

12. A HISTORICAL VIEW ON THE RELEVANCE OF MUSIC FOR SOCIETY IN AN ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH

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Abstract: *The majority of authors who have studied the phenomenon of cultural entrepreneurship have attempted to demonstrate how market conditions and society in general have the power to shape the performances of artistic products, in terms of economical and community relevance. The entrepreneurial concept is linked to the desire for innovation, for transcending conventional traditional practices and knowledge, by focussing creative interests on the real needs expressed by cultural consumers and audiences of concert halls. This research wishes to provide a synoptic view on the existence of this socio-economic phenomenon throughout music history, and thus to show that professional music has almost always been sensitive towards the needs of society, and has succeeded in remaining useful and productive for long periods of time.*

Key words: *Music sociology, entrepreneurship, management, history, evolution*

1. Introduction

The emergence of entrepreneurship as a science was associated with the field of finances and business (Druker, 1985, Schumpeter, 1911), while in the past years it has moved closer to the sphere of sociology and education (Hennessy, 2018). The primary mission of entrepreneurship is to exploit the opportunities in the environment, to understand the needs of consumers and the dynamics of markets, to create and place products in an appropriate and profitable environment, to identify the influences that can determine changes in terms of evolution and progress.

Music history has proven that there have always been two different directions for cultural consumption (Chailley, 2001), on the one hand represented by the *educated audience* for elite, superior culture, and the *uneducated audience* for facile, mass culture. Over the last century, the idea to trade art was more frequently associated with the second category, who regard the artistic act almost exclusively as a factor of entertainment. For the first category the economic concept is placed on a secondary level - often unimportant or even ignored. Nevertheless, it has become noticeable over the past few years that the idea of social emancipation has been accepted and adopted by professional music as well and promoted in various unconventional venues (factories, squares, parks, etc.), used for artistic productions in order to increase the visibility and the marketing of concerts. Many professional orchestras and artists have agreed to exit the traditional, elegant stages and perform in utterly unconventional spaces, led by the motivation to provide massive and varied music education to a larger number of people.

Even though we may feel that this is a recent phenomenon, that requires a change of mentality and an openness towards novelty for professional musicians, music history provides an abundance of similar instances, proving that the

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sociological factor has had a permanent, cyclic influence on the development of music performance and creation.

2. Landmarks in historical musical sociology

In Ancient Greece music played a very important role in society, being always present in religious and entertainment events, in military ceremonies, in marriage and funeral rituals. Being considered a gift from God and endowed with healing powers, it was often used for therapy, healing, inducing sleep, calming pain, and treating mental disorders (Kubarzki, 2016, Budoiu-Balan, 2019). Well-off families were interested in hiring their own musicians for use on special occasions in their life. Starting from that, music began to be differentiated:

- *Superior, elite music*, performed in association with ancient theatre or during religious ceremonies;
- *Popular, mass music*, used for entertainment, as a product that serves individual needs.

After the decline of ancient culture, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, musicians returned to practice art to the official closed spaces inside castles and churches. Very well trained musicians were hired – and very well paid – by kings and leaders of churches and cities. One of the primordial conditions for their success was *flexibility*, which required them to offer both elite art music and entertainment music, to organize activities, to elaborate the artistic plans of the court, to offer music education for noble families and other similar actions. In this context, the historical reports confirm that musicians used to practice a type of intuitive entrepreneurship, looking for networks and support in society, in order to become known and appreciated.

One record about music entrepreneurship stems from the year 1473, 20 years after the invention of Gutenberg's printing press, when a score printing machine was invented. As the commercial activity of publications extended and the number of requests increased, businessmen from other fields found it advantageous to collaborate with contemporary musicians, so that in the 16th century, the products of musical houses had a monopoly of the market in many European cities. Even back then musicians understood that the relationship to the consumption market, by means of the social networks, was an important element that guaranteed their reputation and, implicitly, a successful career. Ensuring good publicity, by optimizing and maintaining communication with institutions and influential people, had a favourable outcome in economic and professional terms.

From the history of universal music we find out that, for several hundred years, music endured in the aristocratic space, as a means of education for the nobility. For the life of palaces, symphonic and opera music were indispensable elements, without which almost no social, political, military, or administrative events were ever organized. At the beginning of the 17th century, the phenomenon of the “classical music stars” emerged, due to the castrati, who dominated the operatic market and monopolized the audience's interest for almost two centuries. They were intensely encouraged by the works of Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, etc. precisely due to the virtuosity and the spectacular vocal-

technical capacities that characterized them and aroused the audience's curiosity. In the 18th century, the exceptional technical and vocal virtuosity with which they performed in the concert hall had become, in itself, a method of selling tickets and attracting new audience categories. The abundance of these castrati led to the appearance of commercial operas meant for the audience at large, such as *Andromeda*, written by Benedetto Ferrari and Francesco Manelli.

The period during which the “court” operas and the privatized - “commercial” - ones coexisted highlighted the difference between the quasi-rigid system imposed by the aristocratic institutions and the flexibility with which autonomous, private institutions that worked for the masses managed to develop and adapt to the changes dictated by society. It was considered at the time that the process of creating serious aristocratic operas was controlled by a much too tedious set of rules, which hindered a fast-repertory development favourable to consumption, while the *popular-community operas* multiplied very successfully, due to their flexibility and receptiveness, attracting a positive public reaction and a large number of supporters in the long term.

After the French Revolution, a large part of the royal orchestras were dissolved, forcing composers and players to search for other variants of practicing their jobs. This led to the appearance of venues for larger audiences, with permanent private seasons at the Leipziger Gewandhaus (1780), École Royale de Chant et de Déclamation Paris (1793), and Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien (1813), which in turn led to the establishment of the first Philharmonic-like organizations. All this hustle and bustle of private networks encouraged artistic management activities and the organization of events with commercial purposes, so that famous names, who impressed by their virtuosity, were required by the public and, implicitly, sold at high prices.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the concept of the *new church* brought with it a system of employment that involved musical services not only in the sacred context, but particularly outside the religious spaces, an alternative that required players to combine mixed practices between tradition and modernity, so that productions may be liked and consumed by large audiences. The appearance of the London Vauxhall Gardens (1729), under the patronage of Jonathan Tyers, encouraged the construction of entertainment spaces meant for syncretic art types, designed especially for the community, in several European cities, particularly where there was a special interest for investors and traders.

In the middle of the 19th century, the idea of attracting audiences to concerts by promoting technical virtuosity was exploited by Liszt and Paganini. The spectacular symphonism that characterized their performances was seen as a transposition into sounds of social life, of contemporary literature, of revolutionary nature, especially designed to liberate society from any rigid frame imposed by the specific features of that period, offering the artistic expressions that reflected their individual aspirations and their desire to be listened to.

The cultural industries of the 20th century were marked by the appearance of the Enlightenment and its associated trends. For the cultural consumption, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer wrote researches regarding the loss of value of

artistic productions due to commercialization. In the work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), the artistic act is approached from the viewpoint of the *use value*, while the two philosophers state that involving elite culture into a commercial system is in fact an attempt at social manipulation, an artistic degradation intended to level communities. The tendency to commercialize the professional elite music in order to make it more profitable has been interpreted since the appearance of Adorno's theory as a wilful act of placing professionals on the same level as the uneducated social masses, an action that tends to turn the elitist-superior audience member into a common customer, with a low power of artistic discernment.

The article highlights the fact that, in order to increase cultural profitability, attempts were made at eliminating the differences between elite art and mass art, suggesting that superior-professional music should fuse with facile entertainment in order to be able to produce the expected results among the social levels. Thus, the idea of social emancipation through uneducated, mass musical consumption was accepted and adopted by the professional music and developed in increasingly less conventional venues (factories, squares, etc.) - intensely used nowadays to promote and sell cultural productions. Many professional orchestras and artists were determined to abandon the traditional, elegant stages, and appear before the audience in utterly unconventional venues, in order to educate a large number of people and adapt their productions to accessible, simple contexts, easy to understand and accept. This process of artistic simplification for the uneducated society is rightfully interpreted as a compromise forced by the existence of commercial and competitive factors.

The science of art event mediation, which has been used increasingly in the past few years, both in music conservatories and in renowned concert halls and arts facilities all over the world is looking for functional solutions that will educate the masses without altering elite artistic products. In this regard, international practices are available that can provide action models for various performance venues, audience categories, recommended repertoires, mediation scenarios, etc.

3. Representative personalities for the history of socio-musical entrepreneurship

Music history demonstrates in fact that the idea of *music entrepreneurship* is not a novelty. The existing literature confirms that commercial practice is an integral part of the artistic act. The analysis of the evolution of these historical consumption practices is necessary to motivate the concept of *social interaction by means of artistic products* as a basis for the theory of musical management and, implicitly, to pursue the track of art's active participation in the community life. We shall briefly present some proof of the existence of these practices in the preoccupations of the grand personalities of music history, in order to open the road to the research resources available in musicological literature that are associated, in our case, with models of artistic career management.

After the death of Henry Purcell in 1695 and the conclusion of a dramatic period of the Civil War that significantly marked Great Britain's history, London

tried to regain its economic, social, and cultural balance. Following the model of the great European centres, the city was intensely looking for composers who could write good music for the artistic life of the region. In this context, the German (though educated in Italy) composer George Frideric Handel arrived in London. Although merely 25 years old, he possessed an extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit, identifying and exploiting the opportunities and the gaps of the cultural market, as well as the existence of an audience eager to pay for the opportunity to listen to good quality music. In order to achieve social notoriety, Handel quickly composed an opera for the London audience (*Rinaldo*, the premiere of which took place on February 24th, 1711 at the *Queen's Theatre* in London), almost entirely based on the composition exercises accomplished during his music education in Italy. The success of this production exceeded expectations, so that Handel continued his exceptional success in London by composing, at the same speed, works in Italian style. As a result of his reputation and managerial skills, Handel was named cultural counsellor and music manager at the royal house. During this time, wishing to increase his popularity among the masses, the new king (George I) extended the cultural life by organizing community performances, parades, and open-air festivals for the London people, putting Handel in charge of preparing and coordinating these social artistic events.

The king's partnership with Handel was courageous and atypical. The premiere of *Water Music* took place in a surprising background, on a boat where, beside the 50 orchestra members, were invited the most important businessmen and political representatives of London. This completely unusual event, an artistic explosion in terms of music and scenery, attracted attention towards England, and, implicitly, towards Handel. In this context, in 1719 the king provided a very large amount of money for the establishment of the Royal Academy of Music (on the structure of a private music theatre). This institution, which rapidly gained fame and admiration, became the first stock company in Europe for the cultural sector, which meant that several local investors financed the aristocratic activities of the theatre, offering important amounts of money for the season's productions. The Academy became a space sought by the high society, particularly due to the celebrities that frequented it, being also regarded as a proper place for building business relationships (Kubarzki, 2016).

The London press of the time paid attention to what was going on inside the Royal Academy, and the establishment soon became a major centre of interest for all the neighbouring regions and for the international cultural life. As the theatre's notoriety grew, Handel's work became increasingly demanding, so that he was forced to make efforts and create a network of music management, to find and hire virtuoso artists (especially Italian *castrati*). As manager of the Royal Academy, Handel conducted an intense activity of organizing auditions and artist recruitment, travelling to European cultural centres in order to intermediate relationships between musicians and the theatre he managed. Handel's administrative activity was productive until 1725, when the theatre closed for lack of soloists. In 1728, Handel and John Heidegger (a Swiss artist manager) started the project of a new business, renting the space of the royal theatre in order to produce autonomous

performances (as private persons).

The year 1728 coincides with the appearance in London of an atypical opera named *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, a satirical piece that radically changed the previous theatrical context, eliminating the recitatives, using common texts that focused on the drama of the current social life (political problems, the corruption of the times, poverty, the image of negative characters that the London reality had to face), at the same time parodying the aristocratic theatre and the elegance imposed by the traditional Italian opera. The emergence of this operatic genre also contained elements that accused the royal house of money laundering through the enormous investments it had made over time in the Italian operas (***, 2019, BBC Documentary, *Mischief and Morals in the 18th Century*). Gay's production became very popular and was played, at the audience's request, 62 times in London and a few other tens of times in theatrical establishments in America. In the lack of specific laws for the protection of author's rights, this piece included even parodied fragments from Handel's work, which had a negative effect on the image and activity of the great German composer.

Taking a small leap in time and space, we arrive at W. A. Mozart's father, Leopold, a personality that stood out due the very important role that he played in promoting and selling the works of young Wolfgang Amadeus. Leopold showed exquisite managerial skills, he was creative and inspired in the way he presented to society his productions and the abilities of his child, determining the mass-media of those times to exploit the story of the supernatural and obtaining an extraordinary success among all audience categories.

Most of the comments around the young musician, Wolfgang, referred to the "divine inspiration" that brought to him complete perfection of his works - an image that his father, Leopold, had in reality skilfully contrived. At the beginning of the 19th century, the German press belied these arguments, according to which Mozart's compositions had been flawless since the very first pieces, by revealing the correspondence between Wolfgang and his father, in which the young musician repeatedly confessed that he had had to give up or return to music fragments that he was not content with and which he regarded as lamentable (BBC, *The Genius of Mozart* Documentary, 2018). Wolfgang was indeed very talented, but the image of a supernatural genius owed first of all to the way in which Leopold presented him to audiences, the "divine perfection" being a marketing phrase skilfully employed to impress society.

Two music business markets developed during Beethoven's time: the piano industry and the selling of scores. The number of companies increased all over the world, especially the music score printing houses, which created a new opportunity for active composers as well as for instrument factories. In 1803, Sebastien Érard, a French maker of musical instruments, sent Beethoven a new piano (with supplementary octaves and an improved mechanism, for which the composer wrote special pieces). This model of "instrument maker - composer" relationship encouraged the appearance of partnerships favourable to business development. For example, if Beethoven wrote a sonata for a new piano, which he then sold to a music store, the ones who wanted to play that piece had to buy first of all a new

piano, with more octaves than the traditional one.

Beethoven did sometimes exploit the market in an intelligent manner; on the one hand he collaborated with music instrument developers, as we have already mentioned, while on the other he wrote accessible music pieces and scores for the society at large. A piece of evidence in this respect is the period when he composed his third concerto for piano and orchestra (for an Érard piano) and, concomitantly, a series of simple sonatas that he sold to music stores in Germany and England. Beethoven is one of the people who were able to identify and exploit opportunities, while at the same time serving community, writing what the society of the time wanted and leading the artistic evolution, exploiting the construction of new music instruments, and, implicitly, exceeding the previous limits in sound, harmonies, and concepts.

In the 16th century, for almost 300 years, the most important supporters of elite music in Italy were representatives of de' Medici family. The musical patronage offered by de' Medici family began during the time of Cosimo de' Medici and was associated with community ceremonies (weddings, birthdays, coronation celebrations) where they were known to organize and sponsor events. They exerted a cultural and political monopoly, influencing culture substantially from a commercial and social viewpoint, particularly in Central and Northern Italy. Even though they did not stem from aristocracy or royalty, their position as protectors and financiers of the arts for a long period of time offered them visibility and respect, being credited as the most prolific Maecenas in history. In Florence, de' Medici financed an important school of madrigal composers, with subsequent branches in Venice and Rome. The composers registered in de' Medici system did not only receive commissions to write madrigals - the very talented ones signed contracts for long-term commitments for multiple community events, such as Jacopo Peri, the father of Italian opera, who was consistently financed within this network for 12 years.

Starting with the 18th century, the main goals of the composers and performers who embarked upon an artistic career were organized primarily around international tours, which secured their reputation within the community and, in most cases, offered them the opportunity of long-term work contracts (usually at the courts of kings and archbishops). Any musician who lived on their own, out of the funds derived from performances given on tours, had to think like entrepreneurs. Weber asserted that the custom of working with concert managers to organize music tours appeared in the time span between 1830 and 1840, with the activity of Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt (Weber, 2004). After music left the space of the royal courts and became visible to larger audiences, artist management companies started to emerge. In the 19th century, the job of event organizer and salesman was known under two names: "Artist manager" - who sought singers and provided the artistic resources for the opera performances and "concert agent" - who dealt with selling virtuoso instrument players and the organization of concerts.

The 19th century was dominated by the image of two influential artist managers, Albert Gutmann in Vienna (1825-1915) and Hermann Wolff (1845-1902) in Berlin, who became known due to the activity of Brahms, Wagner, Hans

von Büllow, Rubinstein and others, and encouraged the appearance of a new industry for concert companies. Nowadays artist agents and concert agencies are indispensable for the artists who reach a superior level in their musical career. The activity of intermediating the relationship of artists and event organizers (the artist manager's activity) requires a good knowledge of marketing and advertising, negotiation, fund raising, planning and monitoring – and for these reasons a specific training is required in this respect in most countries.

Later in history, in the year 1877, Edison invented the phonograph and Emile Berliner the turntable, which led to a huge increase in the production of audio recordings and record sales, developing the industry of music sales for widespread use within society. During World War I, the expansion of music industries was blocked by the interruption of international communications; in this period, the film industry took over the electronic sound industries, establishing the first collaborations for film music producers, which were also very well paid. Thus, professional music found another channel of production, which has remained profitable to this day. The music record market, the audio cassettes business and then the CDs took over the monopoly of cultural business, impacting national economies in many countries worldwide in a very significant manner.

4. Conclusions

The relationship to the consumer society and the trading practices of professional music has always existed throughout world history. Culture has almost always found channels of distribution - more often than not financially profitable and community-oriented ones. Music entrepreneurship, music sociology, and the practices of cultural trading have accompanied artists along history from ancient times to the present. Current art needs a high flexibility in order to adapt to the reality of modern cultural consumption. Achieving products accessible to the masses or finding ways to explain musicological science so as to make it intelligible to the larger public is a responsibility that belongs to professional artists.

In the context of our research we have understood that over time, for the evolution and development of the professional cultural field, it was not only the musicians' training that mattered, but also the consumer's behaviour. In order to influence the behaviour of adult consumers, we must connect them to another type of culture with which they are already familiar, so that they may be able to reach out towards something that represents them.

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