

ORCHESTRAS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF CREATIVITY: REFLECTING ON ARCHIVES, ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES AND POLICIES

AHRC CMPCP Workshop 3 for The ‘Orchestra’ in Global Perspective project

ABSTRACTS

Learning the “Music”: Balinese gamelan rehearsal and performance

Manuel Jimenez, SOAS University of London

On the surface, it might appear that Balinese gamelan is similar to any other performing ensemble, whether it be a modern symphony orchestra, a jazz band, or even a chamber choir. However, upon closer examination one can see that there are fundamental differences in the way that a gamelan operates. There is a rough order to the way that musicians advance through the ranks of a gamelan, allowing more freedom for musicians to decide what they wish to do within the ensemble and how important a position they wish to occupy within the group. In addition to this, musicians are expected to know/learn much more than just the part of the instrument they are sitting at. In more general terms, there is a great difference in the way the Balinese think of ensemble performance, not just instrumentally, but rather in the way that they conceive of performance arts as a whole. In Balinese performance thinking, music, dance and theatre all occupy the same arena, namely, performance. They are all inseparable, and the Balinese approach their performing arts with this all-encompassing holistic attitude. Despite this, there is still a divide of sorts: musicians may dance to a certain degree, but they remain musicians, and while they may move and gesture when they perform, they play music. Dancers may learn to play gamelan, but they remain dancers. My paper will examine the way in which a gamelan operates, both in general and using specific examples, looking at how musicians progress within a gamelan group, what choices are open to them, and what they are expected to know of various pieces of music. I will discuss the music-dance-theatre model, and how said model applies to gamelan across Bali. I will also show what differences there are within the gamelan world, using various examples (particularly from my own research into bamboo gamelan in West Bali) to demonstrate that there is a wide variety of practices within gamelan music, depending on what is being played and who is doing the playing. Using my own experience as a member of a working gamelan group I will look at how some gamelan styles go beyond the music-dance divide, to the point where musicians dance while playing. Finally I will show how emotion can enhance some gamelan genres, while detracting from others, and how gamelan can be a strong factor in determining the local identity of a particular region of Bali.

‘Infrastructures and Personnel: Case Studies in the Evolution of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society in the Nineteenth Century’

Fiona M. Palmer, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

This paper explores some of the principles central to creativity within orchestras. How do we make an orchestra work? In 19th-century Britain, many of the etiquettes and operational standards now engrained and expected were tested, refined, and imposed against a background of fast-paced industrial change and the vigorous pursuit of rational recreation and education. This discussion centres around a unique institution, the Liverpool Philharmonic Society (founded in 1840), and benefits from consideration of rich primary sources. Three case studies are included: first, the viewpoints of managers and players in 1849; secondly, the status and function of conductor in 1850; thirdly, a snapshot of the evolution of the role of the conductor by the 1880s. As a result we will witness the development of protocols, appreciate the pioneering struggles of emerging conductors, and glimpse some of the structural, managerial and political issues involved in making this Society work.

Orchestrations: Context, Community and Social Capital in Orchestral Governance

Henry Johnson, University of Otago, New Zealand

Orchestras are complex organizations. From a larger symphony orchestra to a smaller chamber orchestra, the successful running of such a group of musicians requires leadership and management that oversees a range of responsibilities from programming to concert production. Some professional orchestras might have a staff the size of a small business – and would usually be run as such – while amateur groups rely on dedicated leaders and enthusiastic players. The confluence of players and administrators, together with their inherent hierarchical methods of organization and relations, produces an elaborate social structure that in many cases relies heavily on markers of power and status in order for the musical product to be successfully achieved.

This paper provides an analysis of the governance of an orchestral board in the city of Dunedin, New Zealand, as a means of comprehending some of the organizational and social influences that underpin orchestral music production. The aim of the discussion is to interpret the ways context, community and social capital are interconnected and important concepts for understanding orchestral governance. While separate to the everyday functioning aspects of the orchestra's primarily operations, which involves several full-time or part-time administrative positions, the board serves as an overarching governing body that influences the strategic direction of the orchestra.

This research has been undertaken using mixed methods of data collection, including archival and ethnographic study. As a member of the board in question, I have gained an insider's perspective, but I have also carried out in-depth interviews with key informants on the board and made comparisons with other orchestras. The purpose of the interviews has been to collect qualitative data from a small number of participants, and to compare the findings as a way of comprehending the role of both the board and the individuals that are a part of it. The results of the research are presented as case-studies of individuals, particularly in terms of their purpose on the board and how they perceive this.

In undertaking this study I stress the importance of using ethnography as a research method for understanding any music of any place. As well as an ethnographic and qualitative

emphasis, the research has drawn on the work of such figures as Bourdieu (1997) in connection with his work on social capital. It is with this concept that the orchestra's board is explored, especially in connection with its social networks and the community and orchestra it represents.

The paper has three main parts: (1) Context; (2) Community; and (3) Social Capital. The first part provides a background to the orchestra under study, the Southern Sinfonia, and offers an historical and contextual framework for understanding this particular group's *raison d'être* and its organizational practices. The second part of the paper discusses the contribution the orchestra's board has to the community it represents. The last main part of the paper focuses on the idea of social capital as a way of interpreting some of the underpinning ways the orchestra is interconnected with its local community.

Culture in Crisis: An Icelandic Survivor's Guide

Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, Iceland Symphony Orchestra

The culture of classical music in Iceland is less than a century old; the Iceland Symphony Orchestra was only founded in 1950. In recent years, the cultural life of the country has been nearly as fragile as its economy, as is seen by the much-contested building of the Harpa concert hall in the wake of the economic crash of 2008. I will begin with a brief overview of the history of performing symphonic music in Iceland during the last century. This will be followed by my own observations on the current state of affairs, drawn from my experience during the last four years as Programme Director of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. In particular, I will attempt to cast light on the fragile relationship between culture and politics in the small Icelandic society.

Creative interaction and ownership in the rehearsal process: a case study

Mark Doffman, University of Oxford

This paper examines the collaborative, interactive work of performers, composer and conductor in the rehearsal process leading to the first performance of a contemporary classical work. The material for the paper is drawn from a case study of *musikFabrik*, the Cologne-based contemporary music ensemble and their work on *Tongue of the Invisible* by the Australian composer, Liza Lim, in June 2011.

musikFabrik is a democratic, highly participatory organisation that is committed to new ways of working, ensuring that musicians retain control of their working lives, and yet in their working practices, more conventional and clearly hierarchical ways of working, that is with conductor and composer 'leading' the collaborative effort, remain in play. Beyond the organisational dimension to their work, in *Tongues of the Invisible*, the musicians' musical practice ranges from highly improvised approaches to interpreting fully determined musical notation. Thus, in terms of practice and musical, there is a complex dynamic at work in which highly participatory and conventional 'top-down' work processes co-exist. Such complex work practices and organisational structures have implications for material and

processual ownership both economic and affective.

The ethnographic data are drawn from video/audio recordings from the rehearsal process, observation/note taking and interview material with the participants. This study aims to shed light on how the inherently interactive creative process is 'owned' by the different stakeholders and asks questions about the relationship between musical practices, institutional organisation and momentary creative interaction.

Orchestra community outreach projects and Muslim communities in London: Negotiating aims, values and ideologies through collaborative creative music projects

Carolyn Landau, Department of Music, King's College London

Community outreach and education programmes run by professional Western classical orchestras in Britain emerged in the 1980s. Since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1992, including the teaching of music as a subject until Key Stage 3, these programmes have developed and diversified considerably. Meanwhile, some British-Muslim families have chosen to remove their children from music lessons in State schools due to the problematic nature of music within certain branches of Islamic theology. Other families have opted to send their children to private Muslim schools where music is not in the curriculum, but where the singing of Islamic songs as part of religious education occurs on a regular basis. This apparent paradox is partly due to the ways in which the word 'music' is linguistically, culturally and theologically interpreted and perceived within Muslim contexts. When Western classical orchestras seek to extend their outreach programmes to include projects with Muslim communities, therefore, this can sometimes result in misunderstanding, confusion and frustration. Equally, however, it can also result in musically and culturally enriching experiences for all participants. This paper explores a number of ongoing and recently completed orchestra outreach projects within various Muslim communities in London with which the author has been involved in various ways, such as observer, participant observer, workshop facilitator, photographer, and consultant.

In particular, I explore the following questions: how does the education and outreach work of an orchestra fit into its overall aims and vision? Is this work, for example, mainly about widening participation, reaching new audiences, attracting more funding, following recent fashions in music education or does it also include the expansion of artistic horizons and the creation of new, quality music, and are all of these various goals simultaneously achievable? To what extent are the aims, values and ideologies of orchestras, their education and outreach teams and the community groups with whom they collaborate compatible with and/or complimentary to one another (be they artistic, commercial, educational, social, moral, or religious aims, values and ideologies)? To what extent can creative music projects result in genuine, long term social or moral transformation and how can this be measured or evaluated? How do orchestras choose which communities and which projects to engage with and are these decisions governed by educational, artistic, economic, political, or other factors? And finally, what about the repertoire or musical genres with which the outreach and education projects engage? Do these reflect the orchestras' own resources or are they trying to do something that might be considered beyond their expertise and training, such as teach diverse musical traditions in a creative, collaborative, democratic and non-score based way using potentially unfamiliar skills such as improvisation? I will explore these various

questions by presenting and analysing ethnographic data that I have collected during the past twenty-four months.

Tamil film songs: MIDI sequencing technology in creative music practice

Divakar Subramaniam, University of Glamorgan

The music and sound of Tamil film songs, originating in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, have undergone radical transformation in the past three decades, reflecting social, political, economic and cultural climate in the region, nation and from around the world. Many of these changes arise from the way Tamil film songs are conceived and produced today. Recent modifications to creative processes behind Tamil film songs arise from the availability and use of digital music technologies, a phenomenon shared with popular music of many cultures around the world, as part of recent technological globalization. This paper investigates specifically, the role of MIDI sequencing technologies in creative music practices associated with Tamil film songs. This paper is part of wider research concerning digital music technologies and Tamil film songs. The hypothesis here is that the availability and eclectic use of MIDI sequencing technologies have significantly influenced creative music practices related to producing Tamil film songs, redefining its music and sound in a way that reflects the region's relationship with popular music from around the world.

This research adopts the following methodologies to reflect a variety of contexts for contemporary south Indian film songs: multi-sited ethnography of south Indian film song composition and production involving field interviews and observant participation (through industry oriented creative music practice), historical research, musicological analysis of Tamil film songs and textual analysis of song lyric.

Using audio examples from field interviews and industry-based creative music practice and observation, this presentation will review the application of MIDI sequencing technologies in the creation and production of Tamil film songs, discuss factors that mediated the introduction and ascent of this technology, and highlight the impact of these changes from musical and social contexts. Discussing “how”, “what” musical elements are produced by “whom”, using MIDI sequencing technology, this presentation will elucidate the emerging dominance of digital music technologies (promoting plural musical environments and new music-making paradigms) in producing Tamil film songs.