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Western Classical Music in San Antonio: Performing Arts in the Context of Urbanization, Globalization, and Nationalization

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Western Classical Music in San Antonio: Performing Arts in the Context of Urbanization, Globalization, and Nationalization

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the people of San Antonio.

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Western Classical Music in San Antonio: Performing Arts in the Context of Urbanization, Globalization, and Nationalization

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Studies of the development of Western classical music in the United States have often argued that a cultural hierarchy exists in which popular culture (television, movies, and pop-rock music) and its consumers are culturally divided from "high" culture (avant garde art, theater, and symphony). In the last two decades or so, scholars have attempted to "rescue" high culture from this assumption by arguing alternatively that the roots of high culture in American culture are popular and that high culture was popularized in the years following WWII. I conduct an ethnographic investigation of Western classical music performance organizations in San Antonio, a major American city with a rich history in the performing arts, in order to assess the role that high art culture plays in the lives of informants. I argue that classical music, rather than playing the role of a subaltern form of cultural expression, instead is crucial in shaping the postwar national identity and the modern urban, gentrified living experience. Audience experiences of Western classical music – packaged as cosmopolitan and elite – are different from both the highly commoditized popular music tradition and the locally consumed folk music tradition. I contend that audience members, musicians, and managers and artistic directors, as three distinct groups of performers negotiate the tensions bound up in the circulation of

Western classical music in different ways that reflect the role of ethnicity, nationalism, and capitalism in the development of Western Classical music in the early 21st century.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation focuses on the performing arts community of San Antonio and other parts of Texas and the ways in which the performance of Western classical music has been imbricated in life there. I am researching the performance and reception of WCM (Western Classical Music) in San Antonio [term taken from 2016 UCLA ethnomusicology article on early music performance practice] to find out the impact of the cultural background of the city to the perpetuation of Eurocentric artistic performances in order to better understand the relationship and tensions between ethnic identity, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism.

I intend to demonstrate here that a striking contrast between the ways in which performing arts has been imbricated in the lives of San Antonians, both in the past and today, as a result of a combination of different forces at work in the borderlands as compared to other regions of the United States and Texas, exists. The sacralization of Western classical music – the attempt to elevate this genre of music to the status of museum artifact as opposed to profane object of mass appeal – that has continued apace for the three hundred year span in which Western classical music has become an integral part of American society, both in the United States and in Texas, and that has ensured the existence resident symphony orchestras in most major metropolitan areas of the United States for most of the 20th century faces continual deconstruction on the borderlands as performing arts organizations struggle to survive.

Why is this? Cities like Dallas and Houston and even comparatively small Austin have succeeded in expanding their status as cosmopolitan cities with robust spending on

the performing arts. San Antonio, the seventh largest city in the United States and the oldest metropolitan area in Texas, has a comparatively small performing arts scene. How are they able to keep WCM alive, despite continual failure?

I contend that because of the: particular history of the Hill Country region of Texas, the cultural boundary between US and Mexico; the close proximity and long term segregation of communities with strong nationalistic sentiment, in particular German immigrants and their descendants and Mexican citizens and their descendants; the relative economic isolation of San Antonio from the rest of Texas and Mexico (it is not a major energy capital like Dallas and Houston, nor is it a major economic hub that is connected to the other major economic hubs of the United States - Silicon Valley and tech industry, Atlanta and Los Angeles and film industry, or New York and Chicago and real estate and finance, nor is it a border city like Laredo or El Paso that depends on daily commuters from Mexico to support the economy); and finally the presence of US military and lack of a substantial suburban buildup, the continued prevalence of performance of WCM in San Antonio, despite these major setbacks, reveals that the particular history of WCM in this region depends largely on the ability of the community to come to terms with, share and celebrate the plurality of ethnic identities in the city in ways that differ from other major metropolitan areas and that reveal facets of the relationship between ethnic identity, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism.

I contend that participation in WCM is majorly accomplished by subsuming the celebration of these ethnic identities under an overarching American nationalism. The movers and shakers of San Antonio know that longevity only comes when one is willing

to profane the sacred. This subverts typical American nationalism that is characterized by the ability of a city to be cosmopolitan without giving into the subversive demands of minority groups.

My overarching questions throughout this analysis are: how have communities of audience members and musickers of opera and classical music come to exist and perform in the Border? How do opera's performative social spaces and situated discourses mediate understandings and experiencings of the state, migration, and community?

I address these questions using the methodology of ethnography (ethnographic interviews) and comparisons with Dallas and other cities and their performing arts scene, field observations, and archival research.

In this way, I show that the ways in which Western classical music is discussed and defended by audiences and promoters, in advertisements and in board meetings, and as a form of art competing with other forms of art for public and private monies shares more characteristics with the ways in which other forms of sacralized culture – religious icons, antiques and collectibles, works of "Art" - are talked about than with the ways in which folk music and popular music are discussed and defended. I will show too that this sacralization has an effect on the embodiment of the enjoyment of performance. Folk music and popular music events encourage participants – both performers and audiences – to "go crazy" in a way that classical music allows but in comparatively restrained ways.

This historical development of classical music as an elite and sacralized form of music is astounding given its history as a form of popular culture and music. But some of the key tensions and struggles that take place among pop styles of music – musical

importation and borrowing, commercialization, appropriation – are not normal parts of the sharing of classical music. And the tensions of classism, sacralization, involvement of government agencies that characterize participation in classical music are not normal parts of the sharing of popular music. That is, classical music is not a site of contestation in the same way that popular music is.

Terminology is fraught with invisible baggage and too often it is easy to slip into gross generalization and mischaracterization of history. In the course of the paper I hope to unpack as much of this baggage as I can. The phrase I use most often in this paper is "performing arts" and by that I specifically refer to performance of Western classical music: the historical art form that largely uses the following instruments – strings: violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp; brass: trumpet, horn, trombone, and tuba; woodwinds: clarinet, oboe, contrabassoon and bassoon; and percussion: tympani, cymbals, triangles, among others- and these musical forms, among others – sonata, concerto, symphony, opera, ballet, chamber and orchestral music – typical of Western European popular and elite musical tradition.

Calling this music "the performing arts" is not to say that other musical forms found in Europe or the Americas, or anywhere else in the world are not performing arts. This is not to say that other forms of music, popular and folk, from anywhere, especially Mexico, are not "performance" and are not "art." Truly, any activity undertaken by any human (and perhaps to an extent any activity by any other kind of living thing) can be called performance art. A carpenter with a hammer is using a work of art to enact a cultural performance. Suffice to say that we need not concern ourselves here with

distinguishing between acts that are functional and acts that are aesthetic: all acts are both. Finally, we cannot conclude that what I am calling the performing arts are "better" in any way than any other performance art.

What is Sacralization?

My analysis takes into acconut different kinds of music that are often separately deefined as "sacred" and as "secular." Sacred music is music that is performed for the immediate purposes of a church (e.g., for a ceremony, mass, or other church service), while secular is performed primarily for the purpose of entertainment (e.g., concerts, festivals, social gatherings). However, the separation of these in the border region was relatively lax during the late nineteenth century (Simone 2001, 108).

Today, churches remain a significant space for the enjoyment of classical music. Protestant churches will often perform Catholic pieces (e.g., Mozart's Requiem) with disclaimers explaining what in the music is good, proper Methodist, Episcopalian etc. dogma and what is Roman Catholic anathema. It is clear people are there to enjoy – these events are wide open to the public – but it is also clear that the church is trying to draw members to potentially join them as parishioners – during opening greetings, there are always warm invitations extended to outsiders to return. Thus, music that is called sacred and music that is called secular often perform both functions.

The way in which Small (1987) defines the separation between sacred and secular is different from this and is key to my argument that understanding the shifts in patronage of classical music requires continued attention to the dialectical relationship between secular and sacred that is underestimated by scholars who would argue that it bends to the

power of shifts in economic paradigms. They would argue that the shift to urbanity, to globalization, these are the forces destructive to classical music. Instead, I argue that the shift to urbanity and to globalization is revealed in the experiences of musicians and audiences in San Antonio today to be the saving grace of Western classical music as a living musical tradition. This is a kind of music that has long tried to invent and reinvent a tradition of uniqueness and other worldliness; it has spawned movements such as the authentic performance movement, the early music movement, and contemporary classical movement. Among these movements, there are differences in the shared values of audiences and performers from those who support performance what we may call "the standard repertoire", but I share Small's belief that they are not altogether that different, at least in terms of the ways in which classical music is part of their habitus.

My approach to talking about the performing arts represents an extension of the literature on the effect of participation in high culture on identity formation processes. Most existing efforts compare aggregate outcomes in nations, states, and cities without a historical component and without focusing on the activities of people outside the artistic sphere. Studies tend to focus on the actions and words of impresarios, singers, and composers. By contrast, this study focuses on those of managers, players, and audience members in order to identify the method of adoption of or acculturation in high culture and compare features of particular identity groups as a function of the adoption of this musical form of high culture.

Geographical Context of San Antonio

My fieldwork is predominantly focused in San Antonio, though I do conduct interviews with members of Dallas area organizations. What makes San Antonio unique relative to Dallas and to much of the rest of the United States is its historical location at a particularly strong nexus of Mexican, European, and Anglo immigrant influence. Thus, while St. Louis, MO and St. Paul, MN are the urban anchors of metropolitan areas comparable in size to San Antonio metro, and have a strong German immigrant influence on its musical history, neither of these metros have a Mexican cultural influence as long in history as that of San Antonio. And while Phoenix, AZ, Santa Fe, NM, and San Diego, CA have a strong Mexican influence on their history, none of those places have as strong a German influence as San Antonio. Furthermore, San Antonio is distinguished from such places as New Orleans in that New Orleans has a vibrant African-American cultural legacy that San Antonio's history does not represent and which experienced an overwhelming French influence on its history that contributed to its prominence as a center of activity in Western classical music and opera.

Finally, the large population and historical economic booms of Texas make San Antonio not just a hotbed of activity in the performing arts, which follows money, but a place in which to observe several historical declines. For instance, the onset of World War I and the subsequent suppression of German-American culture in the United States led to a decline in the performance of German composeres. Americans similarly quashed German identity during WWII, going so fas as to intern German-Americans including many German conductors and players in American symphony orchestras. San Antonio, as

a huge military center and with a high concentration of German-born and descended citizens has witnessed these declines in performing elite classical music in more spectacular fashion than any other Texas city. Dallas and Houston, the other large economic hubs of Texas have experienced both a more recent nascence of a culture of Western classical music and more permanence. This is largely a function of the long-term economic power of those cities – first because of their use as major hubs for import and export of goods across the United States and between countries; second, because of their prominence in cotton and oil industries; and most recently because of their highly diversified economies with strengths in capital, technology, and energy.

San Antonio is the seventh largest city in the United States. However, it doesn't "feel" like the seventh largest city in the United States. It is larger than Dallas or Austin, yet contributes less than both cities to Texas's economy. According to the 2010 US Census, its metro area is smaller than those of 24 other major American cities. It has a resident symphony orchestra, but its budget is considerably less than the other top ten largest cities in the United States, and the San Antonio Symphony does not even crack the list of the top twenty well-paid orchestras in the United States. Informants often compare the quality of the symphony to Charlotte, Kansas City, and Salt Lake City – cities that are much smaller than San Antonio.

Thus, the common definition of a "city" does not lend itself well to useful comparison between urban centers that have symphony orchestras. The reason is that symphonies do not just serve a city – they serve the surrounding suburbs and in fact the entire region. People will travel great distances to see the bright lights of the nearest

metropolis and one of the experiences they come to have is at the symphony[1]. In fact, one of the common measures of what makes a city valuable, or a global alpha city, is the number of performing arts venues within the city.

In particular, consulting company A.T. Kearney, in its global cities index methodology lists five indices that rank cities: Business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement. For cultural experience, they write "measures diverse attractions, including number of major sporting events a city hosts; number of museums, performing-arts venues, and diverse culinary establishments; number of international travelers; and nunber of sister-city relationships (Kearney 2012, 2). Forbes similarly used eight metrics: FDI, In an episode of the popular television show *Futurama*, Dr. Zoidberg tries to convince Fry to not stay in the lost city of Atlanta, saying, "Fry, you can't stay here. Sure, they have the Braves, but it's a third-rate symphony."

Because most common definitions of a city do not adequately capture the size of the local economy of most regions in the US, the US Census has devised a tool for better assessing those areas - that a symphony orchestra may serve - called the metropolitan statistical area (MSA).

An MSA is defined as having at one urban center of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties. Despite San Antonio being the seventh largest city in the United States, San Antonio's MSA is, in fact, comparable in size to that of

[1] "The symphony" is shorthand for "symphony orchestra," similar to "a night at the opera."

Charlotte, Kansas City, or Salt Lake City. While San Antonio's MSA is the 30th largest in the United States, the MSA's of Dallas and Houston comprise the 7th and 9th largest MSAs, respectively. As of 2016, Austin's is 35th, while Salt Lake City's and Kansas City's are 27th and 26th. MSA has the strongest correlation to the endowment of an orchestra compared to other metric related to the size and definition of a bounded region.

The story of participation in the performing arts is, of course, more complicated than that. There are large MSAs with small performing arts scenes and there are small MSAs with large performing arts scenes and San Antonio has historically fit both of these patterns at various times. Nevertheless, Texas and the cities of the American West in general have only existed a fraction of the time of the cities of the East. No Texas city cracks the top 40 list of cities which have appeared in the top 100 cities by population in the most US Censuses dating back to 1790. Dayton, Ohio appears 17 times while San Francisco appears 16 times – the only city in the American West on the list. Almost all of the earliest symphony orchestras in the US were located in the eastern half of the US – St. Louis (1880), Boston (1881), Chicago (1891), Philadelphia (1900), Cincinatti (1895), Minneapolis (1903), and Pittsburgh (1896). Again, only San Francisco among Western cities breaks into that list (1911). San Francisco's opera has thus been a city of great interest to historians of performing arts in the US. Nevertheless, Texas cities do have a long-standing connection to performing arts through local bands as well as traveling companies.

What makes San Antonio itself an interesting case study is the particular immigration patterns that included a massive influx of German immigrants in the late 19th

centry and then a large military presence post-WWII, as well as the historical place of the performing arts within American traditions of popular music made the consumption of performing arts an important part of many San Antonian's lives. Furthermore, beginning in the 70s, with the decline of the military presence in San Antonio, and the beginning of a struggling economy, and new immigrations patterns of poor Mexican immigrants, as well as an American trend in the latter part of the 20th century for the consumption of performing arts no longer an integral part of popular music culture made the consumption of performing arts no longer an important part of many San Antonian's lives.

Texans are notoriously patriotic to their state, and many of the values my informants share involve making Texas a great place. Participating in local arts organizatios is a way to reinforce the cultural value of Texas to its inhabitants and to immigrants. Yet, there is an overarching sense that most of the people I have encountered are a part of United States culture and are motivated by the values of the United States.

The American Ethos: Free-Market Capitalism and Democratic Tradition

The United States ethos, the characteristic spirit of the culture, is one in which people participate as borrowers of music that does not originate in the land they call home. This is certainly the case for participation in Western classical music. The participation in European classical music and opera is done not primarily because of any nationalistic attachment to the values or composers of Germany or Italy but because of an American ethos that subsumes these traditional forms into the American culture. That is, citizens may organize the occasional folk festival or ethnic music performance because of nationalistic attachment to some other country, but participation in German or Italian folk

festivals does not rise to the same level of regularity and participation as German or Italian operatic, symphonic, or chamber music. For many white Americans, ethnicity is largely "symbolic and voluntary" and they increasingly identify with a "non-differentiated 'Europeanness'" than with specific national origin groups (Adams 2006, viii).

What, then is this American ethos? According to McClosky and Zaller (1984) capitalism and democracy are the "principal" components of American political culture (McClosky 1984, 17). Even among the most radical leftists and conservatives, their ideological conflict takes place within the boundaries of the democratic and capitalist traditions. For instance, even among members of the socialist left, most do not actually favor the abolition of capitalism.

Among the general public, there exists a uniform devotion to the tenets of capitalism. This ethos is relevant to classical music because for performing arts companies, it is often a struggle to justify to the community the ultimate merits of classical music. I believe this is largely because for many musician informants the benefits of classical music are unrelated to or even at odds with belief in the tenets of free market capitalism. The shared values of individuals who participate in classical music are a belief in not just the expressive value of classical music but in the value of art objects identified as sacred or religious – objects that may have little or no value as commodities. This tension between the acceptance of the American ethos that values profitable commodities and the sacralization of Western Classical music plays out in intensely personal ways for all actors involved.

For instance, despite having these intensely personal reasons for participating in and promoting classical music, my informants consistently refer to their talents as musicians or professionals as "their product" and to the audience as "the consumer." They discuss ways in which friendly and un-friendly competition between city orchestras can drive up interest in classical music and boast about the revenue their presence generates for the city. Turning the discussion of their performance art into that of a profit and job-generating capitalist venture is how they justify the expense of producing classical music.

I have noticed in talking with informants that the study of classical music carries a certain connotation – it is seen as worthy of study. No informant has ever expressed the sentiment to me, why are you as a cultural anthropologist studying this? This is not so true for my colleagues who study pop music audiences. Even my own desire to do this project as a new graduate student, looking for a subject worthy of study, comes in part from this American ethos that sees the classical music as more worthy of study than the other cultural forms I have studied in the past – sci-fi fan fiction, soap operas, and romance novels, namely. These other forms are part of the profane, the transparently commercial. Classical music, long reified as a musical genre worthy of deep study, has a discipline – musicology – largely devoted to studying its history and practice.

The ways in which classical music is defined not as an object of study but as a guilty pleasure have certainly changed from when it was considered popular by a larger segment of Western society. The early 20th century saw a proliferation of popular music as a result of a burgeoning recording industry, but early American popular music shared

many superficial traits with classical music in that, for instance, much of it required orchestration. Additionally, much of popular music required vocalists to bare their voices and required a more consistently high level of vocal ability. Yes, the advent of recording technology made it possible for early studios to edit together many different takes into the best take, but none of the techniques of the early 20th century compare to the studio magic available to pop music, and classical music artists, of today.

The aesthetic of the performer has also changed. Opera singers today are increasingly pressured to fit into new standards of beauty that emphasize thinness (Stearns 2002, 3). Yet, whiteness remains an important aspect of beauty. Opera, prior to the advent of television, used to be more immune to these demands but, as it strives to maintain relevance in an image saturated media market, opera and recording companies strive to find beautiful, thin, white faces to place on promotional material and album covers. The Dallas Opera no longer uses any actual opera singers' faces in its promotional material for upcoming productions. Instead, they use a variety of models hired only for these advert photoshoots. Partly, this is because it is expensive to bring in the performers to do a photoshoot, but the particular use of thin and pale models, akin to a Vogue fashion magazine pullout, is indicative of this trend.

This trend is ubiquitous in other cultures, for instance in Egyptian popular music culture in which the older traditional music is being replaced with disposable Westernized pop music sung by incompetent but plasticized and whitified thin singers.

In short, musicians and audience members today are not only participating in classical music as national subjects or as elite subjects. They are participating as

corporate subjects, as part of a business machine that generates revenue for the city or dies. The deep-seated assumption in Western societies that any commodity worth producing in a capitalist economy is one that generates profits is common to many musician informants, who are reticent to collect unemployment when they are not working for the symphony, even though they are entitled to it. To elaborate, they would rather find other, more time consuming ways of making money – even driving hours every week to other cities to perform or renting out their home and living in their garage – than believe that the state has a financial obligation to fund the arts.

The relationship between these professional product-makers and classical music audiences - hierarchical, distant, and one-dimensional - is perhaps why many potential audience informants – people who have attended the opera or the symphony – felt completely unprepared to answer questions about their involvement as audience members (Small 1987, 213). They felt as if they didn't know enough about the genre to speak as experts. It is typically not until I explain I am looking for a lay person's experience that they agree to express an opinion. In one interview, I asked a man if he had seen the Met's newest production of *Das Rheingold*. He paused and said, "No, I haven't." I cannot know for sure but I felt as if he did not want the pressure of being asked his opinion on the subject. In an impromptu encounter at the Dallas Opera, I asked a couple if I could ask them a few questions about the production. The woman motioned to her husband, "He's the one that knows about opera, ask him."

Small (1987) points to education and a system of superstars as the dominant culprits in this story of people in Western industrial societies not participating to the

extent possible for even those without extensive musical education in musicking. The assumption is that real musical ability is rare and exists in a binary configuartion: you are musical or you are not. He contends that this extends to all Western music (formal education in regards to pop music is virtually non-existent, and the star system is fully a part of pop music), but in fact, this is harder to believe in regards to pop music.

For instance, let's consider ethnographic investigations of music that is considered serious in the society and music that is considered frivolous. Jonathan Shannon describes an entirely different experience during his encounters in Syria with fans of classical music produced in Syria (Shannon 2006, 46). This is music that operates under different conventional definitions of popular and classical music. However, what happens is, rather than being vexed that their knowledge is being tested, informants of Shannon attempt to interrogate him to see if he knows what he is talking about. In studying Cairene pop music, Dan Gilman experiences reticence from people but not because of their perceived lack of knowledge on the subject but because of the subject. In his case, the researcher is met with, "seriously, why?" and an immediate offering of an opinion (Gilman 2013, 39).

Almost everyone has an opinion about classical music, but feels like classical is immune to their criticism. They might harbor personal opinions about it – including "I don't know anything about it or it's not for me" – but they immmediately feel as if they are themselves being scrutinized by not expressing an eloquent enough position.

The question of what popular music "talks about" and how that is different from what classical music "talks about" is a large one. Romantic love is a common trope.

Personal journey of emotional or psychological transformation is another. However, the settings for these tropes, which are at least germane to most Western theatrical traditions, One of the great reasons that classical music has lost its immediate power over the masses is that it does not offer an immediate statement on current affairs. Popular music has its pulse on the joie de vivre of the youth of today. Think of the proliferation of songs about the experience of being "in da club," while there are no arias (to my mind) about being in da club. Even songs in operas that espouse nationalist sentiment are done so ironically and reference a by-gone era – think of Richard Nixon's aria "News, news, news" in John Adams' *Nixon in China*.

Cultural studies scholars, espeically in the Public Culture school, demonstrate that not all local differences fade to sameness in the wake of globalization (Hall 1991; Sassen 1996). This research partly intends to resolve to an extent the exact nature of those cultural processes in the Borderlands context, a region in which the existence and survival of many cultural art forms is tested by the interaction of many different cultures and politics. Certainly, many local identities and political autonomies have been lost over the course of Texas history.

Western art music performed on the borderlands calls into question many of the definitions we take for granted as participants in the dissemination of classical music. At what point does mariachi music cease to be Mexican folkloric music and become American classical music? Does that depend on whether an "authentic" mariachi group is playing at an "authentic" Mexican heritage festival? What if the mariachi group is playing at Symphony Hall with a symphony orchestra? Conversely, at what point does

Wagner or Beethoven become Texana, or Texan folklore instead of highbrow German art, kunstwerk?

These questions of definition are in addition to the many questions that define discourse around the survival of classical music and opera. When we ask a question like, "Can opera survive in the 21st century?" we have to ask ourselves, do we mean the tradition of grand opera and the performance of the standard repertory? If not, can we consider the constellation of operatic forms that have emerged? In addition to the re-emergence of Italian, German, and English baroque repertoire and repertoire from even earlier in Western music history, we have "operacals" – or opera musicals that have had success in the United States in the 20th century – works like Porgy and Bess, West Side Story, and Showboat. More recently, there are performances given on the street, in bars, and in public squares of recent fare that may or may not have plots

People create and use these definitions in academic and popular discourse for the purposes of the present - musicologists and historians in order to perform that most peculiar of human behaviors: to organize and catalogue, after the fact of the performance of life and culture through music, much in the same way that a paleoarchaeologist organizes taxa into discrete categories of species; and music critics and audiences in order to perform that most usual of human behaviors: express and share identities, beliefs, and ideals. Communities use reified definitions of music to help in the process of identifying with and promoting musical forms. Classical music as a definition of classical music, rather than simply as an experience of musical performance, has helped people in

disseminating and reproducing old values, fomenting social cohesion, educating youth, and helping to establish a unique identity in new territories.

Western Classical Music in San Antonio

Some are surprised to learn that modern the symphony orchestra was first developed in the United States. European cities and states have long funded orchestras for the performance of classical music, and many cities have multiple orchestras that find a home there, playing a variety of genres – opera, ballet, symphonic works, etc. But orchestras dedicated specifically to performing Western classical symphonic music were first started in the United States. Each major city was to have one symphony orchestra maintaining a residence in a hall dedicated to performances by that orchestra began in the United States to retain and create appreciation for what was seen as the best of people's European heritage in the New World.

Western classical music as it is performed in San Antonio by the major performing arts companies in the city today upholds many of these values – the cosmopolitanism of major metropolitan cities, the American quality of the modern symphony orchestra, and the liberal Enlightenment values of progress and logical thinking – but it does not overtly uphold a particular European ethnic group's values – those values are no longer propagated in the city as more than tokenism. It only upholds the ethnic values of Americans – those North American people descended from English, Irish, French, Dutch, Swedish, Welsh, and German settlers.

For these people, has the practice of performing and participating in the dissemination of Western classical music followed this trend of going from ethnic doing

to ethnic knowing? This question is one that touches on many issues that are sensitive to fans of classical music – is the music being kept "alive"? Why does new classical music no longer excite audiences as older repertoire? Where are the singular geniuses like Mozart and Beethoven today? Why do kids not listen to classical music anymore, instead choosing to listen to awful pop music? These trends and directions that are common topics of discourse in popular media – newspapers, magazines, television - taken on the local level can be dissected more carefully and traced to specific people and events by understanding the power that classical music has in shaping the lives of those who practice it.

There is no question that local and regional groups across the United States that produce classical music tailor their specific musical repertoire to the people of the region. But the specific features of the region of San Antonio make it distinct even in relation to the distinctiveness of the individual repertoires of other cities.

In the case of San Antonio, there is a unique constellation of "ethnic knowing" that brings people to participate in hearing a Mahler symphony or the mariachi playing alongside the symphony orchestra at Fiesta or to participate in singing an old German liederkranz "singing circle" at an Oktoberfest, each person is: a Texas native, or a Washington native; a lover of Mississippi Delta blues or someone who never listens to music outside of their performance of it; a Mexican national visiting her son, or a German national who relocated to Texas years ago, though not generations ago.

San Antonio is a historical crossroads of cultures. Native Americans, Europeans, Mexicans, and Latin Americans lived uneasily on the same land in order to eke out their

separate and combined existences. To this day, this uneasy tension fomented by centuries of occupation and invasion, of oppression and disenfranchisement, of removal and enslavement, that makes the international borderland between US and Mexico so unique among borders is reproduced and revealed through the history of performance of elite Western art music in the region.

The overall trend of classical music from enthusiastic participation to tacit compliance is determined by local, national and transnational or global influences. Nationally, the symphony hall has resembled a museum, a space for the preservation of masterpieces from a bygone era, rather than a live music venue, for several decades. Thus, the vast majority of repertoire played in symphony halls across the US comes from the 1920s or earlier.

This ethnography shows how regional elements are important to the questions that arise as a result of the ways in which classical music is and has been defined in the United States relative to its past – the questions of authenticity of the symphony company, of the importance of city pride, of the collective identity of musicians, producers, and audiences that arise in the case of classical music in the United States. To reiterate, these questions of authenticity, pride, and identity are not exclusive to the development of Western European classical music in the United States, of course. There are differences in the development of the symphony hall in Philadelphia, for instance, relative to San Antonio. Musicians from Philadelphia bring their own understanding of performance of classical music and their own complex identities to the performance.

San Antonio is, in large part, like many others of the largest cities of the United States. It has economic and social characteristics of a city that can afford to and wants to support the performing arts. It is large – the seventh largest city by population in these United States. It is home to several corporations capable of underwriting the expensive productions and yearly budgets of performing arts organizations – Frost Bank, H-E-B groceries, Bill Miller BBQ, Valero, Whataburger, Lonestar Brewing and Pearl Brewing, to name a few. Interestingly, each of these companies brands itself as distinctively Texan. San Antonio has wealthy patrons, the Tobin family being the largest source of private funding for generations. It has a wealthy and landed population as a result of a combination of factors including many waves of immigrants from Europe and other parts of the United States to Texas, a substantial military presence, and the presence of many women's groups who raise funds for performing arts, reach out to the larger San Antonio community, and educate children in the development of cultural arts appreciation.

The San Antonio Symphony and performing arts in general cannot easily be classified as folk music or commercial music. People involved in the San Antonio often struggle internally with labeling the music they promote. Is WCM an "authentic" music of the people that represents their values or is it a product being sold to a distinguishing consumer base?

To answer these questions, I've become involved in the lives of the people who participate in the San Antonio Symphony. The network of people that inform this study is a local network but is composed of people that are part of a global community. It is composed of people who live in San Antonio and other parts of Texas. It is composed of

people who come from all over the US and all over the world. It includes people living in the present and people that have lived in the past. These are people with a variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds that trace their own experiences back to other places and other ways of expressing themselves culturally. Yet, in their cooperation to produce performing arts in San Antonio, they have bound these disparate places of origin into a shared life here in San Antonio. Both their pasts and their shared present inform their underlying assumptions about the right way to live and the decisions they make to perform and work and create.

San Antonio Symphony musicians, in wanting to replicate the cosmopolitan model of major American cities, embrace discourses of modernity, which ethnomusicologists like Turino (2000) characterize as totalizing Euroecentric mediations of temporal relationships that discrminate against the traditional and present European and U.S. cultures as the pinnacle of civilization. Meanwhile, the organizers of the performance of classical music often portray their performances as part of folk music – as "coming from the heart" – rather than as a commercial venture. Yet, candid interviews reveal a firm commitment to the American ethos in which the value of a cultural art form comes from its ability to be commodified – packaged, advertised, and sold to a discriminating consumer.

Yet, perhaps for good reason, this kind of music has been largely ignored – certainly on the border – by folklorists. Dance, country music, club music – folk music and commercial music – are often studied by folklorists who dance in night clubs and drink the night away in honky tonk bars. Mexican-American and Mexican music that

developed along the border – norteno, banda, tejano – have received excellent ethnographic treatments in recent years. But I have been sitting in symphony halls and rehearsal rooms for the purpose of discovering, if not the folkloric, then certainly the popular in high art. That is, what about postmodernity has made the tension between folk and popular roots and participation in classical music and its social space within the symphony hall so tense that the cord has snapped?

Classical music in the symphony hall is said to represent the communities of the city, yet it does not. Rather it represents the underlying assumption that a cosmopolitan city is the ideal place in which to live. There is no doubt the people I am studying are not, for the large part, part of the minority community within the United States. While they do have different national, regional, ethnic, and social (and constantly shifting) identities, they in large part come from white and affluent, well-established within the United States, secure in their participation in citizenship, upbringings. Yet, these people form and have formed over the time which this study covers part of a striking minority in the context of the Borderlands and in the context of Texas.

Ethnographic Grounding

As with almost all anthropology texts involving a transnational cultural formation, this is not just a history, it is a multi-site ethnography, which tracks networks in Dallas and San Antonio, and that considers the development in these regions longitudinally. This ethnography encompasses the experience of migration as it is manifested in performance – the migration of groups of people in the past and groups of people in the present –

professional musicians nearly all of them – and the aesthetics of their performance. This ethnography is about imagined communities that exist in non-contiguous regions.

Because the music of the performing arts is part of the heritage of European immigrants, the aesthetics of transborder musical performance not only refers to the US-Mexico border. This is critically important because unlike ethnographic accounts of music of natives of the border region, this ethnographic account is of people who reproduce, in their own way, music that is transplanted from far, far away. The traditions of musicmaking that organize activity around this music are reproduced in central Texas, rather than springing from a tradition of the area, whether it is a recent, invented tradition, or one with a longer history. The music of the othered people of central Texas – *son, corrido, huapango, Tejano,* etc. - lends strength to members of these ethnic groups in a subversive way. By incorporating the music and instruments of those who would turn them into second-class citizens into a music that is their own and that speaks of their values, struggles, and stories, they exert the strength of the subaltern.

While performing arts and other European music forms carry with them the strength of hegemony (classical music and its performers depends on the financial support of elite of Western society for survival), its local variant and its folkloric elements (discussed in detail later) require a great deal of work that comes from the difficulty of being so far away from the people who make this music.

This ethnography gives the reader a glimpse into the lives of San Antonio's musicians – their lived experiences of making music in a harsh environment, one that either through disdain for, apathy towards, or simply the deadly force of inertia, has made

producing this kind of music year after year a work of monumental strength, perseverance, and sacrifice for the people who create it.

These are businessmen and women, extremely talented professional musicians, educators, and they are lovers of music. Yet, they are also family members, parents, ex-wives and ex-husbands, chess players, joggers. That is, they have personal lives. They are also political and social – they are citizens of their city, of their state, and of their country. They have various informed and uninformed opinions. Hence, the aesthetics of their performance is tied inextricably to these other aspects of their identifying selves and their struggles in the community that they identify with are salient to my rendering of their expression and performance of music.

When dealing with the aesthetics of music performance, I am specifically referring to and critically attending to certain aspects of the form of performance: traditions in audience reception, the ritual performative encounter in the symphony hall, opera house, and in host houses, etc., and certain discourses that pertain to the "behind the scenes" of a performance. Following Small's idea of musicking, performance is not limited to that of musicians or conductors or even management. It is of the audience as well. Thus, this work in its exploration of music practice is concerned with the daily lives of informants and the social spaces they occupy for it is this study's determination that the expressive finds expression in the performance of music in the daily life and alternate, "non-musical" spaces. Thus, this work deals with issues of identity, performance, tradition, migration, discourse, and postmodernity in addition to the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, ethnomusicology, and Chicano studies.

Ethnography is under constant scrutiny by positivist elements within the social sciences. Criticism of the ethnographer often explores the issues of authority, representation and interpretation. This study, since I am identifying the expressive moments and defining the musical in the ordinary, requires that I explore my positionality relative to my informants.

I am not a musician. Yet, Western classical music is part of my heritage too. My father when he was in seminary in Mexico listened to *Ligeros de los Clasicos*, a set of records with popular light classical music pieces. It is these recordings on CDs on which I became critically attentive to the wonders of classical music in junior high school. I remember first disliking "Una furtiva lagrima" and skipping over it. I remember finding the opening movement of Beethoven's Fifth incredibly moving. Same with the overture from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro. At the same time, my parents bought an upright wooden piano, for my mother to play and for us to learn. She was an accomplished pianist in her own right in Mexico and was particularly fond of Chopin and Beethoven sonatas. My parents tell of my mother, a young Mexican woman here in the United States, wowing white people at parties my father attended as a servant. My father is a gregarious fellow – tall, muscular and handsome. Yet, while this brought him some social capital in the United States, he nevertheless became a lower class peon in the class system here. He became for several years until the man's death, the handservant and personal attendant to a rich oil tycoon in my hometown of Corsicana. It is while serving him that he met several rich white people who cared not a whit about him but were stunned into silence when he always, always trotted my mother out – a thin, pretty young

white Mexican with great poise on the piano (I've heard her myself and she is impeccable) – to these parties and launching into Fur Elise. It was, as a child hearing these sounds and these stories, a source of power, a source of fantasy, of trying to change my positionality.

Yet, I do have a position fraught with contradictions, tensions, and conflict as a dark-skinned Mexican in this society. I have the rights and privileges of being an American citizen, of access to many privileges that my Mexican family members do not have. To a certain extent I do not know if this grants me a better life than them. Many of my cousins have attended the best universities in Mexico and are higher ups in Mexico's corrupt government. In many ways, they live better than I do – materially and socially. A critical engagement with the concept of citizenship and how participation in citizenship (say, as a member of a legally protected white class) helps certain people to express and perform their identity will help me to understand the implicit assumptions that work on a daily basis to determine the ways in which classical music is performed in San Antonio.

Conclusion

In my analysis I couple the work of cultural theorists like Bourdieu with Marxism in its dealings with the implications of the movement of people in a capitalist economic system, and the ways in which capitalist reproduction invades all aspects of people's cultural lives and the spaces they inhabit. What alternate forms of social organization and play are possible with this rupture? Which are made necessary, even? Instead of focusing on social movements, I focus on social activity not explicitly tied to class struggle. However, I do utilize the concepts of the common, the biopolitical, virtuosity, and

communication (informal mode of production) and apply them to expressive culture in San Antonio in a unique postmodern moment in order to recover the multiple dimensions and possibilities of Texas Hill Country culture. The works of Aaron Fox, Jose Limon, Martha Menchaca, Americo Paredes and his students help me to engage the work of cultural theorists like Bourdieu with the unique context of the Texas Borderlands.

My engagement with these varied scholarships is necessarily situated within the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands context – culturally, geographically, and theoretically. Many contemporary scholars talk about exchange, hybridity, and encounter (Limon 1998). The argument goes that intercultural conflict in the Greater Mexico/Texas region has generated a great amount of expressive culture. Americo Paredes and his students have explored how a range of expressive modes and forms reflect and resolve, on a symbolic level, various forms of conflict. My work seeks to examine this relationship and understand how the emergence of this particular musical expressive form is embedded within larger processes of transnational migration and globalization. Through my work, I engage with and contribute to discussions on the interplay between local and global forces, paying attention to the music cultures and folk performances of members of the San Antonio Symphony, the San Antonio Symphony League, and the German Heritage Club. Within Cultural Studies, I seek to address the relationality between dominant and alternative/situated sociocultural discourses and modes of performance and the implications of said relationship on the continual imagining and reimagining of a community. Questions of citizenship (particularly as it relates to belonging to a city) and questions of the state are raised here. Ultimately, what this study does is creat a

composite picture of the social and political ground through which performance exists with attention to migrants' and citizens' active participation in the social production of the transborder imaginary.

I ask: how have communities of audience members and musickers of opera and classical music come to exist and perform in the Border? What is their relationship to the birthplace of this music in Western Europe? How do opera's performative social spaces and situated discourses mediate understandings and experiencings of the state, migration, and community?

Chapter 2: A History of Opera in San Antonio

Introduction

European art forms have been disseminated in the Americas for as long as European colonizers have inhabited the New World, but because staging opera requires an investment of significant social and financial capital, it was not until the late 19th century that opera become a common and popular form of entertainment in the southwest United States. San Antonio was among the first communities to build an opera house, in 1886, and because of its location in central Texas, San Antonio is a nexus point of many intersecting influences – global politics, national economics, and Texas history – all interspersed with a few powerful historical figures, particularly in the oil business.

I suggest that, despite the ebb and flow of opera's relevance to the lives of San Antonio's citizens, there is an undercurrent of support for Western classical music that has remained strong since the arrival of the first European immigrants to the area, for various and shifting reasons. By interviewing members of different generations of San Antonio citizens and comparing the symbolic meaning they attach to opera and to San Antonio with that of even older generations, using historical archival data, the research in this chapter illuminates aspects of local history and resultant questions that serve to contextualize the focus of the ethnographic research in the chapters that follow.

Opera is unique among forms of Western classical music and performing arts in that it has always been a more popular and accessible form of "cultured" entertainment. As a city with one of the longest and richest histories of opera performance in Texas, San Antonio provides a significant opportunity to understand the relationship between this

popular art form and discourses of power and difference across racial, class, and geographic divisions. The work in collecting and interpreting San Antonio's opera history has been minimal and vast quantities of information remain unread as sources for revealing the history of San Antonio's people through their consumption of opera. Employing a diachronic approach in uncovering change over time in the symbolic value attached to this popular performing art, this chapter will shed light on the effect of ethnic, gender, and class shifts of power on the changing value of opera as cultural entertainment and thereby contribute to current debates on the relationship of "cultured" or "elite" entertainment to group identification.

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a historical analysis of Western classical music in San Antonio, with particular attendance to the development of opera, a popular form of Western classical music, in order to contextualize the ethnographic research in subsequent chapters. First, I survey the history of opera and classical music reception in San Antonio in order to examine changes in the traditional values of its citizens over the past century. Then, I look at the scholarship on cultural performance in various contemporary situations analogous to that of San Antonio. This chapter argues that ethnographic research can show how individuals in San Antonio contextualize themselves in shared histories and identities through their participation in cultural performance of Western classical music. These methodologies can illuminate aspects of local San Antonio history that demonstrate the ability of individuals to use cultural baggage from a shared history to continually reengage with an art form and use that art

form to reconstruct or reify existing or desired identity formations against the influx of other influences that they perceive as threatening to their values and, thus, their society.

This dissertation as a whole deals with an object that is traditionally the study of musicology but has the anthropological aim of generalizing trends in social behavior and uses a partially historical methodology, and it is necessarily an interdisciplinary work and subject to critique from several academic camps including cultural anthropology, history, ethnomusicology and musicology, though it is hoped that it will serve more to contribute to the bridging of gaps between the approaches and aims of these disciplines.

Though it is widely understood that music and musicians are a product of their time, Bruno Nettl notes that analyzing music-making, or "cultural performance," in a social context is useful for revealing values of the time of which they are a product (Nettl 1992: 149). "Cultural performance" is understood to be music, theater, pageant, or sports events in which a society abstracts for itself and others its governing principles, showing itself and others its uniqueness. Examples include Native American intertribal powwows, Japanese underground hip-hop club scenes, and performances by the Metropolitan Opera in New York. In the case of the *Radif,* the basic repertory of Persian music, the change witnessed over the course of the early 20th century from a structure similar to other Iranian culture to a structure similar to major Western musical traditions – in the use of Western instruments, notation, and large ensembles guided by conductors – shows, in detail, values – like hierarchy, guidance by a central authority, and individualism - that are important to Iranian culture at large (Nettl 1978). It is clear then that an understanding of cultural performance can tell us about the values of a society, and changes that may

occur in those values will be manifested in cultural performance. This project is fundamentally about that - value change in society as manifested in cultural performance. However, the focus of this project is not just on opera or Western classical music performance on the stage by singers, actors, and musicians, but also the performance of opera by *audiences*. Thus, this is an analysis as well of the *reception* of cultural performance, rather than simply that of cultural performance. The distinction is not so easy to make.

Atkinson argues that, to understand the values disseminated through social music events (that we are calling cultural performances), the most important performance is not necessarily that of the actors on the stage but that of the audience and of the producers of the spectacle on the stage. The performance on the stage is a connecting point through which the audiences and producers engage one another in creating an agreement and bond over what values they share (and by which producers profit and audiences are typically entertained). The producers' understanding of those shared values is manifested in the particular performance, and the audience's understanding of those shared values is manifested in their reception of the performance. If the audience cheers, the producers are probably assuaged that they understand the audience's values. If the audience boos or ticket sales tank in subsequent performances, we can surmise that the audience believe the producers broke their agreement with the audience over what constitutes an enjoyable evening of entertainment and are saying that the producers have lost touch with their shared values.

When I began coursework in San Antonio, the only company producing operas in San Antonio was the San Antonio Opera, a company created by local businessman and amateur tenor Mark Richter in the 1990s. My master's work described in depth the ups and downs of his company. In early 2011, I wrote:

> In the case of San Antonio Opera, the performances are not very good by most professional opera company standards…a cursory search of the San Antonio Express-News reviews of past opera productions will make evident this point. Yet, they regularly receive applause and [the company's] budget continues to grow. Clearly, producers have not lost touch with the shared values of San Antonio citizens.

In my naivete, I believed what the company management was telling me: that the company was solvent, that people were subscribing, and that the company was expanding. In 2012, the San Antonio Opera filed for bankruptcy after canceling the last two performances of the 2011-2012 season. It had assets of just $1,500 in office equipment and debts of $893,677 to season-ticket holders, musicians, and many supporting San Antonio businesses.

In talking to people after the demise of the San Antonio Opera, I found that many thought that Richter did not know how to manage a budget and was too "passionate" about his projects. One of Richter's pet projects was to bring The Three Tenors, a popular operatic singing group composed of internationally renowned opera singers Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras, and Luciano Pavarotti to San Antonio. He succeeded in this, paying hundreds of thousands in fees to them.

From the ashes of this debacle arose a new company, headed by former members of the board of Richter's company, who have completely shunned Richter. Opera San

Antonio has staged more modest productions and remains solvent in 2016. However, its reduced budget highlights the struggle that performing arts organizations continue to have in San Antonio. As the economy has rebounded in the past several years, the Dallas Opera, for instance, has returned to staging five productions, instead of four.

While we acknowledge the struggle of performing arts organizations to maintain an audience, we must also acknowledge that there remains a stubborn, persistent group of people for whom opera represents their shared values. What values are these? What are the real forces at work, if not just the production values of the opera or the management savvy of the management, that keep San Antonio audiences in the seats and subscribing season after season? The history of opera in San Antonio shows that identification with German ancestry, gender roles, charismatic authority, city loyalty and class status have played historically important roles in the development of the infrastructure and performance spaces for the continued performance of opera and Western classical music in San Antonio.

The German influence from the 1850s

Opera has been performed in Texas since the 1850s when an influx of German immigrants created what historians now call the German Belt, which extended from the Galveston-Houston area, through Austin and San Antonio, and all the way into West Texas. American historians are familiar with the German Belt as a typical product of the effects of "dominant personality," and "America letters" in the migration of European ethnic groups to the United States. Johann Freidrich Ernest is significant as one of these early dominant personalities. Ernst and his family were among the first Germans to settle

in Texas, in 1831. In a concerted effort to begin German settlements in Texas, Ernst wrote lengthy letters to friends in Germany, extolling the virtues of Texas settlements and beginning what migration scholars call a "chain migration."

In the middle and late 19th century in Texas, German immigrants and their descendants used opera and other elite forms of entertainment to connect to their old identities and to connect to one another. More than simply a social identity that was being solidified through the opportunity that opera provides to socialize, there was a larger national identity and still larger transnational identity that was being strengthened by knowing that one was being entertained by the same music, stories, and people that were entertaining other Americans and Europeans across vast geographic areas and that had entertained them in a past spanning centuries.

Due to the large numbers of German immigrants in Texas, in 1856 the German Opera Company became the first of many traveling opera companies that performed in Texas. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, opera houses sprang up across Texas. In Sisterdale, just north of San Antonio, the Sisterdale Opera House was constructed some time between 1867 and 1884. In El Paso, the Schutz Opera House was built in 1883 and the Myar Opera House in 1887. In the German town of New Braunfels, the Seekatz Opera House was built in 1900.

San Antonio has been an unusually strong supporter of opera, in forms palatable to local audiences, since the late 19th century. It hosted a golden era of opera consumption in the middle of the 20th century and after a decline in consumption in the late 20th century began to grow again in the 21st century. The opening of the Grand Opera House in

downtown San Antonio in 1886 was the first major step towards institutionalizing opera in San Antonio. At the time many of the inhabitants did not speak English, and German speakers outnumbered Hispanics and Anglos throughout the late 1800s (Fehrenbach 2010, 1). Traveling opera companies regularly came and performed at the Grand Opera House.

Opera, however, was not the only form of cultured entertainment in San Antonio to have a physical building to house it. Wealthy German merchants established The Staffel Casino Club in 1854, originally for meetings between twenty Germans in the home of Carl Hummel. The casino was built and opened in 1858. It hosted games, music, plays, lectures, and actors. Functions included coming out parties for daughters of important families (Jordan 2010, 1). Thus, both gambling and opera served as social centers for businessmen, politicians, socialites and celebrities.

For those for whom German identification mattered greatly – the ethnic German communities that developed in Texas in the second half of the nineteenth century – much of the repertoire that is part of today's standard Western classical music repertoire mattered greatly as well. Perhaps the most similar form it took was in German festivals that celebrated cultural heritage (Bungert 2003, 227).

Folklorist Richard Bauman (1992) identifies three general components to ethnic performance: 1) performance is set apart from the place in which it takes place. 2) Performance is enacted by a skilled performer using a specialized form of communication. And 3) the performance act is intended to be witnessed by spectators and subject to their scrutiny, criticism, and interpretation. Music performance in festivals is a

common occurrence in Western history and the performance of opera has been a part of festivals in Western Europe for centuries. Musicologist Catherine Kintzler (1983), speaking specifically about opera, takes this further and says that performance (of opera) attempts to "transport the spectator out of his ordinary condition into the sensuous realm of enchantment" (Verba 1985, 171).

Festival culture is useful in the maintenance and construction of ethnic heritage for descendants of immigrants. It gives them opportunities to recirculate signs and images of their cultural heritage. Festivals provide members of a community with a reliable source of funding and serves to mobilize the cultural capital of their marked ethnic heritage. Cultural tourism has been shown to help in the further development of ethnic identity, which has to be relearned with every new generation. However, cultural tourism hinders researchers' attempts to understand culture outside of the spectacle by emphasizing certain aspects of a group's culture that appeal to tourists and by emphasizing certain aspects of a group's culture that are manifested in existing material culture.

For instance, much of Fredericksburg's expression of German identity to tourists comes from the German Lutheran church in town, which is one of the few buildings to have survived. However, the German Catholic community has also had a presence in Fredericksburg, which is less celebrated as a result of not having a building to serve as an icon of that German Catholic identity. The emphasis on touristic appeal helps form an identity that, unfortunately, can undermine intra-ethnic cohesion for the ethnic

community themselves. (Bungert 2003, 333). In developing bonds with outsiders, German Americans sacrificed opportunities to increase intragroup cohesion.

Language is deeply embedded in a people's cultural heritage, in many ways more so than the architecture of the buildings, which are often repurposed or dismantled for the present. Music, especially Western classical music, is analogous in many ways to language in the way that it has a lineage one can trace through the constant reinterpretation of past music, past performance of it, and its codification into notes and bars, pages and tomes that collect in churches, schools, and performance halls. An important example of this in San Antonio is the unbroken history of the Saengerfest, a yearly singing festival in which German choral groups perform German folk and classical music. These formal musicological definitions are completely blurred in their use by German-Texan ethnics. In the same way that people feel like they need to talk about themselves, they need to sing as well.

The German influence was undoubtedly enormous in the days of opera's inception in Texas. Today, more than seventeen percent of Texans claim full or partial German ancestry. In San Antonio, fourteen percent claim German ancestry. This is not to say that most opera consumers today are German descendants, or that their German ancestry is the direct cause of their appreciation and/or consumption of opera. Rather, German identity is one of several forces that have shaped the environment in which people consume opera in San Antonio and is manifested, if not explicitly, in the reasons that people support or enjoy opera today.

Unfortunately, it is difficult, based on the extant literature, to determine the long-term effect of German identity to the support for opera**.** Even the large collection of materials documenting the extensive work of opera patrons in the San Antonio arts community - planning materials, correspondence, scrapbooks, programs, brochures, audio tapes, photographs and assorted ephemera – do not provide direct evidence of the influence of these deep-seated identities, identities whose influence is considerably diffuse. Answering these questions would require in-depth interviewing of long-term and short-term participants in opera.

In 2011, I wrote my masters report entitled *Unbuckling the German Belt*. It was an attempt to attend to this often overlooked connection between the development of ethnic groups – such as German communities in the Texas Hill Country or Hispanics in San Antonio – and the high art institutions that tend to separate themselves from these communities and consider themselves to be part of a discourse of cosmopolitanism.

In doing fieldwork, I have determined that the ways in which the music of, say, Brahms and Wagner are used in the spaces of Tobin Performing Arts Center by the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra and of Beethoven Hall by the Beethoven Mannerchor are so distinct from each other that rather than continue to pursue participant observation with people I met at Sangerfests, I decided to continue with my investigation of those participants whose main motivation for the participation in Western classical music, as a whole, shifted to those other than celebrating a German ethnic ancestry.

Another reason for refocusing the project is the decline in the reproduction of German-American values. German identification declined in the early 20th century.

Historians point to rural depopulation (the disintegration of German communities), intermarriage, and modern communication. Acculturation sped up as a result of the world wars and associated anti-German prejudice. Furthermore, there was no more significant migration from Germany to Texas after the early 1900s (Jordan 2010, 1). Opera also declined in the city, in part because of the Great Depression. The Grand Opera House closed in the 30s and it was not until 1945 that opera reestablished itself permanently in San Antonio.

During this time period, interest in classical music entered into a different phase that saw it flourishing in metropolises across the US, including San Antonio. In 1938, Max Reiter, a prominent conductor in Germany and World War II refugee, fled to New York City with several other European conductors. A saturation of the market on the East Coast forced him to come to Texas, where he eventually founded the San Antonio Symphony in 1945. This was a man who personally knew Richard Strauss and conducted world premieres and radio broadcasts of many of his works from San Antonio. Most significantly, he established in San Antonio the first resident opera company in Texas. Along with providing a symphonic repertoire, the San Antonio Symphony provided a locally produced two-weekend opera season using national and local singers.

San Antonio during this time period was a veritable mecca for the performance of Western classical music. The wealthy oil tycoon, Robert Tobin, funded symphony and opera in San Antonio for decades. The role of women in the continuance of support for opera cannot be stressed enough. The San Antonio Women's Opera Guild persuaded the Metropolitan Opera of New York to move the yearly auditions for national talent from

Dallas to San Antonio. American and world debuts of operas took place and international superstars headlined performances at the annual San Antonio Opera Festival. Support of opera once again declined in the 80s and the festival was discontinued in 1983.

There are other significant people and issues at play here. The influence of oil tycoons and art directors who funded and managed performing arts organizations, of women who support opera – these are all people who, for one reason or another, became important figures in making Western classical music a part of San Antonio culture. These people all identified with WCM enough to have supported it significantly throughout San Antonio's history. These class, racial, and gender identities form the dispositions of individuals towards WCM. My research must look at the particular values that are attached to this art form by this society for reasons specific to this society - specific gender, race, or class formations.

Identification as a theoretical framework

Identification is a process by which an individual recognizes or constructs commonalities with other people or other groups and articulates or determines meaning to people and groups outside or within the boundaries of these commonalities, thereby creating what is commonly understood as identities, bounded in time and space (Hall 2000: 16). The descendants of German immigrants living in San Antonio are no longer German in most ways – they do not live within the political boundaries of Germany, do not raise their children in a German-speaking country, and, unlike their progenitors, do not necessarily have to negotiate their German identity with their Texan and American ones, which have formed as their parents' German identities deform. This

phenomenological or conscious process operates across social, class, and ethnic differences.

Another aspect of identification is that it entails the creation of discourses (Stuart 2000: 19). In addition to trying to understand how WCM serves to strengthen or reinforce national or ethnic identities for San Antonio opera fans, I seek to uncover how the discourse around this music becomes a method by which the national and ethnic identities supported by participation in WCM, and their necessary oppositionality to other identities, are constructed and reified. How is WCM discussed in San Antonio? What do patrons and purveyors wish to say about themselves by the way in which they participate in and create discourse around the music?

Identification, in my opinion, assumes that people have considerable agency, an ability to affect the discourses that surround them and to construct/reconstruct the environment in which they make choices, for two main reasons: 1) because the ability to constitute a social identity out of discourse is an act of power and 2) because there is a "knowing" involved in the taking up of static identities that fail to account for the constant shift in identification with different groups (Hall 2000: 18). An American may feel more "American" on the day when Osama Bin Laden is captured than the day before, one in which his life was mundane. Opera, in particular, can provide these moments of heightened awareness of identity (Benzecry 2009: 138). Do people feel as if they are better able to negotiate their identity when participating in or “performing” the reception of opera?

Through analysis of discourse and musicmaking, I consider the issue of agency as well. Are processes of identification not highly constrained by the discourses that create different and oppositional identities? What are the symbolic boundaries placed on individuals as they determine (and overdetermine) who they are? It is possible that what motivates ordinary San Antonio citizens to attend classical music concerts at symphony hall is not upward mobility alone, but moral sentiments, religious beliefs, esprit de corps, etc. It is also possible that the actions of the few charismatic authority figures, the wealthy and powerful citizens of San Antonio, have a greater influence on the actions of less powerful and more numerous citizens than the other way around. What tensions exist as a result of power struggles and the exercise of agency? Who enjoys greater agency in San Antonio? That is, who determines the overarching symbolic meanings of Western classical music to San Antonio, i.e. who participates the most in the discourse around WCM? And has this discourse changed over time? The answer to this question is that meaning for the performing arts and Western classical music in the grand operatic and symphonic tradition is reproduced primarily by musicians, artistic directors, and donors/patrons.

People's identification with certain classes or races gives them certain dispositions, which are collectively termed "habitus" (Bourdieu 1986: 245). A person's habitus is a "set of dispositions" that creates practices and perceptions over a long process of social inculcation. It is objective structures like the myth of the German people, a shared language (German was spoken in San Antonio far more frequently in the mid 19th century than Spanish or English), and kinship (German peasantry struggling to survive on

the frontier) that act on and are acted upon by the set of structured dispositions (the habitus, e.g. disposition towards opera, disposition towards casinos, disposition towards other settlers).

Objective structures can also be the physicalization of these desires to share one's language or identity with others (Bourdieu 1986: 243). These physicalizations include buildings like the opera house or the casino. These objective structures are the result of other objective structures that are incorporated and internalized in the habitus, e.g. disposition towards opera or gambling, which then works to reproduce the objective structures in physical manifestations like the opera house or casino and continual financial support of the opera house.

But of course the relationship between the objective structures and the structured dispositions can change. Bourdieu's distinction is particularly applicable to opera because the relationship between the San Antonio Opera and the audience is a regularly renegotiated one that requires a continual re-evaulation on the part of patrons of the value of opera to them. Opera patrons either buy individual tickets, for which there is an almost monthly evaluation of the value of attending the opera, or they buy season tickets, for which there is a yearly evaluation of the value of opera.

If San Antonians are able to acquire such important markers of identity status or elite status without having to internalize the disposition to support WCM in San Antonio, we should see a difference in the discourse as management reacts to the shifting values of San Antonio's citizenry and its potential customers and as the citizens themselves come to identify other forms of entertainment (such as attending San Antonio Spurs basketball

games) with class or ethnic status. That is, advertising for opera in 1890 should sell opera differently to audiences than advertising for opera in 1950 and in 2011. Younger audiences should value opera for different reasons than older audiences.

Benzecry has commented on the ability of opera to draw viewers in instantly and hold their attention. Certainly this is part of the magic of opera, but it is more relevantly part of the reason it can be popular entertainment. Whereas classical music in the instrumental or symphonic tradition requires considerable effort to enjoy, opera has many aspects that immediately draw an appeal – narrative structure, lavish scenery, costumes, dance, etc. Opera patrons will observe these as things that draw them to opera, but there is always something underneath that makes opera the specific type of entertainment that they choose out of the many that could give them a similarly magical experience.

To reiterate a point made earlier in this chapter, we should seek not to limit theoretical constructions of performance of opera to the performance of opera singers on the stage. Rather, we should take an ethnomusicological definition of performance and considers *everything* in relation to opera as the performance of opera. Audiences "perform" opera in activities such as: of course, watching operas staged by professional and amateur companies, at film screenings, at home on Netflix, Youtube, or various other home media, listening to opera in the car or on the radio; talking about opera with others outside of the opera house at home, at parties, and at work; chatting on Internet forums, reviewing operas on blogs, commenting on newspaper critic reviews. All of these are manifestations of a certain disposition towards opera that reveal the particular values of a person and the values that person shares with a group with which he or she identifies. We

can also use this definition to look at the ways in which Western classical music in the symphonic tradition is experienced.

San Antonio Opera: a case study

After noticing some major differences in the repertoire of the San Antonio Opera from those of other regional companies in Fort Worth, Dallas, and Austin, I began to wonder why the San Antonio audience existed, let alone for such a long time. The Dallas Opera's 2011 production of Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet* was a glamorous event, the rival of 19th century French productions of grand opera. At Houston Grand Opera, superstar Susan Graham in Handel's *Xerxes* received rave reviews. The special effects in Austin Lyric Opera's 2010 production of Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* were spectacular. Fort Worth Opera's 2008 production of Puccini's *Turandot* was a lavish production with stunt performances by a touring company of Chinese acrobats. I have continued to support each of these companies because their productions have been consistently excellent.

By comparison, each production of San Antonio Opera has suffered at the hands of critics, including myself. In 2000, their production of Mozart's *Cosi fan Tutte* during the third season substituted a synthesizer for the harpsichord during recitative sections and was performed in English (a general taboo for productions of Italian opera among professional opera companies). A backdrop of a river in a mountain gorge having nothing to do with the opera seems to have been picked randomly from another show. In 2009, for their third production of *Madama Butterfly,* the singers were miked (another taboo in professional opera) so their voices would carry in the massive five-thousand-seat

Municipal Auditorium. In their 2011 production of *Marriage of Figaro*, even the surtitles (captions projected over the stage that have become standard for American productions of non-English language opera) were not working, so the audience did not know when to clap or laugh.

Charles Carson, a musicologist at the University of Texas at Austin told me a story in March 2011 about one of his students at the University of Houston. One of the assignments for his Western music history class was to see a live performance of music in the Western classical canon. The student came up to him and said there were no more performances of classical music in the city to attend before the deadline for the assignment. Amazingly, the student was correct, save a performance of an opera. Charles said, "Well, it will cost you $35, but you can attend the performance of this opera." The student replied, "I saw the listing, but the money isn't the problem." "What's the problem, then?" "I don't own a tux!"

These episodes highlight the disparity between assumptions among people who do and don't participate in opera. San Antonio Opera patrons are content to patronize an opera company that produces substandard opera, while nonpatrons are unwilling to attend because they believe they aren't allowed to be there without changing at least their clothing, if not their demeanor, or knowledge base. The FAQs on American opera company websites commonly include the frequently asked question: "How should I dress?" Nonpatrons assume that elegant, formal attire must be worn, and many FAQ's specifically state that this form of attire is not required. The correct answer is, of course, that one may dress as one likes. When I attend the opera, I typically wear jeans and a t-

shirt or short-sleeve polo; not because I can't afford a jacket or wish to act out against commonly held stereotypes of opera patrons, but because it is what I usually wear and what is most comfortable for me to wear. This wasn't always the case. I used to wear these kinds of clothes to make a statement. To say that the opera house is a democratic institution, in which people of all social backgrounds can attend. However, elegantly dressed people are not necessarily wearing slacks, tie, and jacket to make a statement, either. It is what they usually wear at work, for instance, or what is most comfortable for them to wear.

The point of both of these stories - my uniformly bad experience of hearing opera in San Antonio and the young Houstonite's misunderstanding of opera etiquette - is that there are different types of opera patrons. Some patrons attend the opera dressed a certain way to make a claim about their status in society. But others wearing the same clothing – whether it's a suit and tie or jeans and t-shirt – are possibly making a different statement. One cannot tell simply by observing them. Similarly, one cannot assume that a company is not successful by simply observing their productions. The remarkable thing about San Antonio Opera is that it has survived and expanded for 15 years, despite low production values. It has capitalized on an understanding of the values of San Antonians, of which adherence to standard models for professional opera productions – stagings of Italian and German opera in their original languages and with proper acoustics – is not of high priority.

In 1983, R. Paul Williams founded the Chamber Opera Theater. The first production, William Walton's *The Bear* and Menotti's *The Medium* played in 1985 to

only a handful of people in Beethoven Hall. A switch to more mainstream repertory and a name change to Opera Theatre of San Antonio in 1986 brought growth. However, the company filed bankruptcy in 1988 having staged a handful of productions – Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in December 1986, *Die Fledermaus*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Madama Butterfly*, and Pavarotti in Concert in January 1988 – and just before their November 1988 production of *Don Giovanni* and planned productions of *Carmen* and *The Mikado*. *Don Giovanni* had sold out 600 seats at the Carver Community Cultural Center before the company folded.

Professional opera had a 10-year absence between the 1983-1988 incarnation and the 1998 Pocket Opera incarnation. In the meantime, different groups in San Antonio produced operas, but none with any regularity.

In 1997, Mark Richter began Pocket Opera and performed a bare bones staging of Mozart's rarely performed *Der Schauspieldirektor* and Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*. By the fourth season (2000/2001), the company had begun to rent or, in the case of the June 2001 production of Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*, purchase full sets from other opera companies. They also began to phase out English adaptations of operas, though during the fourth season, *Die Fledermaus* was performed in English. Nevertheless, their repertoire still stresses contemporary English one-act operas and English comic opera. Below is a partial list of the operas performed over the course of the first few seasons of San Antonio Opera. Notice that each year, the budget increases, the repertoire becomes more mainstream and the performance venue and name of the company change. In all of

these trends, the San Antonio Opera continues to more closely resemble other professional opera companies in the United States.

Season	Operas Performed	Operating Budget	Venue	Name of Company
1 (98/99)	Der Schauspieldirektor; Trouble in Tahiti	$6,000	San Pedro Playhouse	San Antonio Pocket Opera
2 (99/00)	Don Pasquale; Amahl and the Night Visitors; Cavalleria Rusticana	$40,000	San Pedro Playhouse; McAllister Auditorium	San Antonio Pocket Opera
3 (00/01)	Barber of Seville; Amahl & the Night Visitors; Cosi Fan Tutte; Double Bill: The Old Maid & the Thief/Gallantry	$100,000	McAllister Auditorium	San Antonio Lyric Opera
4 (01/02)	Madama Butterfly; Elixir of Love; Die Fledermaus	$210,000	McAllister Auditorium	San Antonio Lyric Opera
7 (03/04)	Rigoletto; Don	$384,500	McAllister	San Antonio

	Pasquale		Auditorium	Lyric Opera
8 (04/05)	Madama Butterfly; La Cenerentola; Don Giovanni	$600,000	McAllister Auditorium	San Antonio Lyric Opera
14 (10/11)	Suor Angelica, Pagliacci; Marriage of Figaro; HMS Pinafore	$2,000,000	Lila Cockrell Theatre	San Antonio Opera

Table 1. San Antonio Opera company statistics 1998-2011.

The 2012 season was ended halfway through, after Mark Richter's company filed for bankrupcy. The more recent incarnation of professional grand opera in San Antonio by R. Paul Williams seems to be conscious of the history of opera in San Antonio and has attempted to rekindle that flame and reconnect to that history. In 2012, the new company OPERA San Antonio formed and began soliciting funds to produce operas in the near future. In response, Jeannie Wyatt, board president of the old San Antonio Opera said, "There is some value in having a history." Mel Weingart, organizer of the new opera company, has said that he wants San Antonio to have more "lavish" productions. Both groups appeal to a sense of nostalgia and history among supporters of their opera company, particularly for the golden era of opera in the 50s and 60s. This underscores the dependence of operatic repertoire on the resources available and a company's ability to cater to members of the audience that have been attending for years, even decades.

The experience of talking to these people gave me the first valuable insight about the importance of San Antonio's history as a major center for the performing arts to contemporary organizations' approach in ensuring that audiences and potential donors see support of the arts as part of their civic duty to the city. I delve into the specific strategies and spaces employed by the management of the San Antonio symphony orchestra in order to regularly present the orchestra in a historical context to audiences in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Defining the opera patron

Most supporters of opera do not, individually, have the ability to change significantly the fortunes of the performing arts organizations in San Antonio. These patrons are less visible than charismatic authorities like Mark Richter or Mel Weingart. Yet, they too play an important role in the local shaping of performing arts organizations. Thus, it is important to understand shifts in audience taste and reception of Western classical music over time.

We can begin by asking the question: is opera, which is a European art form, perceived as a foreign cultural performance that is modified for local purposes, or is it perceived as a domestic form of cultural performance, brought along with people who consume it? In the case of Eastern and other non-Western appropriation of Western forms, different anthropologists have argued differently about whether the local form constitutes a meaningful difference.

Ian Condry (2001, 2006) in analyzing the Japanese hip-hop scene has found that Japanese rappers and MCs respond more to local influences in their reconstruction of

Western/American hip-hop than to larger shifting trends in Western-influenced world pop. According to Condry, hip-hop is "constantly made and re-made in specific locations through local dialects and for particular audiences" in order to produce a "dynamic and contradictory (or ambivalent) realm of debate about what it means to be Japanese" (Condry 2006: 2; 16). In Burma, Keeler finds a different understanding of hip-hop. According to Keeler, "the sad fact is that the assertive style so emblematic of contemporary rap, whether in Burma or anywhere else, poses no threat to hegemonic understandings of what it means to be modern or cosmopolitan" (Keeler 2009: 13). To what extent is the taste of classical music patrons insular and to what extent is it influenced by larger trends and shifts in attitudes towards WCM? Are San Antonio citizens supporters of WCM because of local traditions and city history, or because of the influence of a larger national or international discourse on the value of opera and Western classical music?

I identify some key motivations among contemporary American audiences for a positive disposition towards Western classical music. Membership in each group is not mutually exclusive with membership in other groups. Someone who could be motivated to support opera and the performing arts as an arts patron could also be motivated to support WCM because of the desire to socialize with specific people that are important in other facets of their lives, such as business partners or colleagues.

Tom Boellstorff's (2003) notion of "dubbing culture" would describe the San Antonio Opera as a reworking of a foreign model so that it neither remains true to nor hides the foreign origins. Incongruity with foreign model matters little to the consumers.

In the case of Burmese rap, Burmese rappers perform a cultural lip synch for audiences and do not bother themselves about originality or authenticity, instead taking up any materials in foreign pop that will serve their domestic purposes (Keeler 2009: 13). Do audience members perceive the current incarnation of opera as a cultural lip synch of sorts? Or do they understand it as an "authentic" expression of San Antonio opera culture?

Patrons of opera tend to be patrons of cultural arts in general. Their motivation for attending opera is largely, or in part, because of their affinity for all arts. Surveys (Barnes 1986) have found that men and women are roughly equally represented among these kinds of patrons. Patrons tend to be in their 30s (ballet and theatre) and 40s (opera and symphony). They also tend to be more educated than the general public, have higher incomes, and work in high-status occupations. Blue-collar workers in the survey accounted for only 3 percent of performing arts audiences surveyed, while accounting for more than 30% of the US adult population. They tend to be white, as well. What is the demographic of San Antonio Opera's audience and has it changed over time?

The agreed-upon perspective on popular music throughout the literature is that commercially viable music is a site of contestation for what Hall calls the "power bloc," or dominant forces from above that include corporations and other forces of capitalism, and a populist force from below that includes the people whose musical idioms are translated into a commodified object in popular music, typically as recordings. Within this framework, different researchers ascribe different levels of agency to the forces of populism, but they all ascribe this dichotomous relationship of dominant and subordinate

to the hegemonic and socialist/populist forces of popular music. It is at the edges of the system that the mechanisms break down and the insidiousness of the system is seen most easily.

In the case of opera in San Antonio, the question that must be asked and answered is, how much power does the audience have in determining opera repertoire? A corollary is how much power do they feel they have? It is clear that ultimate power resides in the artistic director, but what concerns him or her most – the satisfaction of the audience or the successful realization of a musical tradition that treats the pieces being performed as works of Art? Many times the desires of each do not conflict, but sometimes, they do.

Neumann talks about the relationship between the continuity of a musical tradition and the inevitable change of musical tradition by historical actors (Neumann 1991: 273). Aware of the ability of musical tradition to change, actors may often seek specifically to retain traditional elements, or what they perceive as traditional elements, in their music, thereby changing a progression or stemming a progression. In the case of Indian classical music, there is a great awareness of and respect for the tradition of performance. The Sufi ritual repertory has as its primary purpose to show "the authenticity and historical continuity of the songs" (Qureshi qtd. in Neumann 1991: 274). Western classical music in the symphonic and grand operatic traditions can be examined similarly and the influence of specific actors working to ensure the authenticity of the repertoire needs to be evaluated. Additionally, the importance of authenticity and the audience's understanding of authenticity need to be evaluated in order to assess the effect of their desire for, or lack of desire for, authenticity. More generally, what are the other

possible desires of individual actors that could influence the choice of repertoire? There is a strong indication from the history of the past two resident opera companies in San Antonio that individual actor agency has much to do with the ability of opera to find a home in San Antonio.

Finally, postcolonial theory can be used to analyze reasons for opera patronage. Musical systems "articulate" identity – they are an embodiment of the processes that construct individual and group identification. There is a large body of literature that applies postcolonial theory to locations like San Antonio, in which the musical practices of a dominant outside group influence and are influenced by the values of the subordinate group. The critique predicts a subversion by the subordinate groups within the musical system in order to reinforce unity and identity of the subordinate group against the dominant group.

The SA Opera necessarily operates according to standard economic models for American opera companies. Through this model, we can identify some patrons that must exist, including wealthy underwriters and patrons. These patrons show up in the history of opera in San Antonio: the wealthy oil tycoon, Robert Tobin, who has funded opera in San Antonio for decades, the collective of women who founded the Opera Guild of San Antonio, and the German conductor Max Reiter. Clearly people like this help to set the discourse, but they are also affected by it. They create the structuring structures; that is, they use their social and cultural capital to influence how opera is performed and marketed to audiences in San Antonio. However, these structures also mold their dispositions, as is made evident by the struggle between the two current opera companies

in San Antonio to claim residency in the newly renovated Lila Cockrell Theatre, and the recent reopening of the Sisterdale Opera House, one of the oldest opera houses in Texas, by the San Antonio Opera.

Towards an ethnography of opera audiences

Nettl identifies a significant disparity between popular conceptions of classical music and a learned conception of it (Nettl 1992: 145). In looking at these popular conceptions, we can learn about the relationship of opera to the rest of the culture and reveal the larger values of that particular culture. For instance, what does the standard FAQ on American opera websites reveal about the assumptions people make about opera? The following list of questions are familiar to anyone who has visited an American opera company's website:

1. What should I wear to the opera?
2. How will I understand what people are singing?
3. Is there intermission?
4. What if I'm late?
5. When should I clap?
6. What are surtitles?
7. Anything else I should know?

These questions and their associated assumptions show not only the disconnection between the assumptions about the norms of opera culture by those who know about opera (presumably those who are writing the answers to these FAQs) and those who do not, i.e., those who are asking the questions. They also show that these assumptions (that

it is okay to dress casual at the opera, that surtitles are necessary for audiences, that there will always be intermissions, etc.) are widely held and almost exactly the same across the United States and perhaps the world.

The overwhelming standardization of opera repertoire in the world (Agid and Tarondeau 2010: 46) coupled with the standardization of etiquette suggest that opera performance on the stage is itself less revealing of differences in the value of opera to audiences in different locations than other cultural performances that go on during its consumption (e.g. socializing), particularly outside of the opera house. The audience, regardless of where, performs certain rituals during the course of an opera performance that look very similar from one city to another. I have personally witnessed performances in Boston, New York, and all over Texas, and audiences are largely similar. The differences in audiences become amplified once they have an opportunity to perform amongst each other out of their seats in the opera house.

Agid and Tarondeau (2010) have done a large-N international comparative study of almost all opera companies in Europe and the Americas. While they focus mainly on differences in management style, they do have a section on audience. However, their approach is mostly to show how management attempts to appeal to local audiences through, for example, lower ticket prices to attract a younger audience, or community outreach programs to attract younger or more diverse patrons. Brochures, gala events, and special offers are other methods used by opera companies attempt to attract new audiences. Agid and Tarondeau present facts, but do not attempt to connect the ways in which audiences are attracted to opera to larger ideas about the values those audience

members may have in common. All of these marketing and sales techniques are part of the discourse created around opera, but it is only half of that discourse. The other half is much harder to tease out just by looking at marketing techniques: the ways that audience members talk about opera and their response to the discourse set by the marketing techniques of opera companies.

Atkinson (2006) focuses on the management of the Welsh National Opera and the production of opera through participant observation and by acting as an audience member. He attends social functions, dress rehearsals, and all stages of the performance preparation process. He is primarily focused on the performers and the managers/producers of opera and is less interested in the audience and what it has to say about a performance. This is because to the audience, opera is a spectacle, and he is trying to understand opera as the performance of mundane micro-scale social interactions. Atkinson's work is in the tradition of the Second Chicago School of symbolic interactionism, which stresses that creative endeavors are always grounded in ordinary social activity that is itself embedded in organized social relationships (Atkinson 2006: 189). Thus, Atkinson focuses on the work involved in preparing people for performance of opera (auditions and rehearsals) and the mundane performances among actors, musicians, and other involved artists that happen off stage (coffee breaks and lunch time). In short, he looks at the performers rather than the consumers.

Atkinson plays the role of a participant observer who is viewing opera from the perspective of a performer who notices the cracks and fails to be moved by the drama (Atkinson 2006: 8). This methodology is a good complement to the methodology of Agid

and Tarondeau. Agid and Tarondeau are able to identify the larger forces that shape audience reception, while Atkinson is an embedded observer who is able to detail the intended effects of those larger forces. Agid and Tarondeau focus on management styles aimed at increasing attendance through various kinds of outreach. One can begin to understand the values of an audience, or segments of an audience, based on what types of management outreach are most effective at convincing them that attending opera and classical music performances or otherwise consuming WCM is an expression of their values. Atkinson's study is important in that it elucidates this part of the study of Western classical music that is too often unstudied. Performing arts are a realization of collective social identities, but musicological and ethnomusicological studies place little emphasis on analysis of these identities in favor of analysis of the performing arts and superficial description of the environment in which the performing arts thrive, respectively. Yes, actors and musicians perform for the audience, but they also perform for each other and the opera company performs and presents itself to patrons, sponsors, and others. Uncovering the performance as it is manifested in discourse and understanding its relationship to cultural notions of identity is a central component of the data collection and analysis in this work.

An important study that has taken up that challenge is Benzecry's recent monograph, *The Opera Fanatic* (2011). He focuses his ethnography on the audience in Buenos Aires. Based on participant observation in "maestro" classes on opera at the local university in Buenos Aires where audience members were introduced to operas being produced at the Colon Opera House, Benzecry suggests that opera fans see their

participation in opera as a way to reenact a past with which they identify, both the past of the genre and of the practice in the community, e.g. listening to recordings of the famous opera singers who started in Argentina, or discussing their memories of past performances in Buenos Aires by international superstars like Luciano Pavarotti or Maria Callas (Benzecry 2009: 144). This reenactment makes sense in the context of Buenos Aires and San Antonio, cities with a rich operatic tradition that has significantly declined in recent decades. Benzecry characterizes this reenactment in much the same way as Atkinson characterizes the Welsh National Opera's marketing of itself – as performance of a shared history whereby audience members are in a heightened state of connection to these shared historical identities as Welsh, Argentinian, or San Antonian. In the case of reenactment of history, the performance serves to define the boundaries of cultural membership in this particular operatic community (Benzecry 2009: 144).

While Benzecry's analysis is extremely important in identifying the importance of history to audiences, he falls short of providing a comprehensive examination of opera audiences in Buenos Aires and relating his observations of their positive disposition towards opera to larger cultural, ethnic, or historic values. Benzecry looks only at a very specific subsection of the audience, the section of the audience that occupies the standing room gallery in the rafters of the Colon Opera House, and he looks primarily at the phenomenological processes at work in their process of identifying as "opera fans" (Benzecry 2009: 137). His definition of what constitutes a "fan" of opera is itself problematic. Since his definition of fan is constructed on conversations with audience members in the upper/cheaper floors, he leaves out a significant portion of the members

of the audience. These people are paying $10 to see an opera that the other 80% of the audience are paying up to ten times as much to see. Furthermore, he focuses on the similarities in the way they process opera, ignoring the diversity he identities in his informants.

These ethnographers have in common a desire to observe and document how the mundane is manifested in the spectacular. Ethnography of the ways in which people participate in the performance of opera is a way of engaging with people in their everyday lives, as paradoxical as that may sound. What draws Benzecry and Atkinson together is a focus on the ordinary and on the mundane. Benzecry's and to a certain extent Atkinson's approach is in the vein of symbolic interactionism and is best at analyzing the discourse beyond that of the opera management. However, Benzecry's sample is not comprehensive enough.

My research continues in San Antonio what Benzecry has done in Buenos Aires, drawing on members from all tiers of the opera house and symphony hall to understand the various racial, gender, and class influences on positive dispositions towards Western Classical Music in San Antonio, the process by which people come to develop that disposition, and to understand more generally how identification processes occur, using both historical and ethnographic methodologies. This can realistically be accomplished by combining a case study of the companies that have operated in San Antonio with comparative analysis to analogous cases in such cities as Austin and Dallas.

Conclusion

The performance of Western classical music in San Antonio is situated at a nexus among many intersecting influences – global politics, national economics, local history, and individual agency. It is a structuring structure in that it creates discursive practices that creates differential identifications among San Antonio citizens. It served a purpose for Texan German immigrants in the nineteeth century and into the early twentieth century to create intragroup cohesion. Today, many who wish to honor and celebrate that German heritage continue to celebrate at Saengerfests, Oktoberfests, and a variety of other ethnic festivals put on by the city and organizations within it.

In the same way that classical music reified certain shared values for German immigrants to Texas in the eighteenth century, so too does classical music reify certain shared values for San Antonians today. These shared values shape the identities of San Antonians and shape the values of the community, a community of musicians, audience members, and organizers/producers.

Chapter 3: Being and Becoming a Western Classical Musician

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the sentiments and embodied experience**[s]** of contemporary symphony orchestra members and audience members. I argue that such people have different perspectives on the performance arts and do not share the same values as those who sought after the performing arts in the late 19th century. I argue three main points.

First, I posit that, by tradition, bodily movements, gestures and facial expressions that accompany musical performance are an important way of conveying meaning and reflect the development of the symphony orchestra tradition in the United States. Second, I argue that the urban renaissance, the return of the middle class from suburban communities to urban neighborhoods**,** has not gone unnoticed by orchestra members and management. Their frustration about the state of Western Classical music in San Antonio stems from the fact that, despite the city's desire to be cosmopolitan, Western classical music remains marked by the larger San Antonio community as distant from their values. Third, I argue that young people who do participate in the performing arts participate in ways that differ from older generations – their status in their social group comes less from their participation in classical music, they are less likely to have a classical music background or education, and they have different expectations or desires for the way in which music organizers attempt to sell their product. They expect sophisticated technical artistry (e.g., multimedia presentations, light shows, special effects), extensive advertisement on social media, and lower student ticket prices. At the same time, they are

attracted to many of the same things: hearing recognizable and compelling live music and getting an intimate experience with big music superstars. Finally, I show, through an ethnographic scene with Steve Zeserman and his student mentee as well as a scene involving an amateur collective in Dallas, the ways in which young people do experience the performing arts.

The Setting and Meeting Steve

As I began my fieldwork in San Antonio in 2013, something happened. The only major opera company in town went bankrupt. As a result, even though I managed to scoop interviews with people from the company, the bulk of my ethnography consists of interviews with members of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, many of whom were associated with opera in San Antonio. The scope and questions of the fieldwork remain the same: How has the way in which music of the Western classical cannon affected the development of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and ethnic relations in in the lives of San Antonians? Specifically, I seek to explore how the performance of music has affected the social milieu and etiquette of San Anonians. Nevertheless, this expansion of the work requires an unpacking of the variation in the music-making practices that are associated with the genre of Western European classical music as it is performed in this region.

The city of San Antonio is teeming with musical life. On many an occasion, I have strolled down the city streets with friends, only to see an open bar with live music being performed. Sometimes, it is not the standard fare of country music, rock music, or folk music. Jazz plays an important role in the nightlife of San Antonio. Classical music

has its role as well, and it is played in a variety of venues and in a variety of ways. Furthermore, it is not always that the standard repertoire is performed.

I frame my discussion of the work of musicians and music industry personnel they are associated with through a narrative of my time spent with Steve Zeserman, one of the bassists for the San Antonio Symphony, and the first person I met who was part of the symphony orchestra. I met Steve Zeserman late one night in the summer of 2014. My wife and I were driving down with friends from Dallas to the Rio Grande Valley for a graduation party for one of our friends in medical school. I was greatly anticipating a San Antonio Symphony performance of Mahler's Second, and somehow convinced my wife to let me stay and catch a bus to the Valley later. After the concert, there was a meet and greet reception open to the public in a banquet room in a nearby hotel. I decided to attend the reception, as I figured I could get closer to the orchestra. Afterwards, people poured out of the Majestic Theater and into the cool night air. Some went to parking garages to get in their cars and drive home or perhaps grab a late dinner. Some went down to the Riverwalk to get a nightcap.

The musicians were a curious sight, especially the cellists and bassists. They were formally dressed, the men in tuxes and the women in dresses, porting giant black rounded cases on wheels. It is not often you see this kind of pilgrimage on the streets of San Antonio. Men and women in sports jackets and cocktail dresses followed the musicians through the streets, in stark contrast to the San Antonio tourists and locals who were enjoying their evening in other ways – walking on the Riverwalk, drinking at a sports bar, or heading to a dance club. Our formally dressed group brushed past people carrying

cameras and fanny packs. Other passerbys were dressed in Spurs jerseys, which is an attire used during basketball season. Against this backdrop of eclectic and colorful attire, the muted blacks of the players seemed all the more unusual. The iconography of formally dressed musicians is so attached to the symphony orchestra in the American psyche that it could not have been a surprise to anyone who these people were and what they had just been doing.

I decided to follow the musicians to the hotel, only a few blocks from the theater. The group I observed was composed mostly of orchestra members but also of audience members. Upon arriving to the hotel we climbed on an escalator and descended to the lower floor where a small conference room was located across from a bar and lobby**.** Spartan in furnishings, it nevertheless felt like a luxurious space. Waiters stood around, holding trays with glasses of wine. Appetizers lined a long table in the corner. Low circular tables covered in white linen took up the rest of the space.

As people wandered through the room, they separated into cliques. I, at the time, knew none of these people. I grabbed some liquid courage and stepped outside for a moment. While in the lobby, I looked at the bar across the way and saw someone I recognized – a friend of a friend that I had met at a New Year's Eve Party a couple of weeks earlier. I went over to her and we chatted a bit. After a couple of minutes, she went back to her friends. Emboldened by the alcohol and cognizant of the desperate need for primary information, I went back to the room of strangers. I approached an older couple sitting at a table, eating cookies and drinking wine. I smiled and asked how they had enjoyed the concert. They gave broad smiles and began chatting away.

After fifteen minutes or so, I decided to keep moving. I told them to enjoy their evening and got up. I saw an opening in a circle of three people. I don't recall (and didn't write down) the content of the conversation, but when they stopped, they introduced themselves to me and I to them. One of them introduced himself as Steve Zeserman, bassist for the San Antonio Symphony. Steve is a big man with a big personality. Tall and large, he wears glasses and has a full head of dark hair, which he uniquely styles into a point that protrudes from the front of his head. He has a big Mid-western voice and is intense.

He was fascinated when I told him why I was there**.** I informed him that I was studying the San Antonio Symphony and performing arts in San Antonio. For the rest of the night, we stood by the food table and he talked my ear off about his ideas regarding how to "save" the performing arts. His idea about staging orchestra competitions would become a refrain I would become accustomed to hearing over the next months. At the end of the night, he added me onto his Facebook friendship list**,** and I added him. His Facebook Wall would become a valuable source on understanding who he was outside of the symphony hall.

Needing to catch a bus at 1am, I decided to take my leave. I said good-bye to Steve and walked the few blocks over to the Greyhound bus station. That night after the concert was over I got my first taste of the symphony orchestra crowd. Like the concert hall, the guests at the reception tended to be older and white, which was a contrast to the general demographics of San Antonio. The city is mainly populated by Mexican Americans and those in public tend to be young adults. Though people talked animatedly

at the reception, the atmosphere was restrained compared to many of the other late night hangouts and parties taking place in the city. Indeed, compared with my experiences at German festivals in San Antonio, this crowd wasn't as rowdy. And similar to the rest of San Antonio, young and middle-aged people dominated the German cultural festivals.

"Going Crazy:" Embodied Performance of Classical Music

What I saw at symphony hall is a scene replayed in symphony halls across the United States. The cultural elite of the city dominate the space in the performing arts and it is their artistic tastes that determine the entertainment on display. Gustav Mahler is hardly a household name in the United States. Nevertheless, it was his third symphony that we were listening to that night. This type of entertainment, however, does not attract a large audience and the management of the symphony finds alternate ways to fill the seats of symphony hall, including but not limited to Pop concerts, summer concerts, and holiday concerts. During these times recognizable composers are invited to play shorter pieces that are familiar to general audiences. These forms of "lighter" fare are typically popular all over the United States. However, symphonies have historically been very creative with the kind of fare they are willing to provide locally that extends outside the realm of the standard repertoire.

A quick look through the past several seasons in Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Austin reveal several kinds of music being performed. For example, the music from *Final Fantasy*, a hugely popular Japanese video game, is reminiscent of sweeping neo-Romantic Hollywood film scores from the 80s. Likewise, such concerts as: Megan Hilty, a popular Broadway singer, in concert, the music of *Journey*, a 70s rock

band, and a concert with *Seinfeld* actor Jason Alexander appeared as part of the concert venues. Seth MacFarlane, the creator of hugely popular cartoon sitcoms such as *Family Guy* and *American Dad,* was also asked to perform. Performances recreating the film audio music of Judy Garland, James Bond, *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* were also highly popular. These kinds of concerts attempt to reach middle-aged members of the middle class who grew up watching the sci-fi movies of the 70s and 80s, who enjoyed playing Atari and Nintendo video games, and attended rock music concerts like Coachella and Lolapalooza. It is important to reach out to such audiences as they have become the new audience, and potentially the donors to the performing arts in future decades.

The next time that I visited Steve I asked him about these kinds of events. Steve had agreed to participate in my study and we held several conversations from that point on. On our first interview we spoke about Joshua Bell who is a classical artist that appeals to the general public and is sought after within classical social circles. Steve believes that Joshua Bell is arguably right on that cusp of pop culture celebrity. He is one of the few recognizable classical names that has transitioned in to popular cultural circles**.** Steve complains about how much money Bell got paid for such little work. Steve said:

> He made seventy-five thousand dollars working probably an hour and thirty minutes no, thirty-five to forty minutes the rehearsal or maybe like an hour and maybe like thirty-five minutes for the concert that's it. How do you make that kind of cash in an hour?

I noticed this kind of tension around money, a sense of unfairness. Everyone sitting on stage at symphony hall is a consummate professional and has played their instrument since they were kids. Why is it that someone who they can readily critique and point to

several people who they believe are better at their craft is a multimillionaire, while they are bit players and take unemployment in the off season? A meritocracy the classical music industry is not. How they deal with that cold, hard fact of their reality varies from person to person, but hardly any of the players expressed an awareness of the paradigm, let alone a desire to change it. Rather, they express disdain at the extent to which their repertoire consists of these potpourris and medleys from pop culture. Steve stated:

> A fair amount of our season is spent doing sort of audience pleasers, which is basically our pops program. We usually do six pops concerts a year and those are fun but they're not fulfilling in the sense that playing a Brahms symphony is fulfilling.
>
> I think most of us got into classical music because there's something about the depth and the breadth of classical music that drew us. No one gets into this because they think it's easy and when you play a pops concert it's like ok I'm playing my instrument and I'm playing music, but it's just notintellectually or artistically what I really want to spend my time doing… the following week when you come back to playing classical music you just think like ok yes this is home base, this feels right.

This comment can be seen across the industry, according to Small (1998). That is, employees complain about their jobs but do not contemplate changing the industry. In the case of the musicians for the symphony, they will play what they are told to play – by the conductor and musical director (I have yet to find a player who doesn't have some complaining to do about artistic choices) – and then in the off-season will do what they can to otherwise fulfill their dreams and aspirations.

The extent to which many of the players feel resigned to this being their inevitable lot in life can be shocking. Steve stated:

> Well it's difficult because we don't play during the summer so we also don't get paid during the summer which means **a lot** [author's emphasis] of people apply for unemployment during the summer **which is fine** [author's emphasis].

The ways in which musicians deal with this situation is not to question it but to make up for the discrepancy in their wages with supplemental sources of income and budgetary restrictions. The luckier ones have independent wealth or resources they have acquired over time. Steve has rental properties that provide him income. Some of the other players will actually rent from Steve. One week I stayed at one of his rental properties while the tenant, another member of the orchestra, was away on a vacation. It was a cozy, converted garage in the back of his house, fully livable, if small. Many players, such as the tenant, supplemented their income by teaching, either at a university or college or privately. Others, to reiterate, took unemployment.

One afternoon, Steve introduced me to the tenant, another member of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra named Martha. I sat down with her to talk to her about her experiences in San Antonio.

One of the main driving forces of the players' inability to escape their situation is that they are acutely aware that what they like to perform is not in large part what drives audiences to the hall. Martha stated:

> But the audience loves it so there's that reward because they'll just go crazy for the music of Paul McCartney or whatever which we've done. So it's fun for them. Another for example Lang Lang, he's a great pianist but there's a lot of great pianists. What's the difference? Can you sit here and say to me, well his technique is not as good as Kissin. I sure as hell can but yet Lang Lang is like a billionaire. I think that there's something to be said for hitting mainstream like a guitar player. You know moving around and becoming crazy.

What Steve and Martha think sets apart the financial success of classical music celebrities is making the audience go "crazy." The word "crazy" was repeated often to describe a situation in which the audience or stage performer behaved in ways that exhibited a breaking of the customary restraint performers are supposed to employ in the hall. These actions can include – on the part of the audience - clapping along to music, cheering in the middle of a piece, or singing along. On the part of the performer they can include: interacting with the audience, even by glancing in their direction, changing impromptu the piece or improvising outside of a standard improvisatory segment of the piece (typically, a cadenza), or even taking requests from audience members, as Jose Carreras did at the end of a recital performance in San Antonio. These instances of "going crazy" are normal or even restrained expressions at popular music or rock concerts. Lang Lang may be one of the few performers in classical music who has acquired somewhat of a rock star status.

By most concert pianists' standards, Lang Lang breaks the norms for "going crazy**."** Of course, this break in convention is no more than an additional performance, a way of getting the audience to also "go crazy." These "taboo" expressions are part of the act. In sum, these rehearsed expressions reveal the relationship between performer and audience as one in which audiences and performers are cued to send and receive information that validates the music being performed.

Lang Lang's performance, however, is conventional in comparison to instances in which taboos are broken wide open. Opera and symphony performances rarely make pop culture news but the occasions they do can be revealing. Opera superstar Jonas Kaufmann

was in the news in 2015 because during a performance of "O Britannia" at the BBC Proms concert, women were so enamored of him and his performance that they threw their bras to him on stage. He handled the situation reservedly. I've been to rock concerts where this is not the case – the singer will typically sniff the bra, clearly making a primal sexual symbolic gesture. The New York Philharmonic was also in the non-arts section of the *New York Times* in 2013 because of an incident where the conductor of the orchestra approached a man who did not shut off his phone, after the ring continued for two minutes during the finale of Mahler Symphony Nine. If you know this symphony that interruption should have been infuriating to any reasonable audience member or player. Indeed, the conductor finally put his baton down, the players stopped playing, and he turned to the man in the front row. Phones are nuisances in movie theaters and pop music concerts. But they are much more often accepted and the consequences are not as dear. The New York Times interviewed the man and he claimed that for two nights after the incident he could not sleep. He would not release his name because of the deep embarrassment he felt.

These episodes show a great contrast in the ways in which soloists, performers and classical audiences should behave. Audience members are expected to be silent and in complete rapture until certain appropriate moments. These moments are numerous, especially at regional level symphonies like San Antonio. In these regional events, it is acceptable for audiences to clap in the middle of a performance**,** though much less frequently than in popular music concerts.

Soloists have more freedom to behave the way they want, not in terms of repertoire, necessarily, as long as they do not breach certain etiquette. It is acceptable for Jonas Kaufmann to accept bras, but not to smell them. It is acceptable for Alan Gilbert to stop conducting but not to publicly demand for an offending patron to be expelled. Unlike formal halls, there are more relaxed rules in the Proms. A Prom is considerably different from the average classical concert that takes place in a symphony hall during Friday nights. It is a once a year celebration that is televised to a popular audience. The expectation is for people to pull the stops out and create something out of the ordinary. This is in contrast to the routine Friday night performance at Avery Fisher Hall.

Ensemble performers have less agency than soloists in most cases. They are expected to be completely silent as well, and readily follow their cues through to the applause at the end, when the conductor motions for them to stand. Steve, in an informal interview, said,

> Oh yeah, always I hate sitting in my chair and just being one of these players it's just boring. I've always.. Toscanini said "you must play as if your life depended on it". I've always had this drive of wanting to be part of something bigger than myself.

Steve commented that, when the conductor gives them some freedom, it can be liberating:

> …at the very end [of a Mahler 5 performance] he asked the strings to just free bow. We flipped, we were like I don't…It's basically just don't do what your stand partner is doing and we did it, but we all made damn sure to change the pitch right when the concertmaster changed on the same bow. So, even within this idea, [the conductor is saying,] "You can do whatever the hell you want guys. I will point when each one of these changes are happening, but I just want sound. I

> just want energy." And we're all like, "we can do that but.. .There it is.. Yeah, so it's this weird.

In general the physicality of performance is critically important in conveying meaning during a performance, therefore, the ensemble performer's actions are an embodied expression of the Western classical music tradition. For example, the Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo describes an "Eastern mind-body theory" that influences Japanese performing arts in general. "Art cannot be achieved through conceptual, intellectual understanding but must be acquired with one's body through training" (qtd. in Gillan 2013, 372). Similarly, according to Hahn, learning is done through "visual imitation, repetition, and close proximity to the teacher" (Hahn 2007, 83). The information is thus transferred into physical memory.

I do not necessarily want to dwell on this discussion of the duality between mind and body as specific to Eastern performing arts traditions but instead wish to convey that the overall process of internalizing a musical performance tradition involves highly conceptualized physical aspects. A large part of this physicality of performance for classical musicians is hand movements. However, a number of recent studies on music and gesture attest to the universality of physical gesture as part of "mental representation" (e.g., Davidson 2005, 216-218; Leane 2009, 197)[2]. Frith (1996) observes that a performance involves actions and gestures that relate to: (1) the larger than life 'stage

[2] Leane (2009) investigates the performance of Indian ragas and shows that posture and arm motion influence the affective state of the performance.

persona'; (2) the narrative content of the musical material (e.g., 'living out' the qualities of a character or emotion depicted in the piece; and (3) the individual performer's current mood and sense of self.

Similar to the ensemble group, during a performance a soloist like Lang Lang generates intense expressive intention through raised eyebrows, opening and closing his mouth, smiles during sonorous passages, crying or sobbing gestures during a momentous passage, etc. The same movement, though, may symbolize different things: a wiggle of the torso during a Beethoven piece may illustrate an ornament in the music, while the same wiggle during a Bach piece may signal the start of a long legato (played in a smooth manner) passage. Lang Lang's body and facial expressions offer audience members an insight into the articulation of musical structures as well as the narrative of an underlying meaning of the work (Davidson 2012, 623).

Steve Zeserman claims that he is different from his fellow musicians in that he allows himself to be "physically liberated." He proposes that he follows more in the path of celebrity musicians like Lang Lang. I have seen him perform, on numerous occasions, pieces that he professes to love, and, based on my observations, he restrains himself in comparison to Lang Lang. While, yes, he is sometimes more animated than some of the other performers, he remains in his seat and it would be hard for the average person to discern any substantial difference in his performance from those of any of the other bassists on stage. He sternly looks at the score, occasionally glancing up at the conductor.

When he is not performing, he puts his bow down and waits for his turn to perform again. That is, he plays with the professional restraint that has become normal for players in a symphony orchestra. In later conversation, he talks about the reason for this restraint. Steve states:

> I'm a cog in the wheel. I have to show up at a rehearsal for ten and the rehearsal ends at twelve thirty. Everything is controlled, I have to play what the conductor wants me to play, I have to play with the music that's on the stand. It's all about me giving my talents to the music to the conductor.

In every way that one could conceive that a performer would want to have freedom – freedom to play how he wants to play, where he wants to play, what he wants to play – the performer is circumscribed by a large set of codified protocols. Most gestures are either tied directly to the production of sound, or support the production of sound. What Delande (1990) calls *figurative gestures*, symbolic, rather than physical in nature are those that soloists use to convey the emotion of the piece. Soloists who have already "made it" have greater opportunity to play how they want, and what and where they want. Yet, in the context of the performance, audiences expect a greater display of emotion than they would from the members of the ensemble. Conductors too, with their considerable power, choose what is played, when it's played and how it is played. Yet, they too must conform to rules that are set by tradition and by the demands of the audience, a tradition that expects from them more emotional expression than from the orchestra. These rules are considerably laxer when performing privately, as we will see later.

Urban Renaissance in the Late 20th Century

American cities have undergone cycles of great transformations over the past century. Before the rapid industrialization of urban areas that occurred in the early 20th century, wealthy families lived in or close to the shops and restaurants of the city square. As factories expanded in the cities, many wealthy people moved out to the countryside where the landscape was less polluted, or became concentrated in sectors of the cities that remain prestine and distant from the pollution of industrial growth (Goldstein 2017, 1).

In the post-war period of 1945-1960, American cities experienced "white flight" as cheap land in the outskirts of cities became available. Construction companies experienced a tremendous boom as White families of different social incomes found housing available to fit their tastes and incomes. Sunbelt cities like San Diego and Dallas prospered and expanded, while manufacturing centers like Buffalo and Cleveland stagnated (Jackson 1995, 6). In particular, affluent and middle class families formed new communities where they purchased homes that had large yards and low population densities. The drawback for these families was the long commute they had to travel to arrive at work (Jackson 1995, 6-8). Bedroom communities and suburbia were born.

More recently, a reverse pattern took place. A pattern of gentrification, in which middle and upper middle class families moved back into urban areas, emerged in the last two decades. The reasons for the transformation of American urban neighborhoods are complex and dependent on local histories. Scholars do not agree on the causes of this emerging pattern. Generally, though, the availability of cheap property, reducing commute time, and the relocation of finance, insurance, real estate, and business

corporations into many old cities spurred employment and attracted new comers to the cities. Accompanying the employment patterns was the establishment or revival of cultural centers (Goldstein 2017, 6).

Young Americans in particular participated in the process of gentrifying the neighborhoods in urban areas as these urban areas experience "renewal." As landlords caved to large developers who built apartment buildings and condos, poor minorities were forced out of their homes, often of generations. For many of the young Americans who replaced them, the city had become an appealing place to live: city apartments and lofts had become the fashionable setting for '90s television sitcoms like *Seinfeld* and *Friends*. Developments in the suburbs began to mimick urban lofts and walk-up apartments (Goldstein 2017, 3). Within the past ten years, Dallas's downtown population – that is, the population that lives within the central business district of the city – has climbed from less than five thousand people to almost thirty thousand. In San Antonio, the downtown population is even larger. Many of these young people tend to be white and well-educated. The characteristics of life that define American suburban living are no longer as appealing to many of these young adults and couples who now rent in high-rise apartment buildings that are close to work[3] (Goldstein 2017, 1).

When I lived in San Antonio while conducting my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to live in two very neighborhoods that experienced urban renaissance in different ways. When I first arrived in San Antonio, I lived in southwest San Antonio.

[3] For a comparison of American suburbs to suburbs in other parts of the world, see Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass frontier (1985)*. Sweden, for example, which has a standard of living comparable to the US, has suburbs characterized by high rises, high density, and low amenities (Jackson 1985, 7).

This area of San Antonio developed as the Latin quarter during the period of 1910-1930, when San Antonio received thousands of refugees in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (Garcia 1991, 38**).** However, since the 1850s, San Antonio has been divided into ethnic quadrants, and in 1930, West San Antonio was majority Mexican, the East Side was mostly black, and the South Side was lower working- class whites. The North side was the rich and elite White enclave (Garcia 1991, 38).

Alamo Heights, a town completely enclosed by San Antonio and north of downtown San Antonio, was particularly wealthy. In the late 1920s, it was the only municipality in the county with all paved streets. During the Great Depression, the houses of elite business owners that populated the districts of downtown San Antonio had begun to fall into disrepair. By the end of WWII, many of the grand houses in the German enclave of King Williams District were divided up into apartments because of housing shortages among lower class industrial laborers who worked in the city. Many of these districts are now historic districts redeveloped for touristic purposes. For instance, many of the houses in King Williams District were converted to bed-and-breakfasts and lodging for tourists.

In 2010, the US Census reported that the geographic divisions among racial and ethnic groups had not significantly changed. Asians made up a larger proportion of the population than ever before. Yet, the city had become overwhelmingly populated by Mexican-Americans. Sixty-three percent of San Antonians were first, second, or third generation Mexican-Americans. Other studies have found that San Antonio remains one of the most wealth-segregated cities in the United States (Garcia 1991, 38). In the 21st

century, the wealthiest live almost exclusively in north San Antonio and the poor live everywhere else. An exodus pattern emerged in San Antonio.

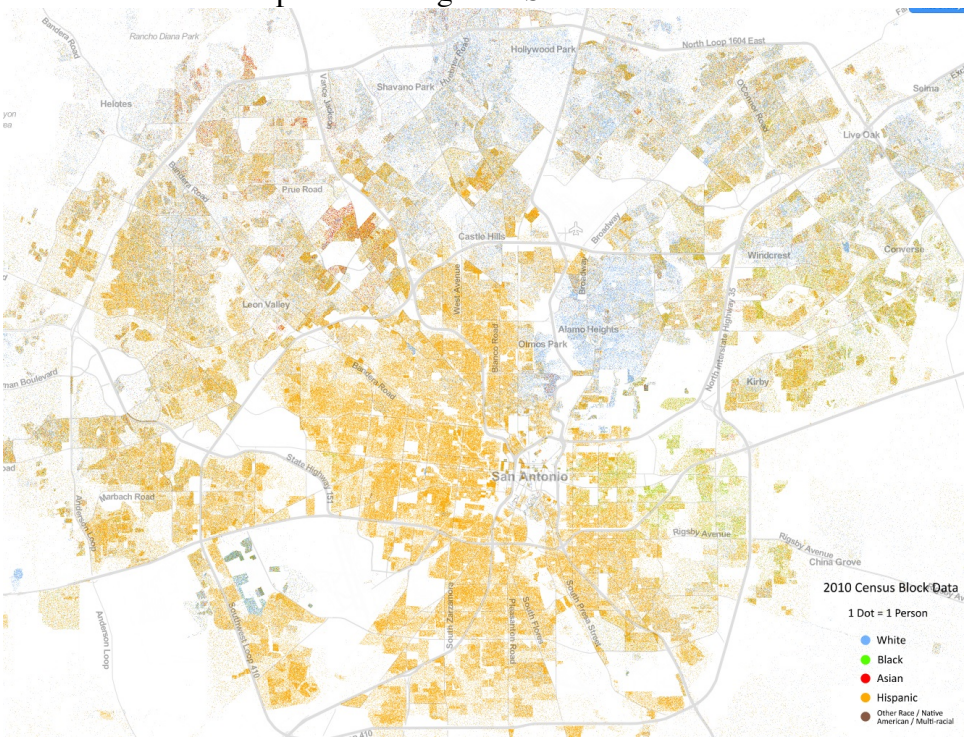

Figure 1. 2010 Census Map of San Antonio showing racial population distribution.

When I lived in South San Antonio, the first year, I lived nine miles from the performing arts and downtown. I lived far from museums, art galleries, the San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park, and the Japanese Tea Gardens. The geographical distance became an impediment to my research, as most of my informants lived in neighborhoods close to downtown or in the far north. Steve Zeserman graciously allowed me to stay free of charge with him one summer. Additionally, I house sat for another symphony member for a couple of weeks later that summer. She and Steve both lived in a gentrified neighborhood north but near downtown San Antonio, between Tobin Hill and Olmos

Park. The difference in quality of life was, of course, astounding. I could walk to libraries, to nightlife, to art galleries, and downtown was a five-minute drive away. I was living within walking distance to San Antonio College, the zoo, and Brackenridge Park.

Perhaps more importantly for the symphony orchestra members, the middle and high schools from which they received music students tended to be in north San Antonio. The practice and performance facilities for the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio (YOSA) tended to be in north San Antonio. The geographic proximity of these resources was indispensable for symphony musicians to maintain their income and their career. At the same time, the fact that many of these wealthier people who supported their children's musical education and who would consider supporting symphony hall lived so far north posed problems for the musicians.

Ilan, a musician with the San Antonio orchestra, stated: "It just takes a small amount of people to have that vision, now everyone is moving downtown. Everybody is moving down to Broadway." According to Steve, the problem with the patronage of the symphony hall is that it is located far away from the communities that would patronize their establishment. Steve said:

> If I lived in Stone Oak [San Antonio suburb], and I worked downtown, am I going to drive all the way back to Stone Oak? It's going to take me an hour in traffic. Get in my car and drive back downtown, so I can see a concert and then drive back at ten? It's ridiculous, you know what I mean? The downtown is not for people like that, they don't want to come back downtown. It takes you an hour just to get back up there with traffic.

Thus, the inconvenience of the commute has led the downtown area to be once again populated. However, the new comers are primarily young upper middle class

families (major Texas cities have added tens of thousands of people to their cores) and older retiring people. [4] As a result of this the audience for the cultural arts centers in San Antonio have grown. Steve continues, saying,

> Once you live down there, once you're down there in a small metropolis, then what? What are you going to do? You're going to eat, you're going to have friends, you're going to go for bike rides, you're going to go for walks, you're going you know go on dates, going to go to the movies, going to go hear concerts.

Martha, a clarinetist, echoes Steve's sentiments about downtown:

> I live right downtown so usually maybe two or three people will come over and we'll just play a round of cards or something and then I'll go to bed… Sometimes I'll go out with people to get sort of a late dinner and you can always find somebody who's going out in their varying degrees of how late people will stay out.

What value do people attach to a night out on the town? The greater the value they attach to the entire night, the more likely it is that they will attend a symphony concert as part of that night. Certainly for the players, it is important to not have the concert be the only part of the night. Martha says,

> So, sometimes I'll go out with people to get sort of a late dinner and you can always find somebody who's going out in their varying degrees of how late people will stay out.

Ilan echoes these sentiments, saying,

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[4] Across the US, downtowns are experiencing revitalizations in part because of people 55+ deciding to eschew taking care of a house in the suburbs in favor of tall condo buildings with skyline views and the ability to walk to restaurants, stores, and social events. Papers like the Dallas Morning News, Austin Chronicle, CBS Local sites, and USA Today have documented this "back to the city" movement, sometimes called the "urban renaissance."

> My location it works well for but it definitely doesn't work well for all locations and the city is very decentralized so it's not very efficient. So Id much prefer to live in a city with like a thriving downtown and like a metro than here. I grew up in a city and I like that, I like living in cities.

Nevertheless, the players are frustrated that the symphony orchestra as an organization cannot find its way into people's way of experiencing the city. Ilan goes on to say,

> I mean this is the seventh largest city in the country. I mean even as a metropolitan area you look at it more realistically, it's more comparable to like Kansas City or Salt Lake City or something like that. That was the joke about the great metropolis of Rochester New York being able to afford a bigger orchestra like Jacksonville, Florida or Phoenix. These aren't big cities, you know, so it's not about how much money is there. I mean, this city has more fortune 500 companies for instance than Salt Lake, they have more billionaires here than Salt Lake. It's just statistically, money is not the issue appreciation, might be an issue and I think we could do better in explaining our place, and what value we have, and making ourselves invaluable.

Many in the performing arts, then, are sensing that a potential audience is now becoming more available to them, but are still baffled as to how to attract them to this specific form of art performance and entertainment.

The Struggles of being a Western Classical Musician

Ilan says, shortly, "There'd be worse places to live." None of my informants seemed overwhelmingly thrilled to be in San Antonio, though many, in particular Steve and Brandon (the director of YOSA), seemed invested in the community. For Steve, his wealth of knowledge about the community came because he was financially invested in the city: his property values would increase if the city was attractive and kept growing. For Brandon, the director of the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio, his knowledge stems from his interest in educating youth:

> We're lucky that we have a community that really has I think a growing passion for the arts, and understanding especially for young people creating more opportunities for them. First of all, it's more diverse than any other place that I've been involved in. Being closer to the border there's a big hispanic population, definitely a different culture in especially music coming from that side of our city and yet we still have kind of this melting pot…
>
> We have a professional symphony that is, actually, everything about San Antonio is a city on the rise right? I mean, it's a professional symphony that is getting better and better artistically every year and providing some really great performances of classical repertoire. And I think that is kind of leading our city to kind of be more open to the more traditional set of classical music and then you have the Hispanic culture and you know, you go north of San Antonio and you get into these German cultures it really is kind of a weird, diverse, cultural city.

Everyone seemed to be aware of and tout as a positive thing, the "diversity" of the city. In fact, this has long been a predominantly Hispanic city and the hostility between traditionalized Mexican classical arts – mariachi, etc. – and the traditionalized American arts – Western classical music performed by symphony orchestra – isn't addressed or acknowledged by informants.

Rather, conversations between members of the orchestra, given that they tacitly accept that any of their gigs must reproduce the WCM tradition, fall into who has made the most money and by what means that, importantly, do not harm the WCM symphony orchestra tradition. I sat in on a conversation between Steve and one of his mentors, a man named George. They talked at great length about where mutual acquaintances had found jobs performing Western classical music:

> George: What did you think about Sebastian? You've worked under him for some years.
> Steve: I find it to be interesting because when he first got the job, it just seemed like he wanted to make the orchestra better. His only objective was to make us better. I look at a city that's the seventh largest city in the country. I look at, they're building us a 205 million performing arts center, he has a board, he has a really great orchestra. You really can't screw it up and we're only getting paid 29,000 dollars a year. The kid's 22 years old and he's getting 55,000 as an orchestra director at Hobby Middle School. 55,000 - now I'm proud. Or your student Michael. He got a job teaching at a private school.

In the recollection of Steve's mentor, the symphony has never reached the high standards of most professional orchestras of big American cities, measured by how long the season was:

> Steve: That was what, 39 weeks right[5]?
> George: No, it wasn't that many we never got that high. I think it was about 32. I think, that's my memory it was a long time ago. It was sufficient in those days, it was a living wage I think. At the time it was a good job, it was a pretty decent salary. Of course now, the top orchestras are paying six figures to their people. Unfortunately San Antonio can't do that so we'll just have to wait and see what happens. I don't know if things will develop from here there's a chance. By the end of your career I wonder where…

If there is a chance of something happening, it will be in 20 or 30 years (by the end of Steve's career). In the meantime, there are other opportunities for musicians in the area. Brandon Henson recruits them for the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio (YOSA), an organization that recruits and helps train gifted young classical musicians. These students perform relatively high-level repertoire in front of audiences.

In general, the part of the year in which the symphony orchestra is not performing sees symphony musicians looking for other job opportunities, one of which is YOSA. I

[5] Full-time orchestras get paid for 39 weeks. The fewer weeks, the less prestigious or well-funded the orchestra. San Antonio struggles to fund a 30-week season.

sat down for an interview with Brandon and asked him where he recruited teachers for YOSA. He said:

> No, I mean the majority of them are symphony musicians but we do have some other freelance professional musicians in the area that maybe will, you know, they're subs in the symphony or they're doing some other regional symphonies in the area that sort of thing. And then also educators too, so every now and then we can pull in professional educators that study one instrument type of thing that would qualify for sectional coaching. We're contracting out so many sectionals now that, you know, not all symphony players are available all the time so we really have to find those additional resources where we can pull in other professional musicians and educators that are looking for work as well to come in and do that.

Turner Partain, one of the subs in the symphony, has a remarkably different career from that of a full time member of the symphony. The way he makes a living and his movement in and around the city is substantially different from a full-time member of the band. When a member of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra leaves San Antonio to visit another city, it is usually not for a gig.

Most of the supplemental jobs someone like Steve Zeserman may do – tutoring, teaching, home business - are done within his home city. Turner, on the other hand, depends on work in other cities to make a living for himself while he gears up for auditions and seeks that permanent position somewhere else. Turner regularly leaves his home in Austin and travels as far east as Abilene and as far south as the Rio Grande Valley.

Steve is one of the busiest men I know. He runs a t-shirt printing business online, he develops properties to rent, he performs with the symphony orchestra, and he has several students, whom he sees several days out of the week. Steve is a different person

in these sessions from the person he is on stage in a concert. At a concert, he is restrained in his movements. He is restrained in his communication with everyone but his instrument. During lessons, he is considerably more laid back.

The lesson itself is done on a one-on-one basis. Steve is paid a good deal of money - $80 per hour - and most students meet with him twice a week. Lessons are conducted either in his converted garage or in the back of the house, depending on if the garage is being rented out. When the student enters, there is some friendly banter between Steve, the student, and the parent. The parent likes to hover usually for a bit before leaving. The student mumbles as part of the conversation, though sometimes the student is more forthcoming.

After banter in the front of the house, they retire to the back of the house for the lesson. He doesn't usually have his own bass on hand and each student brings their own. Usually, the student has been practicing one or two pieces from the previous week. At the beginning of the session, he has them play for him and he goes from there. But Steve admits that they often have not touched their instrument since the last lesson, which visible frustrates him, and it is immediately evident to him if they have or have not.

The session itself is a fascinating intimate scene. As the student plays, Steve moves his hands up and down as if he were holding a bass himself, playing the piece himself. His hands move up and down with the melody. He also incorporates the rhythmic aspects of the music in the movement, similar to a conductor.

These movements are intelligible to Steve and his students. They keep a close eye on him. His movements, to me, are similar to those employed by other musicians, but do

not constitute a uniform systematic code for articulation of meaning. They articulate melody, rhythm, and even non-technical ideas like emotion or passion but not in a formal way. There are musical teaching traditions where there is more uniformity and even a system of meaning, for instance, in the teaching of Okinawan classical music. But even within that system of teaching, there is no single "correct" standardized pattern of hand movements, and particular movements are characteristic of one's own teaching style (Gillan 2013, 385).

Steve claims that he does not need the money and that he therefore discards students who do not work hard. However, he is a musician and is constantly in need of income streams. He often claims that he does these things for fun, yet he keeps many of these students who return time after time, unprepared. So, there is a tension always at work between his musical ideals and his cautious frugality, a tension that runs through many of the decisions in the lives of musicians.

I went on a bike ride with Steve one balmy afternoon. Along the way we heard the strains of a popular orchestral piece I can't remember now wafting over the park. He knew where it was coming from – the band practice of a San Antonio high school. It became apparent to me then that music was not only important to him but also important to the community. It was important to the parents because their children performed themselves and their community identities through these tacitly accepted forms of expression. It was important to the students for much the same reason, particularly the first - it allowed them to become good at something and proud of something that they did. Music is important to Steve because even when it doesn't fill his life, it somehow does.

He is attracted to it. It attracts him. As we rode, he played the classical iTunes radio station through his phone. He hummed along as he rode along. I generally stayed behind him or pulled up alongside him as we rode, and he pointed out different landmarks along the trail.

He used to be a champion athlete. He showed me a newspaper from about a decade ago showing him having won a long-distance racing competition. But as he became more involved in making money and supporting a wife and kids, he exercised less and was less careful with his diet, according to him. In recent months, as a single man again, he has begun exercising again.

Many of my informants are ambitious and talented and have had, by some standards, excellent success in being chosen to be a part of the San Antonio Symphony. Yet, there are musicians who do not get chosen, despite their talent. These people can become freelance musicians but most likely they will become full-time teachers at the high school or lower level. In their spare time, they may keep up their ambition.

Across the country, there are amateur orchestras that perform in various venues and with varied success and longevity. I had the pleasure of sitting in on the rehearsal performances of a very new and emergent such orchestra, the Dallas Unity String Orchestra, a collection of local amateur and professional musicians who came together to perform classical and pop pieces simply for "the love of music."

The first night I attended their rehearsals they had set up a rehearsal space in a conference room typically reserved for book-signing events at a bookshop in Dallas. It became clear why they met there – the owners allowed them to gather there for free. This

is one of the many costs associated with running an orchestra that amateur orchestras cannot afford.

The founder of the orchestra was an African-American man, a high school bandleader from Tulsa, Oklahoma with aspirations to teach orchestra at a Dallas area high school. He himself participated in the Tulsa Youth Symphony when he was young and performed in various college orchestras, as well.

They wore casual clothing - t-shirts and shorts and sandals, a stark contrast to the tyical garb at a public performance, during which most musicians in amateur or chamber groups will wear uniformly colored, typically dark, and more elegant clothing, in particular pants rather than shorts. There were some black musicians, some white musicians, old and young. There was one person on bass, two people on cello, and most were on violin and viola. It was predominantly women who joined the group that night.

Angela Winn, a young white woman, was a freshman at SMU – a private university close in proximity to the bookstore. She had been playing cello for about seven years – since high school. Tadeshi, a young black woman, was studying biochemistry at SMU and had six or seven years experience on violin. (In his casting calls, the director asks for several years experience with one's instrument).

They spent the first part of the night talking. "Get in your sections and practice your pieces. On the 25th, I have reserved this room for people who want to meet and have a sectional." Some people nodded. He went on, "Also, I found a rehearsal spot for us – that is free." Applause. "You can visit yourself; don't be scared – it's being renovated but

they were very glad to give us a space to practice for free: 'Yes, we'd love to have you!' By October, it should be 'nearly there.'"

Afterwards, they ran through a few pieces before dispersing for the evening.

These sessions are reminiscent to me of garage band sessions popular among aspiring rock and pop musicians. The avenues available to them are often just as unglamorous. Many resort to hawking their wares on streetcorners. Because of the internet and social media, there has been a huge industry of musicians who perform from their homes but can broadcast worldwide and make money off of ad revenues. This group had yet to tap into that market.

For some reason I do not understand, social media is not used to as large an extent among classical organizations to promote their music. However, it's clear that musicians do use social media in order to share musical experiences. When I visited with Steve's mentor, we ended the session by "jamming out" to an old performance of Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, final movement. The equipment used was all from the 80s, but this was clearly his preferred method of sharing his music. Meanwhile, back at Steve's house, he often showed me on his tablet computer online Youtube videos of his favorite bassists performing. These videos were often popular music performances.

The Struggle to Appeal to the Next Generation of Audiences

In the discussion of the reasons for the circumscribing of agency on the part of conductor, soloist, and orchestra player, I argued that audience taste in addition to tradition determine what is played and how it is played. The audience base with the most potential – young city-dwellers – tend to be uninterested, and in San Antonio this is

exacerbated by the uneasy attempts at collaboration between traditional Mexican-American and Mexican music and Western classical music.

People that do attend, however, do not form one bloc. We can usefully identify three major classes, the elite donor, the superfan, and the casual patron (Benzecry 2011: 3). Casual patrons will fill up the majority of seats but only come occasionally – they come from all education and class levels. The Superfan will mostly take the cheap seats but will always attend – they tend to come from lower class levels but higher education levels. The elite donor will buy a subscription at the least and at the most will give tremendous amounts in donation money every year – they tend to come from the highest-class levels but not necessarily highest education level.

Isn't whether someone subscribes to the season or donates the best indicator of a fan? It is true that one of the best ways for a classical music organization to make money and to reassure its donors is to increase its number of subscriptions, but this metric is not as useful in determining the type or kind of any particular audience member. Subscriptions run the gamut of kinds of patrons – casual, superfan, and elite donors may or may not have subscriptions.

Subscriptions occasionally afford the subscriber additional perks, mostly consisting of emails that detail additional fund-raising events one can attend. I have collected emails from all the major opera companies in Texas for the past couple of years. Right now, for between $30-50, I can either support the San Antonio Opera by going to a painting and wine session or support the Dallas Opera by eating a five-course meal prepared by a local celebrity chef. These kinds of offers are common, year after year.

The experience of being a fan certainly depends on one's status as a donor. My conversations with Margaret King Stanley and archival research reveal the stark difference in the ways in which donors and non-donors experience the opera. At one point, she said:

> I guess at an older age [as a middle-aged woman] when I started going to Opera number one since there wasn't a lot of stuff in the Performing Arts at that time in San Antonio it was the thing to do. Number two you saw everybody you knew or didn't know. Number 3 at the beginning you could kind of dress up which made it kind of glamorous. Number four there were always parties afterwards some of which I helped plan which made it interesting because the Stars would come and you could meet them face-to-face. so there were a lot of reasons I enjoyed going and I also fell in love with opera at that time and wanted to see absolutely everything. and Victor was very smart in choosing the artists and that was added at a time when people didn't fly all over the world, tonight in Vienna and tomorrow I'm in Berlin, and so they come here on the train at first and spend a week here and they have to be entertained, driven around, and taken to lunch and that was fun too but because they came to stay and didn't have to fly somewhere the next day they were famous stars but he got them more reasonably. now we'd be competing and will be competing in this town with the Metropolitan Opera's and Santa Fe operas and certain time of year and all other companies.

Many of these people – Margaret King Stanley and the former manager of San Antonio Symphony – specifically say they wanted to know all there was to know, experience all there was to experience. What satisfied them most was getting to meet the famous stars and experience each of the operas. The difference between the two is that in retirement – both in their 80s – Margaret King Stanley is still active in the arts community and is, indeed, one of the founders of the new company that is bringing opera to San Antonio and filling the void left after Mark Richter's company shut down. Meanwhile, the former manager is content living in his childhood home in Austin, a

beautiful secluded retreat overlooking the Lake Austin River. In his words, "I've seen everything there is to see; there's no reason to go out to the opera anymore."

Margaret King Stanley, in our interview, seemed most excited to talk about the many superstars that used to regularly visit San Antonio:

> We had the major names here, whether it was Dorothy Kirsten, who ended up marrying someone else's husband here and lived here for a while. I don't think that lasted forever. We had an incident where one woman ran off with one of the singers. You know all those things had happened. We didn't get second level singers here because Victor acknowledged and he booked the very best. So I got to see Astrid Varnay [Swedish-American, one of the three leading Wagnerian sopranos of the time – along with Birgit Nilsson and Martha Modl] sing Elektra, I got to get to know Beverly Sills extremely well, I introduced her to Rudolf Bing who was my guest at the opera here one night and they had never met even though they were both in New York and she had always wanted to get an appointment with him to sing and never could.

The introduction of Beverly Sills to conductor Rudolf Bing – their relationship produced incredible music – is documented in Beverly Sills biography. The way she explains it, an usher introduced her to Rudolf Bing in San Antonio. King Stanley admitted to me that she felt slighted by this. It is clear that the personal association with opera singers is a critical component of the heavy donor's interest in the opera. Yet, the level of access afforded to donors is completely different than that afforded to non-donors. While many post videos of their favorite opera stars on Yotuube, the closest they may get to the superstars is outside after the show in the alley before they get into their transportation.

One night in San Antonio, after watching the opening night gala, a night that saw such superstars as bass Eric Owens and sopranos Patricia Racette and Lisette Oropesa, I

went out around to the back of the building. There were five other people there – all of them were part of the same group of young 20-something men and women. When the three stars emerged from the door leading out to the street, the leader of the group, a tall, portly effeminate man exclaimed to the group of singers, "oh my gosh, we love you! Will you take a picture with us?" The group crowded around the three stars and snapped a couple of pictures with their cell phones. Immediately thereafter, the singers left in their waiting van.

The entire encounter lasted about 30 seconds but made the young group very excited. They went off to finish their night. What was odd to me was the lack of people crowding the stars leaving from the rear entrance. With so many young people applauding inside the theater, one would expect to see the kind of crowds one sees outside of Broadway theater rear entrance. If experiencing intimate encounters with music stars is an important component of young people's enjoyment of it, then how have they either chosen to ignore this method of experiencing a close encounter or are ignorant of it (Stevens 2004, 67)?

For the young people who did attend the concert but were not outside, most simply do not know that they can go around back and see the artists in person. Nor do they tend to participate in the programs outside of the Friday or Saturday evening concert during which artists meet in more intimate settings with audience members. Many of these events are free to attend and take place on weekends and evenings, ideal times for many people. For reasons I do not know, young people choose to do other things with their free time than meet with the artists they like.

The spaces in which the average opera listener and the opera performer can interact are few, which creates considerable distance between them. That distance is increased further among those fans who don't see themselves as average listeners. If the average opera listener is an older, well-educated white person, then the many young Mexican-American people who occasionally attend opera concerts are even farther away from the artists with whom they wish to establish a stronger relationship outside of the concert setting. Why is this?

First, integration of performing arts into people's daily lives will not be successful if people cannot relate it to the other parts of their lives. A night listening to the symphony orchestra, for instance, merely forms the center of an evening of entertainment, not the entirety of it. The ease with which people flow into and out of the urban core, the density of the middle class urban dwellers, and the extent to which the entire city can make the urban core a "work, live, play" area dictates the success of an opera company more than any kind of program, outreach, or advertisement orchestrated by the company can. That is, an opera company can only do so much to ensure that young people who live in the metro area want to go.

During my time in Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, I went with several other young people to concerts. In these different cities, the student ticket programs for each company vary in their robustness. In general, Houston and Dallas performing arts companies have the least generous programs. Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio have more generous ones in: greater availability, greater discounts, and – critically for most potential buyers - the ability to buy two tickets with one student ID. This last component

of the student rush ticket is critical to getting young audience members into symphony hall.

Most students and young people do not have substantially different tastes from the average classical music aficionado. For example, they want to see big stars perform popular works on Friday and Saturday evening. These tickets are in high demand and thus are less likely to be available for student discounts. For students who are fans of classical music, the ability to have some flexibility in choosing what performances they can get tickets for is important.

It is a give and take with management. Management wants young students to come but cannot afford to give high demand tickets away at a lower cost. They in general are only willing to give discounts on off-nights like Thursday evenings or concerts without a big headliner (other than the orchestra, of course).

Discounted tickets are important for young students - people with college IDs older than 35 are generally excluded from student discounts - but management can experience pushback by audience members who are paying considerably more money – up to ten times more money - for the exact same seats. One evening, I was talking to a man in the dress circle (second most expensive tier) at the Dallas Opera and he grumbled to me about his wife dragging him to the opera. He had donated her ticket because she couldn't make it that night, and I had snagged it with my student ID. He said that he pays so much money for these seats that he doesn't want them to go to waste. So he sits through a performance about which he grumbles the whole time – but perhaps secretly

enjoys? – and donates his other ticket back to the opera house. He still had a less chagrined attitude than a man I spoke to in Austin.

Another man at the Austin Lyric Opera asked me how much I paid for my seat next to his family and I made the mistake of telling him – "$10." He asked me how I managed to do that when he had to pay $60 per person for his family. I told him about my student discount and he said "that must be nice" and ended the conversation. A few weeks later, the Austin Lyric Opera discontinued orchestra seats for students. I do not know if our conversation had anything to do with it. As a young person myself, I had varying experiences when attending supplementary events that extended the experience of going to the symphony or opera. Some were happy to see young people and told me so. Others would be less kind. I had someone tell my friend to "be quiet" because she whispered something to me. My friend, who had previously never attended an opera performance, decided not to return. She felt unwelcome. At a talk at the Dallas Opera, I arrived late and stood by the door. A patron thought I was an usher and chastized me for keeping the door open while the talk was going on. Potential friction between new and regular patrons over inevitable breaches of etiquette continue to be a wall that prevents many patrons, particularly young or those with non-white racial backgrounds ones.

Another reason for distancing is that the musical tastes of the players themselves are unknown to audiences. While popular music performers often cover the works associated with other performers and perform on stage with them, collaboration among individual artists is considerably rarer, in large part because of the relative dearth of pieces of music in the standard repertoire that are written for two or more soloists. While

there are occasional instrumental musicians (typically, violinists or pianists) who have careers that include crossover success into popular music, it is typically singers, with their steady repertoire of music written for multiple soloists, who find the most financial and popular success.

More importantly for popular singers, much of their repertoire is composed and produced by the same industry songwriters, who then distribute their songs to different artists. Comparatively, the classical music "industry" is far more localized. Certain people within opera and ballet companies travel to see other productions put on by other companies in other cities in order to determine their feasability for staging those productions in their home city, but for many musicians, seeing other musicians perform is not something they care to do. During my interview with Martha, I asked her about this.

> Ernest: Did you go to concerts, go to recitals or anything?
> Martha: I didn't go to that many, honestly. The LA Phil was right across the street but I didn't go.
> Ernest: Why?
> Martha: Too busy, I was pretty busy and they didn't have a very good student ticket deal when I was there. So you never knew if you could get student tickets so if there was something I knew I really wanted to see I would buy tickets in advance. Also, I had been spoiled when I was at Oberlin I used to drive into the city to see the Cleveland Orchestra. I know the LA Phil's gotten a lot better in the past couple of years but the Cleveland was so much better and when I got to LA, the first time I heard the LA Phil I was like what is this? What are we doing? And you know I wasn't good enough to be in the LA Phil obviously, I'm still not but I didn't necessarily want to spend my free time listening to them if that makes sense.

People involved with the symphony, even if they are not always aware of the particular moments that turn potential audience members away from classical music

performances – moments of what we may call symbolic divestment – nevertheless contend that audience members need to be educated about classical music in order to be able to enjoy it.

Education and the Sacralization of Classical Music

As many of the orchestra members attest to, a background of education in classical music is necessary for one to enjoy it. When one enters any hall to see a live show, be it a musical, a theater play, or an opera, ushers greet the audience member with a program, a book with advertisements from local businesses as well as the details of the show – the names of the sponsors, the performers, and the plot details. The program says something about who the audience is and what interests them. One of my informants writes program notes for a classical music organization in San Antonio. What she says is:

> Program notes are tricky because you want to give the audience something to listen for without also giving it all away or without getting really clinical and dry and boring. If you have a piece that you haven't heard before and there are good program notes that's the best combination. I actually write program notes for the Olmos Ensemble which is a chamber music series here in town and I always try to tell a little bit about the composer's life, only like the interesting things, like where they were born and who influences them like what famous people influenced them and what their instrument was if they had an instrument and maybe some other things that they were really interested in. So for example I just did a piece by Messiaen who was a twentieth century French composer. It can be very difficult to listen to actually but once you know that it's all bird calls it makes so much more since. He had perfect pitch and he would go on walks in the woods and transcribe bird calls and then write them out.

One of the major challenges arts organizations see is in getting potential audience members to even understand the work the performers do. The ways arts organizations educate include: program notes, intermission meet with the players, pre-show talks. But

most agree that educating the youth is the key way to build a potential audience and donor base for the performing arts. Two of my informants have worked for years or, in the case of Margaret King Stanley, decades with young people.

> Ernest: Why do you think children are receptive to the performing arts?
> Margaret: Because nobody's told them it's awful. And their parents haven't said you know I can't stand that it's in a foreign language or whatever people say. I've seen with my own eyes because I taught for 10 years before I went into Performing Arts.

There are many guilds that support the performing arts that perform different functions. Many of them are social. These are in large part dominated by women. At least one of my informants looked with disdain on these:

> So I said yes to the Opera Guild and then I went in as president and then I realized that they were just a social organization and I didn't really want to get mixed up with the social organization there are enough of those so I went ahead and let it be social for some of the people that want that but we have to do something better so that's why I started the educational.

Clearly, educating children is valuable to many people involved in the performing arts. It is odd that there is this distinction between classical and popular music and education and entertainment. The values that people involved in performing arts espouse carry many implicit assumptions. Let's break down a statement by Brandon Henson the director of the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio (YOSA) after I asked him the reason for the existence of YOSA:

> We are creating an opportunity for kids to change their lives and to change the lives of each other. You know, we have kids that are first generation college students that attribute our time in YOSA to being able to do that. The fact that

> they can study with and get encouragement from their peers that brings them to a level where they can get college scholarships. That's a transformational experience that they have that they wouldn't have had without us.

The way in which Hanson "sells" the value of YOSA to me (and it is clear, especially during my interviews with management people, that they are trying to portray their organization in the best possible light, with local citizens as their perceived audience through my questions) is by showing the way in which it can benefit "first generation college students" which is a short hand way of describing the many children of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.

Their way of attracting the parents of young Mexican-Americans is to offer them what they want most – the chance for their children to go to college – to fulfill a dream of moving up that they themselves could not accomplish with their limited resources. "Scholarships" is a buzzword that conjures up images of going to college for free, a tantalizing prospect for many youngsters and their parents.

After offering the prospect of class mobility through education, the music-making itself is a secondary consideration: "it's just kind of like that gravy on top, right? I mean it really is." Even for the children themselves, the music does not rank as the best part of their experience. "the team building exercises that we go through and the getting to know you exercises, the icebreakers…those were the most memorable because that's where [the students] first met their best friend."

All of these practical reasons for doing this are perfectly fine on their own. There is no need to go beyond that to look for some philosophical underpinning, but time and again interviewees rationalize their devotion to the art by appealing to the sacred: "for a lot of those kids, those performances are the most meaningful." Passing along that feeling

that classical music is uniquely meaningful among ways of music-making is important to the education process that these people are willing to get involved with.

There are specific codings in the way this goal of sacralizing music takes place in educating kids. It is revealed in another statement by the director:

> Another kind of meaningful moment for me, was post rehearsal where the operations team did not perform very well. We let a couple things slip through the cracks and that was.. A little tough to take. And then looking back on it and then having conversations of you know what we're trying to accomplish in rehearsals led to a great saying that our Music Director came up with it was just like: "Remember the goal. The goal is for these kids to have an amazing experience every single time they're a part of this.

Many of these informants themselves had these sorts of experiences growing up - a moment when their instrument "clicked" for them. Many of them had parents who pushed them to perform instruments.

It may be no surprise to find out that parents of musicians were supportive of them and their aspirations throughout their career. Through the laziness (Ilan reports: "I wasn't good at my instrument, I'm lazy I don't like to work), short sightedness (Turner curses himself still for turning down a gig with a professional orchestra at 19 because of vacation plans), and self-doubt, they have supported them. I pressed Martha the most on this point and she pushed back somewhat:

> Ernest: I wanted to ask going back to your childhood or growing up in North Carolina. Your parents wanted you to practice playing music, what stuff did they take you guys to do kind of outside of the house?
> Martha: I think just to clarify I think they wanted us to appreciate music and we gained that appreciation through a practical application or through learning it ourselves.

I am sure that there are many people who also had parents who pushed them but did not succeed. What ties career musicians together is that they continued to succeed at their instrument independently and beyond the initial parental push. They began working with higher performing teachers and being given more responsibility in these settings.

Conclusion

I find no evidence to suggest that Western classical music ever lost the role it has played, at least in terms of the formation and reification of a hegemonic national identity and of a cosmopolitan elite, for those who participated in its enjoyment in a metropolitan area with a large population that has historically been denied full participation in the hegemonic and elite status enjoyed by many of the proponents of Western classical music. It, of course, has played many functional roles for many people involved, facilitating local community involvement, lubricating social relationships, educating youth, and creating networks of talented musicians and performers. It has created careers that allow individuals to own a home and raise a family. Yet, the overarching narratives at play are ones that have not changed since the widespread dissemination of WCM in the United States. While these overarching narratives may be less often explictly stated the farther one strays from the border, it becomes clear in its deployment in San Antonio that WCM remains a sacred form of Art.

The enjoyment of classical music is not and has not been subversive in any meaningful way. That is part of its allure and perhaps part of its ultimate downfall as a well-funded and practiced art form. In the US today, the profane is "in." The sacred is "out." Conductors like Dudamel and Alan Gilbert, singers like Renee Fleming and Eric

Owens, or composers like Jake Hegge or Jonathan Dove are not household names. Music audiences worship instead contemporary pop music superstars Katy Perry and Justin Bieber[6]. Some, in the vein of Adorno, would claim that these singers and actors are flashes in the pan – like the Al Jolson and Bob Hope of yesteryear. They are worshipped by their generation but do not have a system of immortalization - of sacralization - in place to convert them into eternal geniuses, like the composers of the standard classical repertoire. One should recall that, by and large, the musicians of the time period – save the occasional Paganini - are not immortalized because of their talents as performers but because of their talents as composers. Composers of popular music, while rich, powerful and well known in their industry, are not immortalized, either – except by insiders in their industry.

For all of the differences in the practice of making music that can be detailed, for all of the differences over time in performance practice, and for all of the differences among amateur groups, early music groups, authentic performance groups, contemporary classical music groups, for the four centuries in which European and American music making of this variety has taken place, here we see a persistent influence of the dialectical relationship between the profane and the sacred.

Whether we are talking about the composer, the ouevre, the score, the instrument, the conductor, or the space, the continued reinvention of these objects, people, and spaces as sacred tugs on audience members and promoters of this music in one direction, while

[6] The Sun reports that Katy Perry's father, a Christian minister, said, "I was at a concert of Katy's where there were 20,000. I'm watching this generation and they were going at it. It almost looked like church. I stood there and wept and kept on weeping and weeping. They're loving and worshipping the wrong thing."

the demands of a neo-capitalist system of music dissemination and distribution and the accompanying demands of discourse.

For audiences, the tug of the profane pulls them in the direction of wanting better production – better sound, better lighting, glamorous young actors, special effects, a crystal clear image with sophisticated cameras. To that end, the Metropolitan Opera of New York (the Met, for short) in 2002 began streaming live performances of its operas to participating movie theaters across the country through a program they called Met HD (High-Definition). During a Met HD performance of the Mozart opera *Die Zauberflote* that I attended in San Antonio, I asked a young woman who was watching what she thought about it. She snorted, "I thought this would be HD. This is not HD." During that same production, an older couple turned to me grumbling, "Did you know this was going to be in English?" Their problem with it was that it was not in the original German. In both cases, from the perspective of the audience members, there appeared to be a violation of their expectations not for the screening by the local theater but for the Met's productions.

Of course, this music can at all times be characterized as profane or as sacred. One can argue that it is profane because of events like the San Antonio Symphony performing mariachi music at a concert with a mariachi band. One could argue it is sacred because during that performance not one jot of any sacred European composers score was changed or marred by the intrusion of a mariachi band into that sacred hall space (a space often used for comedy shows and pop music events). Show tunes and film composers influence the larger trends in orchestral music. Contemporary composers like

Philip Glass and Steve Reich are tremendously influenced by music they discovered in India. Minimalism in fact originates in Indian classical music.

Neither interpretation of opera – a secular interpretation or sacred interpretation excludes the other: both are valid. They instead give us clues about what it is that people idealize and what they do to achieve that idealization. That point was brought home to me during a recent vacation to Cancun. As you go down the main highway that runs along the coast, you see advertisements for a variety of jungle and ocean adventures – snorkeling, ziplining, scuba diving, surfing, visiting ruins, etc. One advertisement caught my eye because of its unusual image. It was a strikingly abstract painting of large eyes in goggles looking at colorful fish. "Absolutely Breathtaking!" shouted the title. At the same time as I saw that, my phone dinged and I saw an email from the Austin Lyric Opera: "Help us end our breathtaking season!"

Even though the spot, called Xel-Ha, is only one of a dozen places in the area to eat a bite and do some snorkeling, the advertisement sells it as something more. In fact, most of the advertisements and people in the area who work in the tourist industry sell Cancun as a "slice of heaven" or "paradise on earth" or "a return to the savage beauty of nature." The ancient temple ruins and pristine waters of the area further help to sell this idea of the land as sacred. Of course, Cancun since the '70s is a government-funded attempt to make tourism a part of Mexico's economy. As my wife pointed out to me when I said I wanted to go to Xel-Ha, "it's not a breathtaking natural wonder the way they make it out to be." The truth is, neither is opera. It's just how they make it out to be.

Chapter 4: Musicians, Management, and Audiences

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss in greater depth the consequences of these tensions between concepts of highbrow and lowbrow and their relationship – both contemporary and historical - to the dominance of capitalist discourse in the reception of performing arts, as well as in the internal psychological valuation of the performing arts by its audiences. I do this by looking at the structured dispositions of audience members and individuals who are part of the San Antonio Symphony – both in the management and in the musicianship.

I interpret their understanding of the function of the performing arts in society and their function as purveyors of the performing arts in society through a lens that is developed in the work of Appadurai on commodities, following Marx's work on commodities in modern capitalist systems.

I contend that there is a complex relationship among musicians, management/artistic directors, and audiences that is manifested in the trajectory of classical music repertoire over time and the spaces in place that it occupies, as well as the relationship it has to the rest of these people's lives. For musicians, the sense that the purpose of performing this music is to elevate oneself and one's audience by experiencing these sacralized pieces finds conflict with the sense among management that the purpose of any music is to be commoditized and sold to a consumer base. Meanwhile, audience members – many of whom are on boards of corporations that

underwrite these productions – desire moments of symbolic investiture and cultural significance.

Thus, much of the discourse around the performing arts, regardless of the role of the individual, falls within discourses of nationalism and sacralization of the high arts and within discourses of cosmopolitanism, or integration into a globalized economy as a major urban metropolis, and commodification, or an object with economic value (Appadurai 1986, 3).

Of course, cosmopolitanism can be linked to or be a part of nationalism. Amado's study of Guatemalan marimba music shows that appreciation for marimba music is linked to a sense of cosmpolitanism that is important to a new shift in Guatemalan national identity. Cosmopolitanism is similarly a part of the United States nation-state identity. The great music halls of the US remain a mecca for Asian, Middle Eastern, and European classical music superstars.

However, classical music does not only allow American cities to integrate into a world music scene. Participants also use Western classical music to adhere to a dogma of exceptionalism for the United States. The extent to which an individual values cosmopolitanism more or nationalism more, depends, I find, on the extent to which they are involved in less visible forms of WCM performance - early music practice, modern classical music, and authentic music performance.

Among players at the San Antonio Symphony, there is little regional unity or allegiance: the faster they can leave San Antonio, the better. That is, they strive to be participants in classical music as its performed in global meccas of the arts, often talking

about SASO as a stepladder to greater things. Those who have made San Antonio their home – people like YOSA director Brian Henson - are more likely to talk about the beneficial things that classical music education brings to the next generation, or the inheritors of the city. People like Henson or King-Stanley are more likely to see classical music as an elevated way to reproduce the values of the local community than symphony players who value the music as what Appadurai calls a "hard cultural form."

For symphony players, San Antonio's classical music scene is a way for them to participate, embodied, in the reproduction of values that transcend the localized values of San Antonio. They do not resent, necessarily, the fare in San Antonio that tends towards Spanish language composers and Texan history, but they do regard the most valuable of Western composers as the meat, or the most authentically sacred, of the repertoire that they perform. In the next section, I will delineate the source of this feeling.

Sacralization and loss of the creative spark and symbolic investiture

The standard concert repertoire and the modern American symphony orchestra were fully formed when Dallas became a significantly populated city, after the turn of the century. Meanwhile, San Antonio, like other large Southern cities of the time – Memphis, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Nashville - had been home or host to classical music performers since the 1850s. Heading into the end of the nineteenth century, the repertory performed at classical music concerts was heterogeneous in many ways. It was performed in many locations: – outdoors in the square, at the church and the theater, and on the street. The repertoire included arrangements of popular, national and patriotic tunes.

Music was performed at any excuse for a social gathering – balls, festivals, holidays, masses, etc.

At the turn of the century, class differences were becoming more pronounced and privileged classes enjoyed music in private, while lower-class people still were relegated to public outdoor concerts (Levine 1988, 78). It is this shift that Levine points to as being instrumental to the sacralization of classical music – of turning it into a tool of creating a safe space for the elite. Along with this came an effort to change the tastes of the lower classes away from the enjoyment of classical music and towards mass or popular music.

The sacralization underway impacted Dallas greatly, but the established music scene in San Antonio helped keep the sense of regional cultural identity extant, even until the turn of the twenty-first century. The border is critical as well to an understanding of the ability of this regional sense of identity to transcend the major economic and societal changes to take place in the 20th century.

Raymond Williams points to the growth of the reading public and the rise of the popular press as creating this shift towards a mass culture, a culture neither "folk" nor elite (Denning 2011, 80). Bourdieu characterizes elite culture after this shift toward mass culture as simply a cluster of cultural commodities of distinction (Ibid. 2011, 80).

The Dallas WCM scene has more successfully than San Antonio sacralized WCM. They have to a certain extent turned it into a comomdity in that way. San Antonio has less successfully commoditized their music. This is evident in their inferior marketability and marketing.

For many cultural scholars, creativity – both individual and cultural - is critically important for the survival of a culture. Franz Boas remarked that the popularity of pattern books in Pacific Coast Native American art signaled the decadence of folk art (Boas 1955, 157). Boas thus associated codified imitation with the end of creative practice (Wilf 2002, 32). Wilf includes Victor Turner and Max Weber among those for whom the creative space is created in the liminal or abnormal ruptures of the routine. Even more recently in the anthropology of creativity, within which scholars typically argue that creativity is "integrated into the mundane arenas of everyday life," creativity is still referred to as "[erupting] at unpredictable times and on unexpected occasions" (Lavie et. al 1993, 5). That is, creativity is still placed within the bounds of the individual person or singular moment. What Levine (1988) argues is that creativity, at least in the performing arts, came to be found within these bounds as society slowly moved away from viewing great works of art as malleable.

Clearly, we must, for the time being, do away with any notion that the encounter with the creative spark in the performing arts is only to be found on stage and within the bounds of the rules of the performing arts because if we do not, we therefore ignore, at the very least, the cultural environment in which musicians learned how to be and what it means to be musicians. We ignore the kindling for the creative spark. How do we find the kindling? We look at what makes the emotional investment real for people:

> If you let yourself become emotionally involved, if the performer is that of a gracious performer, you feel there has to be a shared energy. It may sound new-agey or uber-weird, but seating in backs of theaters, feeling totally disconnected because I couldn't hear them a lot, I feel separated. (LC)

> As for opera, the first opera I ever saw, was I guess under Victor Alessandro, maybe Max Reiter, since he was here through the 50s, this would have been that time or a little previous, I saw [American mezzo-soprano] Rise Stevens in Carmen. But I must admit thinking back on it, the horse and carriage she came on stage with impressed me more than anything. (MKS)

> As much as musicians have very full lives, being a performer is a very unique way to earn a living because you lay yourself bare everytime you go to work. What you do, you are expressing yourself emotionally through your instrument. You are in the case of performances doing this in front of one thousand to two thousand people. It becomes part of your identity. (DG)

> [Steve Zeserman], his identity is he is a bassplayer, a teacher, a mentor to his students. When you are locked out, you feel as if someone has robbed part of your identity. It becomes personal because of that. It's not like being out of work. It's deeper. It's part of your DNA. It's not just a job. When I was a student I was in the practice room ten hours a day. When I laid myself bare, it was there. When someone takes that opportunity from you, it's personal. It's more than just the money. (DG)

Opera is a form both popular and accessible and elite. As with other forms of elite culture that are also popular and accessible, we see parallels in ongoing discussions of its demise. People perennially ask, has the creative spark been eliminated from the performing arts? Opera was at "center stage" in the eighteenth century Venetian world (Feldman 2002, 218). But, despite the dominance of newer cultural offerings, the performing arts reproduce the prevalent attitudes and politics of the day.

A Night at the San Antonio Symphony

Coming into the old art-deco theatre in downtown San Antonio on a hot and humid night in October, the first thing I noticed is that the air was cold. The constant clatter of an overworked air-conditioning system is almost always as part of the

background noise in Texas, something everyone seems to accept as part of the soundscape. It reminded me that this was not always so.

Texas heat has slowed the pace of performing arts activity for as long as the performing arts have existed here. Throughout most of Texas history, people have learned to live without electricity, without fans, and without air-conditioning. Homes and public buildings were erected with high ceilings and large windows to allow for ventilation and transoms over every door to allow circulation even when the doors were closed. For some, it was still unbearable.

In 1879, Sister Anastasie Kemen at Xavier Acadey in Denison, TX wrote to her Mother Superior:

> I think my letter for the month of August, as long as I am here in Texas, will be a catalog of complaints: heat, thirst, mosquitoes, bed bugs (flies!!!), fleas, scorpions, etc. And on top of it all, exhaustion and inertia…this is my condition in the summer, here in Texas. May God come to my aid! (Landregan 2015, 18).

Today, San Antonians have not stopped complaining about the heat, which is compounded in urban settings where heat is trapped by smog and high structures. As with most Texas cities, cars are ubiquitous and further compound the heat and pollution problems. Thus, heat remains a significant factor in slowing down the pace of activity - not just arts activities – in San Antonio.

Yet, here some of us were – early to the concert and attending a pre-show talk with the cymbal player for the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra. We were all seated in the orchestra rear, as is the norm for these informal talks. Most people in attendance were older, though there were a few people in their 30s and even in their 20s. I observed about

a 50/50 split between men and women. The audience was enthusisastic, during the cymbal talk, laughing at jokes, asking questions, and chatting with the player after the lecture. “Composers hardly ever tell us which kind of cymbal to use – here are four different sets I use for Mahler’s Third, based on the tone we feel is most appropriate.”

This happened to be the last season that the Majestic Theatre was the home for the San Antonio Symphony before they moved to the Tobin Performing Arts Center in a different district of downtown. After those representing the Majestic Theatre came on stage, wishing the symphony orchestra the best in their new home, the conductor Sebastian Lang-Lessing came on stage to introduce two members of San Antonio Symphony. First, he introduced a violinist who had been with the company for several years and had just won a seat with the St. Louis Symphony. She received a rapturous applause from the audience. Then, he introduced another player who was also leaving the symphony. After 28 years with the symphony and at 61 years old, he was retiring. This man received even greater applause and a standing ovation from the audience. He gave a small speech in which he said, “the symphony will finally be revealed to be the star it has always been,” attributing that to Lang-Lessing and the Tobin Center home switch.

That little ceremony revealed many interesting and uncomfortable truths about the status of the San Antonio Symphony relative to other performance groups. First, the celebration for the player who was leaving to go to the St. Louis Symphony revealed an understanding that San Antonio is not an ideal home for an orchestra player. Most informants reveal the same: that, despite the onerous task of auditioning for other orchestras, they dream to be hired by a better orchestra.

Second, the expressed belief that the Tobin Center would reveal the symphony to be a star, implicitly describes the Majestic Theatre as not an ideal home. According to Steve Zeserman, the problem with the Majestic Theatre is that it is a "2800-seat cavern designed with visual splendor in mind, not acoustic splendor." Indeed, the Majestic was not built for a symphony orchestra and is a testament to the impoverished state of the performing arts in San Antonio in the past few decades compared to other cities in Texas, all of which have managed to build stunning performing arts centers, the crown jewel of which may be the I.M. Pei designed Meyerson Center in Dallas, but which also include the Long Performing Arts Center in Austin and the Hobby Center in Houston.

Finally, despite these knocks against the situation in San Antonio, there remained an air of hope that the symphony would transform into a truly great organization. Mixed in there were hopes for the city, that it would become a great economic and cultural hub on par with the major metropolises of the Southwest – Phoenix in Arizona, Albuquerque in New Mexico, and San Diego in California.

The tendency to reproduce the performing arts has been the subject of intense scrutiny on all sides - by art patrons, by financial supporters, and by performers and artists, i.e. composers, librettists. This scrutiny comes from an instinct to protect what is viewed as the last bastion of high European art culture.

Levine (1988) details what preservers felt they were up against. With the influx of immigrants from the "lower" rungs of society – Irish, Italian, Chinese – many joined in the jingoistic sentiment that decried the demise of high society. The paradigm they were upholding Levine calls an "escape" into culture (Levine 1988, 177). This escape was

accomplished not by banning people, imposing fees, or creating memberships but by changing the locations of art organizations and events to be more difficult to access with public transportation and from lower class neighborhoods. Though the masses would frequent theaters, fairs, and parks, they could not find their way into the opera houses and museums.

Levine argues that what also took place – in addition to upper class society retreating into private spaces and transforming public spaces by rules, systems of taste, and canons of behavior – was an attempt to change the modes of behaviors of the masses to emulate those of the rich. Where the desire among the elite to purify their music and themselves failed, their ability to change the modes of behavior of the masses – at least in these spaces – succeeded. When Boston Symphony Orchestra founder Henry Lee Higginson said, "Our task is to make harmony above all things – harmony even in the most modern music," he was speaking in direct contradiction to the rules of etiquette in syrmphony hall in the late nineteenth century (qtd in Levine 1990, 178).

What took place then has had resounding effects to this day. In my own attempts at bringing people I know from outside the opera world to the opera, it is always an effort. A cousin who grew up in an impoverished part of Dallas seemed eager to attend a performance in Dallas when I brought it up with him. When I went to pick him up, he asked if we were going to see *Phantom of the Opera*, which was also being performed that weekend. I couldn't help but to cringe and reply, "No!" He backed out at the last minute: people who may be from an undesirable class have been and are successfully kept out of the performance hall and opera house because of the social anxiety they feel

in a space where they do not feel like part of the norm. Therefore, as audiences get smaller, the opera house becomes more and more peaceful and harmonious.

Levine interprets this harmony as one of social conventions as much as musical convention, forced onto an audience that was coerced into silence during performances and forced onto their taste, driving modern art music into the academy. The change in social conventions from one of conviviality to solemn worship at the altar of mortal gods has succeeded today in dividing audiences from their agency in the creation of the concert experience. The classical concert system is not one that particularly wants, even if it needs, a captivated audience.

This is the common sense that follows from Levine's assertions that audiences are no longer capable of enjoying elite European classical music. Once disallowed from enjoying it they are now used to no longer enjoying it.

In a 1966 article for High Fidelity Magazine, Glenn Gould discussed a common occurrence – the rare unearthing of a dead composer's lost piece of music:

> Some months ago, in an article in the Saturday Review, I ventured that the delinquency manifest by this sort of evaluation might be demonstrated if one were to imagine the critical response to an improvisation which, through its style and texture, suggested that it might have been composed by Joseph Haydn. (Let's assume it to be brilliantly done and most admirably Haydn-esque.) I suggested that if one were to concoct such a piece, its value would remain at par -- that is to say, at Haydn's value -- only so long as some chicanery were involved in its presentation, enough at least to convince the listener that it was indeed by Haydn. If, however, one were to suggest that although it much resembled Haydn it was, rather, a youthful work of Mendelssohn, its value would decline; and if one chose to attribute it to a succession of authors, each of them closer to the present day, then -- regardless of their talents or historical significance -- the merits of this same little piece would diminish with each new identification. If, on the other

> hand, one were to suggest that this work of chance, of accident, of the here and now, was not by Haydn but by a master living some generation or two before his time (Vivaldi, perhaps), then this work would become -- on the strength of that daring, that foresight, that futuristic anticipation landmark in musical composition.

Gould's refreshingly self-reflexive comments reflect the underlying disposition of musicians and connoisseurs of art music to devalue that which is identified as a copy and not the work of singular genius, or worse, something that has yet to be identified in any way, like a new work. A member of the Lakes Ballet has internalized this disposition quite well. In response to a question about the relative dearth of new ballet works compared to the old chestnuts, she says: "There's 27 Nutcrackers here in Texas. Even though there are 27, you can still fill your hall. We love the fact that there are so many Nutcrackers." In her estimation, it is better to have an authentic Tchaikovsky and a full hall than something new and an empty hall. In her experience, it is difficult for audiences to enjoy something that isn't already consecrated.

Despite these attempts to fill halls with consecrated relics, less than ten percent of Americans attend the performing arts. This statistic includes television, movie, radio, and Internet screenings. Levine pines for the loss of a "shared public culture" that was "less hierarchically organized, less fragmented" than that which we experience in the "low and high arts" ((Levine 1988, 9).

People experience the performing arts in ways that are affectively different from, say, experiencing a professional basketball game or a rock concert. The kinds of emotional outbursts and raucous interaction of audiences at these popular culture events is absent by design from the performing arts experience (1988 Levine, 146). It is almost unimaginable that there may be overlap in these distinct lineages of expressive culture.

Yet, historically, the performing arts experience more closely resembles that of a professional basketball game or a rock concert than it does the performing arts experience today: “When the orchestra’s selection displeased them, they stamped, hissed, roared, whistled, and groaned in cadence until the musicians played “moll in the wad, tally ho in the grinders, and several more airs to suit their tastes” (Levine 1988, 26).

Today, if the performing arts share anything with its past and other contemporay forms of expressive culture, the overlap is primarily to be found in the ways in which music is sometimes performed, for instance in competition, in collaboration with popular music groups, in pops concerts, or with a programme of musical tributes to another genre of music. In these instances, you will find more affective and exuberant interaction on the part of the audience. Yet, in all of these instances, the performing arts purveyors maintain that the performing arts maintain their distinction from other forms of performance.

That distinction that purveyors tried to create between the symphonic performing arts and other forms of popular music culture came about most successfully with the establishment of the symphony orchestra, a product of the United States that has been successfully exported to the rest of the world. Though the London and Berlin orchestras existed earlier, their interaction with the public was and to an extent is different and more in line with popular music practice.

The symphony orchestra, dedicated to playing the great instrumental symphonic works of the canon of master classical composers, did not emerge until the late 19th and early 20th century (1988 Levine, 104). Prior to that, the most popular and ubiquiitous instrumental organization in ninteenth century America was the band. Orchestras did

exist, but none carried the term "symphony orchestra" and the difference between an orchestra and a band was a functional one rather than an aesthetic one. The New York Philharmonic, the only remaining orchestra from the 1850s, still does not include the term "symphony" in its name. William Robyn, a German immigrant in St. Louis, composed marches, vespers, a mass, and chamber music and helped found the Philharmonic Band, which performed as an orchestra and a marching band (1988 Levine, 104). Musicians moved regularly between the two and shared repertoires. As we will see in more depth, the music they played was both popular and elite. Today we may have problems categorizing marching arrangement of melodies from La Traviata and Ernani, but these were common fare for Union soldiers to march to during the Civil War (Levine 1988, 105.)

San Antonio's symphony orchestra joined the foray in the Twenties. By then, the current era had been well established and the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra followed the form of the most successful of the twentieth-century symphony orchestras. People today may think that symphony orchestras are eternal, but they too are a product of the twentieth century and may remain that. The product of the twenty-first century may be substantially different. The latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st has seen an explosion of forms of music that are often termed classical and, importantly, take live performance of this music outside of the symphony and opera hall.

This signals to me a disconnection between the disposition of performers, audience members and media sources towards future generations of classical music listeners. Performers feel inspired to connect to younger audiences and change their

music to accommodate their tastes, to a certain degree, while audience members seem obstinate about the music traditions they grew up with. They take the doomdsay news from the media and run with it – saying, classical music is being ruined by those who wish to change it.

This divergence of attitudes indicates that authenticity has different meanings to audiences and performers. While performers do express the need to educate students about "important" works, these works are not necessarily the same works that audiences feel are "important." Performers view a work as important because it gives a performer the flexibility to adapt to new music and new ways of playing. Audience members view a work as important because it perpetuates the values of an older generation – nationalistic values, in particular. It is why, for example, the Symphony League pushed so hard to commission an opera about Texas Independence, regardless of the quality of the opera.

How the symphony attempts to capture audiences

I went into this study believing that the distinctions between audiences and performers were superficial. That an individual's performance of opera and classical music emanated from the same habitus, created from the same social and cultural capital, and were therefore largely similar, despite the audience and the musicians having different roles in the community and different roles during the performance itself (say, in the concert hall). However, performers view their craft very differently than even the most avid fans and supporters.

My musician informants, regardless of their age, seem to have the same disposition towards classical music and the same reason for making it that musicians of

the past have written about: chiefly, that they love the music and their instrument. Classical music is to them a powerful vehicle for expression of their own individual value, the value of the instrument they use, and the value of humanity.

It follows that they would want others to generate for themselves the same experience and power. Thus, many try to make a living out of teaching and tutoring. If there is any difference that I can note among older musicians and younger ones, it is that the younger musicians are more active educators to young people. Whether this is because they are generally more energetic, less financially stable, or some other reason, it does not seem to be because older musicians are resigned to the future demise of classical music. In truth, the handwringing seems to emanate from media sources, perhaps to drum up some interest and curb the flagging sales of newspapers.

When it comes to classical music, the musical tastes of young people can be difficult to ascertain. However, it is clear from the sheer amount of advertising that is directed at young people in San Antonio through popular music that it is impossible to have a discussion of their tastes in music without discussing commercial pop music. I worked for two months in San Antonio with young people as a pizza delivery driver. None of the people I worked with – all under thirty-five, except for one older gentleman working a second job – listened to anything but commercial pop music. Their taste varied somewhat within commercial music – some preferred rap, some metal, some top forty pop, etc. Their taste rubbed off on me, and I rediscovered the delights of pop music to a certain extent. Sometimes, I will hear Kesha or Bruno Mars on the radio and think back

fondly to those days of zooming back and forth between people's homes and the pizza shop.

One of the most salient features of Western commercialized pop music – aside from its formulaic nature – is that music listeners perceive a singer's biography and vocal performance as mutually constitutive and mutually expressive (Frith 1996, 185-186). This means that the personality of the musician has to be groomed, prepared, and presented to an audience.

How does this happen at the San Antonio symphony? The website provides profiles of the performers as well as conducts interviews that are presented on the website (See Illustration 1).

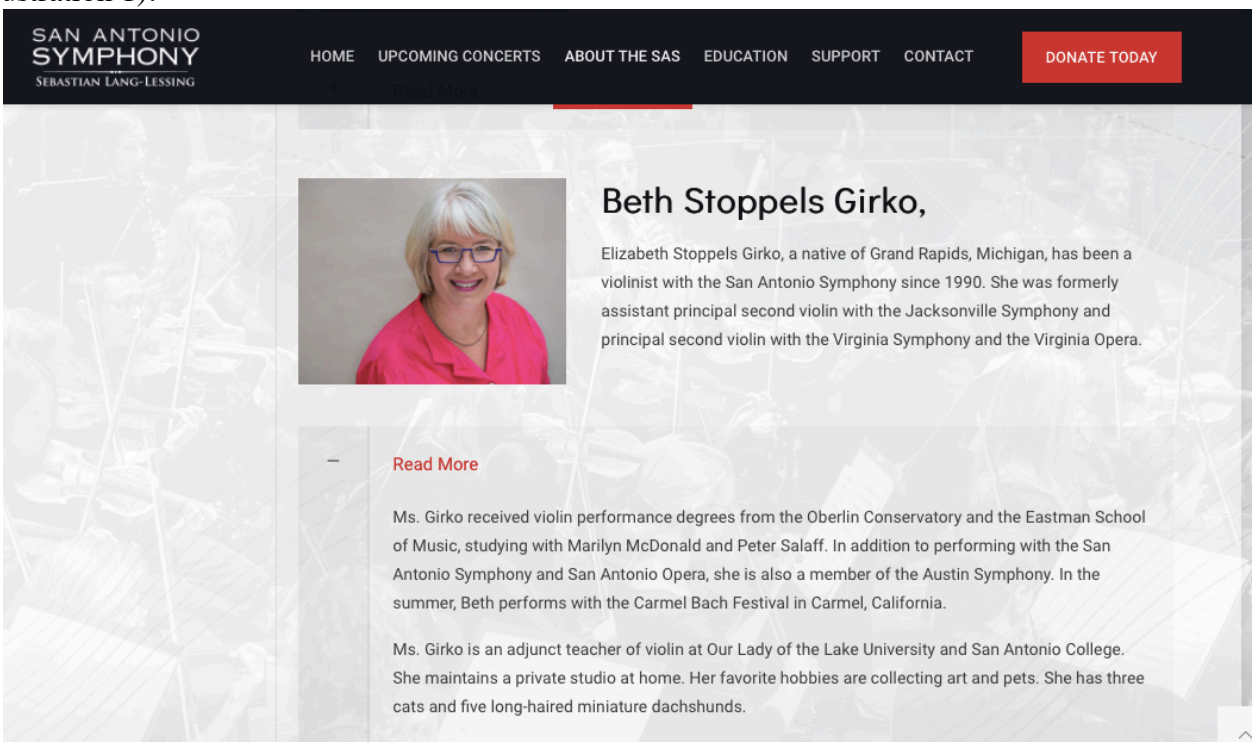

Illustration 1: Excerpt from San Antonio Symphony website.

Furthermore, during intermission at concerts, a couple of performers will go down and answer questions from audience members who come up. Unfortunately, these efforts often go unnoticed by all but the most passionate patrons. In my attendance at concerts, most patrons quickly make their way out of the concert hall space and into the foyers, where a crush of people mingle. Many wait in long lines at the bathroom and at the bar. In many ways, this setting is a bizarre contrast with the space in which the orchestra plays. Whereas in the time and space during which the orchestra plays, the audience sits in silence, listening with rapt attention, in the foyer, the audience deliberately avoids the orchestra. They also avoid any sense of organization or observance of rules of etiquette of the symphony concert hall. They are boisterous. They walk to and fro without observing typical pedestrian etiquette: staying to the right, not suddenly stopping, not filling pathways with large groups.

The San Antonio Symphony does not waste the opportunity to market themselves to this captive audience in the foyers. They usually have a kiosk set up near the bar to advertise upcoming concerts and, most importantly to them, to advertise the discounts given to people who become subscribers. Occasionally, there will be a raffle at the kiosk, giving away a painting or gift certificates to local businesses – anything to get people to stop and pay attention. This kiosk is usually brightly decorated. Large posters of upcoming superstars are prominently displayed.

However, the superstar and the face of the entire operation is Sebastian Lang-Lessing, the conductor and artistic director of the San Antonio Symphony. His likeness is always featured on one of the posters at the intermission kiosk. In fact, his name is often

printed directly underneath the title of the San Antonio Symphony, marking his control over the artistic direction of the company (See Illustration 1). He, in collaboration with David Gross, the manager of the San Antonio Symphony, determines the symphony orchestra's output each year and the direction the symphony will take in the future. If folk music is partially defined by a participatory audience exerting important degrees of control, then, save for a few important donors, this is emphatically not folk music (Levine 1988, 30).

Increased divergence of classical and popular music

Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson – an acolyte of Theodor Adorno - argues that there is a death of critical thought among consumers of popular culture (Jameson 1981; xix). For a kind of music that many of my informants believe a) requires critical thought to enjoy and b) cannot survive without being a part of popular culture, this is grim news. Levine further argues that while most historians believe that Shakespeare as performed for the masses in the United States was diluted and denigrated, Shakespeare as presented alongside magicians and acrobats was integrated into American culture (Levine 1988, 34). Shakespeare was rendered intimate and familiar in this context.

While opera and the other performing arts were also rendered intimate in much the same way in San Antonio in the early 20th century, this is no longer the case. Many of the people that prop up or support the performing arts, my informants included, believe that opera cannot be integrated into current American popular culture lest it lose its purity and authenticity. Shakespeare, a collection of theatrical works separated in time by a

couple of hundred years between their writing and their production in the early 20th century, and grand opera, another collection of theatrical works separated by a couple of hundred years between their composition and their production in the early 21st century, do not share in their respective audiences support (Shakespeare had support, opera does not) but do share in their milieu.

As I have previously stated these informants are corporate subjects and not resistance subjects, at least not to a particularly dominant discourse in American political life. They are resistant, however, because of this corporatism to the protocols and purposes for the symphony orchestra created in the early part of the 20th century.

At the same time there is an utter lack of agency that accompanies the tacit approval of this discourse. Informants are constantly at risk of lockouts, of losing their jobs. Informants feel they have to make up for this tenuous situation, by taking on other jobs or taking unemployment during the off-season. This makes their jobs a grind, makes participation in classical music a grind, and eliminates much of the on-stage enjoyment that made classical music popular with audiences "back in the day." I am making a distinction here between the protocol that eliminates individuality among performers in the orchestra – that eliminates smiles and interactions with the audience. I am talking about engagement outside of that with the audience. Indeed, shortly after our interviews, one of my informants suddenly announced his retirement at a very young age, compared to most other musicians in the orchestra.

The audience of the performing arts in the 19th century was a microcosm of American society, reflecting its social hierarchy as well as its heterogeneity. The dandies

(young members of the upper class) sat in the orchestra, while the servants, poor workingmen, and blacks occupied the gallery (Levine 1988, 24). These posed great difficulties for dramatists, problems that may no longer exist because of the lack of representation of the social hierarchy today.

An informant with the Lakes Ballet gave me this interesting piece of information:

> We did a demographic study of who buys individual tickets, and we contrasted that with subscribers. If you were looking at the US demographics left to right, left being uber rich, and then there's the caviar, etc., we skew very high with the first five indices. There's reason for that. The price for the opera and ballet, opera is hard to understand, it's not in English. This upper subset many are bilingual, CFOs, they are educated, have an appreciation for the arts, and were exposed as children.
>
> As you skew out, less money, less education. These students will never become the people over here [those in the lower side of the spectrum will never become those in the high part of it). If a child says, I want to go to the ballet, the parent doesn't want to take them, says "What's that?" We get about a ten percent returnon vouchers we give to students to attend our ballet performances.

Opera has been an integral part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's popular culture. Yet, broadly speaking, in the latter half of the twentieth century, opera became less a part of people's lives. It became more of what Levine calls "polite culture." It became the possession of the educated members of society and used to educate, rather than to entertain the less educated masses, instructing them in the reproduction of acceptable social capital and taste. Levine's conception is not altogether different from Bourdieu's argument that elite culture is simply a cluster of cultural commodities of distinction (Denning 2004, 80). However, not all historians agree wholeheartedly with this assessment, of course. Karene Grad draws attention to the effect the Cold War had on

lending urgency and drive to patriotic sentiments, which were manifested in a renewed interest in the arts. And few historians argue that the postwar led to a boom in appreciation for the arts. No place enjoyed a greater boom than San Antonio, where the military was an integral part of society and still is today.

Audiences today are regularly instructed in the ways of understanding and enjoying popular commercial music – which requires more education than meets the eye – instruction in using social media, reading cues, and maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of current events and technology. Yet, according to my informants, audiences are not educated in any way – in school or in society – to understand and enjoy performing arts, even though they are instructed on how to behave while listening to a performance at symphony hall.

This apparent lack of instruction on how to enjoy the performing arts demonstrates that, rather than opera having become an educational tool, it has remained a form of popular entertainment that is now inaccessible to popular audiences because of the change in new generations' musical education. The formal role of the school system in educating young generations in music appreciation has diminished. In its place, a less formal (perhaps not) education exists in which the media becomes the most instructive in developing young generations' musical taste. Their ends are perhaps quite different (without placing any moral or ethical judgment on it) than those of the nation-state or a community's independent school district.

One fundamental aspect of folk music, according to Philip Bohlman (1988), is the oral tradition of performance. That is, musical knowledge about form, style, performance

and repertoire are often passed along orally. This makes it difficult to recover the performance practice of opera prior the invention of the phonograph.

Performers of classical music come to know their craft by learning from their colleagues, students, and players they admire from theirs and previous generations. Musical knowledge is transmitted via the proliferation of online media – Youtube videos, XM radio, e.g., - as well as through apprenticeship and attending performances. This means that performers are a part of the audience to their music. I asked my musician informants, "Do you listen to classical music?" I received a variety of answers, from "absolutely" to "not really, except in practice." Laura Collins, who practiced and listened to a great deal of music in the operatic tradition for her training, listened to a great deal of Broadway musicals outside of training. She was furthermore capable of cogently speaking about pop superstars in the mainstream.

The most instructive moments were when I lived with Steve Zeserman. On occasional evenings, he would queue up music videos on Youtube with some of his favorite bassists performing, typically in live recordings but sometimes in studio recordings. In the car, he would play CDs by his favorite artists. While jogging or bicycling for leisure, he would play music on his phone. In all, his listening habits did not differ too much from the average American – at least in how and where he listened to music (Nielse 2015, 1). But, while only two albums – the Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack and Taylor Swift's *1989* – accounted for half of music sales in the United States in 2015, most of Zeserman's music consisted of music far out of the mainstream.

Classical music is not contestative discourse – it doesn't spring from the same well of altern identity that influences the stories told in many folkloric music traditions. It has been part of the discourse of the dominant, the ruling bourgeois culture in Texas, throughout the twentieth century. It reinscribes the power of the hegemonic order, and the performers of the music, the listeners of the music, and the producers of the music reinscribe that hegemonic order through the web of relationships they keep, particularly with the companies and private donors that underwrite their performances.

The question that has been discussed endlessly in the media since the end of the nineteenth century, in regards to the place of classical music within expressive culture is: without paternalistic royalty or a paternalistic government, and perhaps in the future without the support of paternalistic capitalism, how should opera exist, in what ways it should be performed and played, would the music that so many today know and love even exist? Would Lincoln Center exist to perform opera? Or would opera be available primarily on our digital devices and via recordings? These questions are important to an art form whose purveyors have worked hard to maintain its viability as a live, unamplified art form.

Generation after generation of popular music listener has had to deal with the loss in popularity of the bands and singers they grew up thinking were eternal. Decades after their youth, much of "their" music is no longer performed. To the average person who doesn't know about the world of classical music, it can be difficult to believe the amount of support the handful of seemingly arbitrarily deigned eternal composers have had in

order to stretch the performance of their music into the centuries. Does anyone play Al Jolson anymore, the greatest entertainer of the twentieth century?

I had a chance to ask Eric Owens, a world-class opera singer, some questions about singing in San Antonio. “I saw you in San Antonio last year, and I loved your performance! What’s your take on the role of opera in cities that may have had a great history of opera but have declined in attendance in recent years?”

He responded, “The decline of audiences is a hard thing to witness. Times are rocky right now on our planet, and the world's money is on fire! But, there are amazing people who are reinventing how this is done, and there are opera companies doing wonderful things, with budgets that are huge. I had the opportunity to attend a rehearsal of the Martinu double bill that Gotham Opera is presenting, and it was amazing. My hometown opera company, Opera Philadelphia, is doing wonderful work, and engaging the community, and taking opera outside the walls of the opera house, and to the people. There are opera lovers out there, right now, who don't even know that they are. The key, I think, is to reach out, more and more, and go to the people, and I hope that more, and more will want to come to us.”

His comment suggests that in order to do “wonderful” things in opera, a “huge” budget is necessary, or at least desirable. In order to compete with popular music, in which “huge” budgets are necessary to produce the shows popular singers put on, opera needs to compete at that level – big stars singing in front of a spectacular background. This defines grand opera apart from other presentations of opera on a smaller scale.

Owens mentions one of the ways in which opera companies create the illusion of grandeur – by "taking opera outside the walls of the opera house," stepping out into the grandeur of the surrounding areas and using the backdrops freely at their disposal. These are commonly called "flash mobs" and span not just classical and operatic music but musicals and other music.

Flash mobs typically work by having a person suddenly begin singing in the middle of a crowded place – a mall, a market, or a subway. While people look puzzled, a second person joins in, then a third, and so on, until a chorus is formed. These flash mobs typically last 3-8 minutes (usually the duration of an aria or chorus song) and then dissipate quickly, people resuming their normal tasks. That is, the singers will disperse and return to their previous activity (eating lunch, shopping, etc.).

I attended a performance like this produced by the Austin Lyric Opera. They staged a very short 20-minute English language production of Elixir of Love at an outdoor shopping area in an affluent neighborhood in northwest Austin. However, this was not a "traditional" flash mob. Instead, there were a clearly marked, if rudimentary, stage area and a seating area with lawn chairs, as well as a booth belonging to the Austin Lyric Opera. All of this was set up prior to the performance and indeed they had been advertising the performance for weeks. The person seated at the booth was collecting email addresses and giving out coupons for half off tickets to the full-length 3-hour Italian-language production at the Long Performing Arts Center.

A relatively young and ethnically diverse group of singers accompanied by a keyboard performed for about 30 minutes in the open air. These performers turned out to

be local graduate music students, people on their way to making a professional career out of opera performance. As this was in a small plaza between storefronts and restaurants, many people moved quickly past the performance space on their way to another shopping destination. Some slowed down to enjoy a couple of minutes of performance and then moved on. I wondered if professional musicians would submit themselves to this kind of performance. Likely not. The performance schedules for opera singers are typically very tight and the budgets for contracting them for performance are tight as well. This kind of extra performance would be outside the typical relationship between the stars contracted for the grand performance at the Long Performing Arts Center later that week and the Austin Lyric Opera.

If opera is now more a symbol of culture than a cultural force, then an attempt like this to instill that moment of symbolic investiture in potentially new audiences would dazzlingly fail. The moment of symbolic investiture in opera is that moment in which a person experiences a sensation of overwhelming emotion and pleasure. According to soprano Laura Collins,

> "If you are an opera lover, you can be extremely affected by the music. If not, you can go and be bored out of your mind. The middle of the road person, you may be moved by the popular aria. Its the whole experience that might be moved by - visual, aural, and surrounding-wise. The auditorium, the hall."

According to an audience member at San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, "I love opera. My kids play instruments, sing and dance." An audience member at a Metropolitan Opera live-streamed performance of *La Fille Du Regiment* at a San Antonio theater brought her young daughter to the performance. Afterward, I asked the woman how she

enjoyed the performance. The daughter piped up, "I liked the funny lady!" in reference to a slapstick turn by French soprano Natalie Dessay. The woman related that her daughter's favorite was Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Indeed, that particular opera is used by the Austin Lyric Opera during their summer "opera camp" program as a foundational piece for familiarizing students with opera.

If the opera house and the symphony hall are dead to people, then why do they come? There are a variety of reasons that were completely surprising to me. An 87-year-old Anglo gentleman was at the SA Mahler concert because, in his words, "You couldn't keep me in the house." He would attend often and was even a subscriber. He is also a big fan of opera, and encouraged me to "go to the opera house."

Another woman had very different reasons for being there. She was a 50-year-old geneticist at UT Austin. She had recently moved from Chapel Hill, North Carolina to work on a collaborative project between the universities. She loved the old style theater. "There are only four of these art deco theatres left in the country." Her 12-year old daughter was singing in the choir. "That's why we are here." She did also mention that despite the fact that her busy work schedule prevents her from attending often, she "loves music." She was also a fan of Indian classical music. I asked, "Like Ravi Shankar?" She replied, "Yes."

Eric Owens accepts that there is a decline in audiences and he attributes it to economic stress preventing people from attending and/or funding the opera. So, it follows that he believes prices are as fair as they can get. The economy needs to rebound, because opera tickets cannot get any cheaper.

Opera managers are concerned that even this is an untenable model in the long run. People expect a product that costs a certain amount more than they are willing to pay to produce and will not pay at all for any production that is less costly. David Gross says, "We have to come up with ways both for the employer to find new ways to be sustainable but musicians are going to have to look at we have to accept that the industry is changing and how we remain relevant to our culture is going to change… How do you design a season so that you can pay for it so that people want to see it so that businesses want to sponsor it and you have a successful year?"

Musicians still participate in the discourse outlined by Levine in which classical music has a sacrosanct status and in which they are high priests of the church. According to Steve Zeserman, "We don't get the money, we don't get the applause, but we get the Mahler." While the congregation may be dozing off, he is nevertheless content to be proselytizing to the masses.

Musicians in the past generally made improvisational changes to the tunes they sang and the pieces they played, especially during cadenzas (solo extemporaneous moments marked off by a composer to show off the performer's virtuosic skills as a musician). Today, it is conventional for musicians to give deference to cadenzas written by the original composer of the piece being performed.

I wondered aloud in Chapter Three why musicians show such deference to old-fashioned ideas about the spaces classical music may occupy and the relationship it has to contemporary audiences. That is, I wondered why the classical music world has been slow to integrate social media and new technologies with their attempts at to reach

younger audiences. Could it be that the realm of technology is dominated by the amateur and therefore is not an appropriate platform for that which is considered sacred by those who purvey it?

Technology and the spaces for WCM

The defense of the discourse of classical music as sacred is a result of the increased distance between professional and amateur (Levine 1988, 139). While in the past parlor music was lauded, today the amateur is jeered at and rendered invisible at both Carnegie Hall and the Tobin Performing Arts Center in San Antonio. It is assumed that only highly trained professionals have the ability to perform art music – the knowledge, the skill, the will, and the understanding.

Even with the advent of Web 2.0 and a plethora of media sharing services in which a kid in front of his computer can upload videos to youtube and turn into Justin Bieber or some other overnight sensation does nothing to ameliorate the distinction. After all, Justin Bieber was just some kid with humble origins on Youtube who became an artist after he became a professional.

What has happened to these new technologies that allow amateurs to create art is similar to what happened to the camera when it was invented and popularized. Photography posed a serious threat to "serious art" because it allowed the common individual to express him or herself in an artistic way (Levine 1988, 160). Thus it posed a serious obstacle to the sacralization of art. Similarly, the amateur or young professional singer can, through his or her ability or through studio magic and Youtube as a channel, become a much bigger sensation than even the most well-trained opera singer.

The proliferation of "amateur" renditions of classics online makes it more important than ever for classical music purveyors and audiences to be able to distinguish between the insipid and amateur copy and the creative and original genius. Yet, this fear of technology and its effect on the dissemination of art is not a new one. However, let's look at the characteristic disposition of audiences diachronically.

Photography suffered from many of the hard facts of the new technology – images were placed onto hard metal. They were generated by machine, not by the human hand. They required an external object to photograph. It is the same discourse that haunted movie makers in the thirties and video game designers in the nineties and today. Are works in these mediums to be considered Art?

It should be said that none of these ideals of preserving the creativity of the genius or performing authentic reproductions of timeless classics have been possible in reality. Even the most conservative conductor constantly performs according to his or her own whims, predelictions, and tastes. Rather, it is the belief in these ideals that is powerful in shaping attitudes and tastes.

Do Americans still believe that European artworks are the best? Do they think American artists are the best? Or are they still wrapped up in that discourse of elite art music is best and Americans do not produce elite art music only highly profitable, low brow schlock? Even those who agree that jazz is the United States' contribution to art music still exoticize it as that of black people (which it largely historically is). Charles Edward Russell wrote in 1927, "to this day, American artist means to the average American soul inferior artist" (Levine 1988, 145). The Eurocentric productions of culture

that are symphony hall, the opera house, the museum, and the library all of which Americans are taught should be viewed as symbols of the sacred, of the wise, and of the indisputable so (Levine 1988, 146).

There is an interesting caveat to this overall dichotomy in the discourse in the construction of the Smithsonian. Most museums of art fell into the discourse of being temples rather than schools – preserving classics rather than being interactive fun – like science museums. The Smithsonian wanted to be different from other museums even science museums in that its mission was to expand human thought not to marvel at it. Thus any collections were shuffled off to other institutions – libraries and museums. "The objects of the Smithsonian are not educational…the collections of the Smithsonian are for study not "to gratify an unenlightened curiosity" (Levine 1988, 158).

One could argue that this is precisely what the modern symphony hall is for. Not to study the process of making and performing art – but to gratify for the people who have yet to hear Beethoven's Sixth their desire to hear it. What happened to the Smithsonian is precisely what happened to Symphony Hall in Boston and in San Antonio. Rather than being a place for the public to congregate and hear the latest music and to engage with its performers – that is, to *create* the music that may have become American art – great, truly American art – instead, it became a place where they were forced into grinding silence so to contemplative ancient music being performed by a group of musicians playing with the same mutedness, passivity (my musician informants would take issue with this characterization) and contemplative mood. Meanwhile, the task of creating new music was relegated to the university.

The same thing, Levine argues, happened with libraries. Is a library charged with disseminating or conserving knowledge? While libraries provided what no other space could – an indoor public space that did not require patrons to purchase anything – this role was typically taken up by libraries that did not make their primary mission to conserve knowledge. At archival libraries, formidable barriers both physical and procedural – prevented the general public from using collections. And take chromolithography – a method of reproducing oil paintings cheaply – which was hailed as a way to bring art to all classes of society. It and, following closely on its heels, photography were new ways of reproducing art but of creating art as well. Photography and chromolithography were met with derision as another form of cultural dilution (Levine 1990, 120). As with theater, opera, and symphonic music, these mediums that had the effect of widely disseminating a form of artistic expression was perceive as a force of cultural dilution.

To a certain extent, I observe this attitude in the opinions of informants. They have this "product" that exceeds other products. That they love so very much. They want to preserve it. And have people experience the exact same feeling they felt when they first listened to that symphony or that opera.

The historic fear of technology – how it will change things – and a feverish excitement for it and how it will change things, find renewed purchase in the segments of the population that continue to purvey classical music in the new millennium.

When we talk about the circulation of opera as a cultural form, we have to realize that the way in which it circulates differs from commercial, fetishized objects. This is in

large part due to its niche nature. A century ago, Dallas was a city of 158,000 people, far fewer than the 1.4 million living in the city today. Yet, if one were to stop a random person on a street corner, and ask them to name an opera, it would have been an easy task for the average individual. It would be like asking someone today to name a film. Similarly, asking someone then to name an opera singer would be like asking someone to name a pop singer today.

Today, invariably, most people will not be able to name a single opera or recognize the name of one after I give it. During a conversation I had with a student of mine about my work, he asked, "So, opera, is that like Phantom of the Opera?" I said, "No. Andrew Lloyd Webber writes musicals. The vernacular is different from most operas – he writes popular music. They are more akin to rock operas than to 'opera.'" He nods and asks, "What about Les Miserables?" I say, "Again, that's a musical, which is actually based on a French –" He cuts me off, "Right, a French novel." I laugh, "Well, yes, the Victor Hugo novel, but actually the music of the musical is based on a French rock album from the seventies. It was the Brits that turned it into fodder for a musical." He said, "Well, I guess I can't name a single opera." I asked him if he recognized any of the following operas, "La Boheme, Madame Butterfly, Turandot, Magic Flute." He stared blankly. I said, "Well, you may be more familiar with the composers who write operas: Wagner, Mozart, Beethoven wrote one, Verdi…" He nodded a bit. Feeling a bit awkward I relented. Later on, I realized had I not relented, I would have resorted to humming bits from music that is "in the ether." I will take to asking students if they like opera.

Invariably only one or two will raise their hand, and upon further investigation they tend to be singers or musicians themselves.

Among college-educated individuals, even one who had spent a semester abroad studying at Oxford in England, there is an absence of caring about opera. Musical objects typically classified by professionals and academics as "musical" are often thought of by laypeople to be "operas", and perhaps with good reason. In a conversation with an opera singer from my hometown of Corsicana, I remarked that I considered musicals and opera to be part of the same kind of cultural form. She seemed surprised but happy to hear that:

> So I come from a standpoint of, yes, opera is a beautiful, wonderful thing; it's not for everybody, and there are lots of operas that I think are much more accessible to listen to than others. Would I tell anyone to listen to a four-hour long or a three-hour long early Monteverdi opera? No, never, because it's boring. It's like listening to paint dry, if there's a sound. I'm not saying it's not beautiful, not saying that it has no place in expression no that's not what I mean just accessibility wise. I think that's why musical theater is often a more popular output or artistic form than opera is. **Even though its roots are in opera,** I think it's definitely more accessible than a lot of opera if not for simply vernacular, musically it's often more simplistic not all the time but think about Weber versus Wagner you know? You can't really compare it, so I mean I definitely think that some people feel it's the ultimate form of expression in existence.

What does she mean by "roots in opera?" Certainly there is overlap between the genres and certain categorical differences to be teased out, but as long as one understands opera and musical to both have certain broad characteristics or conventions in common, one can see a considerable amount of overlap. In my conversation with the young Oxford-educated man, I struggled to describe a significant difference between musical and opera.

As soon as I tried to describe a sacrosanct rule, I thought of a counterexample. "So, musicals are written using melodies from pop culture…well, Dead Man Walking uses jazz and gospel song and rhythm. But musicals typically use different instruments and orchestral forces…well, West Side Story uses a symphonic orchestra. BUT the main difference is, look to see if the musicians are miked or not. The kind of training opera singers go through involves being able to project into a cavernous auditorium without the support of microphones. Musical singers don't bother with that. This goes back to days when microphones were not invented. And the effect is stunning and qualitatively different than musicals. They are speaking directly, in a way, to you about how they feel."

This is where I stopped trying to explain even though I knew that opera singers were regularly miked or amplified in today's performances – sometimes because of a singer's weak voice (as a result of age or being sick) and sometimes because of explicit directions in the score from the composer.

The reality is that what musicals and opera have in common can sometimes exceed their differences. These are both gesamtkunstwerk – total art works. They incorporate into a live experience (traditionally) costume, scenery, lighting and effects, acting, and music in order to tell a story (in traditional and unconventional narrative style). Music is elevated to an equal partner in both, one of the magical qualities of opera as a theater form.

Conclusion

Americans value commodities greatly – they constitute a greater part of our lives as an object of exchange than ever before – and cultural objects that can be commoditized are part of the cultural milieu much more pronouncedly than objects that do not or cannot. An important component of the acceleration of commodity exchange is what Marx describes as commodity fetishism, the process by which individuals give "magical" meanings to objects, divesting them of their qualities as objects of human labor (Hartle 2010, 60). In a capitalist society, objects take their meaning to consumers from their intrinsic qualities rather than from the human labor used to produce it.

However, cultural scholars have more recently argued that it is the malleability of the meaning of commodities that makes them valuable to individuals. Little girls rarely use a Barbie doll in the way in which Mattel intends. They will cut off their hair, attach them to ropes and swing them around on ceiling fans, or use them as projectiles during horseplay. Action figures may be gendered differently from Barbie dolls, but boys will use them for their own nefarious purposes as well.

It is clear that the malleability of classical music is intimately linked to what aspect of it we are talking about - the composer, the ouevre, the score, the instrument, the conductor, or the space. The continued reinvention of these objects, people, and spaces as sacred tugs on audience members and promoters of this music in one direction, while the demands of a neo-capitalist system of music dissemination and distribution and the accompanying demands of discourse – how does this music contribute to the bottom line

of the local economy? How does it bring tourists into the city? How does it turn the city into a cosmopolitan metropolis? Tug them in another direction?

Chapter 5: Selling Classical Music to the Future

Introduction

I have attempted to provide a window into the struggles, positions, and experiences of people involved in the circulation of Western classical music in San Antonio in Dallas. By analyzing interviews in which informants reveal dispositions structured by systems around them – of nationality, of ethnicity, of market capitalim - I have tried to render visible the ways in which these underlying structures that their actions reproduce have themselves changed. In this last chapter, I consider greater depht the roles of modernity and commoditization in the future of the dissemination of Western classical music, arguing that musicians uphold Romantic ideals of the singular genius through their music and the attempts to commoditize these Romantic ideals leads to conflict with the tastes of audiences which are formed from contemporary ideals.

Producers of classical music and the performing arts have succeeded in creating what Foucault calls "docile bodies" out of the audiences. Today, the audiences that yearn for a bombastic 1812 overture rendition, rather than interrupt the conductor, wait patiently for the Fourth of July celebratory concert. The most terrible performance of the most worthless opera is met with applause and even a perfunctory standing ovation. This is not always the case, and more so in Europe, but by and large Americans, despite having retained a desire to hear the shorter, more melodic, rhythmic, and repetitive

pieces, the rhapsodies and the waltzes, have learned to sit quietly through the symphonies and concertos for which symphony halls were built.

I have attempted to identify and interpret the dispositions of previous generations of performing arts patrons and performers in San Antonio. These structured dispositions are not rigid and permanent and so it is important to identify them in order to compare them to those being reproduced and replaced by new generations of performing arts patrons and performers.

Modernity plays a significant role in the development of the performing arts from the mid-twentieth century onward. While there are many ways in which it plays a role, the one I will focus on here is on the changing relationship in the performing arts between imitation and creativity as it is a relationship that informs the dispositions and actions of every actor in the performing arts.

Western Classical Music and Modernity

With the nascence of modernity, the relationship between imitation and creativity took a moral tone. For instance, in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Emmanuel Kant argues that "the product of genius…is an example not for imitation…but for emulation by another genius, who is thereby awakened to the feeling of his own originality, to exercise freedom from coercion in his art (Kant 2008, 195-196)." Thus, Kant understands the free expression of one's internal creativity as an act of liberation and personal autonomy. This intense desire for personal freedom is part of the intellectual legacy of

the Enlightenment and has had an impact on the way in which modernity is imagined (Wilf 2002, 32-33). Creativity became an index for modernity, while imitation indexed tradition.

The flowering of Romantic ideals – creativity of the individual and deep interiority of the subject – also destroyed the artistic value of the imitation. Walter Benjamin (1936) sermonizes about the worthlessness of the imitation in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. With the exception of bronzes, terra cottas, and coins that have been mechanically produced and stamped for thousands of years and print and woodcutting invented more recently in the past five hundred years, until lithography and photography, the *manus*, the human hand was instrumental in the creation of art. To Benjamin, any photograph was necessarily of less artistic value as it was a mere mechanical reproduction of the subject, rather than the work of the hand. Thus, the role of professional Western classical musicians became to uphold the value of the singular artistic genius.

Consider the "Survival Kit," a festival in Latvia. In a society in which funding for the arts was cut by 60% since 2014 and there was no new funding for art projects, the Center for Contemporary Art invited artists to fill up the empty spaces at the center with inexpensive materials, working as a team. The director of the event Solvita Krese argued, "art possessed great survival power and could help overcome any crisis." More critically, Krese said:

> We originally said that art would go beyond borders and reach out to people whose daily lives have little to do with art or culture. It seems to have happened – cultural activities have attracted very many people who previously had no particular interest in culture. And there was a good balance between elitist and democratic events.

While Krese maintains that art helps people survive crises, she also believes that people have "little" interest in art in their daily lives. She also talks about art in terms of a dichotomy between "elitist" and "democratic" art. Art exhibits she called "democratic" emphasized aesthetic pleasure. Elitist art had a relative disregard for aesthetic pleasure. For instance, what she called a "lesser" activity began with a small shop that placed flowerboxes and benches on the sidewalk. Others, including local residents, added to the scene to make it more attractive. Rather patronizingly, she says, "I see that they, as spectators – and as participants also, have come a long way in terms of understanding arts and culture."

Meanwhile, she praised an elite exhibit called the "Black Market for Useful Knowledge and Non-knowledge" a performance of knowledge by scientists organized by the New Theatre Institute of Latvia: "I'm so happy they were finally able to bring the project to Riga…this wonderful performance." Bound up in her definition of the elite is the kind of positivist knowledge generated by doctors and scientists at the Black Market event. Meanwhile, those attending do not consider the scientific information presented at the exhibit particularly artistic or in line with their expectations for an art exhibit. The press release about the event warns: "visitors – as do visitors in any other marketplace – will have to invest some effort and be alert in order to obtain the 'product' they covet."

Purveyors of the performing arts intend in their attempts to sacralize the performing arts that the performing arts remain an important aspect of the cultural identity of the metropolitan micronation. Yet their attempts have been met with little demand for these relics, in part, because they don't function well as commodities. That is, people who consume it are not successful in imbuing it with their own meaning.

Though Kant himself considered music in general to be completely utilitarian, critics like ETA Hoffman have been successful in showing that Beethoven's symphonies are the highest forms of art, if it is defined as Kant did: as having no purpose, no function. As Small (1998) points out, a symphony is the least utilitarian form of music. You cannot hum an entire symphony. You cannot dance to it. It is designed strictly for contemplative purposes, so it is difficult for it to function as a commodity. It is not part of church functions, it is not a lullaby, and it is not wedding music. It is devoid of almost all forms of consumption except those that take place in the privacy of one's own mind. Thus, the situations in which the symphony is heard are: on a bus, in one's house, at the concert hall.

The emergence of the symphony hall and the symphony orchestra are a result of adherence to these ideas. Instrumental music is the quintessential example of art music. Operas lose their status as high art because operas can be entertaining. Yet, classical music retains the status of a sacred object, a cultural object with minimal purpose or function beyond its aesthetic value.

Some informants do believe that changing the way in which classical music is marketed to the community is the saving grace of sacralized classical music. If producers

of classical music could somehow find a way extend its life in the commodity phase, people would be more open to experiencing it in the gift phase, when it is sacred and a relic. But is this a reasonable expectation? Or is Schoenberg right, when he says, "If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art."

Western Classical Music and Commoditization

Music with mass appeal has been extensively commoditized. Commercial transaction constitutes the most salient feature of the many kinds of interaction and exchange of items related to popular music, though the machines of advertising and marketing work hard to create the illusion of other kinds of relationships between musician/singer/producer and audience. For instance, the consumer exchanges his or her time watching an advertisement for the ability to watch a music video. Meet and greets, concerts, the fan club experience, are similarly describable in terms of the exchange of time with the artist and money (see Condry 2006: Hip-Hop Japan). These face-to-face meetings between musician and fan are another way to bring the product to the consumer.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of subversion of this commercial relationship in fan use of pop culture iconography. Fans regularly change cultural objects to fit their own needs. Amateur producers will photoshop, edit, apply new verse, change the style of a video to make political statements, to parody consuerism, and to otherwise express other points of views not supported by or endorsed by the companies that produce this music.

Fans of classical music are less likely to consume classical music in subversive ways, in part because they don't perceive the relationship as one built on commodity

exchange, one that distances the producer of the commodity from the consumer. Though ticket sales are not usually treated explicitly and openly as gifts given from audience member to arts organization, as they are during traditional gift rites (e.g, giving a gift at a party or to a new couple moving into one's neighborhood), audience members feel as if their ticket purchase is a donation to the organization in exchange for experiencing something enlightening or elevating. Amateur soprano and young opera fan, Laura Collins, and older opera fan Perrie Adams, both Dallasites, say:

> If you are an opera lover, you can be extremely affected by the music. If not, you can go and be bored out of your mind. The middle of the road person, you may be moved by the popular aria. It's the whole experience that you might be moved by - visual, aural, and surrounding-wise: the auditorium, the hall.
>
> I think that audiences, if they're subscribers, they'll come to see. Here in Dallas, they did the Aspen Papers a while back [2012-2013 season], and people left in droves during the intermission for that. But they'll go to support even if they don't really care to see the opera, but if it doesn't have the quality of music, they won't stick around. <"What do you mean quality?"> I associate quality with the melodic old music rather than the atonal new stuff.

This last sentiment expressed by Perrie Adams is reflected in other interviews with patrons who lament that melody is no longer a major part of the fabric of modern opera compositions. When I asked the former manager of the San Antonio Symphony if, now long retired, he still goes to watch operas himself, he replied, "No, I've seen them all many times already. The ones worth seeing, anyway!"

These expressed sentiments among audiences uncover a deep-seated tension in taste. Audiences continuously seek the old in the new and the new in the old. That is, for a new production like Aspen Papers to succeed, it must maintain a certain old-fashioned

quality, chiefly in terms of certain adherence to Western tonality and production of melody but as well a relatable setting and clothing/fashion belonging to recognizable and romanticized times and places. This is hardly different from Puccin's successes when staging Orientalist operas like *Madame Butterfly* and *Turnadot* – these combined elements of Oriental sounding scales – to Western ears, anyway – with other exotic elements like English and American tunes. Or, one can think about Verdi's Aida set in ancient Egypt or Mozart's Abduction from the Seraglio, set in a Muslim palace. Today, these operas are set and re-set in various times and places.

These older operas, replete with harmony and melody, must be made anew every year, but risk being even less popular. For instance, in 2010, San Antonio Opera set Madame Butterfly on Mars, with the BF Pinkerton as an American colonizer and astronaut, which was panned by local critics. The Metropolitan Opera's 2012 production of Wagner's Ring Cycle – at $16 million, it is the most expensive production they have ever mounted - has been excoriated by the old guard for being "witless and wasteful" and having "no insight into anything Wagner wrote or illumination of the themes he was dealing with…this is not Wagner, it's show business." The premier of *Die Walkure* was booed.

Yet, Peter Gelb, the director of the Met, has insisted that the only way to grow the audience is to reimagine old operas lest they grow stale. An informant of mine put it this way, "How many times, really, can you go watch a new production of the Magic Flute?"

Meanwhile, musicians are much more likely to asssume that their product is in the commodity stage when it is being exchanged for money with fans. They have worked

hard to create a unique product and a brand name. When people buy tickets, they have succeeded in marketing their product and convincing consumers to choose their product over the competition.

Consider this, from a conversation with members of the Lakes Ballet organization in Denton, TX:

> Brand awareness, that's a lot of it. People don't know us. There's all the competitions in Fort Worth. There's 27 nutcrackers here in Texas. Even though there are 27, you can still fill your hall. We love the fact that there are so many Nutcrackers."

Also, this from David Gross, San Antonio Symphony manager:

> There is a misconception that symphonies, opera, or ballet are organizations that people donate to and it's a feel-good type thing. Because the tag of non-profit is on there, they don't associate it as having an economic impact on the community. Our budget is 7 million, 91% stays in the San Antonio area. We generate 1.8 million – people parking, going to restaurant, buying concessions…we're pumping about 8 million dollars into the economy, which is a medium-sized corporation.

In the neo-liberal environment in which the justification for a business's existence is its economic contribution to the local community, this pre-packaged comment is precisely what is necessary for the symphony to insert itself into the political discourse of the city.

However, David's point about the San Antonio's Symphony contribution to the economy is something that is not part of the normal discourse for audience members, particularly when people outside of the arts community regularly deride the arts as an extravagance the city neither wants nor needs. Yet, later in our conversation, he says

something antithetical to his assertion that the "feel-good type thing" is a misconception. He discusses further what exactly donations mean to people donating:

> At the end of the day, with individuals there is a certain emotional commitment that I think drives donors to give to an organization. It is a sense of feeling part of, as well as believing in, the organization and what the mission and the product of that organization is. We have people who feel strongly about classical music and the quality of life and economic impact of the symphony.

Micro-nationalism, or community building, is another major component of discourse for both managers and donating patrons. Again, these are more associated with one another than either are with patrons who are not super donors. This striving to make San Antonio a community that fosters the arts is part of the larger stressing of neo-liberal values. San Antonio relies on tourism, and patrons view the arts as an important part of the tourism industry.

Returning now to the transaction involving the ticket holder and the musician putting on the performance, it is easy for a rational person to believe that this difference between the two persons in assumptions about the "work" or use value of the commodity/gift at hand does not make a difference to the transaction itself. At the point of sale, the commodity is the ticket, which is a promise of an event to be performed.

I was outside of Disney Concert Hall in LA looking to purchase a student rush ticket to a performance of Vivaldi's Four Seasons with Hilary Hahn as the solo violinist. As I was standing in line, a woman approached me, asking if I wanted to buy her ticket. She requested the face value of the ticket – some $50. As I was the next person in line, the person in the box office overheard and said to me, "I can get you a really good seat if

you're a student and at a lower price - $30." I thanked the scalper and got my ticket from the box office.

Scalping is a common activity for popular music concerts. Scalpers are often seen standing outside of the venue, asking for tickets (a necessary phrasing given laws against scalping, but a clear indication to even the most naïve of people that they are selling tickets is the fanned out spread of tickets in their hand). They will often sell tickets for ten or a hundred times their face value.

In the classical music world, scalping does not occur frequently. That it does not indicates the charitable nature of the exchange. Of classical music concert tickets, there is plenty of supply and not much demand. To try to scalp one's ticket – even for face value – is a deplorably base act. If one is not using one's ticket, there are guidelines that are made visible at the point of transaction – either on the ticket itself or written somewhere else – for someone who does not use one's ticket. Refunds are out of the question – this is common to popular music concerts as well. But classical music companies will ask patrons to donate their ticket back to the box office so it may be resold – in effect, so that they may sell the same seat to two different people. This is an unusual custom that reveals the charitable nature of the purchase of the ticket by patrons. This creates a conundrum for musicians and directors: can they count on the charity of patrons if they do not consistently produce art that reproduces the values of the audience in ways the audience finds appealing and emotionally satisfying?

From the perspective of musicians and directors, audiences tend to undervalue the aspects of the art that do not comport with their assumptions about what classical music

should be and do – that it should tell a familiar, emotionally charged story full of melody, bombast, and clearly expressed lines. That criterion creates a difficulty for musicians, composers, and directors who cannot or do not always want to satisfy these desires but depend on patrons' financial support.

One example of a way in which audiences and directors tend to differ is in the value attached to newer pieces. To audiences, classical music composed today is of inferior value almost inherently because of its lack of age, its contemporaneity. Even if it were possible to compose a symphony that was identically as moving as Beethoven's Eroica, it would not be as well received as material reproductions of Beethoven's symphony because of the value we attribute to relative age (Spooner 1986, 196).

For other commodities that also trade on their age – for instance, oriental rugs – most material goods of this kind that are bought and sold fall far short of ideals of age. In fact, antique rugs supply only a very small and declining proportion of the market (Spooner 1986, 196).

If we think about authenticity in this simplistic manner, i.e. authenticity being a property of only "old" pieces of music[7], then authenticity defined in this way did not play considerably into discourse over classical music in the United States prior to the early 20th century, when the pieces we consider to be "old" were in fact "new." This definition of authenticity plays into the growing market for historically informed performance of older and older entries in the genres of opera, oratorio, concerto, etc. are more regularly

[7] Audience informants talk about authenticity in this way: classical music IS old music.

performed, recorded, and sold. Whereas Handel's operas were not a regular part of the operatic repertoire, they have become so today.

Nevertheless, as with many commodities that trade on a tradition of craftmanship, a continuity of producing these special commodities helps sell them to audiences. Symphony orchestras trade a great deal on the rich history they have built up simply by existing for longer than most businesses in a city. This often ties into neo-capitalist ideals about the longevity of a company because of its business acumen. When there are interruptions to the local symphonic tradition, as in the case of musician's strikes, the organization and even other people who attempt similar organizations end up losing the faith and, more importantly, financial contribution of art patrons. David Gross:

> We suffer a little bit from the challenges that have taken place in the past. We have to build credibility with the donors. It's a new day. We have to show that we are a responsible organization. Building trust, it's not something you do in a cavalier fashion. It takes time and is done one-on-one. It is time-consuming, and people give money to people. They don't just give it to an organization. For people to have the confidence that they will know our million dollars will be spent responsibly, they have to know we have integrity.

There is a difference between what the average buyer thought he was buying then, what it meant to him, and the equivalent today. The change can be seen in the value and the supply of commodities produced in a certain era, the logistics of production, and the social context of consumption. Levine addresses these issues. So does the director of the San Antonio Symphony, David Gross:

> We have had budget challenges in the past. The philosophy was to reduce and reduce. The problem with reducing resources that make you successful is you start the downward spiral of being less successful. There have been challenges in this organization historically. We aren't going to solve the problems on the

> expense side. We have to generate more earned revenue and unearned revenue at this point, for this organization to successfully represent a city of the magnitude of San Antonio.

David Gross sees the work of the symphony as closely tied to all cultural arts organizations, perhaps because it is working with them that keeps them solvent, but also because working with them allows the symphony to be more visible as part of the fabric of San Antonian cultural life. This is a struggle for a symphony that is closely associated with European, not indigenous Mexican art:

> Sixty-five percent of the population is Hispanic. The first challenge is taking that stereotyped old Euorpean cultural institution and making it relevant to a very growing, exciting community that a lot of its roots are in Hispanic culture. How do you meld that and make what we do accessible and serve the community through education, collaborating with Hispanic-based organizations, and embrace that culture.
>
> The work we do is putting concerts on stage, but we are often in the pit. Opera can't function without the orchestra there. We become kind of a hub for these other activities to be going on. We are in a position to help the organizations become more successful. We do Fiesta Pops every year, we collaborate with the Guadalupe Dancers, we had Little Joe perform with us. It's important to embrace what we do but to try to find relevance between what we typically do and what is the historical culture of San Antonio.

This tension between catering to the local citizenry and what musicians feel is an important authentic classical music experience they must reproduce is what makes commoditization of the classical music product, particularly in San Antonio a richly multicultural city, difficult.

It is clear that that the implications of classical music being practiced in an economy in which music is highly commoditized are many. We are talking here about a musical tradition with roots in pre-modern, pre-capitalist societies. The critical difference

between modern, capitalist societies and those with simpler forms of technology and labor is not that we have a thoroughly commoditized economy while theirs is one in which subsistence is dominant and commodity exchange is limited, but rather that the consumption demands of persons in our own market-driven society are regulated by high-turnover criteria of "appropriateness" what Appadurai calls "fashion." The pulse of demand is much quicker and individual whims and needs change rapidly.

Tastemakers, who place consumers in a game of ever-shifting rules of taste, require for the success of industry that fashion, or appropriateness of a particular commodity, or taste, remain always changing. The form of consumption of classical music today is largely antithetical to these demands of commoditization and has in large part stagnated. In our American past, when classical music was popular, tastemakers could change the music along with other popular culture forms all of which contributed to new creative ideas and paradigms.

But the oeuvre of WCM that exists today largely exists to not change or accommodate change. In the borderland, we see an unusual case in which we see a change in local performance in relation to performance of classical music in the mainstream. A 2016 poll of Britons' favorite classical music conducted by ClassicFM – the largest survey of its kind that year – shows a list of 200 pieces that are taken overwhelmingly from the Late Romantic and Classical periods, and contemporary Neo-Romantic pieces – typically from movie soundtracks. Indeed, it is through movie soundtracks that many people become aquainted with classical music pieces.

Most original contemporary classical music is commissioned by regional music groups and is not found on movie soundtracks. Thus, it is not in the commodity phase, not in any such way that it is competing with new works in other Western music pop genres. Recently composed original classical music – that is, music that composers of it consider to be primarily artistic music and not commercial music - is found almost exclusively in the gift phase, instead. This is true for composers going back decades. For a classical music composer today to make a career out of the craft, he or she has to be willing to write lighter fare in the vernacular of Christmas, holiday, or Christian church music. In order to write "serious" or "art" music, one has to be associated with a university or be commissioned by classical music groups.

Much of the contemporary classical music that is commissioned is funded by donor money and then performed by these non-profit classical music organizations. Thus, music from *Jaws* and *Star Wars* is hardly ever found in the gift phase, maybe only when it is performed at Pops concerts to raise money for the Boston Symphony Orchestra to then perform at a later date the music they feel they were intended to perform, while Jennifer Higdon and Steve Reich's music is rarely commoditized.

This current tension may be a thing of the present but not of the future. The German singspiel of Mozart's day is today generally lumped in with Italian opera, whereas in Mozart's day opera seria and opera buffa – genres within Italian opera - carried a different connotation, were/are a different musical form, and were performed in different spaces and before different social classes of people than the singspiel and even each other. Contemporary half-hearted attempts from symphony orchestras to formally

separate classical music from popular music performed in a classical music setting may carry less meaning to the average audience member in the future than they do now.

Regardless of the ways in which people do and will classify classical music in the future, their relationship to the constellation of music forms that are enjoyed today - video game and film scores, old popular music standards, and the standard classcial repertoire of Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Rossini overtures, and Brahms rhapsodies, – is nevertheless transformed in the sacralized space of the concert hall and by these acolytes of the standard repertoire, the city orchestra musicians.

Conclusion and Future Directions

When I was a child, my father bought me a Sony Discman and my first compact disc, a Western classical music sampler that included a recording of a Donizetti aria and the overture from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro. For the first couple of months that I had my new Discman, it was the only disc I had, so I listened to it night and day, letting myself get acquainted with and then excited by the passion, energy, and excitement in the music I was listening to – even though I didn't know why it had been composed, who had composed it, or what it was supposed to mean. By and by, I lost interest in developing new experiences listening to classical music. By high school, instead of listening to Mozart and Beethoven, I devoured Japanese, French, and Turkish pop music.

In college, I developed an academic interest in audience research, interviewing members of online Star Wars fan communities and analyzing the rhetoric of television camerawork as it relates to the decline in popularity of soap operas. Simultaneously, I developed an even keener interest in Western classical music, attending as many

performances of opera, ballet, and symphony orchestra as I could. I attended amateur performance, college performances, and chamber performances, and I took the Chinatown bus to New York as often as I could to see live performances at the world-renowned Met.

Toward the end of my undergraduate career, as I began thinking about future steps for my career, I became curious about how my own transformation into an opera aficionado – someone who cries at performances – had occurred and what had had to happen in my life for that transformation to take place. That got me interested in how music practice is embedded in the ways in which identity – national, ethnic, and class identity – are formed.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of participants in the circulation of Western classical music art forms and practices in the United States. In the development of questions I would ask informants, I was guided by certain questions:

1. What constitutes the knowledge possessed by participants?

2. What context-dependent relationships and tensions shape both knowledge and practice?

3. In what ways can a better understanding of these practices and context-dependent relationships and tensions inform our understanding of processes of nationalization, urbanization, and cosmopolitanism?

I chose San Antonio as a site for inquiry into these questions for three main reasons. One, San Antonio is a model border town with a majority Mexican-American

population. Ethnic identification with Western classical music is abundantly clear in the case of elite Mexican-Americans living in San Antonio, for whom the influential Spanish-language newspaper *La Prensa* showcased reviews of opera productions, and in the case of German-Americans who established schools, newspapers, churches, and singing organizations that reproduced German lieder, sacred music, and operatic music. Two, it has experienced enormous support by way of San Antonio being one of the largest military cities in the US, to the extent that San Antonio was one of the few cities to maintain a symphony orchestra during WWII and was the earliest Texan city to have a resident opera company. Finally, San Antonio's opera and classical music scene has experienced a striking and difficult transition into the 21st century and organizations in the city have experienced bankruptcies, labor strikes, and hiatuses about which informants have been eager to opine.

After two years experiencing and talking to people who are part of the classical music scene in San Antonio, I find two major interesting points. First of all, the overarching narratives that have been deployed in the circulation of Western classical music in the 20th century are not significantly disrupted in cities in which hegemony may otherwise be destabilized.

Yes, there are more collaborations between San Antonio Symphony Orchestra and groups that produce traditional Mexican or Mexican-American music than in other cities. Yet, informants make clear that this music is mostly appropriated to build and maintain an audience for the music they really want to perform. Rather than disrupt the hierarchy of elite music, production of hybrid works serve to reinforce audiences' and

musicians' understanding of Western classical music as the pinnacle of musical artistic achievement. As Eduardo Lopez, a composer from the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas hired by the San Antonio Symphony to arrange tunes for mariachi and symphony orchestra ensembles earnestly told me during an interview, "Writing for symphony orchestra is completely different than writing for any other kind of group. Because of the range of instrumentation available and the skill of the musicians, the possibilities are endless."

This brings me to my second finding: Western classical music continues to be a method by which difference, ethnic and racial, is maintained, contributing difference to the experience of citizenship and the American ethos. In the case of San Antonio, as I found out firsthand, opera has fallen far behind the symphony orchestra in its success at this project. Why is this?

There is a fault line between opera tradition and symphony orchestra as it is performed in the United States. At least in the case of San Antonio, there seems to be a considerable wane in the popularity of opera but not in the symphony orchestra. I will speculate on some of these below. First, consider that Alamo Heights, an incorporated city with wealthy patrons living close to the downtown area, does not reliably provide patrons for the opera. Why is this? Could it be that the symbolic and cultural capital that used to be built up while attending an opera does not accrue anymore? Could it be that middle-brow culture is what individuals appreciate knowledge of now? Clients and business partners of San Antonio citizens perhaps would better like to know how good

each other's golf swing is or be able to talk about where the San Antonio professional sports teams are in the tournament standings.

San Antonio Symphony has been much better at weathering storms and seems to enjoy a stable future as a third-rate major American city orchestra. As part of attempts to show the public that they perform their civic duty to the city by contributing to the city's economy, by enhancing its touristic appeal, and by reaching out to young people and members of the lower class. The underlying assumption on the San Antonio Symphony management's part is that it is, in turn, the civic duty of wealthy citizens to support the symphony orchestra. Why aren't these wealthy people picking Western classical music performance organizations to fund as part of their civic duty to the extent they had in the past?

The American ethos includes the twin pillars of the valuation of capitalism and exceptionalism. Part of exceptionalism stems from the historical values of the United States that are so drastic from the ones in Europe. In Europe, as nation-states formed, class identities became the most important to individuals. In the United States, citizenship is the primary identity, ethnicity second, and only then do people care about class (Markovits and Hellerman 2001: 9). Class is real but rendered invisible by its elision in discourse. Everybody is middle class: everyone is part of Middle America. Thus, class distinctions that can be made visible through the opera no longer need to be visible for Americans.

The tendency to disavow class is part of this story. Middlebrow people aren't doing it anymore. In the past, German ethnic identification was a perfectly obvious and

natural reason and basis for support. Participating in the reproduction of high culture was a perfectly obvious reason. What's left? Opera *is* popular culture. Operas written and performed today are adapted from contemporary literature (e.g., Stephen King's *The Shining*), contemporary events (e.g., President Nixon's famous visit to China), and contemporary pop icons (e.g., Anna Nicole Smith and Jerry Springer).

If we are primarily viewing ourselves and each other as Americans, it follows that we enjoy art works that represent American identity. Symphony orchestra fulfills this role to a greater extent than opera because the symphony orchestra – as a civic organization that represents a city to other cities' symphony orchestras in the nation - was developed first in the United States. It enjoys considerable support here because it is American.

Opera, on the other hand, was not developed in the United States and the American tradition of opera represents only a small portion of the standard operatic repertoire, even in the United States. A similar but uniquely American musical theater form – the Broadway musical – is astronomically more popular today.

When high culture and ethnic identification fall away, what is left is unbridled nationalism and the Broadway musical is the United States's greatest contribution to the musical theater arts. It has been adapted to film, to television, to radio, and disseminated far and wide in many forms. High school students across the country produce Broadway musicals every year. Broadway musicals were not just enormously influential forms within the United States's popular culture. They helped to transform New York City, the home of Broadway musicals, into the cultural center of the Western World (Shefter 1993: 10).

There are many potential future directions for research to take place that I find compelling. I would have liked to expand my informant pool to include individuals who are part of San Antonio elites but are not necessarily patrons of opera or the symphony orchestra. Who are these new rich people who don't care at all about classical music? If supporting the symphony orchestra and opera companies in the city is no longer part of civic duty to one's city, what support of music practices, if any, constitutes civic duty?

Another direction is to take a cultural geography approach and compare the cultural product of Western classical music, its norms, and its variations across spaces. How are the Western classical music institutions of Los Angeles or Detroit affected by the development of satellite cities, decayed centers, and more recent revitalization efforts or gentrification processes?

These directions can produce more powerful analyses and more definitive answers for the understanding of what types of knowledge produce cultural capital for individual advancement in society. If it is not narrowly defined to consist of knowledge of "high culture" but instead as an understanding of practices that improve the individual's life chances, then knowledge of folk culture can be as valuable as mastery of opera.

They can provide further evidence of what Richard Peterson calls the "cultural omnivore," high status individuals who consume a variety of musical styles – jazz, rock, opera, and folk music. He finds that a cultural omnivore obtains the individual more cultural capital than being a "univore" or someone who only consumes one or a few closely related styles of music (Peterson and Simkus 1992, 169). In this case, someone

who loves opera may no longer be able to obtain cultural capital as before. While this may signal an eventual death knell for grand opera, the incorporation of a variety of musical styles into the repertoire of the typical American symphony orchestra and of smaller, avant-garde opera companies may be their saving grace in the future.

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