228	179	28	79%	12%	Core: Beethoven Week
Rod & Elaine	M / F	65–74	White British	19	1	15	5%	79%	Populist: Queen
Ruth & Matthew	F / M	65–74	White British	193	153	1	79%	1%	Core: Beethoven Week
Sandra	See Mark & Sandra								
Stephen	See Georgina & Stephen								
Trevor	M	65–74	White British	146	145	0	99%	0%	Core: Mozart's Mass C minor
Veronica & Frank	F / M	75+	White British	8	0	7	0%	88%	Populist: Queen
William & Julie	M / F	55–64	White British	46	19	25	41%	54%	Populist: Heroes & Superheroes
Yvonne	F	65–74	White British	97	81	2	84%	2%	Core: Mozart's Mass C minor

Appendix 2.2 Pen portraits of the participants

The semi-structured interviews produced incredibly rich, complex data about each participants' engagement with classical music. Throughout the analysis, I have attempted to do justice to the richness of the data by presenting participants as rounded individuals. To that end, what follows is a series of pen portraits of the 42 participants. These outlines describe each participants' route to attendance, engagement with classical music to the present day and their demographic information. Couples who were interviewed together are discussed as a pair, with the participant who completed the survey and volunteered for the interview listed first.

Alison see **Ben and Alison**

Anita first came to the CBSO three years ago when she retired to the West Midlands. She wanted to see Andris Nelsons conduct because she, like Nelsons, is Latvian. Having lived in London for many years, she was disappointed with the music provision in her local area. Anita has therefore decided she must 'make an effort' to get into Birmingham for matinee concerts, which she describes as 'her only access to professional playing'. She intends to fill her retirement years with activities that are 'meaningful', by going to concerts, learning to play the piano and taking sculpture classes.
(Female, aged 55–64, 3 CBSO concerts attended, 100% core, 0% populist)

Anthony goes to CBSO populist concerts as part of a 'night out' at the weekend with his wife, sister and brother-in-law. They attend a range of arts events together, particularly focussing on Symphony Hall, the Artrix Arts Centre in Bromsgrove and the Garrick Theatre in Lichfield. He likes the lighter side of classical music and jazz. Occasionally attending free world music performances in Symphony Hall foyer, Anthony is happy to go on his own for music he particularly likes. Attending the New Year's Day concert of Viennese Waltzes is an annual tradition. He was first introduced to classical music when he was younger through a friend; they would mostly go together to pop concerts, but would occasionally 'dabble' in orchestral music.
(Male, aged 55–64, 16 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Ben and Alison spoke to me before a performance of Lord of the Dance at Symphony Hall. They started going to events at the venue a few years ago and, through that, found CBSO concerts. They could not remember which concert first

tempted them to the CBSO, but think it might have been the music of John Williams. Before this they had only ever been to live classical music concerts to support friends and family in amateur groups. They would like to try core concerts, but are unsure what they would enjoy.
(Male/Female, aged 55–64, 3 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Cathy retired three years ago and since then, she described herself as 'making up for lost time' in concert-going. She has always had a love for classical music, but now she has more time on her hands, classical music has become 'higher on her list of priorities'. She books more than 20 concerts a year in order to get the best discount. She described how she has 'ended up' chairing the music and theatre activities of a new University of the Third Age group, who she takes to CBSO concerts. She deliberately chooses concerts in order to hear new things and expand her knowledge of classical music.
(Female, aged 65–74, 55 CBSO concerts attended, 71% core, 20% populist)

Chris used to be very involved in classical music. His parents and teachers took him to CBSO concerts at Town Hall and he regularly attended during Simon Rattle's tenure. He used to play violin and currently sings in a choir. Chris still goes to a lot of live music at Symphony Hall, but now mostly focusses on populist concerts and pop music such as Jools Holland, The Moody Blues, The Hollies. Concerts for Chris are a chance to go out with his wife, who does not know as much about classical music as he does, so he chooses concerts that they will both enjoy.
(Male, aged 65–74, 11 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 91% populist)

When he first moved to the Midlands, **David** did not like Birmingham very much. He said it was full of negative, 'red-faced councillors', that was until Simon Rattle came along and 'suddenly, the whole place [was] alive'. However, what particularly changed David's opinion was having major surgery at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 1998. It enamoured him to the city and he started regularly making the journey to attend concerts at Symphony Hall. He grew up going to classical concerts in Bristol and has been an active choral singer for many years.
(Male, aged 75+, 4 CBSO concerts attended, 100% core, 0% populist)

Debbie see **John and Debbie**

Denise remembers her first CBSO concert vividly: she was at Town Hall with a group of school friends and, in a quiet moment, she dropped her Maltesers down the wooden steps. She went to a lot of concerts when Symphony Hall first opened,

'almost bankrupting herself' in the process. Now she has retired, ticket prices force her to be more selective. The other passion in her life is theatre, which often takes priority over classical music.
(Female, aged 65–74, 4 CBSO concerts attended, 100% core, 0% populist)

Elaine see **Rod and Elaine**

Classical music is a very new discovery for **Emma**. A few years ago, she moved to Birmingham for work and, having grown up in quite a rural area, was keen to make the most of living in a city. She came across the CBSO's leaflets when walking through Symphony Hall. She particularly chooses the film and television music programmes and enjoys populist concerts as a different way to spend a Friday night as opposed to going to a bar. She has tried going to core concerts, but she has struggled to enjoy long pieces of music.
(Female, aged 26–34, 9 CBSO concerts attended, 22% core, 78% populist)

Eric is nearly 70 and only discovered classical music 18 months ago. He therefore believes that it is 'never too late' to start going to concerts but wishes he had been given the chance to learn music years ago. He describes himself as 'not bright' on classical music, but loves Elgar and hearing 'light' classics. He goes to a range of music events with his wife because he believes that her Alzheimer's is helped by 'music, sunshine and fresh air'.
(Male, aged 65–74, 4 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 75% populist)

Frank see **Veronica and Frank**

George is relatively new to classical concerts; except for a school trip to Town Hall when he was much younger, his first attendance at a classical concert was three years ago. He often goes to pop concerts at Symphony Hall with his friends and has migrated over to the CBSO's populist series. He believes he will 'graduate' to core concerts, 'gradually, but not yet'. Nonetheless, he recently went to a performance of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, simply because he was intrigued by the story, thoroughly enjoying the performance.
(Male, aged 65–74, 13 CBSO concerts attended, 15% core, 85% populist)

Both **Georgina** and **Stephen** are heavily involved in the classical music scene. Georgina, a retired cello teacher, described the 'amazing' experience of hearing a live orchestra for the first time when a German lodger took her to the BBC Proms in London. Stephen got involved with classical music when he was a student in Cambridge and now sings in various choirs. When Georgina and Stephen first

retired, they were able to go to a lot more concerts, however, now they are older, they prefer daytime performances and said that a concert would have to be 'jolly good' for them to go in the middle of winter. Aside from concert-going, they are friends of two local art galleries, watch a lot of films and occasionally go to the ballet or the theatre.
(Female/Male, aged 75+, 25 CBSO concerts attended, 84% core, 4% populist)

Until four years ago, **Gordon** had never been to a classical concert. Having been made redundant and finding himself with a lot of time on his hands, he was wandering through Symphony Hall and picked up a leaflet for a concert. It was a Valentine's Day performance from the Manchester Concert Orchestra with Gareth Gates and Scarlett Strallen performing love songs from musical theatre. Since attending this first concert, he has become a regular populist attender. He goes to around 15 concerts a year by the CBSO and other producers, which have since tempted him to try core concerts and to go down to the English National Opera in London to see a full production. However, as Gordon is on a limited budget, he was keen to urge classical organisations to keep ticket prices affordable as the more expensive tickets become, the less likely he is to try something new.
(Male, aged 55–64, 7 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Helen has always liked classical music, but very rarely went to concerts. Believing she 'must be missing out' on great music, a few years ago, she made an effort to attend more often. At first, she booked one fixed series, but this has increased to two series and lots of additional concerts, including populist programmes. Furthermore, she books a large number of BICS concerts, sometimes leading to a busy week when they're 'all piled together'.
(Female, aged 45–54, 275 CBSO concerts attended, 83% core, 10% populist)

Jackie started going to concerts when she moved to Birmingham city centre around eight years ago because it 'seemed criminal' not to come. School music lessons were her introduction to classical music; she fondly remembers listening to music in the classroom and believes she would not have gone to concerts had she not had that experience. Now, concert tickets are often bought as gifts for friends and family. She claims that she would rarely attend concerts if Symphony Hall was not 'on their doorstep'.
(Female, aged 55–64, 6 CBSO concerts attended, 33% core, 67% populist)

Jennifer has taught music for many years. She loves going to Oxford to hear performances of works that she has played or studied. As a teacher, she has taken

school groups to concerts on a number of occasions. She first started making the journey to Symphony Hall for the CBSO's family concerts when her son was young. Now that he is older and has developed an interest in film music, they travel to Birmingham whenever they can for film music concerts, both by the CBSO and by other performers.

(Female, aged 45–54, 3 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Jill never had the chance to study music. As a child, she remembers listening to a neighbour playing a Tchaikovsky piano concerto and wanting to learn to play the piano. Her younger sister, however, did have the chance to study music and for over 20 years, she took Jill to a variety of CBSO core concerts and would tell her lots of information about the pieces which helped Jill to enjoy the music. Now her sister is ill, Jill has started choosing her own concerts, but she has chosen to exclusively attend populist programmes.

(Female, aged 65–74, 9 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Joanne first saw the CBSO when they were accompanying the City of Birmingham Choir. She had come to support friends who were singing in the chorus, but was absolutely 'blown away' by the newly-opened Symphony Hall. Classical music has always been a part of her life as she played double bass at school and her parents would take her to concerts at the Hallé in Manchester. When her children were young, Joanne was not particularly engaged with classical music, but now they are older, she has re-joined a choir and goes to four or five concerts a year. She and her husband have a tradition of finding a classical concert to attend when they are abroad on holiday.

(Female, aged 65–74, 13 CBSO concerts attended, 54% core, 15% populist)

John and **Debbie** have been regularly attending CBSO concerts for over 20 years. John, a retired school teacher, tried to learn the violin when he was younger, but 'loathed it'. Instead, he preferred to listen to classical music and always supported music-making in his school when teaching. When they first moved from Yorkshire to Shropshire, they were disappointed by the music provision; they were used to hearing concerts by the Hallé Orchestra and now the nearest professional ensemble was over an hour away in Birmingham. However, once they got used to the journey, they started going to Symphony Hall more often, especially when they retired. When choosing concerts, the CBSO is their priority, but they also go to a number of concerts in the Birmingham International Concert Season.

(Male/Female, aged 75+, 27 CBSO concerts attended, 67% core, 19% populist)

Julian hated music at school. The 'awful, awful teaching [...] put [him] off classical music for decades'. 15 years ago, he started going to CBSO concerts because, in his words, it was 'a bit like Everest: it was there'. He felt, living so close to Symphony Hall, he ought to try classical music and hoped that it would be 'a different sort of cultural experience'. He and his wife attend both populist and core concerts, an 'eclectic' mix because they do not always know what the programme will be like. They also regularly go to the theatre at The Birmingham Repertory Theatre and they used to go to a number of BICS concerts, but CBSO performances are increasingly the priority.
(Male, aged 65–74, 92 CBSO concerts attended, 73% core, 23% populist)

Julie see **William and Julie**

When **Ken** was a teenager in Bristol, he loved classical music but could not afford to go to concerts. He would therefore sneak in at the interval to 'stand at the back and look around to see where the empty seats were'. He played piano as a child and spent his teenage years listening to classical records. Concert venue is very important to him. He fell 'out of touch' with classical music for many years because he moved around the country and struggled to find a good enough concert hall, until he moved within travelling distance of Symphony Hall.
(Male, aged 75+, 26 CBSO concerts attended, 88% core, 4% populist)

Lawrence could not remember how he first came across the CBSO, but has been attending their concerts for over 40 years. He is not musical himself, but his mother played piano, his father would listen to records at home and he regularly hears choral music at church. Since his daughter was born, he has had a lot less time for concert-going, but attends a CBSO performance about once a month as well as the occasional performance in the Birmingham International Concert Season. When on holiday, he also enjoys going to the theatre and pop concerts.
(Male, aged 65–74, 120 CBSO concerts attended, 86% core, 0% populist)

Mark and **Sandra** regularly go to matinee concerts with Sandra's sister. They turn it into a 'day out' in Birmingham, 'hav[ing] a meal' beforehand and then 'sleep[ing] for the first half'. Their classical concert attendance consists exclusively of CBSO concerts as attending a core matinee performance every few weeks is 'enough' for them. Both Mark and Sandra have dipped in and out of classical music, playing instruments and singing when they were children. While they have attended concerts sporadically in their adult lives, concert-going became a regular activity

when they retired.
(Male/Female, aged 55–64, 56 CBSO concerts attended, 100% core, 0% populist)

Matthew see **Ruth and Matthew**

There was always music playing in **Michael's** childhood home. His father was a 'passionate Mozart fan' and would take the family to Hallé concerts. Michael played piano until he was 18 and had been going to four or five concerts a year in Wolverhampton and Dudley for most of his adult life. Five years ago, he started making the journey to Symphony Hall. At first, he went to 'popular things', but his concert-going 'got crazy'; he now attends over 60 performances a year, describing his wife as a 'classical concert widow'. While he also likes to go dancing and takes part in a cooking class, classical music is the main priority in his leisure time.
(Male, aged 55–64, 186 CBSO concerts attended, 90% core, 1% populist)

Nicola first became interested in classical music when she was a teenager. She went to a Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Romeo and Juliet* where she heard Prokofiev's ballet music. When she moved away from home, her landlady had a new, hi-tech sound system, so she started buying classical records to play on it. She originally started attending concerts through chamber music performances at local venues, but has been coming regularly to Symphony Hall for about 15 years. She does not play an instrument herself but is an ardent concert-attender, having been to almost 300 CBSO performances in the last six years.
(Female, aged 35–44, 288 CBSO concerts attended, 83% core, 8% populist)

The first concert that **Paul** went to was at the Vienna Musikverein. He was 21 and visiting a friend who was studying in Austria. His friend had managed to get them free tickets which, as Paul described, were 'like gold dust', so they dressed up in black tie and went to hear Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. Paul was so impressed, that when he returned home, he immediately went to HMV to buy a recording. Now in his mid-thirties, Paul has recently started going to the occasional classical concert in Birmingham. He usually takes someone along as a date in an attempt to introduce other people to classical music.
(Male, aged 35–44, 1 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 100% populist)

Growing up, **Peter** was 'terrible' in music lessons; he only started going to classical concerts when he married a music teacher. At a performance of Simon Rattle conducting Britten's *War Requiem*, his wife picked up a leaflet for the CBSO chorus. After she joined the choir, Peter would then go to concerts to support her. Gradually,

however, he 'got hooked' on CBSO concerts. At one point, he had two fixed packages. Now he just goes to Thursday night concerts, because it 'would not be fair at home' to go to many more.
(Male, aged 65–74, 89 CBSO concerts attended, 99% core, 0% populist)

Philip grew up with classical music as part of his life: he learnt piano, his parents would take him to Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concerts, and he went to a boarding school where music was 'high on the agenda'. It was as a student in Bournemouth that Philip became aware of Simon Rattle and so, when he moved up to Birmingham, he began going to CBSO core concerts. He additionally goes to free chamber concerts at the Barber Institute and passionately believes that live classical music should be made more available to young people.
(Male, aged 55–64, 74 CBSO concerts attended, 92% core, 1% populist)

While classical music has always been in **Robert's** life (listening to the radio and going to concerts at university), it became a priority 15 years ago. That was when he made a 'conscious decision about things [he] was missing out on'. He began regularly attending performances by the Orchestra of the Swan and was part of a campaign to reinstate their ACE funding. It was at this time that he started going to CBSO concerts. He now attends the vast majority of the CBSO's performances in each season, devising his own scoring system to help him remember his arts experiences.
(Male, aged 65–74, 228 CBSO concerts attended, 79% core, 12% populist)

Rod and **Elaine** describe their musical tastes as getting narrower in recent years. They used to be regular attenders at core programmes, but now go to a small number of populist concerts in each season. In addition, they take a group of more than fifty people to a CBSO Christmas concert annually. Elaine studied music at school and college, playing piano for many years. Rod never played music, but always loved listening and encouraged music-making at his school when he was a head-teacher. When they worked and had children, they went to far fewer arts events. Now, they occasionally go to the theatre, art galleries and pop concerts, but sporting events and overseas holidays take priority.
(Male/Female, aged 65–74, 19 CBSO concerts attended, 5% core, 79% populist)

According to **Ruth** and **Matthew**, until recently, they only did three things: 'worked, looked after [their] grandchildren, and [came] to the CBSO'. They live more than an hour's drive away from Symphony Hall and yet go to over 40 CBSO core concerts each year. They are now substantial donors to the orchestra. Ruth

grew up in a family where music was always playing. Matthew's interest in classical music came somewhat later, when he bought a recording of Holst's *The Planets* to test out the record player he had built. They are keen to pass on their love of classical music to other people by bringing groups of friends to CBSO concerts.
(Female/Male, aged 65–74, 193 CBSO concerts attended, 79% core, 1% populist)

Sandra see **Mark and Sandra**

Stephen see **Georgina and Stephen**

Trevor was introduced to classical music as a teenager by girlfriend, but he only started attending regularly when he met his future wife as a way to 'impress' her. When his children were young, he and his wife hardly went to any concerts. When their children got older, they started going to see the CBSO or the Hallé in local concert halls. He took out a fixed package when Symphony Hall opened and has now sat in the same seat for over 20 years.
(Male, aged 65–74, 146 CBSO concerts attended, 99% core, 0% populist)

For the last 10 years, **Veronica** and **Frank** have been coming to a range of concerts at the CBSO with a 'theatre club'. They have recently started attending independently of this group and choosing their own concerts; they are now regular populist attenders. Frank became interested in classical music through watching broadcasts of the BBC Proms, whereas Veronica's interest was sparked by her late husband.
(Female/Male, aged 75+, 8 CBSO concerts attended, 0% core, 88% populist)

William and **Julie** both 'dabbled' in playing different instruments when they were young. When Julie was growing up, she would be taken by her father to hear a concert in London every October half term. They have passed their love of classical music onto their children, all of whom played instruments for some time and would regularly perform in youth music concerts. William and Julie started going to the CBSO when the concert series stopped at Dudley Town Hall. At first, Birmingham seemed like a long way to travel for a concert, but once they found 'the right roads', they started coming regularly to Symphony Hall, especially when their children stopped playing in concerts as they sought their musical engagement elsewhere.
(Male/Female, aged 55–64, 46 CBSO concerts attended, 41% core, 54% populist)

Yvonne first started going to concerts with friends from school when the Hallé offered 'very cheap' seats for their performances. There had always been a piano in her house, and she sang in a choir at school and at university. Classical music

became less of a priority when she was working; she stopped singing in choirs or going to concerts because it was 'too much' to do after a day at work. Now she has retired, she has re-joined a choir and goes to CBSO core concerts about once a month.

(Female, aged 65–74, 97 CBSO concerts attended, 84% core, 2% populist)

Appendix 2.3 Populist Culturally Aware Non-Attenders

There are a group of five participants who were Culturally Aware Non-Attenders or 'CANAs' (Winzenried, 2004) prior to attending their first populist concert at the Symphony Hall. For this group, their first concert attendance was in recent years and, prior to this, they had no experience of attending or participating in classical music. Their experiences are discussed in detail in Chapters 5.1 and 8.

- Emma, who started attending concerts in order to take advantage of moving to a big city and to find alternative things to do on a Friday night.
- Gordon, who found populist concerts while looking for things to fill his time when he was made redundant.
- George, who regularly attending non-classical concerts at Symphony Hall and has, in recent years, crossed over to populist performances.
- Ben and Alison, who similarly crossed over from non-classical events at the Symphony Hall.

In addition, Paul's comments feature heavily in Chapter 8. Paul does not entirely fit within this group as his first performance was a core concert in Vienna, however, Paul's account mirrored the experience of the CANAs in many ways, being an infrequent attender at primarily populist concerts with no prior experience of attending or participating in classical music.

Appendix 2.4 Populist attenders who previously attended core concerts

Three participants were knowledgeable about music and previously had been core attenders, but had in recent years transferred wholly to engaging with populist concerts. Their accounts are discussed in Chapters 5.2 and 8.1.

- Chris, who has previously played violin and currently sings in a choir, but attends concerts with his wife who is considerably less knowledgeable about classical music than him and therefore he prefers to choose music he believes they will both enjoy.

- Rob and Elaine, who used to be regular attenders at core concerts, but now prefer to prioritise going on holiday and attending sporting events and avoid 'heavy' music that they are unsure whether they will enjoy.

Appendix 2.5 Core attenders who came to classical music in adulthood

Three participants had become highly frequent core attendance having first engaged with classical music in adulthood. Their experiences are discussed in Chapter 5.2.

- Peter, who was introduced to classical music through a girlfriend and became 'hooked' on CBSO concerts.
- Matthew, who first discovered classical music when he bought Holst's *The Planets* on vinyl to test a record player he had built.
- Nicola, who similarly became 'hooked' on classical music through recordings of classical music and film soundtracks.

Appendix 3: Interview questions

- What did you think of the concert? Was there anything you enjoyed? Is there anything you would change? What do you think the rest of the audience thought of it?

- Who did you go to the concert with? Did you do anything else in that evening/afternoon?

- Why did you choose to go to that concert? What kind of concerts do you go to?

- How do you choose which concerts to attend? (Prompts for programme, artist, venue, time, day, time of year, non-CBSO included) Who do you go to concerts with? What would stop you from going to a concert?

- What do you think of the brochures/flyers? Do you think they match what you saw? Are there any problems with them?

- How often do you go to concerts? Why do you go that often and not more or less? Have you always gone as regularly? Do you go to concerts outside the CBSO? Do you go to other arts events?

- Do you go to core concerts? Do you go to populist concerts? Contemporary concerts? How would you describe the difference between those types of concerts?

- How long have you been going to CBSO concerts? Or concerts elsewhere? How did you become interested in classical music? (Prompts for first concert, participation, school, family, friends)

- Do you listen to classical music at home? (Prompts for radio, CDs, which recordings) What do you get from a concert that you don't get from a CD?

- Can you describe what it's like to be in a concert? It's difficult to know how people are listening in a concert, how would you describe it? Do you ever do any 'homework' before or after a concert? (Prompts for programme notes, looking online, listening to the pieces)

- How do you think classical music is faring today? What is good about it? Does it have any problems?

- What about the audience – who is in the concert hall? Who is missing? What does a typical audience member look like? Does this differ for different types of concerts?

- Is there anything you think the CBSO or other organisations should do differently?

Appendix 4: Post-concert questionnaire

Questions which were asked of all respondents with identical question options are marked with an asterisk (for explanation, see Chapter 4.1).

How did you find out about this concert?	(Options provided based on marketing campaigns for each concert)
When did you decide to attend this concert? *	On the day of the concert In the week before the concert 1–4 weeks before 2–4 months before 4–6 months before 6–12 months before More than 1 year before Not sure
Who did you attend the concert with? *	Partner Children Other family Friends Alone As part of an organised group Other (please specify)
What were your reasons for attending this concert? (tick all that apply and tick one main reason)	To hear specific pieces To hear particular artists To hear music of this genre For the emotional impact of the music To discover and learn more about classical music To try something new To see the CBSO To celebrate a special occasion To relax To spend time with friends or family To see friends or family perform To introduce others to classical music Someone else brought me Other (please specify)

How important were the following aspects when choosing to attend this concert?	Very important Quite important Slightly important Not at all important
a. Seeing the CBSO perform b. Seeing soloists perform c. Supporting the CBSO d. Hearing specific pieces e. Seeing friends or family perform	
How would you rate the following aspects of your experience? *	Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor Unacceptable
f. Ticket booking/buying g. Symphony Hall facilities h. Symphony Hall service i. Programme of music j. Performers k. Presenter l. Sound quality m. Atmosphere	
Did you enjoy the concert? *	Really enjoyed it Enjoyed it Neutral Did not enjoy it Really did not enjoy it
Would you attend one of our concerts again? *	Definitely would attend again Probably would attend again Might attend again Probably would not attend again Definitely would not attend again
Would you recommend this concert to a friend? *	Definitely would recommend Probably would recommend Might recommend Probably would not recommend Definitely would not recommend

Was there anything that impressed you about the concert? * (qualitative response)	
Were you disappointed by anything at the concert? * (qualitative response)	
Any comments or suggestions on how it could be improved? * (qualitative response)	
Have you been to a CBSO concert before?	Yes No Not sure
If yes, what type of concert have you been to? * (examples were provided for each category based on recent or high-profile concerts in each strand)	Core Classics Friday Night Classics Family Concert Christmas Concert Schools Concert Not Sure
Which of the following describes you? (tick all that apply)	I regularly attend core concerts I occasionally attend core concerts I have never been to a core concert I regularly attend FNC concerts I occasionally attend FNC concerts I have never been to a FNC concert I am a CBSO member I have a CBSO concert package this season I have never been to a CBSO concert before I have never been to a classical concert before

In the last 12 months, how many times have you been to the following? *	12+ times
	6–12 times
n. Attractions (e.g. Alton Towers, Cadbury World)	3–5 times
	Once or twice
	Not in the last year
o. Cinema	Never
p. Museum or Heritage Site	
q. Art Gallery or Exhibition	
r. Play or Drama	
s. Dance Performance	
t. Pantomime	
u. Musical Theatre	
v. Opera	
w. Classical Music Concert	
x. Pop Concert	
y. Comedy Night	
z. Restaurant	
Please indicate your gender*	Male
	Female
	Prefer not to answer
Which of the following age categories do you fall into? *	Under 16
	16–19
	20–25
	26–34
	35–44
	45–54
	55–64
	65–74
	75+
	Prefer not to answer
How would you describe your ethnicity? *	(Responses omitted here for brevity, options were provided based on ONS census options)

What is your household income category? *	Less than £20,000 £20,000–£29,999 £30,000–£49,999 £50,000–£99,999 £100,000+ Prefer not to answer
Which of the following newspapers do you read regularly? * (in print or digital form)	(Responses omitted here for brevity)
Which of the following radio stations do you listen to regularly? *	(Responses omitted here for brevity)

Thank you for giving your time to complete our questionnaire. Your views will help to shape the CBSO's plans for future performances.

We would like to follow up this survey with some individual interviews. If you are interested in discussing your views further, please leave your contact details here:

Name:
Email Address:
Daytime Telephone Number:

Appendix 5: Cultural engagement survey results

Q16. In the last 12 months, how many times have you been to the following?

	Regularly[9]		Occasionally[10]		Never		Total respondents			Did not respond
	Core	Populist	Core	Populist	Core	Populist	Core	Populist	Total	
Attractions	3%	4%	52%	64%	35%	25%	178	141	319	30
Cinema	39%	48%	45%	39%	8%	5%	182	139	321	28
Museum or Heritage Site	66%	54%	27%	38%	1%	2%	185	142	327	22
Art Gallery or Exhibition	56%	34%	38%	57%	1%	3%	187	142	329	20
Play or Drama	47%	39%	42%	53%	3%	3%	181	143	324	25
Dance	15%	13%	59%	62%	17%	17%	179	140	319	30
Pantomime	0%	3%	59%	67%	31%	21%	178	137	315	34
Musical Theatre	10%	28%	66%	62%	14%	5%	179	143	322	27
Opera	31%	9%	46%	49%	12%	35%	178	141	319	30
Classical Music	84%	62%	9%	33%	1%	1%	187	145	332	17
Pop Concert	6%	15%	42%	60%	41%	17%	176	140	316	33
Comedy Night	3%	7%	38%	52%	47%	33%	175	138	313	36
Restaurant	93%	89%	2%	4%	0%	3%	188	145	333	16

[9] Here, 'regularly' is defined as 3 or more attendances in the previous 12 months.
[10] 'Occasionally' combines the responses 'not in the last year' and 'once or twice' in the previous 12 months.

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