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Orchestrating Creativity

The Musical Canon as a Regulative Concept

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Music is often said to be a universal language. Many discussions on the cultural significance of music seem to be underpinned by this widely shared consensus. But although we implicitly assume that music is capable of carrying and transferring meaning, there is hardly any consensus over the kind of meaning it transfers, where it comes from and on what basis it could be called universal. Furthermore, despite this claim on universality, it is common knowledge that music not only transcends cultural boundaries but also stipulates them. Clearly, if music is indeed a language, it is a language in which different songs can be sung. For a proper understanding of what is being sung, it seems critical to first ask ourselves: who is singing?

This dissertation undertakes a quest towards a sustainable musical culture, in which musical culture is explicitly portrayed as an aesthetic practice taking place in a concrete historically situated environment. Throughout this dissertation, I will argue that aesthetic forms are inseparably tied to a variety of actors and factors (ranging from individuals and institutions to historical occurrences and policy shifts), that together constitute a very complex but intelligible environment that stands in a structural relation to these aesthetic forms. Questions of sustainability, therefore, must take this relation into account.

In a way, this amounts to little more than pushing at an open door. In our daily lives, we continue to ascribe to music a moving force that cannot be deduced from music's own formal characteristics, and one that cannot be reduced to cultural convention. As listeners, we constantly navigate in the space between what music is as an autonomous and delineated aesthetic entity, and what music is within a certain specific context. We may feel like blasting Led Zeppelin or Aerosmith through the radio when driving to soccer practice, while we may prefer the company of Bach and Schubert for our Sunday breakfast, and Mozart around teatime. Glenn Miller is an excellent choice during a whiskey tasting with friends but makes a very poor running companion. Even more fascinating is the observation that these different occasions and purposes very often lead to different judgments over the same music. For example, the shower-scene music from Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 thriller *Psycho* became one of the most popular film music excerpts of the 20th century, while same-sounding classical music in a concert setting would annoy some audiences to a point of bitter frustration. Apparently, the undeniable moving force of music is as much connected to the music itself as it is connected to the context in which it is played. In this dissertation, I will argue that music needs these contexts in order to be fully understood. More specifically, an argument will be developed that music discloses a significant part of its meaning by grace of the stories we create for it.

Two protagonists

For this quest towards a sustainable musical culture, I have chosen two protagonists: the symphony orchestra and the musical canon. Both protagonists provide ample conceptual space to talk about music as an aesthetic form rooted in an organizational practice. I will briefly introduce both of them, with the intention of clarifying their respective connection with the broader topic of sustainability.

The first protagonist is the musical canon. In its popular use, the musical canon is understood as a collection of musical works that have survived historical selection processes (the notorious "test of time") and therefore exhibit both exemplary value and superior quality. The etymology of the word 'canon', derived from the ancient Greek 'κανων' (kanôn), meaning 'measuring rod', affirms this definition. Historical accounts of music history are often developed within a framework of just a few handfuls of Great Composers and their Eternal Masterpieces. Stylistic periods are marked with reference to composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner and Brahms. Composers who defined their time to a slightly lesser degree can be found in the secondary echelon of the canonical pantheon, with names such as Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Berlioz and Tchaikovsky. Although these composers are long dead, their works continue to dominate the concert stage.

Despite its connotations of pastness, the concept of a canon in general continues to prove its cultural weight. At the time and place of writing, discussions about the sense and nonsense of a canon have flared up. Despite a more clearly perceptible anti-canon movement, Flemish politicians are now discussing the need for, and the use value of, a Flemish canon, not only in concert halls and theaters, but particularly in curricula of schools and conservatoires. Two things are noteworthy about this renewed attention for a canon. Firstly, this discussion has social issues like gender equality, wealth distribution and racial quotas in its wake, which illustrates that discussions about the canon are not only about aesthetics, but at least partially about how these aesthetics are ingrained within their cultural environment. Secondly, while the political discussions about a Flemish canon have become particularly hot-headed, there has hardly been any mentioning of the content of this canon. To this point, it seems to have been irrelevant to the discussion whether such a canon is supposed to consist of books, works of art, historical events, food, Flemish stereotypes or personal anecdotes. Strangely enough, the discussion is entirely centered around a canon as a concept and not around the collection itself. More specifically, there seems to be a shared sensitivity (one that does not even require explicit articulation to be recognized) that a canon has the potential to represent. Exactly this property of the canon will be the theoretical starting point for this dissertation.

The very fact that this discussion about the use value of a canon is still relevant, and maybe more relevant than ever, testifies to the urgency of a reflective approach. More specifically, it shows that an adequate approach must go beyond binary arguments over what falls in and

what falls outside of the canon and must reach out to a transcendental level of reflection over what the canon is as a theoretical concept, cultural framework and aesthetic phenomenon. By observing the musical canon from this transcendental viewpoint, I do not wish to join the dominant cultural force of declaring war on the idea of a canon, nor do I wish to deliver a one-sided apologetics of the canon. By exploring how the concept of a canon can be understood and how it has regulated our musical culture, I try to defend a midway position between the overly subjective relativism associated with the canon's detractors and the overly objective aestheticism associated with the canon's defenders. In the context of classical music, this position implies a conviction that music does not just consist of organized sound but forms a highly sophisticated cultural language that is uttered within a specific context and can only be deciphered against that horizon. Just like no art is born *ex nihilo,* no art can be judged from within a cultural vacuum.

The second protagonist, the symphony orchestra, serves as a *pars pro toto* for aesthetic practice. This research attends to the broader theme of sustainability within aesthetic practice, which will be studied on a smaller scale in what will be referred to as the 'crisis of the orchestra'. The symphony orchestra presents itself as a suitable candidate for this study for many reasons. First of all, issues of sustainability have been a persistently recurring motif throughout the orchestra's history, and at the present time, there are many indications that the symphony orchestra is (once more) suffering from a sustainability crisis. Secondly, the orchestra's history is well-documented, and the institutions' dominance in the Western musical and socio-cultural sphere is matched by opera only (because of the explicit dramaturgical dimensions of opera, the art form of opera would be less suited for this study). Most importantly though, the fates of the symphony orchestra and the musical canon will be argued to be interconnected. A pioneering international study about this connection was entitled *The Survival of Art or the Art of Survival?* (J. Allmendinger and Hackman 1991). With the present study and the chosen protagonists, I hope to demonstrate the complexities of this question; by arguing that the causalities between the aesthetic survival of the art form and the institution's pragmatic survival strategies can be understood as a dialectical process that constitutes the space within which sustainable creativity can thrive.

Scope of the research

The scope of this research, which flows naturally from engaging both protagonists, is limited to 'Western art music' and its appearance in concert programs of symphony orchestras. This may seem like an antiquated demarcation at first, since the boundaries of 'Western art music' have increasingly shown themselves permeable if not fundamentally invalid. Especially in the 21st century, the globalized art world does not seem to uphold categorizations such as 'Western', to the point that even classifications such as 'art' and 'music' have become questionable. Are popular music, tribal dance music and Indonesian gamelan music fundamentally and defensibly different from what is commonly understood as Western art

music? In these globalized times, is any research that confines itself to a demarcation such as 'Western art music' bound to be inconsequential?

I have consciously limited the scope of this research to Western art music for three reasons. First of all, it is a methodological demarcation that does not imply a value judgment. Concert programming of symphony orchestras is a historical as well as an empirical reality that enters my research as such. Secondly, Western art music has been work-centered for a good two centuries (arguably the era of the symphony orchestra as we know it), while non-Western music, as well as jazz and pop music, tend to be more performance-centered. Thirdly, while this study focusses on Western art music as epitomized in the established canon, it does not focus on the specific works associated with that canon but on the canon as a concept: how it has functioned as a framework, what role (if any) it still performs, and what the creative potential of such a concept may be. The reader will notice that what falls outside of this canon is not left unstudied, rather on the contrary: the transcendental approach ensures that the boundary conditions and the terms of access to the canon will be studied explicitly. In short, the methodological demarcation employed in this research is pertinent not because it reinforces boundaries but precisely because it is reflective towards them.

The argument

The main methodological premise for this research is that to adequately explore conditions of sustainability, it is imperative for the research to remain rooted in aesthetic practice. Settling upon a high level of abstraction could generate lucid theory but would inevitably violate the aesthetic nature of actual musical works as well as minimize the role of the pragmatic sphere in which they are produced and reproduced. Therefore, it seems appropriate to thoroughly integrate theoretical and empirical research, to avoid content-poor scholastics and to steer clear of implementation-oriented platitudes. The research question that guides this bifocal investigation ties theoretical and empirical dimension together and is designed to leave ample space for reflection on the tensions between the aesthetic and the pragmatic.

Chapter 1 starts from the simple observation that the symphony orchestra is in crisis. At first glance, the reason for the orchestra's steady demise seems very obvious: there is not a single orchestra in the world that earns enough from performances to cover its own expenses. However, this grim financial picture can hardly be the core of today's problem. In fact, the symphony orchestra has always led a precarious hand-to-mouth existence, relying on various external monetary sources and on the generosity of donors with very different, often conflicting motivations, interests and agendas. Chapter 1 launches the proposition that there is a deeper structure to the financial precariousness of the symphony orchestra, which allows for the crisis to be viewed as a legitimacy crisis. The deployed definition of legitimacy, as a generalized perception that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within a given social context, will bring into conflict the aesthetic and the pragmatic

dimensions of a symphony orchestra. Likewise, sustainability will be understood not only as the capacity to remain operative, but also as the capacity to remain aesthetically pertinent. In other words, the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra will be argued to be based on an existential dilemma that manifests itself in the tensions between the aesthetic and the pragmatic. This area of tension can be seen as a problem, but it can also constitute the dynamics that lead to productive solutions.

Furthermore, it will be argued in chapter 1 that symphony orchestras around the world have reacted to this legitimacy crisis in a similar way. The symphony orchestra's strategical answer, which will be defined as the field's dominant logic, is twofold: firstly, orchestras adhere to homogeneous organizational forms, and secondly, they show a high level of repertoire uniformity. In other words, the dominant logic manifests itself on a pragmatic and an aesthetic level. From the viewpoint of sustainability, this dominant logic has proved to be a blessing and a curse for the symphony orchestra. The further research is fueled by the suggestion that if the repertoire itself no longer receives innovative impulses, the legitimacy crisis of the symphony orchestra is bound to intensify. A research question will be formulated accordingly: how does the repertoire of symphony orchestras relate to their prospect of sustainability?

At that point, the two protagonists prove their value in connection to the research question. The symphony orchestra provides the arena, while the musical canon provides the lens through which to observe the issue. Together, they allow me to unite the two required research dimensions (theory and empirical research) and explore, in each dimension, how the aesthetic and the pragmatic (or the artistic and the organizational) are intricately interwoven. Moreover, the musical canon allows for a synchronic as well as a diachronic approach. Synchronic, in the sense that pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions converge in the concept of the musical canon. Diachronic, in the sense that the concept of the musical canon allows me to explore the past, present and proposed future of the concept.

The theoretical part of this study provides a specific apparatus of concepts that should enable me to comprehend the tensions between the aesthetic and the pragmatic on a level of abstraction. Chapters 2 and 2 are entirely devoted to the analysis of the canon, both as a historical reality and as a theoretical concept. A historical account of the evolution of both the orchestra and its repertoire reveals how the orchestra has evolved from a mere sound-producing medium to a carrier of the symbolic *grandeur* embodied by the musical canon. As such, the parallel origins of orchestra and repertoire reveal a continuous dialectical process between the aesthetic and the social-pragmatic domain. Once the canon's role as a normative framework is established, a status quaestionis of the contemporary canon debate will allow me to distinguish canon defenders and canon detractors. In doing so, I will argue that these opposed positions fall prey to aestheticism and aesthetic relativism respectively, leaving a crucial part of the debate untheorized. Although both positions seem irreconcilable, they both depart from the same implicit assumption that the canon is a cultural authority: its

constellation and aesthetic boundary conditions are seen as (in-)adequately representative of the culture in which the canon manifests itself. Accordingly, the logically prior question imposes itself: what property of the musical canon accounts for this authority?

To answer that question, the metaphor of the museum will be introduced, which will be another *Leitmotiv* throughout the theoretical research. The work of Lydia Goehr, and more specifically her influential 1992 book entitled *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works,* will be of theoretical guidance throughout the critical analysis of the canon-concept. Goehr argued that the collection of retained musical works occupies a mental space that functions like an imaginary museum, from within which the works perform a normative function. This museum metaphor points in a promising direction as to where the authority of the musical canon may be looked for. Not only the works within the museum perform a normative function, the structural integrity of the museum itself has the same normative power: the canon, as became clear in the historical account, is an imaginary framework that regulates aesthetic and pragmatic dimensions. Elaborating on Goehr's argument, the musical canon will be argued to be a regulative concept: while the canon emerges from specific historical practices, it subsequently performs a normative function by regulating that practice. It is precisely the regulative dynamics of the canon that have remained largely untheorized in the context of music. At that point, attention will be drawn to the canon as a referential framework, the integrity of which is authorized by a historically matured narrative that unites separate works into one coherent 'story'. For this pivotal concept of the narrative, the following definition will be used: a narrative is a collective and historically matured thought-construction that establishes a coherent logic in a collection of separate objects. Precisely because this construction is imaginary and based on shared beliefs as well as aesthetic consensus, it exhibits narrative features and can be seen as a kind of unwritten 'story' around a collection. A narrative, therefore, has not so much a fixed 'meaning' as a 'potential', which is historically determined, traceable and therefore revisable. The proposition underlying further scrutiny of this idea, will be the following: narratives of the musical canon regulate the perception of what is legitimate and what is not, and thus determine what is, on the one hand, aesthetically meaningful and, on the other hand, what can be accepted by the audience as relevant in the context of the *hic et nunc.*

At that point, it will become clear how the analysis of the concept of the musical canon taps into the discourse of the orchestra crisis. The canon will be argued to have stagnated because several concurrent tensions have endorsed a narrative of the canon, which, once identified, has performed a new role as an authoritative object instead of a referential background. In that appearance, the concept of a canon became pressurized with the dawn of modernism in the early 20th century. Historically, the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra, as champion *par excellence* of the musical canon, started here. Understanding the narrative character of the canon not only sheds light on historical shifts, it also allows to determine under which conditions a canon can show itself empowering instead of restrictive. The potential of the

narrative can be deployed in search for a solution to the existential dilemma facing the orchestras. This will be the point of departure for complementary empirical research.

The empirical part of this study turns to specific organizational environments, which will be studied in accordance with the apparatus of concepts. Chapter 4 is aimed at thoroughly exploring the normative impact of the canon. By gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from actual organizations, this chapter is not only aimed at illustrating the theoretical claims, but also at establishing the creative potential of the musical canon within today's orchestral practice. To that end, six organizations were selected in three culturally distinct regions: Antwerp, Amsterdam and London. In each city, one representative case was chosen, and one alternative case. The representative cases (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouworkest and London Symphony Orchestra) are orchestras that cannot be neglected in the regional (and international) field because of their historical importance to the cultural development of that area. The alternative cases (Casco Phil, Splendor and Aurora Orchestra) consist of orchestras or organizations with a distinctive and novel approach towards organizing, programming and performing, in challenge of the field's dominant logic. Thus, the resulting multi-case study contains a vertical research dimension and a horizontal research dimension. On the horizontal axis, the three separate regions are compared, each with different policy requirements and specific historical background. On the vertical axis, a distinction has been made between the established orchestras that have been designated as representative cases and the alternative organizations that have arisen in the margins. For each of these organizations, the empirical study examines how specific actions, tactics and strategies translate into their programming policies and how these actions relate to the legitimacy of the organizations within the field.

The first part of this empirical chapter examines the organizational models of the cases, with particular focus on the organizational sustainability of alternative models that challenge the dominant logic of the field. At that point, the business model approach will be introduced, which evaluates the organizational choices that are made to operationalize the artistic core values. The second part of the empirical research addresses the programming policy of the organizations and the actual trends in their repertoires, while relating these trends to the specificity of their model. Against the background of the dominant logic, this empirical analysis investigates whether an orchestral model that goes against the dominant organizational logic is also capable of convincingly tempering the aesthetic authority of the traditional musical canon. In other words, the empirical analysis seeks to determine how and to what extent the musical canon cuts through orchestral practice as a regulative concept, and how pragmatic (organizational) and aesthetic (artistic) dimensions are, however implicitly, mediated by a narrative that accounts for the organization's legitimacy. Conditions will be explored as to how new narratives can be installed, capable of pushing the canon's boundaries.

The concluding chapter reflects on the empirical and theoretical implications of the research provided. The central claim reads that the musical canon, by grace of its narratives, presents a contingent referential horizon to the individual works that fall under it. This implies that the meaning carried by a musical work relies on a combination between what the work is in its own right and what it becomes as part of a narrative. While in recent discussions, the contingency of narratives has mainly been used as an argument to illustrate the fallacy of the musical canon, I argue that precisely the contingency of narratives can, under the right circumstances, be deployed to make aesthetic practice sustainable again. The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works (still the mental space that serves as a metaphor for the musical canon) will be concluded to be the place where narratives are plotted and will therefore be argued to constitute the precondition for the attribution of meaning to the works. As such, this final chapter will determine under what conditions the curatorship of the Imaginary Museum may once again fall into the hands of an actual aesthetic practice, thereby rendering any legitimacy concern superfluous.

Position as author

As a conclusion to this introduction, I should acknowledge that I share with the literature reviewed a bias in favor of a more prominent cultural position for classical music, the continued existence of the symphony orchestra and the development of its repertoire. In that sense, I am trapped within a certain paradigm over which I am badly placed to judge. At the same time, this dissertation is infused with a tinge of nostalgia, in the sense that I myself continue to consider the traditional musical canon as a warm base camp, from which I only hesitantly undertake aesthetic expeditions into the unknown. I believe that my personal struggle with this topic, in honesty and complexity, has been an invaluable asset in this quest for a sustainable musical culture.

The most unsettling aspect of this dissertation as a whole, at least to me as the author, is the fact that this is a discursive report of a cognitive process which is in fact inherently circular. It befell me, like many authors, to force a cognitive process in which causal relations go in various directions, into the straitjacket of linear discursivity. In that sense, perhaps fittingly, this dissertation is an illustration of the central claim that our understanding of reality is always mediated by narrative structures. Even though I have tried to bring to the surface the complexities, reciprocities and layering of the discussion, the hermeneutic circle that underlies this research has artificially been brought to standstill. I hope that the reader, once he has absorbed this narratological rendering, may feel inspired to set the hermeneutic circle in motion again.

Antwerp, spring 2020

Chapter 1 - The Crisis of the Symphony Orchestra

1.1 Introducing the symphony orchestra

The symphony orchestra has always been a powerful cultural medium. As a symbol representing pre-dominantly Western cultural development, the orchestra simultaneously marks and crosses geopolitical boundaries (Ramnarine 2018). On February 26, 2008, the New York Philharmonic performed a landmark concert in Pyongyang, receiving a standing ovation from a communist audience that had been taught to treat every Western cultural product with suspicion and hostility (Wakin 2008). Six weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Leonard Bernstein conducted an orchestra gathered from East and West Germany in an on-site concert featuring Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* which concludes with the famous *Ode to Joy* (Bernstein changed Schiller's original text from *Ode an die Freude* to *Ode an die Freiheit*) (Dring n.d.)*.* Over the course of its colorful history, the symphony orchestra has developed a set of fixed structures and rituals, and a repertoire of musical works that are often considered to be among the major achievements of human civilization. The NASA team responsible for the Voyager mission in 1977 boarded a so-called Golden Record consisting of planet earth's most representative sounds, which included Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* as well as Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (Rehding n.d.)*.*

Because of this supposed representative potential, the history of the symphony orchestra is often a history of superlatives, and sometimes of pompous, imperialistic self-boasting. Indeed, the founders and promotors of the first symphony orchestras were, however implicitly, children of the Enlightenment. Therefore, the reputation and significance of a symphony orchestra and its repertoire reaches far beyond the sounds of music itself (Holoman 2012). Ironically, however, music never reached a high rank in the hierarchy of the arts for most philosophers of the Enlightenment (Bonds 2014). More important than its music, therefore, it was the symphony orchestra itself that was considered a cultural institution capable of spreading the good word of rationalistic cultural development. Strikingly, the symphony orchestra never really shook this elitist reputation, and still carries it along as both its most heavy burden and its most solid source of legitimacy.

1.1.1 Defining the orchestra

As viewed against this background, various definitions of the symphony orchestra are in vogue. A technical definition from the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians describes the orchestra as:

> "a composite and corporate instrument compounded of certain bowed-string, plucked-string, woodwind, brass-wind and percussion instruments, with the important qualification that each string part is played on a number of instruments, whereas each wind and percussion part is played on only one instrument". (Carse 1976, 262)

In a more general context, the term 'orchestra' has been used to denote any grouping of instrumentalists, ranging from Asian gamelan orchestras, to Caribbean steel orchestras and Afro-American jazz-orchestras. Here, 'orchestra' and notably 'symphony orchestra' is used in a specific historical sense, as "a characteristically European institution that arose in the 17th and 18th centuries and subsequently spread to other parts of the world as part of Western cultural influence" (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). It is telling that the former definition comes from New Grove's fifth edition of 1976, whereas the latter one can be found in the most recent New Grove standard work. Recent years have given rise to an interest in the orchestra as an institution, not only as a body of instruments. In fact, considering its symbolic significance, the symphony orchestra has two histories (Carter and Levi 2005).

First and foremost, there is the history of the orchestra as a sound-producing body; an instrument as it were. This history explains how this instrument evolved according to composers' wishes, how it was influenced by developments of its separate instruments, evolving concert halls and their acoustics, audience tastes and critical reviews. Most overviews of the symphony orchestra date its origin back to around Mozart's time, and describe how this body of instruments grew from a relatively modest ensemble (comprising less than a dozen instruments in each string section, woodwinds and brass section in pairs, and one percussionist) to the industrial-sized professional symphony orchestra of today, boasting a size of 85 to 120 full-time musicians, depending on the program. The other history of the symphony orchestra has nothing to do with the instruments themselves, let alone the sound they produce. This alternative account can be called contextual, or even sociological. It describes how the orchestra co-evolved with social structures and macro-sociological tendencies. This alternative history contends that the growth of the symphony orchestra is paralleled by an expansion of its cultural power, and that the development of the (metaphorical) instrument reflects its advance towards being a hallmark of Western art tradition.

1.1.2 What crisis?

With reference to the second and much more heroic storyline, much ink has been spilled over the appearance that the symphony orchestra has been in a steady decline for several decades. "There is a nagging sensibility that we are living well beyond that authentic age of the orchestra and its repertoire", the American conductor and music scholar Leon Botstein once remarked (Botstein 1996, 189). In recent years, symphony orchestras have indeed been struck

particularly hard by declines in the cultural sector: drastically diminished government funding, a problematically homogeneous audience base, and an ongoing debate on the relevance of the institution itself are all symptoms of a field in crisis. Care must be taken in putting each and every orchestra under the same umbrella, but an overview of some of the world's leading symphony orchestras sketches a general picture of increasing precariousness (Ramnarine 2018).

In many European countries, state subsidies for cultural organizations have been in steady decline since the final decade of the 20th century, reaching an alarming low in the years after the financial crisis of 2008 (Silerova 2012). In 2011, the Dutch government withdrew €200 million from the total cultural budget of €900 million, resulting in either the disappearance or drastic restructuring of four professional orchestras (Sabel 2011). In 2014, the European Union decided to no longer fund the prestigious European Union Youth Orchestra that had existed since 1976 (Jordan Smith 2016). Similar trends are discernible in Hungary, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Italy and Belgium, since the 2008 crisis (Silerova 2012). Also in the United States, where a more philanthropy-based system is in vogue, highly ranked orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic (2011), Detroit Symphony Orchestra (2010) and Philadelphia Orchestra (2011) have filed for bankruptcy (Cooper 2017). Private patronage, newly obtained funding and financial injections via large sponsorship contracts have provisionally held off a graver demise of the institution, but the concern continues.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of indications that the symphony orchestra is very much alive. Most symphony orchestras worldwide are, qualitatively speaking, at the top of their game and the feeling that orchestral music has never been performed at a higher level, is widespread. Moreover, despite the disappearance of many local orchestras, the institution itself has managed to stay upright and can still rely on considerable amounts of external funding. Likewise, the alleged crisis of the orchestra has not prevented new orchestras to emerge. A worldwide revitalization of youth orchestras, for example, is undeniable. Following the example of many European countries, the Concertgebouworkest in Amsterdam launched a new international youth orchestra called RCO Young in February 2019, and the European Student Orchestra Festival provides a new international network for aspiring student orchestras. The symphony orchestra has also utilized its potential as an agent of cultural diversity. The British Chineke! Orchestra, founded in 2015, is the first professional orchestra made up of a majority of black and ethnic minority musicians, and commits to high-quality performances of minority composers. The London Gay Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1996, provides a performance space for musicians of all sexualities and aims at contributing to LGBT acceptance in London and beyond. Similarly, the symphony orchestra has actively engaged in social work. The revolutionary education program *El Sistema* was successfully pioneered in Venezuela in 1975, where it effectively kept impoverished children off the streets (Baker 2014). Its most famous product, the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, has toured around the world since 2007, under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel. Comparably, the MIAGI Youth Orchestra

was founded in 2001 as the flagship project of a South African NGO, aiming to promote social cohesion by engaging in musical activities. Meanwhile, most professional orchestras foster well-developed education and outreach programs, LSO Discovery being the world's most elaborate (Hackman 2002).

Clearly, the symphony orchestra possesses the utterly convenient ability to survive disruptions in its surroundings. The history of the symphony orchestra, which will be discussed more elaborately in chapter 2, shows how the institution has suffered and endured various crises by adapting to its environment. However, the variety of seemingly opposing alternatives for the orchestra's core business, as well as the terms of the institution's survival, have put many organizations in an existential quandary: is the orchestra's task limited to mere preservation of cultural heritage, or should an orchestra be an open and active forum for civil discussion? Should the orchestra focus on audience enlargement to guarantee increased revenue, or is an orchestra's total autonomy and isolation from mass culture the only way to secure music's integrity? And most of all: are these options mutually exclusive?

The answers to any of these questions are of course contingent, and relative to both timeframe and regional setting. It is indeed striking that the traditionally dominant strain of symphony orchestras is suffering the most (i.e. Western-European and American symphony orchestras, with a strong symphonic history and tradition), while relatively new orchestras in the Nordic and Baltic regions are flourishing (Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016). Clearly, this situation is no black-and-white matter of market failure or success, let alone a question of artistic inadequacy. Rather, as Tasos Zembylas argues (Zembylas 2004), the orchestra crisis touches on basic questions of society, because orchestras embody different, often conflicting, objectives and values. If a crisis of the orchestra is indeed in place, it can only be understood against the background of a multi-facetted discussion that cuts across the various dimensions of the orchestra. Therefore, the aim of this first chapter is to explore the dialectics between disparate factors in the orchestra's quest for survival, and to show how these dialectics relate to the orchestra's repertoire, which is the place where these disparate factors most tangibly converge.

1.2 The impact of legitimacy pressures[1]

Throughout its history, the symphony orchestra has managed to secure a solid position within Western culture and its policies. This central position has led to the emergence of a wide variety of financially supporting structures. Since the late 19th century, relatively generous subsidies to European orchestras are common, justified by their perceived importance as cultural heritage. In the United States, the differential between ticket income and expenses is usually met by private and corporate philanthropy, which soon became a well-rooted system in the American community (Holoman 2012). This system is usually encouraged by the tax system, which makes most donations deductible. Today, most orchestras rely on a complex mixture of state and municipality support, grants, philanthropy and commercial income, be it in varying proportions. However, because of its dependence on external streams of income, a symphony orchestra itself has little protection against macro-economic cycles, and no orchestra model seems to provides complete security against fluctuating macro-sociological tendencies (Cottrell 2005).

In contrast to most American orchestras, the lion's share of European orchestras relies on government funding; for up to 90 percent, compared to about 5 percent in the US (Flanagan 2012). Despite the *de facto* impossibility of bankruptcies within a system that strongly relies on government subsidies, the orchestral crisis has struck both supporting systems equally hard. In the Netherlands, the Philharmonie Zuidnederland replaces two former orchestras since 2013, and for over a decade, discussions continue to flare up to merge the two Belgian federal orchestras, despite their very distinct artistic functions. British symphony orchestras have faced similar perils over the last decades (Sigurjonsson 2010; Galinsky and Lehman 1995), and even in Germany, with its very strong tradition of maintaining qualitative symphony orchestras, the number of orchestras and the amount of their subsidies has decreased over the last decades (Jutta Allmendinger and Hackman 1996). While this drastic reduction of the symphonic landscape can superficially be ascribed to government cutbacks, the opposition to the orchestra's huge claim on private and taxpayers' money should rather be considered as a reflection on what society believes to be a relevant cultural institution, as Botstein suggests (Botstein 1996). A broader perspective on the changing status of the orchestra within Western society seems due to adequately contextualise this issue (see also: Galinsky and Lehman 1995; Hamel 2016). Most of all, the question arises to what extent these crises simply follow the cyclical tendencies of their economic environment (and thus even out in time) or whether they are structural and therefore inherent to the institution itself.

1.2.1 Financial precariousness of the orchestra

At the surface, the obvious problem is the fact that symphony orchestras are financially demanding and require a lot of external support to sustain themselves**.** To this date, there has been no professionally functioning classical orchestra able to cover its expenses by means of ticket revenue. At first sight, the problem is indeed financial. Not only are symphony orchestras unable to cover their own expenses, they will, within the developing economic system, show deficits of increasing size. In 1966, William Baumol and William Bowen published their pioneer study in the economics of the performing arts, entitled *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma.* As the title of this influential research suggests, the book presented a serious dilemma or structural difficulty, namely the continued financing of the performing arts in the face of rising unit costs (Baumol and Bowen 1993). Baumol's famously proclaimed 'cost disease', often referred to as Baumol's curse, stipulates that the productivity gap in the performing arts is bound to grow perpetually, putting ever-increasing financial pressure on performing arts organizations. Economists agree that increases in productivity (defined as physical output per timeframe) are likely to occur in industries that rely on machinery and equipment (Heilbrun 2003). The performing arts sector, however, barely makes use of any technology or equipment and thus resides on the far end of the material productivity spectrum. Technical advancements of any used instruments do not count as productivity increases, because they do not lead to increased, countable output. The output of the performing arts is not of a material nature: the output is the performer's labor itself, which remains consistent. As a result, possibilities to increase productivity are almost completely lacking in the performing arts industry. On the other hand, wages in the performing arts sector (by far the largest expense of any performing arts organization, especially of an orchestra) have to rise in line with those in the general economy, even though productivity advancements in the arts lag behind. Baumol's curse is a bitter pill: the cost per unit of output in live performing arts is fated to rise continuously, relative to costs in the economy as a whole (Heilbrun 2003). Particularly interesting is Baumol's and Bowen's observation that this cost disease is completely independent from the dynamics of supply and demand: "Even if every major orchestral concert were sold out, the consequent increase in receipts would cover much less than one third of the total financial gap between earned income and reported expenses" (Baumol and Bowen 1993, 240). Accordingly, larger institutions are as sensitive to Baumol's curse as smaller ones, and so-called economies of scale (reaching a benefit from an increased level of production) do not lift Baumol's curse.

In his 2012 volume *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras*, economist Robert Flanagan analyzes the sustainability of privately funded American orchestras in relation to subsidized orchestras in Europe (Flanagan 2012). Following the findings of Baumol and Bowen, he points to the inescapable dynamics of rising performance costs as well as to the manifestly decreasing performance incomes due to the declining concert attendance as a global phenomenon. Unlike Baumol and Bowen, Flanagan also addresses the difficult tensions that

arise from weighing financial issues against artistic priorities. Flanagan concludes his study by asserting that none of his three proposed strategies to face financial challenges (enhancing performance revenues, reducing the growth of expenses, and raising nonperformance income) is, on its own, likely to ensure the symphony orchestra's security and sustainability. Interestingly, he equally acknowledges that the problems facing the symphony orchestra are universal to both subsidized and non-subsidized orchestras (Flanagan 2012).

Despite their somewhat different focuses and the fact that these studies were published almost half a century apart, both economic analyses reach two similar conclusions. Firstly, both studies refer to the orchestral crisis as structural. From both economic analyses can be concluded that the orchestra will never be able to cover its own expenses and will therefore always have to rely on external financial sources. This dependence on external factors puts the orchestra in a vulnerable position, as it is dependent on either the economic conjuncture, or the benevolence of a subsidizing body, or both. In either case, the willingness and ability of an orchestra to adapt to these contingent factors will prove vital for its survival. At the same time, both analyses agree that symphony orchestras have displayed a notorious degree of historical conservatism in terms of formal structure. Indeed, the symphony orchestra has developed and nurtured rather static patterns of behavior in a notoriously formal environment.

A second and connected observation is the fact that the orchestra's crisis is not financial at its core. Although financial precariousness is indeed inherent to the orchestra as a performing arts organization, the above accounts confirm that the fluctuating availability of external funds for the orchestra runs along the trendlines of other dynamics than economic cycles. Here, the historical conservatism with regard to formal structure and behavioral patterns comes into view more poignantly. Studies agree that the orchestra's clinging to historically fixed structures is related to its natural desire to preserve what can be called the 'cultural identity' or cultural capital that the orchestra advocates (Bourdieu 1986; DiMaggio 1991; Weber 2002). Herndon defines this cultural identity as "the sum of self-perceptions, personae, self-presentations, ideologies, assumptions, fears and actions of all of the sub-groups of a society, or of a single sub-group within a society" (Herndon 1988, 135). In relation to that observation, Edgar Schein's theory of organizational culture states that "the members of a culture hold values and conform to cultural norms because their underlying beliefs and assumptions nurture and support these norms and values" (As quoted in: Mauskapf 2012, 51). In other words, members of a culture are willing to support either privately or publicly those institutions whose values and norms they share. Accordingly, the organizational structure of an institution comes under pressure when these values change. If the degree of fit between a social entity (in this case the orchestra) and its cultural context is weak, the cultural engagement for the social entity, which often takes the form of financial support, is marked by a corresponding decrease (Herndon 1988). Therefore, if the orchestra's willingness to

adapt to changes in its social environment is weak, a financial crisis, as a result of decreased cultural engagement in climates of both subsidies and private support, is inevitable.

Perhaps the most important conclusion emerging from the analysis of the symphony orchestra's crisis, is the fact that the economic analysis is an analysis of a symptom, not of the disease itself. Baumol's curse is an inescapable dynamic that forces the orchestra in an uncomfortable environment, but the degree to which the curse manifests itself, depends on contextual factors external to the financial domain. The unravelling of the crisis that most symphony orchestras struggle with, leads back to the origin of the symphony orchestra as a value-laden cultural institution. Holoman summarizes:

> "As classical music and its chief representative redefine their place in civic culture, the demographic, economic, and scholarly arguments inevitably lead back to the discovery of the 1820's: that the balance sheet follows the 'philharmonia quotient': how orchestras, their public, their cities, and the music they make resonate with one another." (Holoman 2012, 46)

This does not mean, however, that the pursuit of a sustainable orchestral institution is fruitless. Rather, it shows that the crisis of the symphony orchestra is in essence a legitimacy crisis which precedes the financial crisis.

1.2.2 The adoption of a dominant logic

To understand its behaviour, any organization can be framed within a social and institutional context that regulates practices and stipulates a certain norm for good or successful behaviour (Kraatz and Block 2008; Kremp 2010; Zembylas 2004). Expecting to gain legitimacy, organisations are inclined to align their organizational structure and value sets to that norm, especially in times of uncertainty. Drawing from a definition by Suchman, legitimacy can be defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) affirm: "Organizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness". Symphony orchestras are no strangers to this institutional pressure: an organizational profile is a product of implicit (spontaneous) or explicit (strategic) exchange with a competitive or associated environment. Like any institution, the symphony orchestra operates in an environment that is influenced by macrosociological shifts. The first social changeover that comes to mind is a decreased exposure to classical music (Hamel 2016). Since the rise of the institutionalized symphony orchestra as we know it (in the second half of the twentieth century), most of the secondary institutions where musical tastes were

stimulated, like church and education, have altered drastically, whereas, paradoxically, the symphony orchestra has crystallized (Botstein 1996).

As this broader socioeconomic environment seems to be globally universal, a collective mindset within the music industry can be identified, often called the 'dominant logic' (Bettis and Prahalad 1995). This dominant logic is reflected in shared beliefs and collective responses, causing music organizations around the world to largely react similarly to the current situation. Glynn (2002) asserts that legitimacy issues in symphony orchestras bring into conflict the dual elements of economic utility (where financial return symbolizes success and grants legitimacy) and normative ideology (where artistic creativity and excellence symbolize success and grants legitimacy). Various studies agree that economic crises in particular tend to favor the business mentality within an art organization (Glynn 2000; 2002; Kremp 2010; Ramnarine 2011; Hamel 2016). Problems regarding income and resource acquisition like subsidizing money or private funding prompt managers to favor predictability over uncertainty. The resulting dominant logic that has been collectively adopted by the sector, as a strategic response to legitimacy issues, has two dimensions: one organizational and one artistic. Both are manifestations of the same credo of 'predictability over uncertainty'.

Firstly, the dominant logic has led to isomorphous organisational forms. Around the globe, traditional symphony orchestras adopt the same organizational structure: one chief conductor, a similar orchestral composition, a board of managers, hierarchical governance structure, … (Glynn 2002). Many of the prominent orchestral institutions barely underwent any structural changes since the end of World War II. International recruitment of musicians, conductors and managers, which is indeed relatively new and has meanwhile become customary, only adds to this global homogeneity. Even in more symbolic dimensions of the organization, such as its name, this shift towards homogeneity is discernible. For example, in 2017, the Antwerp-based orchestra deFilharmonie capitulated to international peer pressure and changed its name to Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, analogous to numerous international city-based orchestras.

Secondly, and intrinsically related, this strategic turn to predictability has reverberations on other aspects of the organization, that are not necessarily associated with organizational stability (Galinsky and Lehman 1995). As sociologist Arthur Stinchcombe (2013) asserts, a high degree of formal and industry-homogeneous organization usually correlates to a high level of product uniformity. Traditional art institutions generally operate under relatively strict constraints, which often makes them incapable of providing the logistic and organizational flexibility that is required for artistic production (Urrutiaguer 2014). In terms of predictability, the artistic programming of a certain widespread and unquestioned standard is the safer choice. In the case of music, this standard repertoire or 'musical canon' can be defined as a stable body of musical works, spanning the time period between roughly 1780 and 1910 (Weber 1999), that over time persistently survived spontaneous and conscious selection

processes. Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* is the preeminent example, as well as symphonic works by (among few others) Mozart, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Bruckner and Strauss.

The idea of the musical canon will be discussed at length in chapters 2 and 3, but the initial benefits of programming the canon in symphony orchestras are, in this context, at least threefold. Firstly, because of the widespread familiarity with the performed works, audience numbers rise and so does ticket income: reproduction of the canon increases revenue significantly (Kremp 2010). Furthermore, because of performers' familiarity with the repertoire, the required rehearsal time for performances is far less than the time needed to perform contemporary or peripheral works (Gilmore 1993). Secondly, this dilemma of box office success and shrinking public can be averted without having to compromise a certain aesthetic standard. Due to their unquestionable status, canonical works seldom face opposition from a musician's or a critic's side. Because the aesthetic focus shifts towards performer's activities instead of the compositions themselves, judgment over the value of performances becomes far easier and more accessible. The pragmatic avoidance of creative risks thus causes creativity to be redefined as virtuosity in interpretation of the standard repertoire (Gilmore 1993). Research indeed shows that orchestras have become less likely to perform newly written compositions over time (Kremp 2010; Osborne 1999). Opportunely, the standard repertoire itself requires no justification, as it is considered a general and unquestionable aesthetic norm. Furthermore, conventionalized musical practice facilitates communication with the audience: this way, familiarity with the repertoire buys civil legitimation for the orchestra.

1.3 Pragmatized Aesthetics

Legitimacy pressures have pushed the symphony orchestra towards a dominant logic, which has materialized as a twofold strategic solution consisting of, on the one hand, isomorphous organizational forms and, on the other hand, artistic uniformity in the form of the musical canon. The adoption of the dominant logic, however, works on several levels. Organizational and artistic uniformity are the most perceptible effects. However, the implementation of the dominant logic also has repercussions on the less tangible aesthetic domain. This reveals a fundamentally dialectical relation between the aesthetic and the pragmatic, which will be the common thread throughout this research.

1.3.1 Musical programming

The shift towards artistic predictability and organizational isomorphism in symphony orchestras shows, as Glynn eloquently puts it, "how the dual chords of artistry and utility have resonated in orchestras" (Glynn 2000). Nowhere have these chords resonated more clearly than in musical programming. Musical programming in symphony orchestras is where the aesthetic and the pragmatic meet in a very tangible way: the inherent difficulties of reconciling artistic conception and practical feasibility are recognizable for any orchestra's management, and the results of this process of accommodation constitute the profile of the orchestra. Legitimacy claims of symphony orchestras have given rise to two dominant strains of musical programming, of which the benefits and pitfalls will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.3.1.1 The compromise of the musical canon

As elaborated above, the adoption of a dominant logic in symphony orchestras entails artistic predictability, which is most eminently embodied in the musical canon. Programming the canon is positively associated with increased audience attendance and increased ticket income (Kremp 2010). Most importantly, however, the musical canon is easily implementable because the reproduction of the established musical masterworks doesn't diametrically oppose an aesthetic logic. For reasons stipulated above, the prioritization of the aesthetic safe space which is the musical canon, seems to comply with an aesthetic and pragmatic logic simultaneously. Therefore, in musical programming, the opposing value regimes which are vital to the symphony orchestra, namely the aesthetic and the pragmatic, seem to meet each other in a steady equilibrium of compromise.

However, the compromise of programming the musical canon does not arrive completely unopposed. Almost ironically, the standardized musical canon that initially promised pragmatic and aesthetic stability is increasingly pressurized because of this stability. Not the

specific works of the musical canon, but the framework holding these works together, is under scrutiny in academic circles as well as in the actual concert world. As will be elaborated in chapter 3, there is a growing consciousness that the process of selection which eventually gave rise to the musical canon, conceals a sociological, even ideological background. Art institutions like symphony orchestras have a symbolic cultural value: while adhering to a certain norm, they disseminate those norms beyond the boundaries of any specific organization in the form of what Bourdieu called 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1986). Paul DiMaggio echoed:

> "For a society to have cultural capital – sets of cultural goods and capacities that are widely recognized as prestigious – there must be institutions capable of valorising certain symbolic goods and social groups capable of appropriating them." (DiMaggio 1991, p. 135)

The point that Bourdieu and DiMaggio make, is that art institutions and the values they adopt, are related to behaviour of social bodies. The implied social hierarchy that is present in the process of musical selection, conflates with the canon itself and becomes a cultural self-evidence. The musical canon, therefore, is not only a collection of works but also a hierarchical principle of order: it presents old works organized as a coherent collection, and defines sources of authority with regard to musical taste (Weber 1999) and with regard to those who are capable of appropriating these musical tastes. On the one hand, the canon became, and remains to this day, an important resource for legitimation of the institution that carries it forward (i.e. the orchestra), precisely because it constitutes and represents cultural capital (see also: Turrini, O'hare, and Borgonovi 2008). On the other hand, despite being a source of legitimation, these ritualized practices have increasingly alienated potential audiences from the art form and have reinforced the pervasive anxiety that symphonic music has outlived its role. The prominent *The New York Times* music critic Anthony Tommasini summarizes aphoristically:

> "As long as classical music is in the preservation business, it should come as no surprise that potential new audiences (…) dismiss classical music as dated and irrelevant." (Tommasini 2001)

Thus, while the musical canon is an easily implementable pragmatic and aesthetic compromise in the quest for legitimacy, its identification as a hierarchical and indeed exclusive principle of order simultaneously endangers that legitimacy. These ambivalent dynamics are mirrored in empirical reality. Contrary to intuition, research shows that financially secure actors are even more likely to defend traditional repertoire choices and are less inclined to innovate (Kremp 2010). To a certain extent, the orchestra's legitimacy claim relies on symbolic cultural capital, not on financial capital. As argued above, strategic crisis management further reinforces this inclination towards traditionalism. Both institutional and legitimacy theory

point out that isomorphism and homogeneity increase perceived legitimacy. This illustrates once more that, against the background of a legitimacy crisis, the financial picture is an ambiguous parameter in the process of musical programming, and not the only significant one. The legitimacy crisis goes deeper than financial sustainability alone.

1.3.1.2 Redefining the orchestra

As if to counter the aura of pastness and elitism that irrefutably sticks to the musical canon, many symphony orchestras are renegotiating their place within today's civil society (Hamel 2016). This has given rise to a second dominant strain in musical programming of symphony orchestras. Increasingly, the legitimacy claim of symphony orchestras relates to their alleged beneficial impact potential (Hamel 2016). It is a popular belief that music has a constructive social impact on those involved as practitioners or as audience. Being a welcome legitimation for an art institution that has been enduring an existential crisis for a long time, there remains little room and even littler demand for ambiguity of the social impact of classical music. Outreach programs and education projects, examples of which have been given above, are steadily becoming part of the DNA of many European and American orchestras (Galinsky and Lehman 1995).

Additionally, in response to changes in the socio-economic environment of symphony orchestras, recently emerged concert formats show themselves much more lenient and informal than in the second half of the 20th century. Connection with a globalized and non-hierarchical lifeworld is aimed for by means of film music concerts and cross-over concepts (Hamel 2016). Within the span of a handful of years, these trends have emerged and gained prominence in the vast majority of European and American orchestras, making it a standardized and homogenized practice by now. Marketing strategies no longer aim to innovate the content of the musical treasure house, but instead remain true to the artistic status quo by focussing on innovation of its package to assure an appeal to larger audiences (Hamel 2016). Concepts in the style of *Mozart was a DJ* or *A candlelight evening with Chopin* overflow concert programs, thereby strategically avoiding the traditional concert houses.

Concerts outside of the traditional concert venues, in informal attire and featuring popular music have become widespread. Over the last few decades, for example, collaborations between well-known symphony orchestras and popular artists have been very common. Metallica's 1999 album *S&M,* which is an abbreviation of 'Symphony and Metallica', embodies perhaps the most well-known cross-fertilization between a mainstream band and a leading symphony orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. As another example, the Belgian National Orchestra has performed *The Symphony of Unity,* a live mix between electronic tracks and classical music, on the main stage of the immensely popular Tomorrowland dance festival in 2015. Likewise, orchestras anxiously look for financial comfort in the proximity of more

popular genres, for example by providing live music-accompaniments to blockbuster movies such as *Titanic* and *The Lord of the Rings.* These 'popularizing' concerts usually generate larger audiences than traditional concerts, and revenues are often more sizeable (Hamel 2016). Demonstrating these obvious declarations of legitimacy, symphony orchestras have spared no efforts to shake their reputation of being exclusive, elitist and financially unsustainable.

1.3.2 The hybridization of the aesthetic

The interplay between legitimacy issues and related financial difficulties confronts the symphony orchestra with several dilemmas in which challenging balances have to be struck (Cottrell 2005). These balances, however, have sometimes assumed strange shapes within musical programming: as argued, conservative repertoire choices (embodied in the prioritization of the musical canon) in many ways contradicts the outreach and diversification rhetoric that orchestras have acquainted themselves with. The recent quest for the orchestra's legitimacy and aspired sustainability thus exposes a paradoxical combination of self-interested efforts to preserve the orchestra's exclusive cultural capital, and altruistic attempts to engage the orchestra in inclusive projects to shape new and wider communities (see also: Ramnarine 2011). This has resulted in an orchestra landscape exhibiting a highly ambiguous attitude towards innovation. While efforts to informalize concert and orchestra formats are abundant, the average concert program in the traditional setting of the concert hall has remained surprisingly immune to this trend (Glynn 2000).

One crucial aspect, however, is common to these seemingly irreconcilable legitimacy claims: in either case, legitimacy can be argued to be pragmatically induced. In light of the above analysis of musical programming in the face of legitimacy charges, one can easily acknowledge that pragmatic logic overpowers aesthetic logic. The notion of legitimacy from a pragmatic point of view relies on principles of utilitarian predictability and civil accessibility, to be measured in quantifiable parameters such as market conformity (by headcount) and societal impact (by audience diversity). The dominant logic has led to a strange hybridization of the aesthetic domain, which is reflected in musical programming. The hybrid aspect of the aesthetic domain lies in the fact that symphony orchestras have to play both sides in search for legitimacy. On the one hand, a considerable part of classical music audiences attends symphonic concerts precisely because they feel comfortable with sitting in concert halls, among orderly dressed people playing the music they know, in formal circumstances they call familiar. Therefore, legitimacy is still found in the conservation of the traditional musical canon, and with the advance of popularizing concerts, the symphony orchestra is at risk of losing its original and most devoted audience base. On the other hand, prominent issues like the lack of ethnic diversity within the orchestra's ranks and in concert halls, high ticket prices and doubts about the orchestra's claim on social engagement have put this financially demanding cultural institution in a difficult position (Rosen 2018), as it challenges the

historically exclusive nature on which it has relied for many decades. Additional legitimacy, therefore, can be acquired by means of a change of the canon's package (the concert format) and by means of the admission of the explicitly non-elitist. This inverted snobbism is aimed at re-establishing a wide civil support for orchestras, and the resulting increase of ticket incomes only adds to the resulting legitimacy boost. In this institutional context, intrinsic aesthetic issues like repertoire development in the form of slowly crystallizing artistic selection processes, however, get side-lined. This prioritization of the pragmatic and the according hybridization of the aesthetic will be referred to as 'pragmatized aesthetics'.

At this point, dimensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic show themselves fundamentally intertwined again. Pragmatic pressures ultimately affect aesthetic developments, in the sense that the exclusive adoption of the standardized musical canon ultimately leads to the marginalization of innovation and the reinforcement of the arbitrary boundaries defining 'classical music'. In that sense, pragmatized aesthetics entails a disinterest in, and according marginalization of, aesthetic innovation. This illustrates the importance of the coordination between pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions. On the one hand, overly rational solutions to pragmatic crises may lead to crises in the aesthetic realm. On the other hand, rigorously striving for legitimacy from an aesthetic point of view (e.g. the revaluation of creativity over reproduction) may in turn lead to pragmatic issues such as financial instability.

Initial benefits notwithstanding, it seems that the dominant logic of pragmatized aesthetics has initiated a vicious cycle maintained by mutually reinforcing legitimacy crises. Although initially advocated as a solution to the crisis of legitimacy, organizational and artistic isomorphism have become part of the problem. The use of the orchestra as an instrument for social cohesion has provisionally granted the orchestra more breathing space but has simultaneously further narrowed the space for legitimacy claims originating from the aesthetic domain. The intertwining of pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions implies that without creative development of the aesthetic sphere, the pragmatic sphere, too, is withheld from vitalizing incentives and has to rely on the expressive potential of an aesthetic status quo, most exemplarily represented by the compromise of the musical canon. Apparently, the industry-wide adoption of the dominant logic of pragmatized aesthetics, entailing isomorphous organizational forms and uniform artistic choices, has been a blessing and a curse.

1.4 The sustainable symphony orchestra

The dominant logic of pragmatized aesthetics can be summarized as entailing isomorphous organizational models and uniform artistic policies, in which innovation as well as conservatism are pragmatically inspired. By adopting this dominant logic, the symphony orchestra has provisionally reclaimed its legitimacy and successfully withstood Baumol's curse. It seems that the cost disease, which has been a troublesome consistency in the orchestra's history, is unlikely to be terminal (Luksetich 2003). However, the empirical fact that the symphony orchestra is very much alive, does not necessarily imply that its present condition is healthy or sustainable. With the adoption of the strategic credo of uniformity, and with financial deficits being averted by bending concert programs and formats into a shape that is generally perceived as a legitimate basis for external funding, the question arises as to whether the symphony orchestra is accumulating an artistic deficit. This critical and rather harsh question touches on the issue of defining the orchestra: in a historical context where defining an orchestra proves difficult, defining a sustainable orchestra is a highly problematic and risky endeavor.

1.4.1 Towards aesthetic sustainability

Being more than just a fashionable buzzword, the notion of sustainability itself has proven problematic in a hyper-globalized world where definite marking points for evaluative orientation seem lacking (Gielen 2010). Due to the lack of an unambiguous cultural orientation, the notion of sustainability seems to deal with some paradoxical reconciliations that, at first glance, embarrass the tenability of the notion itself. For example, how can aesthetics be reconciled with utilitarianism, or normativity with positivity, or art with economy (Kagan 2010), in a way that can unambiguously be called sustainable? In some postmodern discourses, the notion of sustainability has even been referred to as an 'empty signifier', because its applicability is so universal that the term loses its meaning (Brown 2015). What is sustainable for an oil refinery, for example, may not be sustainable for the environment. In order for the term to be truly significant, in that line of thought, it has to be 'charged' with meaning by means of an adjective that indicates the context in which the term is used (financial sustainability, organizational sustainability, ecological sustainability, etc.). It is up to the orchestra to charge the notion of sustainability with a meaning that secures not only the orchestra's survival, but also the terms of its survival.

The seemingly opposing dimensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic each impose a distinguished norm or logic on the art organization, which need to be weighed consciously in order for the organization to remain flexible. The hybrid nature of the aesthetic domain, in the sense that it is formulated from pragmatic principles, obstructs this dynamic. With issues of sustainability in mind, the symphony orchestra has apparently undergone a shift in its focus

of attention from the aesthetic domain to the pragmatic domain. The orchestra's most profound legitimation, and therefore its most vivid aspiration for a sustainable future, is increasingly articulated in utilitarian terms such as functionality, impact, revenue and attendance. However, the careless authorization of the pragmatic, and the according hybridization of the aesthetic, is a double-edged sword. While the upheld utilitarian logic of the pragmatic certainly grants benefits to the art organization in terms of legitimacy, it simultaneously renders the art form, its cultural meaning and the institution that carries it forward, immobile. The interdependence of the aesthetic and the pragmatic dimensions implies that, in the long run, the pragmatic cannot survive without the aesthetic, and vice versa.

1.4.2 Invitation for research

There is no question that the dominant logic of pragmatized aesthetics has formulated an answer to the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra. Considering the above argumentation, however, the question rises as to whether this answer from the pragmatic sphere is sufficient. It seems that it would make sense for the orchestra to formulate an answer to its legitimacy challenges on the aesthetic domain, for which the orchestra is the most equipped. That way, the orchestra would benefit from innovative impulses from the aesthetic domain, rather than the pragmatic. Development of the orchestra's repertoire is paramount to this approach. However, the argument cannot end here. The intertwining of the aesthetic and pragmatic dimensions also obliges to reconsider the origin of the legitimacy crisis itself. It makes sense to wonder whether the legitimacy crisis stems from the pragmatic domain only. When claimed that the dimensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic are profoundly and fundamentally intertwined, it is a logical requirement to at least contemplate the possibility of a legitimacy crisis in the aesthetic domain. If the orchestra and its repertoire seem to have outlived their relevance, it may well have been an aesthetic process that has initiated the alienation of art form and audience. Hybrid programming policies that simultaneously focus on the canonical and the explicitly non-canonical, suggest that the aesthetic domain itself may be suffering from a crisis. Therefore, artistic and organizational formulas need to be designed, in which the aesthetic can grow along with the pragmatic.

To explore these dynamics in depth, there is an urgent need for a two-dimensional research, entailing an aesthetic (or theoretical) as well as a pragmatic (or empirical) component. Only a research that presupposes both dimensions as fundamentally intertwined, can truly touch on the issue of sustainability of the orchestra. The research question underlying this bifocal investigation can be formulated as follows: how does the repertoire of symphony orchestras relate to their prospect of sustainability? The musical canon, being a collection of works as well as a framework, makes an exceptionally fitting unit of research. The investigation of the

musical canon as an aesthetic framework penetrates deeply into the aesthetic domain without neglecting its perceivable socio-pragmatic consequences.

The necessity of this two-way approach may be additionally motivated by the two conclusions for this introductory chapter. Firstly, this brief introduction to the perceived crisis of the orchestra has introduced a layer of complexity which showed that processes explaining why orchestras would depart from tradition and turn to innovation, are not well understood. The identification of pragmatized aesthetics allowed to uncover pseudo-solutions for unsustainability. The organizational and artistic isomorphism embodied by the musical canon, to which was referred as the pragmatized aesthetic compromise in musical programming, grants temporary stability (that is how the whole idea of a musical canon came into being), but an overemphasis reinforces the legitimacy crisis on the long run, as isomorphism and uniformity easily slip into redundancy. This conclusion necessitates a theoretical dimension of this research. A symphony orchestra that aspires towards a sustainable future will have to show itself as an active cultural body, not as a petrified acoustic museum for cultural heritage. The genesis of the musical canon, as well as its theoretical investigation, may illustrate how it has shaped the orchestra landscape since the very beginning. Additionally, the potential of this concept may be exposed: not only as a pragmatized aesthetic compromise, but also as a valuable aesthetic concept in its own right. The analysis of the canon as a concept may indeed illustrate how its framework may hold an expressive potential that can contribute to our understanding of music as an art form that is still alive and relevant.

Secondly, the eminent similarity between orchestras worldwide provide an all-too-easy argument for policy makers and public opinion to make existing orchestras merge or cut off their financial lifelines, and it is hard to prove them wrong. Therefore, the main challenge for the orchestra's future is to explore the possibility of organizational models in which the aesthetic is enabled to grow along. In other words, these models are aimed at recalibrating artistic creativity and pragmatic feasibility. The present symphonic landscape has seen the emergence of many alternative practices developed from this rationale. But although actors who don't rely on already-established types of cultural production and the cultural capital associated with it, generally have more incentive to innovate (Leblebici et al. 1991), these actors often lack the autonomy from non-artistic pressures (such as money) to resolutely pursue this aspiration. Such actors are often bound to compromise their mission of aesthetic innovation with pragmatic survival strategies, and often remain largely peripheral. This gives rise to the question underlying the empirical part of this research: can an orchestra model be devised that is able to withstand pragmatic challenges and at the same time facilitate aesthetic innovation and development? The business model approach, which will be introduced in chapter 4, may help to efficiently and sustainably align the divergent interests in the art world and make art accessible to audiences without compromising artistic integrity.

Designing a sustainable orchestra, in theory as well as in practice, amounts to finding a balance between the aesthetic and the pragmatic in which both dimensions do not hamper each other, but reinforce each other in a productive dialectical relation. Only when this productive relation is theoretically established and operationalized within a practice, any legitimacy challenge of the orchestra will be rendered superfluous. As mentioned before, the musical canon is a protagonist in both components of the research. Not only will the canon cut across the two dimensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic, it will also traverse the three temporal dimensions of past, present and future. In successive chapters, the genesis of the canon will first explain its authority in today's orchestral practice, and a subsequent critical analysis will finally determine what role the canon can play in envisaging a sustainable symphony orchestra. In the end, it may even suggest how an art organization such as the symphony orchestra can once more offer resistance to the macrosociological changes on which it seems to depend so heavily.

Chapter 2 - The Sociology of the Symphony Orchestra

Chapter 1 has illustrated how the various perceptions of what the symphony orchestra is supposed to be, relate to the orchestra's legitimacy crisis. A more detailed account of the historical evolution of both the orchestra and its repertoire reveals how the orchestra evolved from a mere sound producing body to a carrier of symbolic grandeur. As such, the parallel geneses of orchestra and repertoire expose a continuous dialectical process between the aesthetic and the socio-pragmatic domain. In accordance with this crucial observation, the historical account enables to direct the focus of this research to how the musical canon has functioned as a concept in aesthetic practices. In other words, this approach goes beyond the specific works associated with the canon and explores its significance as a framework.

2.1 A brief history of the orchestra

The first true promotors of the symphony orchestra were children of the Enlightenment. This does not mean that the orchestra, simply defined as a considerably large body of instruments, did not pre-date the late eighteenth century, but the Enlightenment does mark a turning point in the importance of this cultural institution. Before the second half of the eighteenth century, instrumental music was no more than a secondary addition to more highly regarded art forms such as opera, dance and theater. The rudimentary orchestral formation that accompanied Monteverdi's paradigmatic first opera *L'Orfeo* in 1603, was not much more than an *ad hoc* formation of instruments, subordinate to both visual spectacle and textual meaning, and its musical function was mostly confined to allegorical coloring (Carter and Levi 2005). The same accessory function can be ascribed to Jean-Baptiste Lully's so-called *grande bande* accompanying Louis XIV's dance performances in Versailles. Orchestral formations that regularly appeared in the context of catholic liturgy, likewise, were only meant to accompany and support an external, textual message. Indeed, if music played a respectable role at all within this climate, it was by grace of its potential to support the content of a text. Purely instrumental music in its own right only sporadically appeared in both liturgical and secular contexts. The term 'orchestra' became in vogue around 1670 in France and Italy, and as late as 1720 in England and Germany (it is interesting to note that the latter countries were lagging behind in the development of a European operatic style). Earlier expressions to refer to large bodies of instrumentalists include *capella, concerto* and *sinfonia.* Usually, these formations are collectively called pre- and proto-orchestral formations, because of their provisional nature (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). The high cultural esteem of the orchestra, however, did not come along with its change of name. The fact that the term 'orchestra', derived from the ancient Greek 'ορχήστρα' (orchestra), merely refers to the ground level of an amphitheater where musicians played during stage performances (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001), reveals the secondary importance of instrumental music around that time.

Almost halfway the eighteenth century, a musical paradigm shift revaluated the role of instrumental music and of the orchestra as its medium. Although local traditions continued to exist, parallel changes can be found in many cities and courts around 1740, ranging from the training of instrumentalists and the idiomatic use of instruments, to the role that orchestras played in society (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). By 1750, the orchestra was recognizable as a standardized institution in most prominent cultural regions in Europe: a typical orchestra included violins divided into two equally large sections, violas, cellos, double basses, two oboes, two horns, one or two bassoons, keyboard continuo and optional trumpets and timpani.

In the wealthy German city of Mannheim, the local court orchestra achieved an unusually high level of musical quality under Kapellmeister Johann Stamitz. During a visit to the court of Mannheim, the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was awestruck by the evocative possibilities of this orchestra (in a letter to his father, Mozart mentions the innovative treatment of the woodwinds, and the use of the orchestral crescendo), and wrote his symphonies with these new technical opportunities in mind. As the Kapellmeister at the court of Nikolaus Esterházi, Mozart's fellow composer Joseph Haydn had the unusual amount of about 50 musicians to his disposal, to cater to the wishes of his patron. The emergence of more or less standardized orchestras with unusually high musical standards, coincided with the cultural shift of both musician and composer, climbing up from a mere artisan to an artist (Elias 1991). In the late eighteenth century, the servient and functional nature of the musician eroded steadily. Highly respected composers such as Mozart and especially Haydn, often divided their time between various courts, each time expecting to find a similar orchestral formation to perform their music. The standardization process of the orchestra (including two clarinets from Mozart's final works onwards), and therefore the true history of the orchestra as an independent institution in its own right, began around 1780, with Mozart and Haydn's final symphonies as the orchestra's first milestones.

For many musicologists (Holoman 2012; Lawson 2005; Weber 2008a), Ludwig von Beethoven marks the most decisive turning point in the history of musicianship, the history of the symphony as a musical form, and the symphony orchestra. Beethoven's number of symphonies, the musical genre tailored to suit the orchestra's standardized structure, is nine, dropping spectacularly from his immediate predecessors Mozart and Haydn, who wrote 41 and 104 symphonies respectively. Starting from Beethoven, music was considered a truly independent, respected and individual art form. Notably Beethoven's *Third Symphony 'Eroica',* originally dedicated to Napoleon, can be considered as the first monument to this individual musical heroism. Throughout Beethoven's nine symphonies, the orchestra grew into its definitive form through the addition of trombones and two extra horns to the obligatory part of the orchestra, and the definitive abandonment of the keyboard continuo.

With instrumental music gradually becoming an art form in its own right, secularized and largely emancipated from aristocracy, it attracted more popular attention. In the early 19th century, the original sponsors of symphony orchestras (such as patrons, courts and churches) found themselves unable to cover the increasing expenses of the expanding orchestra. Therefore, musical activity shifted from courts and churches to more densely populated cities in which a larger audience-potential promised financial opportunity. In the 18th century, there had barely been any concert halls devoted to instrumental music. Instead, theatres, palaces, inns and public buildings had formed the first stages of the classical orchestra. Towards the end of the 18th century, however, some larger cities organized series of public concerts which featured full-scale orchestras (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). Prominent examples are the *Concert Spirituel* in Paris and the *Grosse Konzert* in Leipzig. Symphonies where henceforth not written for a small number of clergy members and aristocrats, but for large middle-class audiences in symphony halls capable of housing several hundred (Weber 2008a). In January 1813, the Philharmonic Society of London was the first independent organization to offer full subscription seasons of multiple concerts (Mauskapf 2012) and by 1850, concert music and opera formed the cornerstones of public musical life in Europe.

Although anyone was allowed to purchase a concert ticket or season subscription, concert series often aspired towards a high degree of exclusivity by keeping ticket prices high (Holoman 2012). Symphonic concerts rapidly became an exclusive social event, reserved for the wealthy and the leisure class. Still, concert organizers soon realized that their ticket revenues never fully covered their expenses. Halfway the 19th century, concert organizers adapted to the economics of the industrialized Western city, began to explore new ways of patronage and financing and found opportunities in the changing demographic environment. Just as clergy and nobility had done for centuries, the upcoming bourgeoisie was eager to provide musicians with financial support in exchange for a status as cultural philanthropist (Mauskapf 2012). This way, the symphony orchestra as a corporate nonprofit structure emerged. The shift towards this other form of relative autonomy required a bureaucratization and professionalization of the orchestra's organizational structure. The addition of a management structure and an administrative board, often including the most generous sponsors of the orchestra, resulted in a solid and well-functioning organizational structure that granted legitimacy to the orchestra. As a respected cultural institution, the orchestra gained social status from this well-constructed symbiosis with an upcoming upper middle-class (Weber 1977). This symbiosis between orchestra and community lies at the basis of today's praxis and can be summarized in the following model:
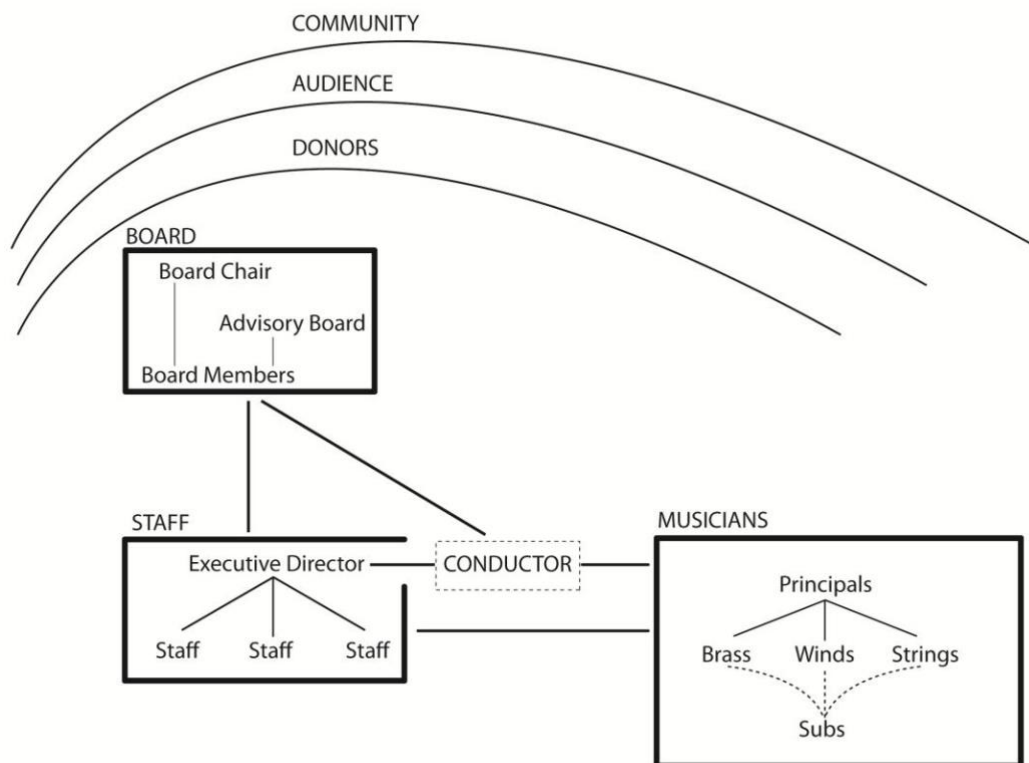
Figure 1: The orchestra community (Mauskapf 2012, 34)

While remaining true to this basic structure, the 19th century saw an enormous expansion of symphony orchestras. By the end of the century, nearly every self-respecting city in Western Europe maintained its own symphony orchestra structured along the standard model, as well as an equally respected concert venue that could house every citizen willing and able to exchange money for both music and status. As such, the symphony orchestra unwillingly became a tool in political power struggles between cities, who each wanted to eclipse its peers (Locher 2012). This competitive external environment soon proved to be a formula for success for the symphony orchestra, both in aesthetic and in pragmatic terms. The final decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century, were a time of insatiable demand and inexhaustible supply, leading to the appearance of some of the most remarkable musical compositions for symphony orchestra (Holoman 2012).

By that time, classical orchestras had reached prominent cities in the United States, where they played an equally significant role in cultural life as in Europe (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). Becoming a global phenomenon, a considerable amount of today's leading orchestras saw the light of life around that time, often as an immediate development of an established concert society: the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (1882), the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra (1882; known as the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra between 1924 and 1991), the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (1888), the Boston Symphony Orchestra (1881), the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (1891), the Munich Philharmonic (1893) and the London

Symphony Orchestra (1904). With music emancipated from liturgy barely a century earlier, a new sacralization of art music was established, with the symphony orchestra as the main advocate. The physical appearance of the symphony orchestra, in terms of its instruments, barely evolved since Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony,* and it remained notoriously conservative throughout the 20th century. Only percussion instruments were added, and not even an instrument as popular and versatile as the saxophone won a fixed place in the standardized orchestra (with sporadic exceptions in a.o. the works of Berg and Bizet). Electronic instruments such as the theremin, several keyboards and sound-producing computers have all made brief *actes de présence* but vanished as quickly as they emerged (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). Several technical modifications of the standard instrumentarium, such as the optimization of the keywork system of the woodwinds, are the exception to this rule. The only structural innovation in the orchestras since the beginning of the 19th century, is the strongly augmented role of the conductor, rising up from a mere *batteur de mesure* to the most respected and influential member of the orchestra, literally and figuratively central to the orchestral structure.

It is remarkable that the standardization of the symphony orchestra runs in tandem with the increasing intertwining of the symphony orchestra with money. The basic calculus for the average 19th-century orchestra is very transparent: production costs were subtracted from season's ticket incomes, and the result was divided among musicians (Holoman 2012). The institutionalization of the standardized model brought new differentials by job content: the conductor often made twice what the musicians did, the principle players earned more than their colleagues, and so on. As long as concert seasons were fully subscribed, revenues were fixed. These conditions, workable and reasonable in an early stage, eventually proved hard to maintain. Competition from other forms of leisure time, reinforced by the emergence of the family automobile, the increasing public interest for sports, the invention of the radio and the rise of popular music, prompted orchestra managers to look for alternative forms of income, outside of the concert hall. The expansion of the entertainment market also nurtured the development of other, competing types of orchestras, such as salon orchestras and dance orchestras, who were usually smaller and thus more rentable than their symphonic counterparts. On the other hand, the radio and the gramophone player offered very promising opportunities for the classical symphony orchestra. In 1913, arguably the first successful recording of an orchestra was made by the Berlin Philharmonic, featuring Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* under the baton of Arthur Nikisch (Holoman 2012). By the end of World War One, only half a decade later, an extensive repertoire performed by most of the world's leading orchestras, was commercially available. In 1926, the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitsky was broadcasted live on the radio for the first time in history. The opportunity to record and broadcast classical music pushed the symphony orchestra into a climate of fierce international competition. Orchestras became fully exposed to economic cycles and conjunctural fluctuations for the first time (Holoman 2012). In the wake of the competition for the best recording, an unseen atmosphere of stardom appeared with soloists and

conductors, leading to disproportionate divisions of wages within orchestras. In one night, some conductors could make up to four times what an average orchestra musician would make in an entire season, making recording-eager conductors like Herbert von Karajan, Serge Koussevitsky and Georg Solti multimillionaires. The so-called Golden Age of the symphony orchestra thus carries a dubious connotation.

The changing economic, social and cultural environments in which orchestras found themselves during the interbellum, brought different modes of financing and institutional structure within the basic model outlined above. Two forms remain dominant: one is derived from the court orchestra structure, and one from the concert series (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). In the first case, the state, municipality or another public entity such as a radio station, is the owner and primary sponsor of the symphony orchestra. Musicians, in that case, are civil servants and managers are civic functionaries. In most European and Latin-American symphony orchestras, the state and municipality took over the role of primary financial patron, and secured the orchestra's survival by means of subsidies (Carter and Levi 2005). In the second model, dominant in the free-market economy of the United States as well as in parts of Great-Britain, the orchestra is an independent, non-profit corporation run by a board of laymen and professional managers, relying on both private and corporate philanthropy, and commerce. In some rare cases, especially in the USA, one single patron personally tended to the financial needs of an entire orchestra (Koopman and Berkhout 2015), or financed the construction of their venue. Investing their inherited wealth or the products of their enterprises, industry barons like Andrew Carnegie and Jack Heinz made sure that their city, New York and Pittsburg respectively, had its share of culture, which they hoped would attract more capital to the city (Holoman 2012).

Often, these Anglo-Saxon orchestras are additionally funded by other non-profit cultural organizations such as the Ford Foundation, which distributed over $80 million to American orchestras between 1966 and 1976 (Hart 1973), and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which offers financial aid to orchestras to nurture creative thinking, innovation and diversity in American symphony orchestras. Despite their independence, a moderate form of government subsidies is fairly common in American orchestras. In some rare cases, such as in the London Symphony Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic, the orchestra is organized as a cooperative, owned and run by the musicians themselves. Over the years, a mixture of these systems became dominant, especially in Europe: most orchestras are now financed through a mixture of state and private injections, in addition to their own generated revenues.

The symbolic grandeur (Gielen 2010) of the symphony orchestra, and the financial resources that came with it through recordings and new ways of funding, led to another "great symphonic boom" (Holoman 2012) in the 1930s, which lasted several decades. As proof of their capacity to recover from the devastation of World War II, governments and patrons were eager to quickly carry on their cultural philanthropy. The long period of worldwide prosperity

after World War II also sparked an intensification of orchestral activity based on European-American models in Asia, South-America and, to a lesser degree, in Africa. One reason for this increase in transcontinental orchestral activity is the emigration of European citizens. Already in the late 19th century, a European community in Hong Kong founded an amateur symphony orchestra, and orchestras were introduced in Japan as part of the explicit westernization during the Meiji Restoration (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). After World War II, the growing urban middle-class population in Asian and South-American cities turned to western classical music to legitimize their status within society, much like in 19th-century Europe (Cottrell 2005). Between 1945 and 2005, for example, the number of professional orchestras in Japan has increased from 2 to 25. Striking is the conservatism in repertoire preferences that orchestras outside of Europe and North-America display, supporting the above suggestion that the artistic preferences of these regions may be more derived from the orchestra's embedded social grandeur than from its artistic merits.

The next crisis of the symphony orchestra struck during the economic recession of the 1970s. The increased reliance of orchestras on commercial recordings, made them vulnerable for economic fluctuations of that market. By the 1980s, classical music recordings drew only 5 percent of record sales, and did not manage to break even. Less than a decade later, the recording industry lost two of its biggest stars, conductors Herbert von Karajan and Leonard Bernstein, who died within months from each other. The 1990s and early 2000s brought temporary relief to the recording industry, with the advance of high quality live recordings with postproduction edit and mix (Lawson 2005). Since 1999, London Symphony Orchestra's own record label *LSO Live* uses the latest digital technologies to capture and distribute their live performances. However, by the time demand for recorded music began to rise again, media such as the internet and mp3 files had entered the industry (Aguilar 2014), forcing the orchestra to adapt again. Meanwhile, digital music stores and streaming platforms on orchestra websites have become a new worldwide standard and offer limitless possibilities for audience attraction and music dissemination. In 2011, the Berlin Philharmonic launched its Digital Concert Hall, offering live and on-demand concert montages, captured by six HD cameras in their very own concert hall, as well as numerous concert introductions, interviews and documentaries. Today, the potential listener has virtually unlimited access to the daily concert life of leading orchestras anywhere in the world.

2.2 The orchestra and its canon

The evolution of the symphony orchestra stimulated the growth of a large body of musical works composed for this versatile and promising new medium. Making use of the expressive potential of the orchestra's ever-increasing scale, composers and musicians benefited from its rising prominence in the cultural milieu. In addition to that, the intertwining of this unfolding musical medium and its correspondingly unfolding social environment gradually made concert programming, the process of selecting works to be played, into a meaningful and eminent activity.

Around 1780, a typical non-liturgical concert consisted of about 10 to 15 pieces from diverse genres comprising arias, overtures, concertos and (parts of) symphonies, without reference to any coherent, let alone hierarchical order (Weber 2008a). All genres were considered each other's equals and could therefore be juxtaposed within the same program. While, in general, today's listeners would resist this idea of a miscellany patchwork in orchestra programs, it carried welcoming connotations for 18th-century audiences. In the middle of the 18th century, taste was rooted in the general public rather than in milieus of connoisseurs. The absence of hierarchy and distinction within concert programs ensured the presence of music for everybody's taste in each concert.

Most composers that appeared on concert programs in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were alive at the time. Sustained by an implicit teleology, new works were considered aesthetically superior to older ones, and there was hardly any interest for works by deceased composers, except within the ranks of composers themselves (Weber 1977). Also in terms of audience behavior, concert formats around that time strongly focused on the here and now, rather than the past: the concept of a concert was more a social idea than it was a contemplative one. Concert etiquettes did not forbid talking, shouting praises or criticism at the performers, and moving around the concert venue to shake hands. Because of this lighthearted atmosphere, concerts with a duration of over four hours were not exceptional. A well-known example is Beethoven's benefit concert in Vienna in 1808, featuring the premieres of his fifth and sixth symphonies, as well as his fourth piano concerto and the choral phantasy, along with no less than four compositions he had written earlier (Caeyers 2009). Even for those musical connoisseurs who actively and attentively enjoyed the music on stage, the expressive potential and the intrinsic value of music did not lie in the works themselves but rather in the activity of performing (Goehr 2007).

2.2.1 The emancipation of music

Remarkably, the standardization of the symphony orchestra by the end of the 18th century coincided with the emergence of a selective orchestral repertoire that slowly took prominence

over new works. Throughout the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, concert life became increasingly dominated by composers of the past, and concert programs were drastically reduced in length. In light of this process, concert formats increasingly relied on the musical recipe of overture-concerto-symphony. This repertoire of orchestral 'classics' presented the symphonic concert as an aesthetic and moral experience rather than mere entertainment and accompaniment (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001). Between 1800 and 1850 in particular, musical culture in Europe arguably underwent its most radical transformation in values, practices, repertoires and institutions. William Weber describes this important shift as the 'great transformation of musical taste' (Weber 2008a) and argues that this transformation was intricately linked to two important paradigm shifts in the early 19th century: a shift in politics and one in aesthetics. Both shifts embody the emancipatory process of classical music.

2.2.1.1 The shift in politics

In the first half of the 19th century, Europe was marked by political instability, following the French Revolution of 1789. The Restoration period between 1814 and 1830 nurtured a careful and unstable political status quo, countering the political power vacuum with a turn to institutional stability. That way, the instability proved to be very fertile soil for new forms of order and governance in the sense that it stimulated liberal, nationalist and socialist movements to form, which became central to European politics until World War I. While revolutions around that time failed in political terms, it brought the political discourse, and critical thinking in general, to a much wider population (Bonds 2014). As an increasing amount of people became involved in politics and organizations, critical thinking also penetrated the artistic realm, encouraging the emergence of new forms of institutional authority. With the old aesthetic authorities fading (such as church and aristocracy), there appeared a pervasive wish for a new aesthetic authority over musical taste, along with the demand for rules of conduct to coordinate musical culture.

In this turbulent climate, symphony orchestras and symphonic concert series became the central and most authoritative institutions of classical music, as an antidote to cultural fragmentation. In the wake of the revolutions of 1848 and 1849, recovering governments aimed at deepening trust in state institutions (Bermbach 2004). As every major city had a concert series and affiliated symphony orchestra, classical music began to serve as a vehicle for national and civic pride. From that rationale, lower ticket prices ensured broader audiences, whose cultural education became a key principle. This learned and 'high' culture thrived on the repetition of certain musical works to symbolically counter an unstable political and social order. Beethoven's withdrawn dedication of his third symphony *Eroica* to Napoleon Bonaparte has been widely documented, as well as the persistent political appropriation of the *Ode an die Freude* anthem from Beethoven's ninth symphony, from his death onwards. In his essays and short stories, E.T.A. Hoffmann repeatedly refers to a circle of politically engaged artists called The Serapion Brethren (*Die Serapionsbrüder*), a half-fictional movement of which

Hoffmann was a leading member (Herman 2017). This artist's collective inspired Robert Schumann to create a comparably quasi-fictional music society, the League of David (*Die Davidsbündler*), which was closely linked to the politically influential Young Germany movement (Weber 2008a). This mingling of the political and the aesthetic can be read in its most exemplary form in Richard Wagner's revolutionary treatises that were published in 1849 Dresden, in which he propagates a new political order based on aesthetic values (Bermbach 2004). Wagner arrived at his description of a utopian society, in which the so-called *Gesamtkunstwerk* could thrive, by historicizing Western culture in a peculiar but influential way. Individual art forms, according to Wagner, had been subordinated to the agenda of politics since the end of antiquity. In defiance of the popular use of the term, the *gesamt* in *Gesamtkunstwerk* does not refer to the reconnection of all separate art forms, but rather to the collective enjoyment of art, to the benefit of mankind. Wagner's *Kunstwerk der Zukunft* or 'artwork of the future' was not only aimed at reuniting the individual art forms under one aesthetic form, but also at enabling the artwork itself to reflect upon, as well as thematize, the basis of human community and cooperation (Herman 2017). In the words of Wagner:

> The essence of dramatic art is based on whether it succeeds in grasping and representing the inner essence of all human action and life. (Wagner 1983, 19)

2.2.1.2 The shift in aesthetics

The propagation of the idea that culture, and music in particular, is able to generate cultural stability, required a solid philosophical basis. The idea is rooted in Romantic thinking that radiated from the larger cultural capitals of Europe, mainly in Germany, Austria, Italy and England. At the backdrop of a process of secularization that started after the breakdown of the *Ancien régime,* the philosophical movement of musical idealism took form, in ambiguous relation to Enlightenment philosophy (Herman 2017). Musical idealism was the pinnacle of romantic philosophical thinking in the early 19th century and may be the most fundamental rupture in the history of music philosophy.

Before the period of the Enlightenment, music had always been servient to external masters. During Antiquity, for instance, musical performance itself, and not any content ascribed to the music, was seen as a cathartic experience. Medieval Christianity placed serious music in service of God for several centuries, strongly underlining music's subordination to a text. While the Renaissance saw an increasing interest in secular music, with the birth of the opera as the main example, the priority of the textual aspect of music persisted; a motive that only gained importance during the baroque period which was strongly influenced by the agenda of the counterreformation. From the Enlightenment onwards, music established itself as an art form *sui generis* that could perform an artistic function without the assistance of text and without serving pedagogical or liturgical purposes. Because of its intangible character, music was the last art form to emancipate itself from external authorities and to justify its existence

from its own properties (Gregor 1983). Ironically, the intangible character of music later became its most valuable asset.

Alexander Baumgarten, the 18th-century founding father of aesthetics as an independent discipline, was the first philosopher to acknowledge and thematize the value of the arts from an autonomous point of view. Baumgarten asserted that aesthetics, or the art of judgement through the senses, is not about rational comprehension in the first place, but about irrational contemplation. The faculty of imagination that is present in each and every human being, thus argues Baumgarten, plays a constitutive role in man's understanding of physical reality (Baumgarten 2007). The faculty that appeals to the senses and the faculty that appeals to reason are fundamentally intertwined for Baumgarten. When a farmer plows his field, he is not consciously concerned with the beauty of the result. The fact that the result is in fact beautiful, thus argues Baumgarten, shows that beauty implies a system that connects the senses to reason. A valuable work of art, therefore, is a work of art that mimics physical reality, thereby giving aesthetic form to irrational components of phenomena, as an auxiliary faculty to the faculty of reason (Jäger 1980). Contrary to prior notions of the concept of mimesis, in that line of thought, imitation was increasingly defined as mirroring the essence of a phenomenon instead of its manifest physical reality (Goehr 2007). The work of art is therefore self-legitimizing: it represents the perfection of nature in both sensory and rational terms. Music, as a result, took center stage with Baumgarten: his great appreciation for music stemmed from the fact that music is immaterial and intangible, enabling the art form to appeal to a level of cognition unreachable for the faculty of reason.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Immanuel Kant argued that aesthetics (broadly understood as sensory perception) is crucial to man's understanding of reality, but only to the extent that the object under perception contributes form (which Kant understands as intelligibility) to the faculty of cognition. This form of the empirical (and therefore sensory) experience, which he later specified as time and space, presents a comprehensible and structured object to the faculty of cognition, for further rational examination. In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant picked up on Baumgarten's idea and argued that the work of art, as long as it can be grasped in a stable form, is a sensory game of time and space, suitable for this rational examination. An art form such as music, however, does not meet the right conditions on account of its volatility. For Kant, music is a mere game of sensations (Kant 2011), incapable of mimesis by lack of form, and therefore inferior to the plastic arts.

A successive generation of philosophers broke with the tradition of mimesis in the arts. Contrary to the aesthetics of Enlightenment, literary philosophers such as E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tieck and Wackenroder argued that the value of a work of art resides in its ability to reflect a higher ideal, one that cannot be grasped by the mere faculty of cognition. The work of art, to the extent that it cannot be grasped in a stable form, is capable of reaching beyond the faculty of reason, into the realm that Baumgarten had referred to as the irrational, which now could

more appropriately be dubbed the a-rational (Herman 2017). Thus, the first generation of romantic philosophers combined Baumgarten's revaluation of the sensory with the formalism of Kant's rationalistic framework, the result being that music now topped the hierarchy of the arts. The very fact that music is incapable of mimesis paradoxically became its most important asset, in direct opposition to Kant. In the words of Lydia Goehr:

> "(T)he very idea that instrumental music lacked both referential significance as well as concrete and specific content, the very idea, in other words, that had led to the rejection of such music as unworthy, turned out to be the key to finding for this music its long-sought-after respectability." (Goehr 2007, 150)

This radical rupture with the concept of mimesis strongly penetrated musical practice. Instrumental music had now definitively emancipated itself from servitude to external meaning-givers and found its most important legitimation in itself. Gradually, the expressive power of music was thought to lie not in its performance, but in the product itself, by virtue of its intangibility. In E.T.A. Hoffmann's words:

> "When we speak of music as an independent art, we should properly refer only to instrumental music which, scorning the assistance and association of another art, namely poetry, expresses that peculiar property which can be found in music only. It is the most romantic of all the arts, one might almost say the only really romantic art, for its sole object is the expression of the infinite. (…) Music discloses to man an unknown kingdom, a world having nothing in common with the external sensual world which surrounds him and in which he leaves behind him all definite feelings in order to abandon himself to an inexpressible longing." (Locke and Hoffmann 1917, 123)

Instrumental music, most exemplarily embodied by the symphony, became the ultimate medium for this aesthetic expression of the infinite and what lies beyond cognition: the Sublime (Herman 2017).

In the latter half of the 19th century, the question as to whether instrumental music is able to represent a non-musical realm or possess any specific or unspecific content, led to a complex and highly ambiguous debate on absolute music and program music. Often finding philosophical support with Hoffmann and Arthur Schopenhauer, progressive composers such as Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz very consciously looked for ways to disclose to listeners the realm of the Sublime through their music. Defenders of what came to be known as 'absolute music', and most prominently the music critic Eduard Hanslick, argued that music consists of no more than "sonically moving forms" and therefore cannot disclose or represent anything at all (Hanslick 1966; Herman 2017). A common result, however, is that concerts evolved towards a highly introverted musical experience, rooted in individual contemplation. Audience behavior changed drastically following this shift. Performance now became a foreground

affair, not for the act of performing itself, but in order for the work of art to be heard in its full glory (Goehr 2007). The erection of major concert halls also helped to change the expectations as to how an ideal audience should behave. As audiences began to listen attentively to the music that was being performed, tables were removed and chairs were directed towards the stage, symphonies were no longer cut up into separately performable parts, and concert programs were customized to the listener's attention span. The idea of the miscellany concert program, therefore, was abandoned, in favor of well thought-through, homogeneous concert programs (Weber 2001).

2.2.2 Musical politics

From the early romantic era onwards, listeners and critics agreed that music should not serve an extra-musical end (although, in the case of program music, it could represent one), and shared the belief that instrumental music, in its most nonreferential form, could be a respectable art form only in service of itself (Goehr 2007). Although German idealists did not have the explicit intention of reforming musical life itself (with the exception of Wagner), the political conditions around that time were in their favor. Remarkable is the fact that the word 'idealism' was widely used in English literature of that time (a.o. with Coleridge, Shelley and Ruskin), to denote a high social purpose (Weber 2008a). While musical idealism had its origin in philosophy, it was indeed strongly empowered by a rising middle class, using their own media that included periodicals as well as the opera house and the concert hall. While opera often remained a middle-class phenomenon, symphonic concerts acquired an upper-middle-class image. The elitism associated with the notion of high culture, however, should not be equated to the notion of social class. Weber describes the class that frequented public concert life between 1750 and 1850 as follows:

> "Between 1750 and 1850, the cosmopolitan members of the nobility and the middle classes formed a group called the *beau monde* or "the World" in the main capital cities. The milieu was diverse in composition: international merchants and bankers; high-level doctors, lawyers, and clergymen; prestigious artists and musicians; salon hostesses of various backgrounds; and courtesans of the *demimonde.* The nobility participated in the discourse of the emerging public sphere with the upper-middle class, but the *beau monde* was by no means coextensive with that class. The *beau monde* constituted a milieu larger and less intimate than that of a court but at the same time one much smaller, less diversified, and more tightly drawn than the upper classes found in the major metropolises by 1870. The *beau monde* was a public whose members at least knew *of* each other, mingling in a closely linked set of social, cultural, and political contexts." (Weber 2008a, 21)

The elitism of the concert hall was a mingling of contrasting elites, proving 'elitism' to be an aesthetic category rather than one based on social class. Therefore, education in the arts and shared knowledge of its masterworks took central stage. Musical notation, and the increasing opportunities to publish and spread musical scores, paradoxically contributed to the intangibility of the musical work, which now became an object with eternal, fixed value (Berger 2014) that also existed outside of the act of performing. In this integer form, the musical work had now earned its epithet 'classical'.

These exceptionally high musical ideals and behavioral patterns required institutional and intellectual support to become installed. This timeframe marked the birth of what Weber calls 'musical politics', which refers to the mingling of reflection and sociability that was found in periodicals and heard in music. In that climate, the role of the music critic cannot be overestimated (Weber 2002). Music magazines brought the political and according aesthetic debate to a wider audience and developed a moral code for taste in music. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung,* for example, appeared weekly between 1798 and 1848 and offered a forum to notable performers, critics and composers such as Eduard Hanslick and Franz Liszt. E.T.A Hoffmann's groundbreaking review of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* (cf. supra)*,* the unofficial birth act of musical idealism, appeared in this magazine in 1810. In 1834, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was established, in the words of its co-founder Robert Schumann, "to acknowledge the old times and their works, (and) to draw attention to how new artistic beauty can draw strength from such a rich source" (Geck 2010, 54, own translation). Adolf Bernhard Marx promoted Beethoven's music and its supposed sublime content in particular, during his editorship of the *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* between 1824 and 1831 (Navickaite-Martinelli 2014). Also in France, composers like Cherubini and Berlioz wrote appraisingly about Beethoven. Respected writers such as Alphonse de Lamartine and Victor Hugo even praised Beethoven as the creator of a 'new morality' (Navickaite-Martinelli 2014).

Apart from playing a decisive role in the process of canonization of several composers, these music magazines also provided a medium for resistance to any altering of original scores of musical works. This pendulum swung far: critics who wrote in music magazines generally took a conservative stance towards musical practice, condemning any form of artistic freedom with regard to the original work. Even solo cadenzas, which were originally meant to be improvised or designed by the performer, were from now on considered to be an integral part of the 'original' work of art: "Who is worthy to append a bit of his own writing to a composition of Beethoven's?", a critic complained in 1871 about a performer's improvised cadenza of the Beethoven violin concerto (Levine 1988). Critics were eager to join the idealistic cause, because it helped to legitimize their professional authority (Weber 2008a). Meanwhile, composers and performers played an equally significant role in promoting their colleagues. The famous violin player Joseph Joachim travelled all over Europe to perform the concertos that Brahms, Schumann and Bruch had dedicated to him, and Clara Schumann ensured her

late husbands' historical survival by performing and publishing his composition after the latter's death.

The great transformation of musical taste that took place between 1800 and 1850 was about more than the installation of music as an independent art form. The primary purpose of European art in general had long been to legitimize the political authority of a ruling class, or a ruling individual. In a similar vein, musical idealism, derived from German idealists such as Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schopenhauer, mingled nationalism with a transcendent idealism that emphasized the primacy of the eternal over the material (Weber 2008b). The discussion in music aesthetics around that time, was a broad discussion over musical value; over what music is able to represent. The intensity of the debate on absolute music versus program music uncovers the deeper roots of the discussion. In a politically turbulent climate, the belief was cultivated that instrumental music, embodied by an orchestra, represents a coherent people. Marcia Herndon describes cultural identity as "the sum of self-perceptions, personae, self-presentations, ideologies, assumptions, fears and actions of all of the sub-groups of a society, or of a single sub-group within a society" (Herndon 1988, 135). The musical work, in combination with the practice that is imbued by it, became a very helpful vehicle within this logic of cultural identity (this idea will be further developed in chapter 3).

2.2.3 The emergence of a canon

The main contribution of idealist romantic thinking to music aesthetics was that it installed the idea of a higher realm of musical experience where truth could be uncovered by means of attentive contemplation. Now that music had found a new, secular basis for its legitimation as a valuable and autonomous art form, it needed an artistic grammar to coordinate its disparate products and present them as a coherent whole. Around 1850, the sociopolitical context as well as this musical idealism elevated a selection of composers and their works to public attention. With musical works now carefully notated, packaged and distributed in fixed forms, journals and critics directed their attention towards older compositions, against the interest of living composers. Considering the politically turbulent context, the canonization of the repertoire can therefore not only be ascribed to the undeniable increase in quality of musical works, which were now composed under a comfortable autonomy-paradigm. It can also be interpreted as a result of an implicit attempt to create a coherent artistic paradigm under which a people, or a social class, felt represented.

The practical nature of concert programming as a balancing act added to this logic of canonization. An orchestra's concert season carefully weighed conductor enthusiasm against audiences' demands, calendars of soloists and conductors, the presence of rival events, and the natural flow of the season and the program (Holoman 2012). The assumed familiarity of a selected repertoire facilitated this process of balancing and negotiation. An equally important

practical factor was the expected mobility of both orchestras and their repertoire. A composer, as well as a travelling conductor, expected to meet a standardized orchestra with basic knowledge of certain popular works. Through these practical and social dynamics, a relatively fixed set of canonical musical works took form, agreed upon by the international musical community.

2.2.3.1 The rise of the canon in Europe

The culture of miscellany concert programming, in which virtuoso performances had dominated the concert stage, gradually made way for a practice dominated by musical idealism, that centered around the idea that the value of a musical work of art resides in its ability to reflect a higher ideal. Around the time of what Weber calls the 'great transformation of musical taste, in the middle of the 19th century, a vocabulary first appeared that made reference to a canon of musical masterworks. For example, an 1847 announcement for the Gewandhaus concert series in Leipzig read that "(t)he next three concerts are works by the Great Masters of the last 100 years" (as quoted in: Weber 2008a, 178). Through the rise of musical idealism, concert programs in Europe were soon dominated by music of composers that were considered 'classical' composers, most of which had already deceased. For example, the segment of dead composers programmed in Europe rose from roughly 30 percent to 75 percent between 1780 and 1870 (Weber 2008a). From the 1830's onwards, the word 'classical' was used in a normative rather than a historical way (Weber 2008a). As such, boundaries were formed between musical genres, with 'lesser genres' such as vocal works and virtuoso pieces being excluded from most serious concert programs. As soon as this 'classical music' concert arose, complementary 'pop concerts' were organized in a separate circuit. For example, so-called promenade concerts, emerging from the 1830s onwards and all over Europe, included waltzes, opera overtures and popular arias. The audiences attending these popular concerts were often formed by the intersection between the cultural elite and a broader public.

The symphony, as a genre, remained tied to the separate world of the concert hall, the orchestra and their audience. A typical serious concert program featured overtures at both ends of the program (or sometimes at both ends of each half of a program), a symphony, and a concerto or a series of vocal pieces. Symphonies, however, became the centerpieces of orchestra programs around 1830. The importance of Beethoven's symphonies in particular, especially the third and the ninth, is not to be underestimated. Every major concert series, such as the Philharmonic Society in London, the Conservatoire concerts in Paris and the series of the Vienna Philharmonic, programmed an entire Beethoven-cycle at least every three years, in some cases even every year. Only Mozart's final four symphonies and Haydn's twelve 'London symphonies' enjoyed comparable prominence. Every cultural region had its own canonical emphases, but the triumvirate of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven became remarkably universal. Other early canonized composers throughout Europe included Bach

(Carl Philip Emanuel Bach more frequently than the now more famous Johann Sebastian Bach), Handel, Gluck, Weber, Cherubini and Spohr (Weber 2008a).

As this process of canonization advanced over the course of the 19th century, the status of new music became subject to dispute. Wagner and the so-called New German School to which also Berlioz and Liszt were affiliated, sparked large audiences' interest in new music on concert programs. At least in the case of Wagner, a specific political climate catalyzed this process (Bermbach 2004). The resulting aesthetic schism between conservatives and revolutionaries led to the canonization of both sides, stereotypically placing Wagner, Berlioz and Liszt on the progressive side, and Brahms and Schumann on the conservative side. Tchaikovsky, Gounod and Saint-Saëns soon followed. Interestingly, many aspiring composers initially profiled themselves not as composers but as performers of the classical repertoire, in full realization that canonization meant survival (Weber 2001). Beethoven maneuvered his way upwards in Vienna by performing Mozart's piano concertos, Brahms did exactly the same thing, and Wagner conducted Beethoven's symphonies until his own works received the attention he thought they deserved. Showing affection for what steadily became the classical canon, rather than putting up resistance to it, increased composers' chances of being acknowledged as a legitimate composer.

From the early 19th century onwards, the musical canon in Europe remained tied to an aura of exclusivity. By the 1860s, professional orchestras had moved to the center of musical life (rivaled only by opera), and by 1870 people passed on their seats in the concert hall through their wills; a system that in many cases remained in place until the end of the 20th century. Orchestra concerts were a way for artists, lawyers, professors and civil servants to enhance their power and social standing (Weber 2008a).

2.2.3.2 The rise of the canon in the United States

The process of canonization in the United States was intricately bound up with the situation in Europe. The same way William Weber exposed patterns in the emergence of musical hierarchies of musical forms and audiences in European culture, Lawrence Levine has addressed these processes famously in his book *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (1988), from an American point of view. In the early 19th century, European music came into the United States as a form of exotism or cultural import product, making the process of canonization and aesthetic selection interestingly different from the European story. Similarly, though, the processes of canonization can be traced back to social paradigm shifts, revealing a non-artistic side to canonization.

Weber (2008a) described how musical life in early 19th-century Europe was dominated by miscellaneous concert programs. In the United States, that situation was no different and persisted for a much longer period (Levine 1988). For example, in the late 19th century, the

fourth act of Verdi's *Rigoletto* could easily be followed by the final act of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung.* In addition to retaining indifference to the integrity of the musical work as a whole, music programmers in the US also made no differentiation in musical genres and forms: a concert program often consisted of a mix of popular genres such as military marches and serious genres such as symphonies or tone-poems. This form of programming, where alteration and flexibility remained key, was based upon a rhetoric intended to attract as much listeners as possible (DiMaggio 1982). Homogeneous concert programming became dominant in Europe around 1850, sustained by an ideology that defined the authority of serious music in general, and canonized composers and works in particular, in terms of a transcendent purpose. This transcendent purpose was reserved for those audiences who were familiar with canonical works and the according behavioral patterns. This principle of homogeneity reduced the variety, length and selection of musical works, precisely as a reaction to the wide popularity and commercialization of miscellaneous concerts without such claims on transcendent value. In the United States, the musical realm thrived much longer without this aura of exclusivity. Big names of soloists and conductors seemed more important than the works they performed. Established European singers were regularly asked to perform popular American classics such as *Home Sweet Home* between their operatic arias, as late as the 1850s (Levine 1988).

Still, the aesthetics of musical idealism, and the associated process of selection and canonization, slowly gained terrain in the United States as well. In 1844, Theodore Thomas, the German-born founder of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, wrote: "The masterworks of instrumental music are the language of the soul and express more than those of any other art" (as quoted in: Levine 1988, 113), words strongly reminiscent of the phrasing in E.T.A. Hoffmann's famous Beethoven-review. In line with these words, the directors of the Philharmonic Society of New York wrote in 1848 that "it must be acknowledged that the science of Music as it exists in nature is not of human invention, but of divine appointment" (as quoted in: Levine 1988, 132). As was the case in Europe, the result of this process of musical sacralization was the increasing resistance against the practice of mixing musical genres eclectically (Levine 1988), and the solidification of a relatively stable musical canon.

From the 1840s onwards, an increased prominence of symphonic repertoire by established masterpieces can be traced in the United States. Works by Mendelssohn, Wagner, Liszt, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Strauss formed the most prominent part of the repertoire. As was the case in Europe, Beethoven symphonies covered the largest part of performance time of the average American orchestra, with 12 percent of duration-weighed performance time by 27 major American orchestras (Caves 2000). In the beginning of the 20th century, composers such as Schubert, Mendelssohn and Weber lost shares of performance time, while composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Bruckner slowly gained ground. Much later than in Europe, Mozart and Haydn only entered the repertoire in the early 20th century. During the interbellum, moderate modernists such as Sibelius, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Franck and

Rimsky-Korsakov were added to the standard repertoire, but eventually lost their prominent place to both older and newer contenders (Levine 1988). Finally, thanks to active efforts by Willem Mengelberg and Leonard Bernstein, Mahler joined the pantheon by the 1970's.

As was the case in 19th century Europe, the process of canonization that took place in the United States, was as much political as it was aesthetic. The strong wish to boast an American canon, and the occurrence of active efforts to develop one, can be illustrated by one famous example. In 1892, the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák was invited by Jeannette Thurber, the foundress of the National Conservatory in New York, to become the institution's new director. His appearance in the US was part of a conscious strategy to develop an American musical idiom, much like he had done earlier for the music of his native country (Clapham 1995). In 1893, Dvorak was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to compose his famous *Ninth Symphony 'From the New World',* based on musical idioms that he deemed authentic to the US's cultural history. While Dvorak indeed based melodies of his ninth symphony, as well as his *American String Quartet,* on folk songs of Afro-American descent, his compositions remain typical examples of a Central-European musical style (Clapham 1995). The attempt itself, however, exposes the increasing motivation of the American musical world to develop a musical style authentic to its own culture. It thus highlights the importance of nationalist and class tendencies in the process of canon formation.

The formation of a musical canon in the United States gradually became reliant on the same processes as in Europe, where terms of access proved equally important as the quality of the retained works. Towards the end of the 19th century, more and more musicians wanted to free the symphony orchestra from a popularizing environment. This introduced the American orchestras to the problem of how to reconcile a transcendent and exclusive musical atmosphere with financial necessities. Therefore, many orchestras were organized as cooperatives, where the musicians themselves were responsible for proper management and carried the economic risk (Flanagan 2008). In other cases, wealthy individuals or groups of individuals tended to the orchestra's financial needs. In his periodical *Dwight's Journal of Music,* the Boston music critic John Sullivan Dwight voiced his wish to free the concert programs of the mixture between classical and popular music, though realizing that ticket incomes would not suffice. In 1881, Boston stockbroker Henry Lee Higginson presented himself "prepared and willing, if need be, to sustain large losses in the enterprise, in which artistic excellence, completeness, and the elevation of the public taste are evidently of more account to him than any saving of expense, pecuniary profit being wholly out of the question" (Quoted in: Levine 1988, 122). In this effort to withhold certain cultural goods from free exchange in the market, musical culture was also withheld from larger audiences. While orchestra concerts, much like museums at that time, were not always expensive and could often even be attended for free, there was another price to be paid. Audiences willing to enjoy a serious music concert were implicitly required to have knowledge of the standard repertoire

and the according behavioral patterns. This tight control over terms of access to cultural goods isolated the symphony orchestra and its repertoire from the broader public.

2.3 The aesthetic authority of the canon

This overview of the history of the symphony orchestra, and of its repertoire in particular, reveals that the process of secularization and emancipation of music from external masters, that saw the birth of both the symphony orchestra and the symphonic repertoire, was almost immediately followed by a new, secular process of sacralization.

Halfway the 19th century, a common language of idealistic musical values was established; a language spoken by concert programs, periodicals and a particular audience that together formed a cohesive musical world. The history of the musical canon can indeed be told from the perspective of a specific narrative that became installed over the course of the 19th century. In the context of romantic idealism (cf. chapter 2.2.1), classical music became increasingly associated with a set of timeless norms and became preoccupied with the idea of discovering 'truth' or eternal aesthetic value in enduring patterns of taste. For example, in 1831, musical theorist William Crotch wrote that "there is a kind of Truth even in matters of taste, which will ultimately prevail", and that works of the Great Masters "are the great and unrivalled models of all that is sublime and sacred in our art" (as quoted in: Weber 2008a, 95). According to this new aesthetic ideal, a musical performance was supposed to be a highly introverted musical experience, rooted in individual contemplation. One of the most important evidences of this new aesthetic narrative was the process of classifying genres after their supposed intrinsic merit. Serious genres such as the symphony and the concert overture were, in the words of a 1861 Viennese critic, considered "of healthy taste", and opera fantasies and waltzes as "coquettish" and "out of the question" (as quoted in: Weber 2008a, 238). Unworthy genres, along with their composers, were expelled from concert programs and were excluded from what gradually became the musical canon.

The sacralization of music by the dominant aesthetic current resulted in an increasing distance between art and a more mundane occupation derogatively dubbed 'fashion'. In that sense, art was seen more as something that *was* than something that *is* (Levine 1988). From the late 19th century onwards, compositions of canonical composers were performed by trained professionals in splendid new concert halls, freed from the distractions of the mundane and cultivated in terms of elevation rather than entertainment. The sacralization process of both repertoire and habits increased the distance between the amateur and the professional, between the mundane and the sublime, between the symphony and the waltz, and between the great masters and the novices. The golden age of classical music can be understood as the result of an ongoing ritualization process that helped orchestral culture legitimize its own isolation, by cultivating practices with a pseudo-sacred status (Mauskapf 2012). These practices, reinforced by increasingly authoritative conductors and compliant audiences, have been shaped by class politics as well as by the sublime aesthetics disseminated through the music of composers such as Beethoven, Wagner or Liszt. The cumulative power of judgment, however, did not so much lie in the hands of any specific orchestra, the audience, a conductor

or any other individual, but rather in a higher authority that was collectively developed: the implicit standard of excellence embodied in the abstract idea of the musical canon (Bergeron and Bohlman 1992). Only recently emancipated from external masters, music unwillingly became servient to an outside authority again, this time to a self-inflicted aesthetic peer pressure.

The musical canon, therefore, is as much a principle of social differentiation as it is a principle of aesthetic coherence. Precisely with reference to this aspect, the history of the musical canon shows an interesting dialectic between aesthetic authority and institutionalized centrality. Three major conclusions can be drawn from this.

Firstly, it makes clear that the musical canon has an ambiguous relation to the market. The process of canonization that took place in symphonic culture, was not in the first place a financial move, as the isolation of musical practice withheld classical music from larger audiences. A canon of symphonic music took form because orchestras were seeking high art, not money. Especially in the culturally dominant German-speaking regions, musical idealism created the canon-ideology which brought along various connotations with reference to cultural identity and collectivity. The canon, along with all its connotations, was later sold as a complete package to a wider audience. Recordings of orchestras, for example, provided the opportunity to make orchestral music widely available, often at low prices. But while technological advancements revolutionized the orchestra's *modus operandi,* it did not revolutionize the repertoire, as this would compromise the orchestra's aura of exclusivity. Instead, the orchestra, its repertoire and its aura of exclusivity were romanticized in the 20th century. Mickey Mouse's famous handshake with conductor Leopold Stokowski in Walt Disney's 1940 movie *Fantasia* symbolizes this hybrid connection of the old ways with the new, and epitomizes the commercial potential of the exclusive. Technological advancements leading to the reproducibility of classical music, granted an even more iconic status to certain works. In the early 1980s, for example, Philips decided on the 74-minutes Compact Disk, the average duration of a performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. That way, the stability of the musical canon, initially a matter of aesthetics, was further reinforced by commercial rationales.

Secondly, the hegemonic position that classical music achieved, put composers of new music in a problematic situation. While in the second half of the 19th century, a balance was maintained between new compositions and repertoire in concert programs, yet another generation lay between new composers and the old masters by 1900. The musical canon became so familiar to audiences that new works were approached with suspicion, whether they were written in a conservative style or in a modernistic style (Weber 2002). In that sense, the heightened suspicion of contemporary music was thus not triggered by the extravagances of an avant-garde; neither Schoenberg nor Stravinsky broke from traditional composition practices until around 1910. One may even wonder if it weren't the heightened hostility

towards contemporary works that began to drive composers into extreme directions (cf. chapter 2.3). In any case, the focus on authentic performance practices further diverted the audience from being interested in new music well into the second half of the 20th century.

Thirdly, and connected, there is the obvious fact that the prioritization of the musical canon strongly impacted the role of the musical performer. In a performance context where music carries an eternal and intangible value, performers are now limited to translating that value in a way that remains as true as possible to the composer's supposed intentions.[2] More than ever, composition and performance became two distinct activities (Goehr 1998). As Lydia Goehr remarks: "The demand here is for performance *transparency*: performances should be like windows through which audiences directly perceive works" (As quoted in: Aguilar 2014, 253). Thus, performers, too, fell prey to the aesthetic authority of the musical canon. Flamboyant performers such as Vladimir Horowitz, Glenn Gould or Nigel Kennedy are the exceptions that prove the rule: the fact that their idiosyncratic interpretations of canonical works are a source of controversy to this day, illustrates both the general audience's conservative pattern of expectations and the appeal of performers who detract from these expectations.

This alliance between musical culture and the prioritization of the musical canon highlights the importance of the canon for the development of symphony orchestras and shows that the discussion on the musical canon cuts across the birth and rise of major symphony orchestras. The advance of symphony orchestras in the second half of the 19th century, and well into the 20th, is partially a product of the process of ritualization of concert attitudes and the canonization of the repertoire. To understand the importance of the musical canon for the further development of musical culture, therefore, it does not suffice to approach these processes in a purely descriptive historical manner. A broader analysis of the role of the musical canon as an impactful concept, provides a useful lens through which to observe those historical developments in aesthetic practice that can be related to the sustainability of the symphony orchestra.

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[2] Related to this idea is the concept of *Werktreue,* or the unwritten rule of having to remain true to the work itself, which will be discussed in the epilogue.

Chapter 3 – Narrating the Musical Canon

Academic thinking on the origin, development, relevance and status of the canon has a history as fascinating and many-sided as the history of the canon itself. In advance of entering this debate, a disambiguation of the word 'canon' is imperative. Speaking of 'the musical canon' may suggest that it is obvious which works belong under this label and which do not. According to its most basic and widespread definition, the musical canon denotes a set of musical works that are considered masterpieces by general consensus, such as Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* or Dvořák's *New World Symphony*. The problem with this definition is, however, that it often proves difficult to discern what is canonical and what is not, especially when taking into account regional preferences, changes over time, and the various contexts in which 'the canon' is framed.

For example, the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* is the central pedagogical tool in American musical education and is encountered by every music student in the United States. It provides a pedagogical canon, in the form of a student-oriented overview of musical works that are considered exemplary for Western musical culture and have strongly impacted its development (Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca 2019). Apart from this pedagogical canon, a performance canon which can be distilled from concert programs throughout the global orchestral scene contains yet a different set of works than what can be called the academical canon, which is taught in musicological circles and puts much more emphasis on the aesthetic impact of composers such as Arnold Schoenberg and Karlheinz Stockhausen; two major composers that rarely appear on concert programs. A collection of standard recordings, with Leonard Bernstein's Mahler-symphonies, Otto Klemperer's Bruckner-symphonies, Pierre Boulez' *Ring*-cycle or Jacqueline du Pré's memorable recording of Schumann's cello concerto, provides a next interpretation of the idea of a canon. In addition, ethnomusicologist Tina Ramnarine has raised awareness of the importance of African and Asian ensembles and repertoires (Ramnarine 2018). And finally, gender studies have criticized the masculinity of the traditional Western canon (McClary 2002; Citron 2000). Apart from the historical fact that there did not exist any proper musical education for women, researchers increasingly recognize a historical bias against women as creators, and a broader aesthetic climate that belittled women's creative achievements (Citron 1990). Although there have been attempts to install a feminist or gender-neutral musical canon (see a.o. Taruskin 2009b), the dominant perception of the musical canon remains male-centered. The content of 'the canon', in short, always depends on the specific discourse in which the canon takes central stage. By extension, the term 'classical music' has the same disadvantage: it is a vaguely and intersubjectively delineated repertoire within a more extensive repertoire.

The canon's functioning as an interpretive framework has only received scholarly attention fairly recently, which has resulted in a rather polarized canon debate with devoted defenders and ardent detractors on opposite sides. This polarization, as will be demonstrated, leaves a

crucial side of the debate untheorized because it remains trapped in a certain understanding of the musical canon that will be challenged. In brief, it undervalues the complexities of the normative functioning of the canon, which will be argued to be underpinned by a continuous tension between aesthetic and pragmatic dimensions. Interestingly, this canon debate is strongly related to the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra. Both discussions have in common the critical position towards a canon that is no longer adapted to its present surroundings. Therefore, the following theorical account of the musical canon ultimately reveals the need for an additional empirical investigation, which will not only give tangibility to an otherwise needlessly abstract discourse but will also be a first step in taking a moderate stance in the contemporary canon debate.

3.1 The contemporary canon debate

Despite the different interpretations of the canon, there is one additional property that can be ascribed to the canon, which distinguishes it from a mere collection of works. Joseph Kerman, widely considered to be the founding father of canon research in music, aphoristically suggested that "the repertoire is formed by performers, whereas the canon is established by critics" (Kerman 1983, 110). Kerman does not refer to music critics in the strict sense only. Rather, critics are to be interpreted more broadly as those who reflect on the status of a specific work of art and ascribe a certain value to it. In a similar vein, William Weber states that "if 'classics' are individual works deemed great, 'canon' is the framework that supports their identification in critical and ideological terms" (Weber 1999, 338). Although both canon and repertoire (or 'classics') often refer to the same collection of works, the terms clearly carry a different weight. More than a mere set of musical works, the canon appears to be an authoritative point of reference that provides a rule of conduct for musical construction and appreciation (Bergeron & Bohlman, 1992; Müller, 2010) . The musical canon indeed facilitates the reduction of the plurality of musical works to a privileged and homogenized set of standards. Robert Morgan was among the first to call attention to the canon as a whole: "A canon provides models for creation and a standard against which creation is measured" (Morgan 1992, 46).

While romantic and early modernist aesthetic debates centered around the establishment of what exactly constitutes the 'text' of music, through which music could contain any form of meaning or pertinence, the attention of the postmodern quest for musical significance is increasingly drawn to the production, presentation and development of this text. The pivotal insight grows that it is the environment within which a musical performance is presented that provides its meaning, not the musical forms themselves (Bergeron and Bohlman 1992; Kerman 1983). As an answer to the aestheticism of the early to the middle of the 20th century, attempts have been made to de-fetishize the musical canon and the issues surrounding it, by exposing the social relations involved. In other words, the context of musical works, in relation to the music itself, is under scrutiny in postmodern debates. That way, Sven Oliver Müller's proclamation of a 'musical turn' in music philosophy seems hardly hyperbolic: as the linguistic turn in early twentieth-century philosophy stressed the impact of semantic structures on our understanding of reality, this musical turn directs its attention to specific contexts of musical production as constitutive to music's understanding as an art form (Müller, 2010).

Therefore, speaking of 'the canon' (or of 'classical music', for that matter) is far from futile. The specific content of the canon, from this point of view, is of secondary importance only. Instead of assuming the existence of a quasi-endless multiplicity of delineated canons in terms of content (each one dependent on the specific purpose to which a canon is framed), thus hollowing the notion of the canon and obscuring its significance, it seems more insightful to focus on practices that rely on the abstract notion of a canon itself, and on its manifest

effectiveness in coordinating aesthetic practices. This alternative, critical approach of the canon assesses the assumptions that are involved in order to be able to speak of 'the canon'. To that end, this approach places the development and impact of the canon in a larger discourse that incorporates not only the aesthetic exemplary function of the canon, but also the shifting impact of the canon, as a concept, on aesthetic practices. More important than arguing about the specific content of the canon, its performative role as a normative framework makes for a better unit of analysis. Important questions from that viewpoint are: on what basis are distinct musical expressions lumped together into a canon? What distinguishes them from other forms of musical culture that carry a different hierarchical label? By addressing these questions, the discourse turns its focus to the conditions of what can be called the canon-concept.

3.1.1 A polarized discussion

As a result of the shift to the critical viewpoint, art historians, as opposed to composers, critics and philosophers, have increasingly refrained from making normative judgements. In an effort to circumvent complex questions over aesthetic value, they have focused on mere registration and description of aesthetic matters as historical facts, evaluating an object's historical value rather than its aesthetic value (Locher 2012). Because this reluctance to address aesthetic issues is still widespread among academics, canonization processes have only slowly gained the interest of academic scholarship. The idea circulates that it is not up to the individual, let alone the neutral researcher, to judge over an object's intrinsic aesthetic value, but up to the market, the audience or history itself. In the academic field, an undeniable rhetoric of decanonization has entered at least since the New Musicology movement of the 1980s, which has enriched the discussion with insights from cultural studies and sociology. Recent writings on the topic have highlighted the authoritarian dimension of the concept of a canon and have increasingly focused on types of music traditionally excluded from the canon (see e.g.: Bergeron and Bohlman 1992; Beard and Gloag 2005). Themes of social injustice, along with themes of gender and race equality, have questioned not only the authority of the traditionally white, male and Western-centric musical canon, but have also called the institutions to the stand which are portrayed to be its gatekeepers (e.g.: Citron 2000; McClary 2002; Ramnarine 2004). In the face of this quandary, the contemporary debate on the justification of, and the resistance to, the traditional canon has evolved into an almost binary dispute. Dean Kolbas (2001) distinguishes conservative defenders and liberal detractors of a canon's value. The relevance of this distinction for discussions over the musical canon and its relationship with questions of legitimacy, will gradually become clear.

Conservative defenders of a canon, as Kolbas states, remain true to the 19th-century paradigm by justifying the importance of the traditional canon based on the assumption of its eternal superiority and the cathartic experience that its reproduction generates, either to individuals

or to society at large (Kolbas 2001). From de defenders' point of view, the function of the canon is to give orientation, which can only be achieved if its framework remains stable (Locher 2012). Jürgen Habermas, for example, states that the canon is a medium that facilitates the individual's insertion into the normative conscience of an entire population (Habermas 1990). In a similar vein, Jan Assmann contends that the canon is a guiding principle enabling to identify with a collective and stabilized identity (Assmann 2005). Revisions of the canon might compromise the collection's integrity as a whole and might therefore destabilize a population's identity. In short, conservative defenders' arguments are based, firstly, on the aesthetic authority of the canon, and secondly, on its capacity to embody the true, the good and the beautiful (Goehr 2007; 2002a). A canon, from the defenders' point of view, exemplifies patterns of endurance and stability, throughout historical periods and within the culture in which it presents itself. Defenders thus see the canon as a museum that exposes a comprehensible and representative version of human progress, that tolerates no alterations. As will be discussed below, Lydia Goehr points to the fact that defenders incline to treat the canon as a solid given, rather than a notion that has emerged and crystallized within a practice (Goehr 2002a).

Liberal detractors, on the other hand, emphasize the fact that the canon was indeed constructed within a practice. Assuming an underlying agenda in this construction process, detractors criticize the traditional canon based on its elitism, chauvinism and naïve aestheticism (Kolbas 2001). It is argued that if the canon is claimed to embody a certain culture at a certain point in time, today's canon should be radically different from the past's: more representative of the diversity of societies and the wide span of cultural heritages within those societies. Detractors hold that, in its current ethnocentric and patriarchal form, the canon further ostracizes a society's already repressed groups (Goehr 2002a). Detractors therefore promote the demythologization of the canon to expose its latent social bias, and the opening of the traditional canon in order for it to be representative of manifest social diversity. This side of the debate has, among other, strongly benefitted from feminist and ethnomusicological arguments (Detels 1994). As detractors contend that the canon is politically constructed from an elitist agenda, they plea for its political deconstruction. In line with this idea of 'constructed success', detractors hold that the selection process of the canon is not driven by an aesthetic logic, but a merely pragmatic logic. From this point of view, the construction of the canon is a contingent matter of location, timing, opportunity and luck (Robertson 2003). Its coherence, from this angle, is based on patterns analogous to waves of non-artistic interests. This conscious construction of the canon, according to detractors, occurs within institutions. In fact, as Goehr argues, the detractors' argument is indeed about the institutionalized centrality of the canon, rather than about its content per se (Goehr 2002a). As the traditional canon fails to represent true diversity within society, the true problem lies with the canon's embedding in institutions such as the education system, and cultural institutions such as theaters, museums and symphony orchestras that secure the canon's dominance.

Summarizing, researchers of canon formation and development have, for a long time, either conceived of the canon in purely aesthetic terms, with little reference to the non-artistic conditions to which canonization processes are subjected, or they have interpreted the canon from the viewpoint of specific sociological contexts, with little reference to the functionless aspects or art itself (Kolbas 2001). Despite their seemingly contrary positions, however, these disagreements among critics about whether to break open or preserve the traditional canon expose a strikingly similar assumption. Kolbas remarks that both opposites are equally guilty of fetishizing the canon. Whether they claim that the canon is truly representative of a cultural identity, or only strategically representative of an elitist segment of that culturally diverse identity, both sides *a priori* presume the canon's capability to represent. At the same time, either camp remains unclear as to what exactly explains this capacity. Therefore, both fall prey to the same form of implicit fetishization, in the sense that they ascribe to the canon an almost uncanny capacity to represent. Defenders do, in the sense that material circumstances are not perceived as essential to canon formation (Kolbas 2001), and detractors in the sense that they exclusively focus on canon dissemination, a process that occurs in the institutions, implicitly taking the representativeness of the canon for granted. In fact, both sides' reliance on the representativeness of the canon is so strong that the immediate utility of the canon, either in an aesthetically elevating sense or a social sense, is promoted by both strains as the canon's ultimate justification. This suggestion has already been launched in chapter 1: the legitimacy claim of the dominant practice of pragmatized aesthetics is based on the belief that the established and historically rigidified musical canon consists of the most representative works that musical culture has to offer.

The similar presuppositions shared by detractors and defenders show that the antagonistic debate on canon justification has more to do with politics of inclusion and exclusion than with aesthetic properties. The contemporary debate has shifted towards the non-aesthetic factors in the construction and dissemination of a canon, and towards an assessment of how these processes relate to a social group's collective identity (Goehr 2002a). This shift towards institutional centrality has repercussions in three ways. Firstly, the fact that the debate fully leans on the idea of representation obscures the aesthetic selection process in favor of the dissemination and reception processes. Secondly, the underlying selection process of the musical canon that might explain its representative power, remains untheorized. Thirdly, the role of institutions as producers and guardians of the assumed representative canon takes central stage.

As the focal point of the canon debate shifted from aesthetics to sociology, so did the tools of investigation. Within the sociological reading of canonization processes, Pierre Bourdieu and John Guillory represent the dominant strains. Bourdieu's theory of cultural production states that the reproduction and prestige of the traditional canon originates in processes of cultural familiarization (Kolbas 2001). These processes of familiarization, in turn, depend on social

confirmation and the according broad institutionalization of the art world. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu contends:

> "(T)he producer of the value of the work of art is not the artist but the field of production as a universe of belief which produces the value of the work of art as a *fetish* by producing the belief in the creative power of the artist." (Bourdieu 1996, 229–30)

With Bourdieu, the focal point of the canon debate is drawn to the institution as a producer, rather than to the artist himself or the aesthetic impulses that drive him. In line with the 'constructed success' premise, Bourdieu's model of canonization argues that the material field of cultural production, namely the objective relations among a wide network of representatives and institutional components, plays the key role in the consecration of particular works of art and their collectivization as a canon.

In *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation,* John Guillory (1993) ponders the causal affinity between the canon and social relations, which he argues to be consciously cultivated by institutions. Guillory holds that it is only by understanding the social function and institutional protocols of the education system that we will understand how certain works are canonized and passed on throughout generations. The canon, which is understood as the illusion of a fixed and exclusive representative body, takes the form of cultural capital that functions as a regulator of access to literacy, or highbrow culture. Those who are able to attain knowledge about the canon, gain access to the social status that it radiates. Others do not. Therefore, according to Guillory, the canon debate has taken the form of a true crisis since radically changing social conditions, namely the denunciation of the notion of highbrow culture, have contested the unequal distribution of cultural capital (Guillory 1993). By stressing the matter of access to the means of artistic production and consumption, Guillory recognizes, much like William Weber, that canon formation and class distinctions are closely intertwined.

However, pointing out the historical fact that artistic production and education have been a social privilege, does not explain the selection criteria of canonization, nor the impulses that drive its inner development. Both Bourdieu and Guillory focus extensively on processes that take place outside of the aesthetic domain, and which account for the cultivation, distribution and regulation of access to the selection. While these sociological theories thus reveal the external and material constraints of canon 'maintenance', they omit the internal and logically prior question of canon formation. Therefore, purely sociological accounts fail to theorize the complex processes of musical canonization that take place under the umbrella of a dominant aesthetic paradigm, that needs to reveal itself before it can become institutionalized. What sociological theories have added to the debate, is the crucial insight that idealizations of the canon must be tempered. Concluding that aesthetic judgement and development are no more

than mystified social relation, however, leaves a crucial portion of the debate unsatisfactorily discussed.

3.1.2 Aesthetic relativism

Both detractors and defenders of the traditional canon understand the canon as a cultural authority. While it is precisely this cultural authority that is the object of their criticism or defense, the mechanisms that play into this authority remain underexposed. As heirs to romantic idealism, radical defenders understand this authority of the canon in a metaphysical way: the idea is cultivated that the authority of the canon is based on its capacity to represent eternal beauty; the authority of the canon, in that sense, is absolute and inherent to the works. The resistance to canonization has maneuvered the debate on the canon in another direction. If one accepts, Locher (2012) argues, that a canon is not a given entity but a more or less collectively developed and agreed reference system, incentivized by institutional logics and representing sets of values deemed important for society as a whole or for groups within it, then canonization has to be considered as a social and political enterprise. Spurred by the sociological viewpoint, canon detractors perceive aesthetic value to be entirely constructed within a network of social and institutional actors, and thus act as the antipodes of the aesthetic idealism of the 19th century, upon which defenders continue to lean.

However insightful, this approach remains equally unsatisfactory. Detractors reveal their reliance on the canon's authority as a representation by pushing the argument to open up the canon, in order for the canon to reflect social diversity in a society where the distinction between high and low culture has eroded. Those wanting to open up the canon often take on an explicitly utilitarian point of view, as there is always an aspired result, namely the beneficial social impact of everyone being represented in artistic forms that a society holds dear. However, bringing into existence an infinite amount of canons for any conceivable group, is to forfeit the historically determined, objective content of aesthetic distinction (Kolbas 2001), a process for which aesthetic motivations are required. In that sense, opening up the canon amounts to little more than symbolic change, justifying this action only from a utilitarian motive. This sheds light on what Kolbas calls the "false pluralism of the canon" (Kolbas 2001, 138): by bringing into existence multiple canons for reasons of inclusivity, whereby each canon allegedly represents different segments of a diverse society, the assumed exclusive and authoritarian nature of the canon is only reinforced. Moreover, the political option of abolishing the idea of a canon altogether and assuming the existence of an infinite amount of concurrent canons, would logically imply for all cultural artefacts to have equal significance (Locher 2012). This option would in fact mean discarding the notion of the work of art entirely, and by extension the notion of the canon itself. Egalitarian erosion of aesthetic judgement thus serves as a political weapon against the alleged elitism of the canon. The according nullification of the high/low hierarchy has caused the functional to thrive at the expense of

the aesthetic (Frith 1996). The primacy of the functional over the aesthetic echoes pragmatized aesthetics, of which the problems have been discussed in chapter 1.

The downplaying of aesthetic judgement has drawn the debate towards the terrain of sociology, pedagogy and politics. As a result, aesthetic relativism and liberal pluralism have dominated the debate: the debate has developed an indifference and distrust towards aesthetic judgment. While the emergence of aesthetic relativism indeed cures the aesthetic incomprehension that became manifest in various art forms in the first half of the 20th century, this liberal discourse reinforced what Boulez called the 'ghettos' of art music: "everything is good, nothing is bad; each in your own corner" (Foucault, Boulez, and Rahn 1985, 7). By lack of an objective yardstick to measure its aesthetic condition, a function originally taken on by the canon, utility can be the sole function of a canon in a radically egalitarian environment. If this sociological approach finds the evaluation of canonical works to be ultimately dependent on its social effects or reception, it suggests that the qualitative content of works of art is merely a function of their degree of institutionalization. One crucial flaw looms in the background: by cultivating a distrust towards aesthetic judgment, and by thus eroding the difference between high and low culture, sociological accounts fail to legitimize their reliance on representation logic in their own field. Kolbas aphoristically concludes:

> "The idealism of those who take the aesthetic quality of (works of art) to be timeless, subjective, or without social implications, is matched by those who find the Western canon to be the result of an historical prejudice that can be overcome with a substitution of texts in the classroom." (Kolbas 2001, 140)

In conclusion, the focus on non-aesthetic factors in canonization processes (an approach adopted by the canon's detractors) has played into the increasing dominance of aesthetic relativism. This approach cultivates the perception that there is no sufficient basis to support the selection of some objects over others based on aesthetic judgment. However, to reach a non-circular definition of the canon (of the kind: "the canon is a set of canonized works"), conditions for the selection process itself need to be considered as well as its conditions for dissemination and familiarization. Acknowledging the mediating role of institutions in canonization processes is not to deny the existence of other factors. The pool of objects from which the selection is made, deserves proper attention, and most of all the basis for the selection of one object over another. Detractors' arguments are oriented to the authority of the canon, which relates not necessarily to the individual works themselves, but to the conceptual framework holding these works together. In other words: the conditions under which a canon can assume an authoritative or normative guise, need to be exposed. The fact that the canon is discussed in terms of its authority, which is implicit throughout the whole binary discourse, appears to be crucial to the notion of a canon itself, and indicates that a canon is a meaningful constellation of works that adheres to a logic that stretches beyond a mere material or institutional one. It appears that the canon can only be understood as a

result of interlocking forces that cut through the aesthetic as well as the pragmatic domain. Understanding these dynamics that constitute a canon, therefore, amounts to understanding under which conditions a canon can be perceived as an authority.

3.2 The regulative canon-concept

This chapter critically analyzes the canon as a concept. Not its historical manifestation and content will be the point of focus, but its characteristics and functioning as a concept in musical discourses and practices. In the previous paragraphs, it has been argued that every understanding of 'a canon' is supported by a series of assumptions that allows the canon to be perceived as an authority. In other words, only by grace of these assumptions, the canon can be understood as an authority which can either be defended or argued against. To understand the authority of the canon, these assumptions now become the explicit subject of this study. In that sense, the underlying paragraphs undertake a transcendental analysis of the musical canon: it explores the conditions under which the canon assumes its normative guise and, related, the conditions under which the canon can be acknowledged as a normative framework that guides specific practices. In that sense, this research is partially inscribed in a Kantian tradition: the theory does not primarily study the relevant object itself (i.e. the musical canon) but studies the necessary conditions, and the assumptions that are in place, to conceive of this canon, and to speak of it, in terms of a concept. At the same time, this research also departs from the Kantian tradition. It sympathizes with the criticism of Bourdieu (cf. above) that the Kantian tradition takes too little account of the social processes and specific institutions that help shape these concepts and install their authority (see: Bourdieu 1993). In line with this criticism, the underlying theoretical investigation culminates in an argument that additional empirical research is needed to understand the authority of the musical canon. As implied throughout the previous paragraphs, the authority of the musical canon can be traced down to specific environments in which choices and actions, both aesthetic and pragmatic in nature, have intertwined.

This critical analysis of the canon will occur in several steps. Firstly, the familiar museum metaphor will be elaborated on, to illustrate how the canon has assumed a normative guise. Secondly, the interplay between aesthetic and pragmatic factors will be argued to have contributed to the stagnation of the musical canon. Finally, it will become clear how the normative nature of this stagnated canon is related to the orchestra crisis today.

3.2.1 The museum metaphor

Looking for the conditions under which the canon can be recognized as an authority requires an investigation that takes into account the unique properties of every art form, in this case of music. First and foremost, it is important to consider the historical conditions that enable to speak of a canon, which are indeed different in every art form. The literary canon, for example, emerged when relatively stable nation states took form, unified by a certain language (Kolbas 2001). Halfway the 18th century, commercial print culture allowed for an authoritative body of literary works, mostly poetry, to be widely distributed in edited

collections (Folfenflik 2006). In the visual arts, the idea of a canon first appeared around the time the painter and art historian *avant-la-lettre* Giorgio Vasari wrote his *Lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors, and architects* in 1550 (Ginsburgh and Weyers 2010; Locher 2012). In the case of music, there is one condition to be able to speak of a canon: there can only be a musical canon if there exists such a notion as a musical work. A canon of musical composers could have existed before that point (e.g. for pedagogical purposes). Nevertheless, a canon of composers lacks the consistency and imaginary tangibility that a musical work provides and on which the particular use value of the musical canon relies. The unusual aspect of a canon of musical works lies precisely in the fact that musical practice could, from a certain point onwards, rely on something that could be perceived as an objective reality, namely a musical 'work'. Accordingly, when a composer is said to be 'canonized', it is much rather the case that his works are canonized, and with them, the composer. The musical canon provides a comprehensive framework for these musical works, that first need to be acknowledged as separate entities. The discussion about the musical canon, by extension, is a consideration of the aesthetic value of separate works, relative to their collective form as a canon.

The emergence and impact of the concept of a musical work has been studied by Lydia Goehr in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works.* Goehr describes the emancipatory process of music in the early 19th century, when music was gradually separated from the everyday world and thus recognized itself as an art form (Goehr 2007). Romantic aesthetics defended music's capability to mediate between the human and the divine realm, or between the concrete and transcendent. As elaborated above, music finally obtained a place among the fine arts after centuries of servitude to liturgy and politics. As it conquered its way to the realm of the established fine arts, music gradually became packaged in more delineated, separate forms, eligible for equal treatment to the tangible objects of the fine arts. The resulting "complete and discrete, original and fixed, personally owned units" (Goehr 2007, 206) were called musical works.

Throughout the 19th century, as Goehr maintains, musical practice became dominated by this work-concept. While earlier music was not produced to outlast a few, or even one single performance on specific occasions, the work-concept allowed for a composition to be performed many times without seeming outdated or out of context (Erauw 1998). The ontological shift towards musical objectification granted the musical work a status of transcendence and eternal validity. The often-quoted paradigm example of this ontological shift is Mendelssohn's 1829 performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*, a composition written for a specific occasion a century earlier. This separability principle, as Goehr dubs it, finally provided music with the right attributes to become an object of study and epitomization (Goehr 2007). In order for this process to succeed, music needed a mental space to house and coordinate these new objects called works. Goehr calls this mental space, filled with solidified musical works in a meaningful and coherent way, the imaginary museum of musical works. The idea of an imaginary museum was first coined by the French art historian

André Malraux, who initiated an important discussion on the concept of the museum in his essay *Le Musée Imaginaire* (Malraux 1965). In the essay, Malraux ponders the relation between the art object itself and its mode of presentation, or the tension between the aesthetic (as a collection) and the artefactual (as distinct objects). Just like Goehr, Malraux arrives at the idea of an imaginary museum through the separate work of art and, most of all, through the work's conscious self-identification as a work of art. Malraux quotes Maurice Denis in saying that "a religious picture, before being a Virgin, is a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order" (Malraux 1965, 14). Goehr's work-concept resonates with this observation. Until it is recognized as music, a musical episode is only a sequence of disparate sounds in time. Once this music assumes yet another form when dubbed a 'work', this new package makes it eligible for inclusion in the collection of the imaginary museum, where it performs a new function as a work.

In *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works,* Goehr defines the work-concept as a regulative concept. Regulative concepts, as she describes them, serve as an orientational maxim: thinking and speaking in terms of a musical 'work' leads to changes in practice. Because an actual practice becomes organized in terms of the concept of a 'work', such regulative concepts determine, stabilize and order the structure of practices by providing a general understanding to which the specific individual cases can be measured (Goehr 2007). William Weber similarly described a great transformation of musical taste, where miscellany and performance-based concert programs were gradually replaced by homogeneous programs featuring strictly delineated and almost sacred musical works (cf. chapter 2.2.3). In that sense, the work-concept not only emerged from an environment in which aesthetic and pragmatic tensions coincided, it subsequently performed a normative function by indirectly regulating that same environment. Production, presentation and development of music all took shape according to the idea of the musical work.

The historical account of the musical canon outlined in chapter 2 justifies an analogous gesture, allowing to propose that the musical canon, as a concept, has a comparable regulative force. As an increasing amount of musical works became included in the collection, the imaginary museum of musical works filled up nicely and, following the same hypostatization process that was induced by the work-concept, presented yet another sense of coherence in itself. Just like music could be understood in terms of 'works' of art, the collection of these works could now be understood in terms of a 'canon'. The musical canon, in other words, undergoes the same hypostatization process as the musical work: the collection of musical works is assigned a meaning that cannot be fully reduced to the sum of the properties of the separate musical works. The canon is an imaginary construction that, as such, has a regulating impact on the practice in which it originated. As anticipated in the previous paragraphs, the attention of this transcendental analysis is drawn not to the content of the canon (the works in the imaginary museum) but to the canon as an imaginary cultural artifact *sui generis* (the imaginary museum itself).

The musical canon functions as a regulative concept. Following the historical analysis of the musical canon delivered by Weber, and the conceptual analysis offered by Goehr, the musical canon can indeed be recognized as an imaginary construct that has gradually emerged from musical practice, at which point it imposed its ideals on that same musical practice. The great transformation of musical taste, in that sense, marks the point at which the canon began to regulate practice. In that sense, as Goehr suggested by the title of her book, the historical development of the musical canon is an immediate effect of the emergence of the work-concept. Since the work-concept emerged, works of dead composers took prominence over those of living ones, and these alleged transcendent musical masterpieces formed a relatively solid canon to which all future compositions could be measured. This view is endorsed by the etymological background of the word canon, that is derived from the Greek word 'κανων' (kanôn), meaning 'yardstick' or 'measuring rod'. The musical canon is a body of authoritative works that exert dominance, like a measure against which new works are validated. It concerns, in other words, those works from which, in their totality, a certain set of rules can be deduced that are implicitly recommended or even dictated (Detels 1994) to imminent products. In this climate, the sonata form and the four-movement symphony were standardized, as well as instrumentation requirements for symphonic works, and focus was almost invariably on pitch organization at the expense of rhythm. The dominance of these rules, however implicit they were, is illustrated by the often severe criticism that composers initially faced when they detracted from them: Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt being the most famous ones. Modernism's fundamental challenges to these rules will be addressed below.

As a result of the work-concept, music as an art form could now pride itself on its own delineated canon, that came with its own set of rules. This allows to propose that while musical works are indeed constitutive for a canon, they do not yet form a canon *an Sich.* It is an imaginary framework that makes a collection of works into a canon and accounts for the canon to be understood as an authority. The next paragraphs will demonstrate how not only the individual works themselves, but also the imaginary construction that framed these individual works into a canon, play a normative role. The hypothesis of the canon being a regulative concept will thus be confirmed, and the conditions through which the canon achieves its aesthetic authority will be gradually explored.

3.2.2 Open and closed concepts

As argued above, contemporary canon discussions leave a significant part of the debate around the sense and nonsense of the canon untheorized. By reducing the canon either to mystified social relations cultivated by institutions or to spontaneous aesthetic processes occurring in a social and political vacuum, the logically prior step of explaining the authority of a canon is ignored. Imaginary though the museum may be, this metaphor for the musical

canon provides a promising clue as to where the authority of the musical canon can be looked for. The previous paragraphs urge to look for the underlying assumptions that allow individual works to become framed into a collection that can, only by grace of these assumptions, be perceived as coherent and authoritative. Accordingly, in order to understand the impact of the musical canon to its full potential, a further critical analysis of the canon-concept imposes itself. When linking the historical analyzes of Weber to the regulative concepts of Goehr, a perfectly reasonable explanation emerges as to why and how a body of musical works was granted prominence over other works, and how these dynamics have impacted aesthetic practice.

In her analysis of the work-concept in *The Imaginary Museum,* Goehr makes a distinction between open concepts and closed concepts. Drawing inspiration from Friedrich Waismann's essay on the verifiability of empirical statements (Waismann, Kneale, and Mackinnon 1945), Goehr defines open concepts as:

- "Not corresponding to fixed or static essences
- Not admitting of 'absolutely precise' definitions of the sort traditionally given in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions
- Intensionally incomplete or 'essentially contestable' – because the possibility of an unforeseen situation arising which would lead us to modify our definition can never be eliminated
- Distinct from, though related to, vague concepts. According to Waismann, a concept is vague if there are cases in which there is no definite answer whether the term applies (e.g. 'tall' or 'middle-aged')" (Goehr 2007, 91).

An open concept, in short, does not stipulate strict boundary conditions and can undergo changes without compromising its coherence. The history of the musical canon displays this continuous developmental change that can in many ways be considered logical: if the concept's current embodiment can be connected to its previous embodiment in a significant way, the identity of the open concept is preserved (Goehr 2007). Open concepts thus facilitate a changing and developing practice without risking the chaos of an unconstrained pluralism (Bergeron and Bohlman 1992). Although the open concept, by nature, enforces terms of inclusion and exclusion, it can be most appropriately defined as a guiding principle. The practical and musical benefits of an increasingly standardized musical landscape were far from absent in the late 19th and early 20th century: as a touchstone, the musical canon offered stability to composers and musicians and granted their products a sense of continuity and legitimacy (cf. chapter 2.2.3).

Contrary to intuition, a closed concept is not quite the opposite of the open concept. As Goehr describes, a concept is closed as soon as it is decided that the objects that it covers, are categorically required to possess certain features (Goehr 2007). These objects, in other words,

need to answer to the concept's exclusive boundary conditions as absolute requirements. Considering the above genesis and development of the musical canon, it seems fair to argue that the musical canon is traditionally understood as a closed concept. The idea of a canon seems to imply that there is a fixed set of rules that any musical work needs to obey in order to be perceived as legitimate. The religious understanding of the notion of a 'canon' as a body of texts immediately inspired by God, may suggest that a closed canon-concept is somewhat like a Platonic idea: eternal and *a priori*. In that case, however, it would be contradictory to even assume a history of a canon. The closed canon-concept is itself also a mobile and historical notion, but one of far greater severity. A closed concept, although regulating a developing practice, does not incentivize any change of its imminent embodiments; it forces any future embodiment to adhere to its fixed 'boundary conditions', or set of rules and assumptions. As argued in the previous paragraph, this set can be deduced from the collection of separate musical works, and becomes increasingly dominant because the rules are continuously affirmed. A practice dominated by this closed canon-concept has allowed for the canon to slowly stagnate: only the works that adhered to the canon's increasingly dominant boundary conditions, where perceived as legitimate. The distinction between open and closed concepts is only indirectly relevant at this point and will be further developed towards the end of this chapter as well as in the conclusion. Crucial at this point, is the understanding of the canon as a (closed) regulative concept, in the sense that its increasingly affirmed boundary conditions have allowed the canon to stagnate.

The stagnation of the musical canon is an easily verifiable empirical reality (cf. chapter 4). In his historical account of the musical canon, William Weber contended that various external and mainly social factors played into the stagnation or rigidification of the musical canon (Weber 1999). His summary of the genesis of the canon, based on extensive reviews of concert programs throughout the relevant period, is worth quoting:

- "1800-1870: The rise of an integrated, international canon that established a much stronger authority in aesthetic and critical terms, and that moved to the center of musical life c. 1870.
- 1870-1945: A stable, though not untroubled, relationship between canonic repertoires and contemporary music by which first concert programs, then opera repertoires, were dominated by the classics, but new works none the less maintained considerable prominence.
- 1945-1980: An extreme, indeed intolerant predominance of classical over contemporary music in both concert and opera repertories, paralleled by the rise of independent organizations led by composers for the performance of new works.
- 1980-…: A limited but still insignificant re-emergence of taste for new works, chiefly in avant-garde artistic circles separate from traditional concert-halls and opera stages" (Weber 1999, 341).

Scrutiny of the actual history of the musical canon indeed exposes a process of gradual stagnation. Joseph Kerman had also marvelled that "(the canon) seems to hang suspended like a historical clothesline between two fixed points in the past" (Kerman 1983, 115), and more recently, Richard Taruskin spoke of a a symphonic repertoire "frozen at the (19th) century's midpoint" (Taruskin 2009b, 680). Returning to the conceptual level, understanding the musical canon as a regulative concept offers a plausible explanation for the historical process of stagnation. The more works that were integrated into the canon, the more severely that canon radiated its authority on imminent works. It has been argued in chapter 2.2.3 that, throughout the 19th century, showing affection for what steadily became the musical canon increased composers' legitimacy and their chances of canonization. Johannes Brahms, for example, worked on his first symphony for 21 years, before he found himself worthy of following in the footsteps of his canonized idol Beethoven. One might say that the protective umbrella of the canon gradually assumed the role of an echo-chamber: only works that conformed to the rules implicitly embodied by already canonized works, were regarded as aesthetically viable. Peter Burkholder summarizes this process of stagnation as follows:

> "Once the concert hall became a museum, the only works appropriate to be performed there were museum pieces – either pieces that were already old and revered or pieces which served exactly the same function, as musical works of lasting value which proclaimed a distinctive musical personality, which rewarded study, and which became loved as they became familiar." (as quoted in: Taruskin 2009b, 682)

Weber made a similar observation, while immediately offering a plausible explanation for this transformation:

> "Ultimately, canonical works from different timeframes were homogenized by their common ideological identity as a canon. The Great Composers were thought to share a common spiritual stature not found in newer music; a kind of aesthetic and ideological narrative united them in musical as well as historical terms." (Weber 2001, 130)

The installation of a common language of idealistic musical values has been explored already (cf. chapter 2.3), but Weber's use of the word 'narrative' deserves renewed attention. With this particular phrasing, Weber suggests that the normative dimension or authority of the musical canon is accounted for by the canon's dependence on a narrative. The reconstructed genesis of the musical canon indeed suggests that the musical canon has grown less and less receptive to new fertilization, due to a narrative that contains aesthetic ("musical") as well as contextual or pragmatic ("historical") determinants. In the words of Weber:

However "difficult" the exact reconstruction of this array of factors may be, the idea of a 'narrative' opens new perspectives with regard to understanding the canon as a regulative concept. While the concept of the narrative seems resistant to any fixed definition, narrative approaches to aesthetic practices have been characterized as attempts to give meaning to events (and by extension, the objects that structure these events), by interpreting them in terms of a plot (Beard and Gloag 2005) or, as defined by Paul Ricoeur, as attempts to "draw a configuration out of a simple succession" (as quoted in: Beard and Gloag 2005, 85). Under this description, narrative approaches have taken central stage in New Musicology, most prominently in relation to gender perspectives (e.g. McClary 2002), hermeneutic perspectives (e.g. Kramer 1993) and musical semiotics (e.g. Nattiez 1990a; 1990b). While these perspectives themselves are only indirectly related to the present discussion, their common angle is all the more interesting. As it explicitly considers the relations between aesthetic forms and their appearance in specific and concrete contexts, the concept of the narrative introduces a suitable perspective to view the multiplicity of factors involved in the process of canonization. What Weber refers to as "an array of conventions, circumstances and tastes" is a set of contingent and often pragmatic factors involved in the process of canonization, that lends itself to creating a more substantive story or narrative about a collection of individual works; a story that accounts for the authority of the canon (cf. chapter 2.3).

Although the dominant narrative of the 19th century canon is quite elusive and too complex to be grasped in one smooth story, various distinguishable elements are firmly in place, as variations on a main theme. The narrative that supported the erection of pedestals is in essence a legacy from romantic idealism, in the sense that it added a reflective dimension to musical works. As described earlier, this ideology was based on the assumption that the works that became incorporated in the canon are aesthetically timeless, superior and represent the best works the art form has to offer precisely because they lack extra-musical reference (cf. chapter 2.2.1). Goehr points to a shift in attitude in the first half of the 19th century, in the sense that the belief was abandoned that music should serve an extra-musical or social end. A new idea was embraced that instrumental music is an autonomous art in service of nothing but itself (Goehr 2007). In the original words of Hoffmann:

"(Instrumental music) gives pure expression to music's specific nature, recognizable in this form alone. It is the most romantic of all the arts (…) for its sole subject is the Infinite." (Locke and Hoffmann 1917, 1)

Once works had been declared "timelessly enduring achievements" (Taruskin 2009b, 681), a teleological discourse was installed that framed separate musical works into a canon, based on the assumption that there is a continuity between these separate works. Even the bitter dispute between the defenders of program music and those of absolute music had a common undertone, namely that there is one logical and 'valid' development of music (both strains saw themselves as successors of Beethoven). Indeed, a teleological rhetoric was installed that thought in terms of predecessors and successors, allowing for these works to be understood in relation to each other. For example, the music critic James William Davison asserted in 1843 that Louis Spohr would be admitted "into the realms of classical immortality", on account of the fact that his works could "take their station among the master-pieces of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and Cherubini" (as quoted in: Weber 2008a, 177). Precisely this interpretive dimension has prompted several researchers (e.g. Kerman 1983; Weber 1989) to differentiate between a 'standard repertoire', which is an empirical reality in concert programs, and a 'canon', which is established through reflective ideology. It is indeed this ideological story or 'narrative' that makes a collection of individual works into a canon. The musical canon is a regulative concept, because the idea of a musical canon, as embodied in these narratives, subsequently gives shape to aesthetic practices and weighs on the pragmatic choices made in the field. While the canon can be told through many narratives, not every narrative weighs as firmly on the field. Crucial to the remainder of this dissertation is the argument that a narrative can only be authorized if it is supported by specific institutional conditions (cf. chapter 2.3).

A more precise definition of the concept of the narrative, or at least one that is suitable for this particular investigation, will emerge from the following paragraphs. With an accurate definition pending, this pivotal turn towards the narratives that underly the musical canon proposes two things that require further exploration. Firstly, as argued, the musical canon can perform its regulative role by grace of an underlying narrative. This narrative grants to individual works a preferential status that allows them to be perceived, in their totality, as a canon. In other words, it is a fictional narrative that accounts for the historical fact that the works associated with a canon (as well as their composers) are regarded as aesthetic authorities and therefore regulate aesthetic practices. Accordingly, if the canon's functioning as a regulative concept is derivative of narratives that are collectively formed by a practice, it is the canon's relation to its narratives that requires further theoretical exploration and empirical corroboration. Furthermore, it is precisely this relationship between the canon and its foundational narratives that is under discussion in the contemporary canon debate as outlined above. Secondly, the musical canon can be traced back to its foundational narratives, revealing something about the historically situated tensions between aesthetic factors (such as the urge for creative development) and pragmatic factors (such as audience retention) that constituted those narratives. Accordingly, if narratological dynamics can be established which have contributed to the historical stagnation of the canon, it is plausible that conditions can

be established under which it can be opened up again.[3] The following paragraphs deal with these subjects. Plausible explanations will be delivered as to the paradigmatic shift in the canon's narrative and its according normative dimension, after which a link will be suggested with the crisis of the orchestra.

3.2.3 The stagnation of the canon

The historical process of gradual stagnation of the musical canon has been well-described by researchers (Jutta Allmendinger and Hackman 1996; Osborne 1999; Glynn 2000; Kremp 2010; Hamel 2016), and will be empirically verified in chapter 4. Likewise, the theories behind this process, such as the one above, have reached a considerable amount of consensus among scholars (Kerman 1983; Bergeron and Bohlman 1992; Goehr 2002a; 2007; Kremp 2010). The discussion about the shifting role of the musical canon and its narratives is something else entirely. Scholars agree that the authority of the musical canon significantly altered during one of the most frequently and intensely discussed moments in music history: the first few decades of the 20th century. Rather than trying to entangle this challenging knot in music history, the underlying paragraphs suggest three parallel occurrences that have quite plausibly contributed to a shift in the regulative impact of the musical canon: an increasing historical consciousness, the collapse of tonality, and a charge against established institutions. These three occurrences will be interpreted as related events where aesthetic and pragmatic dimensions have been firmly intertwined.

3.2.3.1 Historical consciousness: New as Norm

Throughout the 19th century, historical awareness gradually became a mode of thinking. Hegel's dialectical model of history and the Darwinist idea of evolution shaped a Western culture increasingly aware of its own historical position (Dahlhaus 1983; Gur 2012; Shreffler 2013). In music theory, correspondingly, musical facts were interpreted from the angle of preconceived schemes of progress (Gur 2012): the progressive development of musical parameters became viewed as exponents of a necessary historical force. The most insightful

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[3] At this point, some terminological confusion may arise with regard to the 'closed canon-concept' and the 'stagnated (or closed) canon'. A closed canon-concept is a concept that is defined by one specific narrative that becomes increasingly dominant. Goehr stated that a closed concept stipulates strict boundary conditions. In other words, under the paradigm of the closed canon-concept, new works can still become incorporated into the canon as long as they adhere to the boundary conditions stipulated by the narrative and shared by the already collected works. This explains the canonization of moderate modernists such as Britten, Shostakovich and Pärt, as well as the exclusion of more progressive composers such as Stockhausen and Boulez. Contrary to what the argument about 'opening up the canon' may imply, the traditional canon, as an empirical reality, has not so much 'closed off' as it has 'stagnated'. Under the paradigm of the closed canon-concept, to be precise, it is the narrative that is closed, not the actual canon itself. For these reasons, and for terminological clarity, the term 'stagnated canon' will be preferred over the term 'closed canon' when speaking of the actual canon of musical works. As stated earlier, a brief reflection on the very concept of the canon (i.e. the canon as an open or closed *concept*) will only be made at the end of this chapter, as well as in the conclusion.

and well-described example of this historical awareness of musical culture at the beginning of the 20th century is found in the figure of Arnold Schoenberg. In his writings, purposive historical evolution of music proves vital to his musical thinking (Schoenberg 2008). For example, this idea permeates his portrayal of the so-called 'emancipation of dissonance' as an inevitable historical development (Hinton 2010). Schoenberg states that atonality was not so much an invention as it was a discovery (Gur 2012), waiting to be disclosed by the right person. In his 1930 essay *New Music: My Music*, he illustrated this idea of destiny with an anecdote. When, during Schoenberg's military service, a superior officer asked him if he was indeed "this notorious Schoenberg", he replied: "Beg to report, sir, yes. Nobody wanted to be, someone had to be, so I let it be me" (Schoenberg 2008, 104). In the same vein, the fact that Schoenberg preferred the term 'pantonality' over 'atonality' illustrates that he saw the transition from tonality to 'pantonality' as destiny, in the form of a desirable liberation from restriction (Taruskin 2009a).

Schoenberg even implemented this idea of an inner necessity of the musical material with retroactive effect: in his essay *Brahms the progressive*, Schoenberg argues that the musical prose of Johannes Brahms (commonly considered a conservative composer *par excellence*) aspires towards the economical use of musical material, avoiding undeveloped repetitions (Schoenberg 2008). Ascribing this purposive use of the musical material to Brahms, Schoenberg places him on the same level as progressive composers like Wagner, in a logical chain of musical events leading to Schoenberg's own 'discovery' of atonality (Gur 2012) and the eventual implementation of the twelve-tone technique by composers of the Second Viennese School (Shreffler 2013). Richard Taruskin (2009a) has argued that Schoenberg's *a posteriori* interpretation of late 19th century musical developments was an attempt to legitimize his own compositional practice, which adds credibility to the suggestion that the category of necessary progress became a source of motivation and legitimation in the musical culture of the early 20th century.

The idea of necessary development of the musical material indeed appeared as a symptom of a broader cultural trend. As Gur (2012) points out, Schoenberg's concept of progress had a major influence on musical thinking in the 20th century, particularly on Theodor Adorno's philosophy of music. Schoenberg's idea of necessary development strongly contributed to Adorno's generalization of 'the new' as the driving principle of modern art. The new became the cultural norm and progress became the principle of history (Lindner 2014). The Frankfurt School with Adorno, Marcuse and Scheler in particular, came to understand modernity as a process of acceleration in reaction to the consciousness of history, and modernism as an artistic expression of this consciousness (Lijster and Celikates 2018, 40). This broader cultural trend of regarding progress as the goal of modernity and of modernist art, found its most literal expression in Adorno's 1949 essay *Philosophy of New Music* (Williams 1993). In his influential book, Adorno orchestrates a dispute between followers of Schoenberg's developmental musical thinking on the one hand, and Stravinsky's restorative musical thinking

on the other hand (Adorno 2006). Adorno's dislike of the latter position stems from the assumed reliance on an idealized past and on the primacy of collective identity over individuality; themes which Adorno saw musically and thematically represented in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (Cross 2008). Stravinsky's non-developmental musical approach can only be called regressive, Adorno argues. Schoenberg's oeuvre, on the other hand, remained true to what Adorno called the historical tendency of the material, to which each work of art must conform if it aspires to carry any meaning at all. In the tendencies of the musical material itself, Adorno argues, resides the possibility of the new (Adorno 2006). In *Aesthetic Theory,* Adorno contends that art is modern in the sense that "the authority of the new is historically inevitable for it" (quoted in: Malik 2018, 253). Therefore, only art that is conscious of this necessity of progress could categorize as authentically modern art. With the idea of necessary progress and musical development installed as the ultimate principle of modernist art, adjectives such as 'Romantic', 'tonal' and 'Wagnerian' became used in a pejorative way, to denote works of art that failed to be interesting from a modernist perspective (Williams 1993).

This newly obtained historical consciousness had a decisive effect on processes of musical canonization, which testifies to a shift in the regulating impact of the canon-concept. To some composers, the assumed progressive force of history provided incentives to intervene in the hitherto 'unconscious' development of the musical repertoire (Redhead 2011). Critical distance towards the musical canon (which by then had clearly delineated itself quite clearly on concert programs, as Weber (2001) contends) resulted in an acceleration of musical innovation. However, a more conservative strain of classical music enthusiasts, pragmatically inspired by its newly won elitist identity, had little interest in a radical adaptation of the musical realm it had clung to (Weber 2001). For some composers, accordingly, the conditions supporting the delineated performance canon formed their most credible legitimation. This mainstream part of musical culture inclined towards the well-established musical canon and approached every new work with suspicion. The mere fact that a musical work was written by a composer who did not belong to the established canonic pantheon, especially when the work was written in a style that could not be compared to the idiom of the canonized few, was enough for it to be cast aside and considered irrelevant or uninteresting (Weber 2002).

Thus, while Schoenberg, who openly proclaimed tonality outdated, explicitly sought to develop the musical material and musical canon itself in a continuous (though accelerated) way, an already canonized practice proved reluctant to embrace these enrichments (Morgan 1992). The increasing distance between a standardized repertoire and according practice on the one hand, and the theoretically assumed logical progression of musical material on the other hand, frustrated a subsequent wave of avant-gardist (with John Cage as their spokesman) to the extent that they deliberately tried and removed their music from the historical process altogether (Shreffler 2013; cf. infra). Ironically, this remarkable reaction granted them a somewhat canonical status, at least in the academic's or musicologist's

handbook. In practice, however, their idiosyncrasy banned them from mainstream concert programs (Morgan 1992). Those 20th-century composers who advocated the restricted style that the solidified musical canon dictated, seem to have withstood the test of time more successfully on actual concert programs to this day. Schoenberg remains in the shadow of Richard Strauss and Jean Sibelius, while Cage needs to humble himself to Dmitri Shostakovich and Arvo Pärt. Their respective stylistic differences mandate the inquiry of the most obvious explanation for the stagnation of the musical canon: the collapse of tonality.

3.2.3.2 The Tonality Enigma

The stagnation of the musical canon roughly runs in parallel with the steady expansion and eventual collapse of tonality. Therefore, it is alluring to argue that the canon's receptiveness to new influences ended when tonality was abandoned. If music is indeed a language, traditional tonality would have been its common grammar that had made musical practice between roughly 1720 and 1910 understandable and accessible. With the collapse of tonality, music history undeniably entered a new phase in which aesthetic consensus became harder to achieve. With the old grammar gone, a limitless array of compositional possibilities forced composers to look for new schemata to make their music coherent and accessible. Early examples can easily be found in the mystic chord organization in the music of Scriabin, in Webernian serialism or Debussy's incorporation of pentatonic scales. Neither of these alternative systems have acquired the unambiguously dominant position that tonality had acquired. The consequences of this post-tonality enigma have only become fully apparent since World War II. The radical composer John Cage went as far as to reject the assumed necessity of a normative musical system and completely "dissociated sound and syntax", as Robert Morgan eloquently puts it (Morgan 1992, 51). With his dictum "everything we do is music" (Cage 1994), Cage proclaimed musical forms indistinguishable from mere sounds or even noise, thereby rendering even the demarcation of 'music' problematic.

The lack of an unambiguous grammar contributed to the further alienation between the modernist's uncharted territory and the traditional, predominantly tonal canon. Avoiding evaluative terms, it is safe to say that post-tonal music has faced tremendous difficulties to connect with the larger audience whose patterns of taste firmly relied on canonical (and tonal) works. Remarkably, composers who remained relatively indifferent to a progressivist agenda have more successfully entered, at least, the performance canon. What binds such composers as Shostakovich, Britten, Sibelius, and later Pärt, Glass and Adams together is the fact that they remained relatively true to the principles of tonality (Williams 1993); a boundary condition stipulated by the narrative that led to the stagnation of the canon. Their designation as anachronisms has led to their characterization in terms such as 'regressive', 'calendar-contemporary' and 'conservative' (Zolberg 1980). This dismissive attitude can only be understood against the background of the parallel current of modernist progressivism, whose claim on an ontological necessity remained in place. It is tempting to see neotonalists' less

troubled connection with mainstream classical music as the ultimate proof that tonal music is intrinsically 'better' or more appealing than any alternative. From that viewpoint, it could easily be argued that the condition indispensable to the musical canon's existence and to music's comprehensibility, was indeed tonality itself.

Although it seems highly plausible that the collapse of tonality and the according loss of an aesthetic consensus was the main reason for the stagnation of the canon, objections can be made that prompt to dismiss this view as overly simplistic. The musical canon may create the false impression of being a smooth narrative that continuously evolved and expanded in a straightforward fashion. However, several episodes of ambiguity within canon formation disprove this account as far too linear (Kolbas 2001). The New German School embodied by Wagner and Liszt, for example, divided the second half of the 19th century into two fundamentally opposed aesthetic positions (Bonds 2014). Still, the musical canon (as described in chapter 2.2.3) has been as benevolent to Wagner and Liszt as it has been to Schumann and Brahms. Apparently, the musical canon is not existentially incapable of overcoming drastic aesthetic caesuras. This observation challenges the presence of unambiguous aesthetic criteria (such as 'tonal' and 'atonal') that would necessarily lead to this or that composer's inclusion into the musical canon. Looking ahead to the conclusion of this section, it can be argued that the narratives that underly canonization processes consist of more than aesthetic criteria alone.

Therefore, it seems imprudent to conclude that the musical canon stagnated merely because the syntax of tonality was abandoned. It might even be plausible to see things the other way around. The shift from tonality to atonality was a breaking point that could have been overcome by the traditional audience (like any other of the many caesuras throughout music history) if it would not have been for the authority of the canon which was already in place. Perhaps the collapse of tonality itself can be fully understood only when a strongly stagnated canon is already presumed. From that point of view, it was the canon in its stagnated form, not tonality, which presented itself as a common syntax, due to a dominant narrative that interpreted canonical works as eternally valid and as a touchstone for musical pertinence. It could well have been this *a posteriori* reflection on the musical canon that further regulated the musical landscape of the 20th century. The stylistic conventions of the predominantly 19th-century canon penetrated nearly every branch of the musical realm: the musical works associated with the canon were considered to be intangible and unquestionable aesthetic authorities. Innovative musical products have since then largely become attempts to, paradoxically, overcome the dominance of this canon.

Modernist movements characterized by progressivism can thus be interpreted, at least partly, as a reaction to the dominance of the musical canon. Because of an emerging critical consciousness of aesthetic practices being regulated by the concept of a canon, and the associated unsettling idea of a deterministic artistic development, oppositional movements

began to take shape to challenge the concept's authority (Goehr 2002a). Paradoxically, these interventions only affirm and reinforce the principle of regulativity. As Goehr remarks: "Those who wish to challenge a concept's regulative force (in this case, the canon's; AH), find themselves paradoxically situated in a practice that is regulated by the very concept they want to challenge" (Goehr 2007, 254). The nature of that regulative impact, however, appeared as something quite different from before. Once musical practice became aware of its regulative impact, the canon became a stable object for composers to reflect upon and to engage with. The collapse of tonality may thus be understood as an antagonistic force, interlocking with historical consciousness and the according acceleration of innovation.

3.2.3.3 Institutional conservatism

By lack of any purely aesthetic determinants for the stagnation of the canon, an assessment is imperative of non-aesthetic factors that contributed to the canon's stagnation. Growing historical consciousness had not only explicitized the presence and authority of the musical canon, it had also allowed to reflect upon the narrative that granted this musical canon its coherence. In a similar fashion, challenges of the musical canon were more directed to the restrictive authority of its narratives than to its content. As argued before, canonization processes were not only receptive to aesthetic dynamics, but were equally influenced by social factors that appeared in tandem with the growing importance of institutions. Early 20th century challenges to the musical canon were not primarily directed towards composers and their musical works but towards the collectively constructed narrative that framed the musical works and bound them together, as well as the institutions that maintained and supported this narrative. A similar observation has been made with regard to the canon-debate, as outlined in chapter 3.1: arguments of canon detractors or defenders cannot be traced to the canonical works themselves or their aesthetic properties *an Sich*, but to the collectively developed narratives that shape the canon.

The skeptical attitude of oppositional movements often manifested itself as assaults on the institutions that defended and disseminated the cultural elitism that became associated with the musical canon. Because of their considerable reliance on the musical canon, symphony orchestras were the prime victims of these symbolic assaults. Arnold Schoenberg's *Society for the Private Performance of Music*, founded in 1918, illustrates his attempt to circumvent the institutional complexities and connotations surrounding musical performance. "Why can't music go out in the same way it comes into a man, without having to crawl over a fence of sounds, thoraxes, catguts, wire, wood and brass?", Schoenberg once exclaimed (as quoted in: Goehr 2007, 229). This practical concern radiated on his compositional practice, leading him to deliberately compose works that were nearly unplayable (Goehr 2007). In early 20th-century Paris, likewise, independent platforms such as the *Société Musicale Indépendante* and

artist groups such as *Les Apaches* deliberately took a stand against the traditional Conservatoire de Paris (Brooks 1993).

From the early 20th century onwards, various types of ensembles and chamber orchestras provided small-scale, cheap and flexible alternatives to their larger siblings (Lawson 2005). Assuming the role of a rebellion against the traditional symphony orchestra, the chamber orchestra, comprising only a few string players on each part and only selected woodwinds and brass players, focused in particular on those musical works that did not belong to the symphonic canon. Pre- and early classicist music and commissioned works by modernist composers such as Stravinsky, Milhaud, Honegger and Schoenberg formed the largest part of their repertoire (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001), exposing a generous and deliberate outreach to repertoires 'untainted' by the symphony orchestra's inclination towards rigidification of the canon and according exclusivity of its performance context. The advance of chamber orchestras and, in the second half of the 20th century, periodic ensembles, formed a statement against a social practice associated with the musical canon, rather than against the works associated with that canon. For example, Pierre Boulez' famous 1967 battle cries to "blow up the opera houses" (*Der Spiegel* 1967) and to destroy all art of the past were meant as a charge against institutions and stagnated performance practices, rather than a literal invitation, as will be discussed below.

As a result of its antagonistic stance towards the institutionalized and alleged exclusive cultural field, this separate world of music gradually lost its connection with public life in the first decades of the 20th century (Weber 2002). Many of the ensembles had carved a niche for themselves, in the form of a particular repertoire and according audiences, thereby reinforcing an increasingly dual cultural framework of isolation versus institutionalization. Their polemical position motivated defenders of the anti-institutionalized movement to build a separate concert world of which the more traditional audience soon became skeptical. In this separate concert world, modernist experiments with atonality and serialism found acclaim. In that sense, the avant-garde bought its aesthetic autonomy at the price of social alienation.

The emergence of commercial recordings in the early 20th century has also played a significant role in the segmentation of the concert world (Levine 1988). The industry's focus on classics and must-hears for a large audience has reinforced the marginalization of contemporary classical music. This topic traverses the well-known discussion between Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, who have defended opposite positions (Adorno 2002; Benjamin 2010). While Adorno denounced the increasing fetish-character of reproducible art and the rendition of musical works to mere objects of consumption, Benjamin considered the reproducibility of art works as a chance to increase their accessibility and, therefore, a chance for art to serve political or even revolutionary purposes. Either way, the reproducibility of art has problematized the autonomy of music as an art form, and movements antagonistic towards

established institutions and the industries in their wake have strongly contributed to the separation of the canonical and the contemporary. Interestingly, the stagnation of the canon can be seen as a result as well as a cause of this process of alienation.

3.2.3.4 The canon recognized as a regulative concept

The stagnation of the musical canon is best interpreted as a phenomenon in which aesthetic and pragmatic factors have interlocked. It was at least a three-way process that allowed the musical canon to stagnate. The complexity of this juncture of arts and practice has been discussed in an iconic 1985 conversation between Pierre Boulez and Michel Foucault. Its quotation at length is useful at this point because it synthesizes the three interlocking events described above and connects them to the already introduced idea of the narratives of the musical canon.

In hindsight, Boulez stressed the contextual character of his invitation to blow up the opera houses. After recognizing the existence and alienation of various art worlds, he denounced any form of cultural enclosure:

> "There exists a tendency to form a larger or smaller society corresponding to each category of music, to establish a dangerously closed circuit among this society, its music, and its performers." (Foucault, Boulez, and Rahn 1985, 7)

This trend towards closed circuits, Boulez continues, originates in the decline of the reassuring continuity of the musical canon:

> "In classical and romantic music, which constitutes the principal resource of the familiar repertory, there are schemas which one obeys, which one can follow independently of the work itself, or rather which the work must necessarily exhibit. (…) The vocabulary itself is based on 'classified' chords, well-named: you don't have to analyze them to know what they are and what function they have. They have the efficacy and security of signals; they recur from one piece to another, always assuming the same appearance and the same functions. Progressively, these reassuring elements have disappeared from 'serious' music. Evolution has gone in the direction of an ever more radical renewal, as much in the form of works as in their language. Musical works have tended to become unique events, which do have antecedents, but are not reducible to any guiding schema admitted, a priori, by all; this creates, certainly, a handicap for immediate comprehension." (Foucault, Boulez, and Rahn 1985, 10)

According to Boulez, the loss of a guiding framework of reference, or the decline of canonical continuity in favor of radical renewal, is an obstacle for the comprehension and adequate dissemination of musical innovation. Foucault agrees in similar phrasing:

> "The cultural insularity of music today is not simply the consequence of deficient pedagogy or propagation. It would be too facile to groan over the conservatories or complain about the record companies. Things are more serious. Contemporary music owes this unique situation to its very composition. In this sense, it is willed." (Foucault, Boulez, and Rahn 1985, 11)

Although Boulez and Foucault both stress that contemporary music's unpopularity among traditional audiences is partly an issue of unfamiliarity with novel musical forms, they equally acknowledge that contemporary music, at that time, tended to take an explicitly anti-canonical stance, challenging a well-coordinated musical practice as well as the non-musical connotations that together, as a narrative, granted the canon its coherence. Musical modernism's isolation is a logical result of this conceptual challenge. In that sense, it seems that musical modernism (as an aesthetic development) did not create the stalemate between canonical and non-canonical music, but that musical modernism owes its existence, at least partially, to the consciousness of the regulative impact of the canon-concept and the narrative that had been constructed for it. From that point of view, it seems legitimate to reiterate the previously made suggestion that the canon has not only stagnated because of the increasing isolation between separate aesthetic circuits, but that the stagnated canon has equally served as a necessary condition for these separate circuits to have taken shape. In that context, one may even say that the various strains of musical avant-garde have little more in common than their antagonistic relationship to the canon.

These central observations not only add credibility to the understanding of the canon as a regulative concept, they equally testify to the importance of the canon's narratives. Before historical consciousness became a dominant mode of thinking, the canon was part of a pre-historical awareness, as Dahlhaus contends (Dahlhaus 1983): the musical canon had already been present and had already performed a certain function before historians (and with them, composers) began to consciously reflect upon its functioning as a normative framework. Throughout the 19th century, the narrative of the canon was constantly affirmed as an increasing number of musical works was incorporated into the canon. As stated before, composers, programmers and critics collectively aligned themselves with the narrative of the canon because it provided their works with a sense of coherence and thus contributed to their legitimacy. Thus, as the canon materialized, it confirmed the narrative's credibility by serving as a self-legitimizing benchmark for imminent works, resulting in an increasingly stagnated canon.

Secondly, and connected, it appears that the canon could only retain its self-evidence as an aesthetic ideal as long as a certain unawareness of its foundational narratives could be cultivated. Accordingly, when the canon's authority became challenged, a new aesthetic consciousness dawned and with it a new aesthetic paradigm in which the canon performed a different function: it became a petrified object to reflect upon. The moment the canon became recognized as a restricting principle, antithetical reactions emerged. As argued above, this metareflection on normative ideas such as a canon is a key aspect of modernism (see also: Eagleton 2000; Redhead 2011). Increasing historical consciousness demystified the canon's narrative, in the sense that composers came to challenge the norms that were stipulated through it (such as tonality, but also the elitist institutions that had been the canon's gatekeepers), because the norms did not correspond with their creative practices anymore. Thus, just like in the contemporary canon-debate as outlined above, antithetical reactions did not challenge the actual canon itself, but rather the authority of the narrative that contributed to the stagnation of the canon. Schoenberg was among the first composers to acknowledge the contingent character of the canon's foundational narratives, at which point he deliberately intervened in its guiding process. Although he saw himself as an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary, his conscious reflection upon the narrative initiated a radical shift. At that point, the avant-gardist's iconoclasm appeared which was directed towards the 19th century narrative that considered canonical works to be aesthetically superior achievements, and at that point Adorno's idea of necessary progress gathered momentum.

However, dismantling the canon's self-evidence is not quite the same as denying its existence or neutering its normative impact. Paradoxically, the musical canon, although 'unmasked', retained its normative impact as a regulative concept, because its antithetical reactions partially owe their existence to the canon. This paradox ,observed by Goehr (2007), answers the previously asked question as to the existence of musical works that are intrinsically non-canonical by lack of aesthetic consensus. In purely logical terms, there can be no such thing as an intrinsically non-canonical work. Works are either in line with the canon's boundary conditions endorsed by a narrative, or they are defined by them because they deliberately challenge them. Likewise, the hypothetical idea of a counter-canon also presupposes the regulative functioning of the concept of a canon. This implies that every musical work has the potential to become incorporated into the narrative (and therefore into a canon), regardless of its aesthetic properties, even if the outlines of that narrative are not yet discernible.

3.3 The relation between the canon and its narratives

No matter how modernism is interpreted, a changing spectrum of music is undeniable in the first decades of the 20th century. Works that have played a crucial role in the aesthetic landscape of the early 20th century include Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune,* Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring,* Strauss' *Elektra* and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire.* These works are commonly denoted as 'post-romantic', and some of them as 'post-tonal'. What really binds them together aesthetically, apart from this rather uninstructive 'post' point of view, is unclear (Cross 2008). Not all of them share an antipathy towards the naïve idealizations found in romanticism, and not all of them have abandoned the tonal system. Not all of them incline towards a serial approach to pitch organization, and not all of them look for the expressive potential of extended techniques. In other words, it proves to be exceptionally hard to construe a coherent conceptual map of musical modernism. In that context, Robert Morgan has remarked that since the tonality enigma, "one is unable to find the universal acceptance of an enduring set of formal conventions evident throughout a given linguistic domain" (as quoted in: Williams 1993, 34).

Finding legitimate terms for categorization is the main difficulty for the music historiographer, as any perceived sense of continuity that may lead to categorization and coherent narration of history can be challenged by counterexamples (Dahlhaus 1983). Indeed, nearly every musical work of that period presents a new set of challenges to either all-encompassing categorization that is more precise than the strictly temporal category of 'contemporary art music'. Therefore, narrating music history as an unbroken chain of musical events is always a form of *hineininterpretierung*. In that sense, explaining how the musical canon can be understood as an authority requires a disciplinary turn that considers historiography as ideologically informed (Ramnarine 2014). The sociological account of the musical canon as delivered by Weber (1999; 2001; 2002; 2008a) had already anticipated this move (cf. chapter 2.2).

3.3.1 Canonization as narratological puzzle-solving

In the same sense that music historiography requires narratological puzzle-solving, canonization seems to require a certain distance in time for patterns of interpretation to become narratives.[4] In light of the historical analysis delivered in chapter 2, it can be safely assumed that there has always been a certain range within which selections are made for incorporation into the canonical puzzle, and that even the selection criteria themselves, whether aesthetic or pragmatic, are subject to change over time (see also: Locher 2012). Even within the established canon, some composers have disappeared or have lost considerable

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[4] This 'inertia' of the canon will be addressed in chapter 5.

prominence over the years (composers such as Carl Maria von Weber, Giacomo Meyerbeer or Franz Lehár), while some have considerably gained attention (Anton Bruckner, Gustav Mahler and Alexander Scriabin come to mind). In the 20th century, institutions have played a crucial mediating role in this constant flux. Mahler, for instance, would not have enjoyed his current canonical status without his apologetics by Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouworkest (Koopman and Berkhout 2015). Until the 1960's, *The Barber of Seville* and *Guillaume Tell* were the only regularly performed Rossini operas. The entrepreneurial skills of Philip Gosset, editor of the first scholarly edition of all Rossini's works, have since then led to a worldwide revival and canonization of many other Rossini operas (Everist 2001). Even the canon in its rigidified form is under construction to some degree, in the sense that a work's or a composer's centrality within the canon can be renegotiated. Philosopher of religion Merold Westphal describes the general principle of canonicity as a matter of degree, rather than a binary matter:

> "At any given time, the canon is represented by a series of concentric circles. At the center are texts with the highest degree of canonicity, while at the periphery are those whose classical status is most tenuous. This means that historical changes in the canon are not simply a matter of inclusion and exclusion, but also matters of location between the center and the periphery." (as quoted in: Ginsburgh and Weyers 2010, 41)

It is important to note that the criteria for this renegotiation, whether they are aesthetic or pragmatic, are historical facts themselves. The identification of the musical canon as a regulative concept revealed that the canon is as much a product of music historiography as it is its premise. Dahlhaus contends:

> "We must see that the works in our imaginary museum were selected not as a result of an accumulation of coincidences or arbitrary decrees, but on the basis of judgments and decisions that once formed a coherent pattern – a pattern that contemporaries might not have been conscious of but which nevertheless influenced their behavior." (Dahlhaus 1983, 102)

From that point of view, a work's location between the center and periphery of the canon is determined by a historically situated narrative that fuses together all separate objects and synthesizes them into a new shape that makes logical sense. The various instantiations of the same musical canon, conceived from a pedagogical, academic, or profitable viewpoint, not only exemplify the canon's connection to a narrative, it equally suggests that the narrative can be reconstructed over time, like a story that can be told from various perspectives. It can therefore be argued that the canon's fluctuation along narratives accounts for the canon to be understood as an authority, on which both its defenders and its detractors lean. As such, the canon can be understood as a regulative concept because it discloses patterns of

interpretation while simultaneously creating space for new patterns to emerge. When canonization is understood as conceiving of a collection that is always temporal and under construction or negotiation, it can be seen as a performative, narrative practice producing meanings which are neither objective nor entirely subjective.

3.3.2 The normative impact of the musical canon

As the previous paragraphs suggested, the normative impact of the musical canon can be causally linked to the narrative that is constructed for it. However, it also appeared that this narrative is, to a certain extent, historically contingent and extrinsic to the musical works it connects. It is a fictional construction with a storytelling character, to make sense of a collection of separate works. Tim Rutherford-Johnson suggests that "canons (may be) a necessary evil to make sense of the world" (Rutherford-Johnson 2017). This quote beautifully introduces the central claim that can be made as a conclusion to this chapter: through its relationship with underlying narratives, the concept of the musical canon is a problem as well as a solution with regard to the sustainability and development of classical music and its performing bodies.

To arrive at this claim, a brief summary of the argument seems appropriate. At one point, Carl Dahlhaus launched the term "Aesthetic Platonism" to refer to the tendency, preeminently observable throughout the 19th century, to place musical works in an extratemporal realm, as though their meaning and value were eternal and *a priori* (Dahlhaus 1983). As a result of this tendency (that was described at length in chapter 2.2), these separate works, now declared as absolved from temporality, perform an entirely new function as a collection. In connection to her investigation of the regulative work-concept, Lydia Goehr summarized this process of collectivization of separate works as follows: "We reify it, canonize it, and place its products in a museum, as a way, paradoxically, to prove it alive" (Goehr 2002a, 315). This narrative of the 19th century indeed created an imaginary museum, a canon, that became filled with works which were produced under that aesthetic paradigm. The contemporary canon debate is entirely about what Dahlhaus refers to as 'meaning' and Goehr refers to as 'liveliness' of these products: the debate calls into question the conditions under which the canon can be acknowledged as a representative, legitimate authority.

It was argued in this chapter that a musical canon historically emerged from specific musical practices that involve programming decisions and composers' choices. More specifically, patterns of these actions and choices have created the conditions for a narrative to emerge, which frames individual works into a canon. It is precisely this narrative, which considered canonical works to be aesthetically superior and eternally valid, that allows a collection of separate works to perform a normative function as a canon. This argument runs parallel with Goehr's elaboration of the work-concept. In *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, she

states that music gradually became separated from its performance. Once music assumes another form when consciously dubbed a 'work', this new package makes it eligible for inclusion in the collection of the imaginary museum, where it performs a new function as a work (Goehr 2007). The above analysis authorizes a next step: the collection of works in the imaginary museum is held together by a narrative, which allows the collection to behave as a canon. As an increasingly authoritative concept, the musical canon subsequently regulated musical practices. More specifically, it has been illustrated throughout this chapter how the normative impact of the musical canon has guided musical practice throughout, roughly, the 19th century: the concept has influenced composers and critics, and it has given rise to specific organizational forms and patterns of behavior (cf. chapter 2.2.3). From these arguments, it can be concluded that if the normative impact of the musical canon is derivative of a collectively construed narrative.

However, due to its indebtedness to an increasingly dominant and self-affirming narrative that established an eternally valid logic in the succession of separate works, the canon has stagnated. By grace of this dominant narrative, the canon-concept began to regulate not as a principle that guided a developing practice, but as a principle that imposed a constraining development. As a result, the musical canon, as it is traditionally understood, came to be supported by a rigidified museum narrative that seems to have outlived its pertinence. Because it was felt that the traditional canon no longer represented its present-day practices adequately, it was thus deprived of its most important legitimation, namely its representativeness. From that point of view, the canon, while primarily a framework of stability, security and legitimacy, also created the most important condition for its own discreditation.

Interestingly, though, a way out of this conundrum lies precisely within this paradox. The critical analysis of the concept of a canon allows for a deeper understanding of the relation between the canon and its narratives. Following the above arguments, a more adequate definition of the narrative can be put forward: a narrative is a collective and historically matured thought-construction that establishes a coherent logic in a collection of separate objects. Precisely because this construction is imaginary and based on shared beliefs and aesthetic consensus, it exhibits narrative features and can be seen as a kind of unwritten 'story' around a collection.[5] As viewed from this understanding of a narrative, the canon is a regulative concept not only in the sense that it stipulates norms, but also in the sense that it embodies historical patterns of interpretation in the form of a coherent story.

Modernists' anti-canon movements have testified to the importance of narratives as historical patterns of interpretations (cf. chapter 3.2.3). As argued, the empirical facts that explicitly anti-canonical works have created an isolated concert world and that these works do not seem

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[5] In that vein, William Weber (Weber 1994) has proposed a parallel between the emergence of the musical canon and the rise of the novel.

to connect with the wider public (which will be confirmed in chapter 4), is plausibly related to the fact that these composers have withdrawn from a narrative that serves as a referential horizon for works. Boulez contended that breaking artificially with the narratives that constitute a canon, seems to be an obstacle for intelligibility:

> "Musical works have tended to become unique events, which do have antecedents, but are not reducible to any guiding schema admitted, a priori, by all; this creates, certainly, a handicap for immediate comprehension" (Foucault, Boulez, and Rahn 1985, 10)

In other words, it seems that music requires overarching narratives in order to become understood; narratives that reach beyond the characteristics of separate works and interpret works in relation to each other. Musical works as "unique events" do not speak as easily to the listener as musical works that have become part of a narrative that understands the musical work in relation to other works. In that sense, the interpretation of musical works shifts along the narratives that are created for them. This final proposition points to a condition that is unique to the art form of music. Because music lacks material embodiments and only comes to existence in its performance, fictions have to be generated to make music understandable and to coordinate musical practices. In *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works,* Goehr argued that although the musical 'work' is a fiction, musical practices are to a large degree regulated by that fiction (Goehr 2007). In the same sense, the musical canon is a fiction (that is what makes a canon an 'imaginary' museum); a fiction that regulates our understanding of musical works, through the narratives historically created for it.

The effectiveness of the regulative canon-concept and its relationship with narratives that are collectively created for the canon, raise the question as to how the imaginary museum can be critically engaged with. It was argued in this chapter that aesthetic practices are aesthetically and pragmatically regulated by a discourse that is historically and collectively construed. Therefore, rather than asking the sociologist's question of how the museum can be demystified, accepting the avant-garde composer's invitation to burn it down or comply with the defenders' fetishism, renewed attention can be drawn to the canon as an interpretive model. In resistance to the idea of art history as an *ancilla sociologiae* (Gombrich 1994), the canon can be viewed, just like a museum, as a meaningful constellation of elements whose respective validity is at least partially relative to the narrative that is created for it. This way of approaching the canon acknowledges that its value resides in its capacity to continuously generate meanings for the products that fall under it (and, by extension, those that do not). The history of the canon revealed that the narratives that generate these meanings are rooted in an actual practice, and that they are the result of shared beliefs and cumulative judgments which can be traced. It was therefore argued that no musical work is intrinsically non-canonical: conditions for canonization are always a contingent construction. One may therefore wonder under what conditions works can be incorporated into a narrative that

adequately discloses their meaning and significance. Therefore, critical examination of the musical canon for the benefit of the long-term survival of classical music as an art form, does not amount to securing the Eternal Masterpieces within the imaginary museum, or to destroying the museum altogether, but to regarding the conditions to enter its collection as historically traceable, contingent, and therefore as revisable.

Additionally, this critical examination invites to reflect on the canon on a conceptual level (cf. chapter 3.2.2). It invites to explore whether the concept of a canon can be understood as an open concept, namely a concept that is, as Goehr describes, "intensionally incomplete, because the possibility of an unforeseen situation arising which would lead us to modify our definition can never be eliminated" (Goehr 2007). The open canon-concept retains its regulative impact but, unlike the closed canon-concept, is supported by contingent, fluctuating narratives which are always historically situated, and regulates a practice that is conscious of this contingency. The authority of these narratives is relative in the sense that they rely on shifting aesthetic consensus. The contemporary canon debate has shown that it is the narratives of the canon which are being challenged, and more specifically the categorical authority that sticks to the idea of a canon only in accordance with an understanding of the canon as a closed concept. Understanding the canon as a regulative concept in light of its contingent narratives, therefore, allows to launch an alternative understanding of the concept of a canon, that reaches out beyond the classical division of aesthetic objectivism and aesthetic relativism (cf. chapter 3.1), both of which seem trapped within an understanding of the canon as a closed concept.[6] In short, it amounts to exploring the conditions under which the idea of the canon as an open concept may be installed. While this conceptual level of analysis is only indirectly relevant to the central argument (and will therefore only briefly be discussed in chapter 5 and in the epilogue), it provides an interesting background to this research. By means of the analytical distinction between open and closed concepts, Goehr's original insights with regard to the regulative work-concept can be used as a starting point for further reflection on the very concept of a canon: what might happen to a musical practice regulated by a concept that, although authoritative, might also show itself to be flexible and adaptable?

This counts as an immediate invitation for further research. The crisis of the symphony orchestra, defined earlier as a legitimacy crisis, is characterized by exactly the same discussion. Narratives can be viewed as a 'story' through which the canon is not only understood but also legitimized. The legitimacy challenges that the institution faces, can be viewed to stem from a miscalibration between the repertoire and the contextual environment in which it presents itself *hic et nunc*. Formulated in the terminology employed above: the narrative that allows

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[6] This midway position between aesthetic relativism and aesthetic objectivism is not new. In fact, the groundbreaking volume entitled *Rethinking Music* (Cook and Everist 2001) deals with this subject intensively. The additional advantage of the underlying study is the fact that it takes insights from case studies as its point of departure. Quite plausibly, this will provide a solid empirical basis to further strengthen the discourse.

for the canon to be acknowledged as a legitimate authority, no longer stretches out to the present. Understanding the narratives underlying the canon may help to determine under which conditions the regulative canon-concept may show itself empowering instead of restrictive. Additional research can be conducted against the background of the following theoretical proposition: narratives of the musical canon regulate the perception of what is legitimate and what is not, and thus determine what is, on the one hand, aesthetically meaningful and, on the other hand, what can be accepted by the audience as relevant in the context of the *hic et nunc.* Therefore, this theoretical chapter invites to investigate how the narratives of the musical canon permeate orchestral praxis today: how do orchestras' programming policies relate to the narratives of the musical canon?

Chapter 4 – Canon in Context: a Case Study Approach

This empirical chapter provides the opportunity to pick up on the initial problem of sustainability. At this point, a brief recapitulation seems appropriate. As discussed in chapters 1 and 3, existing studies have left a crucial part of the discourse around sustainable symphony orchestras and their repertoires insufficiently theorized. Adhering to either purely aesthetic or purely socio-pragmatic approaches, sustainability has been looked at from an angle that covers only a part of the problem. This particular research introduces an alternative focus, in the sense that it sets out to explore precisely the productive interplay between the aesthetic and the pragmatic in the context of sustainability. The point of entry for this approach is musical programming in symphony orchestras, which has been argued to be the nexus where pragmatic and aesthetic tensions converge. Based on that link, a research question has been launched: how does the musical repertoire of symphony orchestras relate to their prospect of sustainability?

In the opening chapter, a link has been suggested between organizational models of symphony orchestras and the repertoires they program. Therefore, this research question can only be addressed to a satisfying degree by incorporating empirical research. This chapter is devoted entirely to the empirical part of the research. First, a research setup will be distilled from the insights, questions and conceptual apparatus developed in chapters 1 and 3. In the main part of this fourth chapter, the conducted case studies will be summarized against the background of that research framework.

4.1 Research setup and methodology

In chapter 1, a double problem has been sketched out. Briefly summarizing, it has been argued that legitimacy pressures have pushed the symphony orchestra towards a dominant logic, which has essentially caused two problems to arise: one that stands in relation to the organizational structure of the symphony orchestra, and one that has reference to the artistic output of the symphony orchestra. More specifically, this dominant logic has urged the orchestra field to adhere to uniformity of organizational forms and product uniformity. Product uniformity, as argued, entails the prioritization of the established musical canon and a broadening gesture towards more popular and accessible musical formulas. It has also been argued that this move towards product uniformity has paralyzed or at least marginalized the orchestra's and the repertoire's expressive potential. The supremacy of the pragmatic over the aesthetic domain, as the orchestra's dominant answer to the legitimacy crisis, has been referred to as pragmatized aesthetics. In line with the theory outlined in chapter 3, the underlying empirical research considers both problems, aesthetic and pragmatic, as two sides of the same coin and is supported by the according argument that if the repertoire itself no longer receives innovative impulses, the legitimacy crisis of the symphony orchestra is bound to intensify. Therefore, musical programming of symphony orchestras will play a major role throughout this chapter. This first subchapter informs as to how the research has been constructed and performed.

4.1.1 Research setup

As this empirical study is a continuation of the developed theory, the basic empirical question is the same as the theoretical one explored in chapter 3, namely: how does the musical canon, as a concept, impact musical programming? The legitimacy crisis of the orchestra provides an interesting contemporary arena for this discussion. This issue can now be empirically clarified by means of a vocabulary and conceptual lens developed in chapter 3. The transcendental analysis of the musical canon has oriented the attention to the canon's authority as a concept rather than the specific works traditionally associated with it. The canon has been argued to be a framework that accounts for the collection's integrity. A historical and conceptual analysis has illustrated that the musical canon is a regulative concept: while it emerges from aesthetic practice, it subsequently performs a normative role by regulating that same practice. This historical inquiry testified to the argument that the aesthetic and the pragmatic domains are fundamentally intertwined.

Based on these insights, the musical canon has been argued to be comprehensible only with reference to a narrative: the canon is understood through a narrative that presents the works of the canon as a coherent collection. Because this narrative is historically shaped by a specific

practice, the narrative embeds the collection in its contextual surroundings. The step to the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra is a small one. Orchestras themselves implicitly and explicitly rely on narratives to mitigate the tensions between the aesthetic and the pragmatic. Their representatives strive to consolidate an aesthetically acceptable program and pragmatic conditions that, in their proper balance, legitimize the actions of the orchestra. Narratives of the musical canon guide this process, in the sense that they regulate the perception of what is legitimate and what is not, and thus determine what is, on the one hand, aesthetically pleasing and, on the other hand, what can be accepted by the audience as relevant in the context of the *hic et nunc.* Against the background of this theoretical proposition, this chapter is aimed at identifying how these legitimizing narratives are deployed and how the canon, through these narratives, performs a regulative function in actual orchestral practice.

The previous chapters have already provided some clues that can serve as a point of departure. The prevailing response to the orchestra's legitimacy crisis, defined as pragmatized aesthetics, can now be understood as indebted to a narrative. More specifically, this pragmatic-aesthetic compromise relies on a narrative that understands the musical canon as a petrified and fixed collection: it represents an imaginary account of the canon as an organic unity that was purposively developed to perfection by a necessary historical force. By virtue of this narrative, legitimacy is claimed based on the historical significance of a delineated musical canon and its aesthetic authority. It cultivates a belief in the eternal and indisputable beauty of the works commonly associated with that canon and links the fact that the canon attracts large audiences and generates according incomes, to this preferential status. In this narrative, the canon is viewed as something stable, eternal, and maybe most of all, as a relic that survives from the past. Although these narratives that affirm the stagnated canon are the basis on which legitimacy is acquired, they have not yet proved to be a sustainable formula. As hinted at before, it seems that the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra is indeed based on an existential dilemma: the narrative that affirms an understanding of the musical canon as a fixed collection, has a legitimizing and delegitimizing effect at the same time. Legitimizing, in the sense that cultivates the belief that the canon represents eternal beauty and generates audiences and incomes accordingly, and delegitimizing, in the sense that it favors a stagnated collection of works that are associated with the past. The broadening gesture that has become a part of the pragmatized aesthetics answer (in the form of popularizing formats and cross-genre projects), can be seen as a compensation for the elitism, pastness and lack of civil embeddedness associated with that interpretation of the canon.

On the other hand, understanding the canon as a concept that regulates practices by virtue of a narrative, also suggests that other narratives are conceivable. The transcendental analysis of the canon delivered in chapter 3 showed that narratives can be traced throughout specific historical contexts and that they are therefore contingent. Narratives are not entirely intrinsic to the musical works that they connect, as they are a collective and imaginary construction that, under the right conditions, can be reconfigured. It was therefore suggested in the

theoretical proposition that narratives regulate the perception of what is legitimate because they provide a general understanding of the works within the canon. Therefore, this empirical study is aimed at exploring the conditions through which narratives may be installed that understand the musical canon as open. Against the background of these newly constructed narratives, new works can be included in the musical canon. However, opening up the canon to new works is not a goal in itself. Most importantly, as the canon relies on interpretive narratives, the developing collection contributes to a shifting aesthetic consensus about the works within, and will allow the canon to act as a legitimate aesthetic authority relative to its shifting narratives. That way, the canon is no longer understood as a relic that survives from the past, but as the representation of a meaningful story that is being told today. Summarizing, this chapter has two objectives. Firstly, it offers empirical support of the proposition that narratives of the musical canon regulate orchestral practice, and secondly, it establishes the conditions under which these narratives are installed and endorsed. Two kinds of narratives of the musical canon will be distinguished: narratives that affirm the stagnated canon, and narratives that try to open up this stagnated canon to new or unfamiliar works. The results of this empirical investigation are expected to generate sufficient insights to, in an ultimate phase, address the research question.

Triggered by the probability of various concurrent narratives, not only traditional symphony orchestras have been included in this study, but also various smaller organizations who have designed their model in full knowledge of the legitimacy crisis. For each of these organizations, the underlying empirical study investigates how specific actions, tactics and strategies deployed by symphony orchestras translate to their programming policies, and how these actions are indebted to narratives that authorize their legitimacy within the field. In other words, the empirical research setup is very closely related to the theoretical research framework. The focus on the link between organizational models and artistic output (yet another variation on the pragmatic-aesthetic main theme) enables to launch two additional propositions, which will structure the empirical investigation, leading to their eventual evaluation. The first part of the case study looks into the orchestras' organizational models, probing the operational sustainability of alternative models that try to challenge the industry's dominant logic. The empirical proposition that guides this first part of the research is the following:

EMPIRICAL PROPOSITION 1: Orchestra models designed in full knowledge of the legitimacy crisis of orchestras, adhere to organizational structures which (significantly) differ from those of long-established orchestras.

The second part of the empirical research focusses on the organizations' programming policies and actual repertoire trends, as related to their model. It is aimed at answering the question as to whether an orchestra model that deliberately challenges the dominant logic, also

convincingly evades the authority of the musical canon. The following empirical proposition guides this second part of the research:

EMPIRICAL PROPOSITION 2: Adhering to a certain orchestra model gives according advantages and disadvantages to the orchestra in terms of programming autonomy.

Both of these empirical propositions relate to the organizational models of specific organizations. The empirical propositions implicitly suggest that organizational structures have an influence on whether or not the canon can be opened. It is suggested that certain organizational conditions create a high degree of autonomy in musical programming, and that this autonomy can be deployed to create narratives that understand the musical canon as open. As such, these empirical propositions will determine how the narratives of the musical canon, however implicitly, regulate orchestral practice and how pragmatic (organizational) and aesthetic (artistic) dimensions are intertwined in these narratives. In that sense, the empirical input that this part of the study aims to generate, is an intermediate step towards to a well-informed and non-speculative understanding of the theoretical proposition that stands in an immediate relation to the research question. The resulting research setup is visualized in Figure 2.
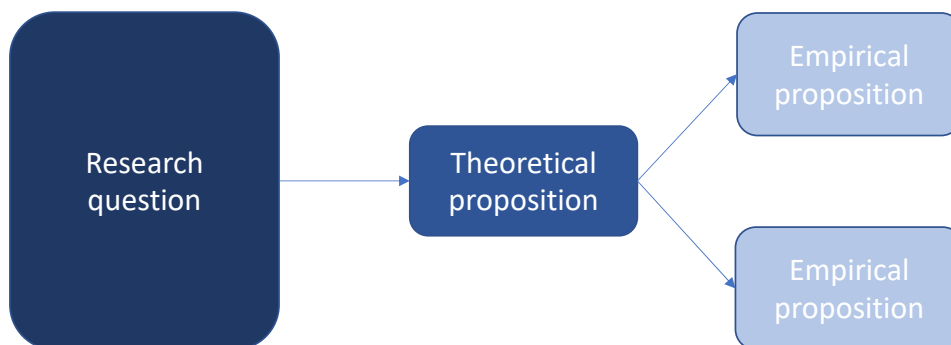
Figure 2: research setup

4.1.2 Methodology

The case studies that follow this chapter provide the opportunity to shed empirical light on otherwise rather abstract theoretical concepts or principles. To that end, the study strives for generalizable findings that go beyond the setting of the specific cases under scrutiny. The following paragraphs provide a very brief description of the deployed strategy. A detailed account of the methodology, comprising arguments for case selection, data collection and analysis procedures, as well as a reflection on methodological shortcomings, can be found in Appendix A. The goal of these case studies is to construct a holistic and pluralist interpretive

framework that allows for conflicting explanations, rather than a linear or singular understanding of the observed causalities. Therefore, this case study research does not test hypotheses, but rather evaluates propositions that result from the theoretical research. The case study approach thus allows to understand the variety of causes and motivations for programming choices, and to look for the influence of contexts, both historical and circumstantial. Contexts will be understood as nested environments that shape these causes and motivations, while they are at the same time formed by these very causes and motivations. This chapter contains a concise summary of each of the individual case studies, focusing only on the most crucial aspects of the study. The individual case reports of which this chapter provides a summary, can be consulted in Appendix B.

To take on a pluralist perspective, an embedded multi-case study (Yin 2014) has been opted for, for which six cases have been selected in three cities. The choice for organizations within these cities is partially pragmatic (in terms of access and proximity) but mainly depended on the extent to which the selected orchestra model could be considered as relevant to the research question. The selected cases all have a specific and well-considered stance towards the musical repertoire and adopt an according organizational model. These conditions guarantee a close fit with the theoretical framework and propositions, and the case selection stands in direct relation with the research question. This principle of purpose-bound sampling (Tellis 1997) authorizes the inclusion of one organization (Splendor) which is not a symphony orchestra, but a music venue that has developed an organizational model which precisely fits the research requirements.

The six cases have been selected from three culturally divergent cities: Antwerp, Amsterdam and London. Musical life in each of these regions is influenced by very different cultural histories and policies, providing an important lens through which each organization will be observed. However, the particular city background, history and recent developments in the cultural, demographic, social or economic fabric of the city, are only looked at to the extent to which they are relevant for the selected organizations within that city. It is a fact that Antwerp, Amsterdam and London continue to lead the way in the elaboration and implementation of so-called 'creative city' frameworks (see e.g.: Waitt and Gibson 2009; Gielen 2010; Schramme and Segers 2012). Although this might have provided a relevant additional lens, this discourse has not been integrated in this particular study. The ultimate aim is to investigate and compare orchestra models and their repertoires. Therefore, the three regions are nothing more than a methodological tool for an adequate and sound comparison and are themselves not a focal point of the study. It may, in the end, be suspected that some of the investigated models require the surroundings of a big city in order to remain operative as they are. These considerations mostly fall beyond the scope of this particular study.

Within each of the cities, the selected cases envelop the span of organizational options within the field of interest. In each city, one representative case has been chosen, and one alternative

case. The representative case is an orchestra that cannot be neglected in the regional (and international) field because of its historical importance to the cultural development of that area. The alternative case consists of an orchestra or organization with a distinctive and novel approach towards organizing, programming and performing, in challenge of the field's dominant logic.

It is important to note that this dual approach should not be confused with the polar case approach as formulated by Pettigrew (1990): both the representative and alternative organizations are typical organizations, not radical or unique examples. The embedded multi-case study, visualized in Figure 3, has a horizontal dimension and a vertical dimension. On the horizontal axis, three separate regions are incorporated, each with different policy demands and historical baggage. On the vertical axis, a distinction has been made between established symphony orchestras which are labelled as representative cases, and smaller alternative organizations that have recently emerged in the margins. Apart from being ingrained in their respective cities, each selected organization is nested in the same international field and depends on the same contextual mechanisms. Each of the selected organizations operates at the highest professional level of live music performance. The research considers all normative judgments over quality of performance or management as irrelevant.
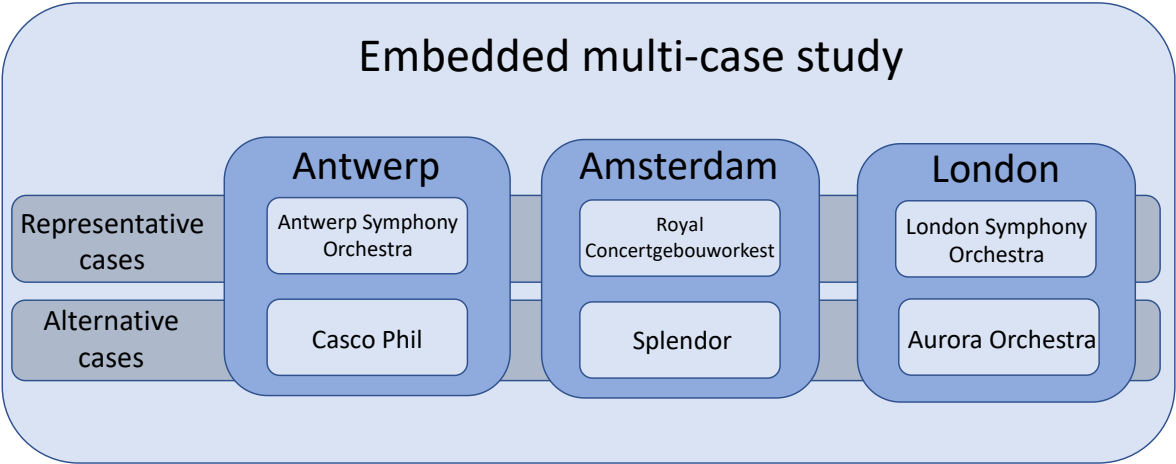
Figure 3: Embedded multi-case study

Each separate case study incorporates the organization as a whole. In the context of the case study, a symphony orchestra is defined as the players, management structure, marketing strategies, artistic profile, history, performance context, and all other possible aspects that contribute to the organization's distinct entity as a performing musical ensemble of twelve or more players. This definition shows that this research approaches the orchestra as a holistic entity and that its constituents are not considered as separable research entries.

4.2 A comparative case study

The individual case reports in Appendix B contain facts and observations from specific organizations, complemented with case-specific discussions that relate to the overarching research questions and propositions. In this chapter, these organizations will be compared on several fundamental levels which are immediately relevant to the present research. In this comparative summary, the intention is to transcend the concrete level and to formulate insights that, in all probability, can be generalized beyond the specific cases themselves. This will enable to directly address the previously launched propositions with regard to the link between orchestra models and their potential for repertoire development.

This cross-case analysis consists of three parts. The first part briefly introduces the six organizations and their respective artistic profiles. Their organization within the embedded multi-case study calls for a purposive comparison of the artistic profiles of the representative orchestras with those of the alternative orchestras. The second part of this chapter explores the overall potential of alternative practices that challenge the classical music industry's dominant logic. The analysis delivered in this second part includes the enablers, drivers and significant barriers associated with alternative ways of organizing in response to this dominant logic. In that part of the research, sustainability is understood as the potential to remain operative as an organization. The third part of this cross-case analysis examines how these ways of organizing relate to the organizations' repertoire policies and actual repertoire tendencies. Sustainability, in that part of the research, is understood as the capacity to continuously generate aesthetic output that can be perceived as legitimate. At that point, specific narratives of the canon will be identified, in order to establish to what extent these narratives, for each of the cases, implicitly regulate the perception of what is legitimate and what is not. Together, these complementary analyses, designed along the pragmatic-aesthetic divide, provide the empirical information that is required to reassess the propositions, which will be done in the next chapter.

4.2.1 Cases at a glance

Before taking a comparative stance, the six cases under review will be introduced below. For the representative cases, attention will go to the institutional and geographical environment in which they are embedded. For the cases labelled as alternative, focus will lie on their organizational and artistic distinctness from their larger siblings.

4.2.1.1 Representative cases

Antwerp Symphony Orchestra

The battle for territory can sometimes be a bitter one in a country as small as Belgium. However necessary, the maintenance of sustainable cooperation among art organizations, and the adequate distribution of resources is not easy in its politically turbid climate. Apart from the federal government, three separate governments see to the cultural needs of the three demographic regions Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital Region. To complicate things, some policy issues are administered at the city level, which often results in a back-and-forth play of who exactly takes responsibility over which matters. In contrast to nearby countries such as The Netherlands and Italy, Belgian symphony orchestras have managed to stay upright during various political crises. The conditions, however, have not been favorable: especially in Flanders, subsidized symphony orchestras have survived under the persistent threat of budget cuts and austerity measures for several decades. While the Belgian performing arts scene has brought to the fore innovative and influential individuals such as Gerard Mortier for opera and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker for contemporary dance, Belgian symphony orchestras have yet to shake their reputation of being out-of-date. However, as a result of an ongoing dialogue between the various players in the cultural sector itself and the maze of regional policies, cultural institutions have increasingly showed themselves willing to cooperate in both artistic and logistic matters.

Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (ASO) can be seen as an emblematic orchestra in Belgium. As one of the official Art Institutes of the Flemish Community, the ASO profiles itself as a regional orchestra with international ambitions (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016b). With a staff of 20 people and 77 musicians on the payroll, the orchestra finds its way to most Belgian stages as well as prestigious venues abroad. The ASO finds itself in an interesting geographical position in the economic and cultural center of Flanders. The historical city of Antwerp, at only 25 miles from Brussels, is a crossroads of cultures, gaining international esteem thanks to its historical significance and the prestige of the Port of Antwerp as the second-largest port in Europe. Housing over 170 nationalities, the city of Antwerp is the European city with the second-largest number of different nationalities, second to Amsterdam only. In that context, arts and culture are considered to be important vehicles for participation, social cohesion and urban regeneration (Schramme and Segers 2012).

After nearly 60 years of nomadic existence, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra recently found a new home in the brand-new and acoustically state-of-the-art Queen Elisabeth Hall in the heart of Antwerp. With its 1800 seats, a large number for a city with approximately 500.000 inhabitants, the ASO is able to attract the largest amount of audiences of all Flemish orchestras (Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016). In 2018, the ASO reached a total of 130.083 people, divided over its 498 concerts and other activities. In that year, 94 concerts were performed in Belgium, 46 of which in the orchestra's own Queen Elisabeth Hall. An additional 14 concerts

were performed abroad (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2019). At the time of research, the ASO was in search of a new chief conductor to complement the roles of primary guest conductor Philippe Herreweghe and honorary conductor Edo de Waart. Since the 2019-2020 season, Elim Chan is the first female chief conductor in Belgium and the youngest ever chief conductor of the ASO.

In 2004, the official mission statement spelled out that Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (then called 'deFilharmonie') is

> "an ensemble that:
> -plays and programs at a high international level
> -brings stylistically informed repertoire in an attractive and relevant way
> -preserves masterpieces, scans for new developments, gives composition assignments and supports Flemish music." (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2004, 1)

In 2016, the recently renamed Antwerp Symphony Orchestra profiled itself as

> "an enterprising institution that:
> -produces concerts and socially relevant classical music projects; and sells nationally and internationally
> -maintains sustainable and constructive relations with partners, governments, the business world and the broad social environment
> -is a recognized Art Institute of the Flemish Community, and serves as a Flemish cultural ambassador abroad
> -brings a varied program spanning baroque and romanticism to contemporary music, with special attention for Flemish musical heritage, innovative projects and education
> -is anchored locally, thanks to its social and educational activities." (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016b, 1)

In a decade-and-a-half time, the has ASO transformed from an institution defined as an ensemble to an enterprising institution. The choice of wording is in line with this pattern: the orchestra no longer 'plays' and 'programs', but rather 'produces' and 'sells'. Apart from this apparent shift towards a more business-oriented approach, specific themes stand out.

Firstly, the ASO expresses a clear ambition to become broadly networked within the city's, the region's and the international social fabric. Concerts are complemented with socially relevant projects and educational efforts, especially locally. In addition, the orchestra serves as a cultural ambassador on the international stage, maintaining and actively promoting Flemish musical heritage. The orchestra also breaks through its presumed isolation and maintains relations not only with the business world, but also with all sections of society, pursuing a broad civil support. Secondly, programming emphases are more clearly defined in the new

mission statement. The orchestra's musical program essentially spans the whole symphonic repertoire from (late) baroque to contemporary music, but also makes a broadening gesture. The orchestra's core business now also includes classical music projects aimed at diversification, innovation and education (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2004). The concept of 'innovative projects' is not further defined, which allows for a very broad interpretation. This discrepancy synthesizes the core of the orchestra's legitimacy problem: the orchestra's essential task appears to be to reconcile age-old symbolic cultural value (as an Art Institute of the Flemish Community) with present-day civil embeddedness.

Royal Concertgebouworkest

Despite the fact that composers from the Netherlands have only played a limited role in the historical development of symphonic music, the Dutch have been known to tend to their orchestras. The country of only about 17 million inhabitants counts 10 professional symphony orchestras, among which are some leading symphony orchestras in the European and global musical landscape. Dutch cultural policymakers, on the other hand, have not always been soft on their orchestras. In 2013, two orchestras have disappeared through policy reforms, and severe austerity measures have put financial strains on the remaining orchestras. In a similar vein, the legitimacy of the Netherlands' orchestras has only recently become a subject of intense political and public debate (van Gennip, Streevelaar, and Walinga 2014). Over the last decade, the dominant view has been that subsidies have maintained arts organizations for too long, while they appear to be accessible only for the cultural elite. In 2015, the performing arts sector in the Netherlands took a serious blow of 20 percent in budget cuts (Davoudi and Zonneveld 2012). For a country with little tradition of philanthropy and private support, this situation has instigated shifts within the sector, away from the typically continental tradition of government intervention, and towards marketization (Davoudi and Zonneveld 2012). Only one orchestra in the Netherlands seems to have escaped any form of critical scrutiny from policymakers: the Royal Concertgebouworkest in Amsterdam.

In 2008, the prestigious music magazine *Gramophone* ranked the Royal Concertgebouworkest (RCO) as the best orchestra in the world, based on specialized opinions by music critics and orchestra musicians (Gramophone 2008). Relative though such a qualitative ranking may be, the RCO is traditionally seen as one of the leading symphony orchestras worldwide. Striking is the fact that the orchestra rose to prominence only a few years after its foundation in 1888 and has maintained a leading position ever since. This trend is partly accounted for by the fact that the orchestra has known only seven chief conductors, each of whom has had an enormous impact on the homogeneous development and maintenance of the orchestra's musical quality. Orchestra founder Willem Kes has led the orchestra between 1888 and 1895 and was followed by the RCO's arguably most notorious conductor, Willem Mengelberg, who conducted the orchestra for half a century, between 1895 and 1945. His successor, Eduard van Beinum, held the baton between 1945 and 1959, to be followed by Bernard Haitink in the period between 1959 and 1988. The first non-Dutch conductor, the Italian maestro Riccardo

Chailly, occupied the post between 1988 and 2004 and the Latvian conductor Mariss Jansons between 2004 and 2015. Finally, Daniele Gatti was appointed the new chief conductor in 2016. It is no coincidence that the Royal Concertgebouworkest derives its name from the building in which it resides. An equally important factor in the enormous continuity of the RCO has been its concert hall of superior acoustic quality. Located at the Museumplein in the cultural heart of Amsterdam, the Concertgebouw has hosted the RCO for its rehearsals and performances on a daily basis, from day one.

The Royal Concertgebouworkest now counts 117 musicians, supplemented by a staff of 53, comprising 25 nationalities in total. Globally speaking, the orchestra occupies a central position among peer orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and London Symphony Orchestra, and regularly performs in the world's most prestigious concert halls. Nonetheless, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam hosts the vast majority of the RCO's concerts, and the Dutch National Opera (having no resident orchestra) can rely on the RCO for one opera-production every season. Throughout the years, the Concertgebouworkest has collaborated with prominent conductors for recordings spanning the whole symphonic repertoire, many of which are now seen as referential recordings for the works in question. Since 2004, the RCO has its own recording label, RCO Live. At the time of research, the Concertgebouworkest was in the process of looking for a new chief conductor, as the collaboration with chief conductor Gatti was terminated in the summer of 2018, after accusations of transgressive behavior reported by the Washington Post and corroborated by RCO musicians (Midgette and McGlone 2018).

Anno 2019, the official mission statement of the Royal Concertgebouworkest goes as follows:

> "The Royal Concertgebouworkest is a symphony orchestra that gives orchestral performances of the highest caliber in the world's leading concert halls under the direction of the very best conductors. The activities it carries out in Amsterdam form the basis of its role as the Netherlands' ambassador for international excellence. The Royal Concertgebouworkest offers audiences emotional and intellectual enrichment, generating involvement and active loyalty." (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 3)

Central to the orchestra's mission is its value creation, which they define in terms of non-material services such as offering intellectual enrichment and generating both involvement and loyalty. In order to unlock these values, the orchestra has developed a set of conditions that include artistic priorities and organizational choices. In an effort to establish the core values of the organization, a series of conversations and group sessions was organized internally, in which over half of all the RCO's employees was engaged (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a). This systematic process has led to the conceptualization of four core values and sixteen corresponding attitudes. These core values and attitudes, not by

chance visualized in a circle, allow for a more specific interpretation of the orchestra's balancing exercise between opposing demands of keeping an artistic organization on the rails.
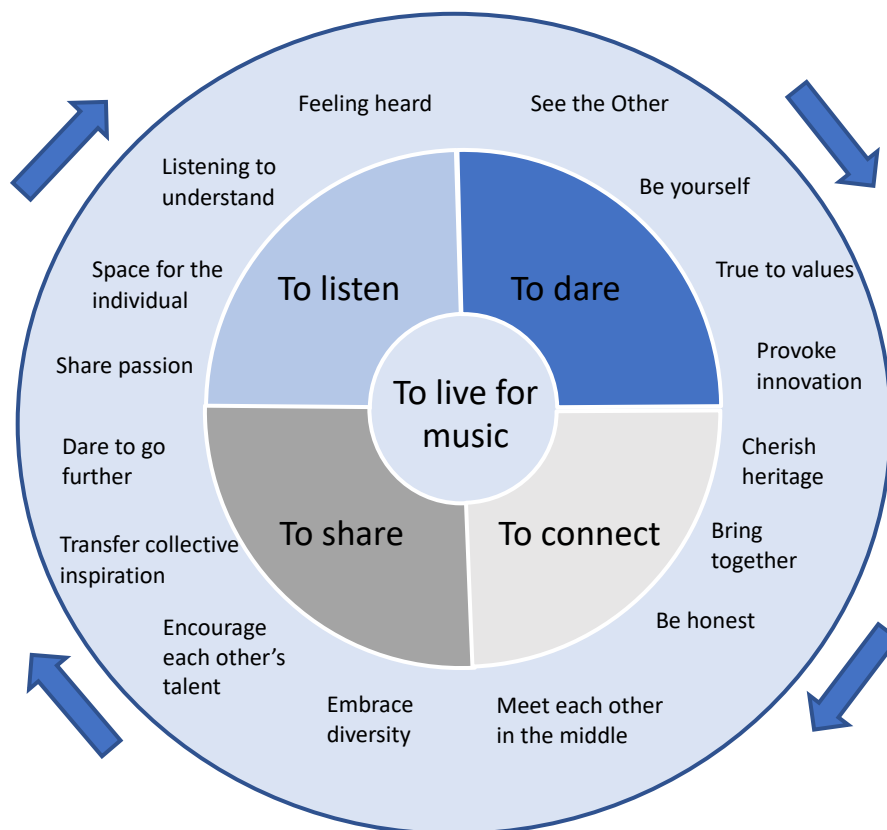
Figure 4: the RCO's core values and attitudes (Translated from: *KCOurant* 2018, 7)

Further consideration of each of these four core values can be read in the individual case report in appendix. At this point, it suffices to say that the RCO's conceptualization of four core values has important implications for the way the organization is managed. First of all, 'to live for music' is a basic principle from which all other principles are deduced, making them all subordinate to this central adage. The basic principle penetrates deep into the organization: marketing and personnel policies, programming, auditions, etc., are all based on this principle. This means that, for example, within musical programming, the starting point is the artistic vision, not marketing and ticket sales. Therefore, the RCO never engages conductors or soloists based on their popular status with the audience and only works with artists in whom they believe. On the other hand, core values 'to share' and 'to connect' imply that the orchestra never engages in idiosyncratic or radical contemporary projects that are estimably unpopular with larger audiences. The orchestra believes, as can be deduced from its core values, that artistic relevance lies at the crossroads of urgency and attractiveness.

London Symphony Orchestra

"British musicians are, on the whole, neither optimists nor pessimists, but imperturbable pragmatists" (Morrison 2003, 54). The opening line from Richard Morrison's *Orchestra: The LSO: A Century of Triumphs and Turbulence* epitomizes the relentless fighting spirit found within London orchestras. Over the last century, countless new orchestras have emerged and disappeared in London, as a result of musicians' disagreements over the existing orchestras, or to feed the artistic desires of exceptionally ambitious individuals. Taken as a whole, the London orchestras not only tell a story of opportunism and competition, but also of an unyielding and enviable determination to survive. Today, London houses no less than four self-governing orchestras (London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra), as well as the fully salaried BBC Symphony Orchestra. The imbalanced presence of five full-time professional symphony orchestras in the UK's capital, with only a handful of orchestras in the rest of the country, can be interpreted against the horizon of London as a global capital of culture. The fact that four of the five symphony orchestras are self-governing, and therefore rely on government subsidies and regulations far less than their continental siblings, shows to what extent cultural policy in the UK is intertwined with the use of culture as a resource for economic as well as social development (Oakley 2012).

London Symphony Orchestra is Europe's oldest and best-documented example of a self-governing orchestra. Since 1982, after several decades of sharing performance spaces with other London orchestras, the LSO performs in the Barbican Center which is located in the cultural and economic heart of London, and has foreign residencies in Paris, Tokyo and New York. In 2017, 70 of the orchestra's London concerts were performed at the Barbican, and 49 in the orchestra's small-scale venue LSO St Luke's. In September 2017, the orchestra welcomed music director Sir Simon Rattle, who returned to his home city after 16 years at the helm of the Berlin Philharmonic. As the most generously funded London orchestra by the Arts Council of England, an adequate barometer for a cultural organization's legitimacy, the LSO can be argued to be the most representative orchestra of its city.

Managed by a board of directors of which a majority is elected from the musicians' own ranks, the LSO has always tried to keep organizational sustainability and artistic pertinence as closely attuned as possible. Since the orchestra's first concert on June 9th, 1904, the LSO has proved the value of its model by tying together a seemingly endless string of 'firsts' and 'mosts': the LSO was the first London orchestra to play silent films, the first one to have a recording contract, and the first one to exploit the educational potential of the internet. The orchestra has earned millions being the most recorded orchestra in the world as well as the world's most streamed orchestra on Spotify, but also found itself on the brink of bankruptcy more than once. London Symphony Orchestra has always worked under strict constraints and has combatted problems which other orchestras have only recently begun to face. Overall, the

history of the LSO very colorfully demonstrates the advantages and flaws of a self-governing orchestra model.

London Symphony Orchestra has established a firm global place as a 21st century orchestra. The following years or decades, the orchestra wants to continue pursuing two parallel artistic tracks: artistic excellence in performing music is the core of the orchestra's activities, along with making a profound impact on the social fabric of its environment. In September 2017, Sir Simon Rattle conducted his first concert as the new principal conductor of London Symphony Orchestra. A renowned champion of music education and repertoire experimentation, his impact on the orchestra is likely to be different from that of his predecessor Valery Gergiev, who had primarily focused on the standard repertoire. The near future will also see the erection and inauguration of the New Centre for Music in the City of London, with acoustics promised to match those of the world's leading concert halls (Buckingham 2019). This new state-of-the-art center will be the product of a major cooperation between the most prominent musical organizations on London's Culture Mile: the Barbican, the Guildhall School and the LSO. At the time of writing, the imminent Brexit was perceived as a major threat to the LSO's increasingly international mission. However, the continuing discussions and sector-wide uncertainties over the exact effects on cultural life in the UK, have spurred the LSO to follow the events closely, but not to take any specific actions for the time being.

Andra East, head of LSO Discovery, the orchestra's famous outreach and education department, summarizes London Symphony Orchestra's current position as an artistic as well as an entrepreneurial organization as follows:

> "The LSO's core mission is to make great music available to the greatest possible number of people. That is the narrative of the orchestra, but also our mission as an organization, in the sense that every aspect of this idea permeates everything we do." (East 2019)

In the 2017 annual report of London Symphony Orchestra's activities, the official mission statement of the orchestra is articulated as follows:

> "The principal activities of the Group continue to be a world-class symphony orchestra providing the highest quality musical performances, broadcasts and recordings and the provision of a wide-ranging, inclusive and diverse music community and education program. The LSO is based within the UK and also regularly performs overseas and has a signature sound which emanates from the combined virtuosity of its 88 outstanding musicians sourced from around the world. The LSO aims to be a 21st century orchestra, with a mission to bring the greatest music to the widest possible range of people,

engaging the broadest mix of people with the highest quality and most evocative music-making." (London Symphony Orchestra 2017)

As anticipated in the previous paragraphs, this mission statement puts strong emphases on both the performance quality and virtuosity of the orchestra, as well as the idea of inclusivity. The mission statement does not hint at what the orchestra wants to put forward as being 'the greatest music'. Neither the orchestra's repertoire preferences nor the orchestra's stance toward developing the repertoire are explicitly articulated within the mission statement. Yet, if one considers the history of London Symphony Orchestra throughout the years, a panoptic evolution becomes visible. An on-demand and commercially driven orchestra without any delineated artistic vision has gradually become a solid 21st-century orchestra with a clear identity that is supported by two pillars: artistic excellence and social responsibility. These two pillars are most visibly embodied in the LSO's expansive outreach and education program, LSO Discovery. Increasing worries over the long-term sustainability of the orchestra has placed musical programming, rather than commercial motivations, at the heart of the LSO's operations.

4.2.1.2 Alternative cases

Casco Phil

On April 8, 2008, the Antwerp concert venue deSingel hosted the official baptism of fire of the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic, an initiative that owes its existence to Benjamin Haemhouts, who exchanged his career as a solo trombone player in the Bamberg Symphony for a career in orchestral conducting. This first concert of the brand-new orchestra immediately reflected its dual ambition: to enrich the classical repertoire with new or unknown works for orchestra and to increase the accessibility of classical music in general. On the opening concert's program, a newly commissioned and still untitled work by the young Belgian composer Steven Prengels was flanked by two monuments from the symphonic repertoire: Beethoven's first and Schubert's second symphony. The Belgian Chamber Philharmonic, however, had broader ambitions still. The mission statement that has remained unaltered since 2008, reads:

> "The organization aims to promote musical culture in all its aspects. To this end, it may set up all services and develop all activities, such as forming an orchestra and giving musical performances." (Casco Phil 2018)

Clearly, the artistic vision of the organization takes priority over its incidental form. From the outset of the project, the organizers aimed at breaking open the structure of the traditional orchestra, to explore and push the creative boundaries of a musical ensemble and the repertoire it is able to perform. Rather than an orchestra per se, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic presented itself as a musical laboratory, where boundaryless experimentation

is promoted in dialogue with various art forms. Strongly committed to this idea of creative experimentation, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic applied for subsidies for four consecutive years, to be rejected on account of the saturation of the orchestral landscape in Flanders. Disappointed by the irony of the rejection (the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic was formed to counterbalance this saturation, by revitalizing the repertoire and break open the solid structure of the orchestra), the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic changed course: not in artistic mission but in organizational form.

In 2013, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic officially changed its name to Casco Phil. In a television interview, artistic inspirer and conductor Ben Haemhouts explained the main rationale of this move:

> "When we started the project, we were an orchestra; a form. And from there we started to think what we were going to do with it. Later, I started to notice that this form stood in the way of the artistic idea. Now we have turned the idea around: we start from an artistic idea and only then we start looking for the ideal form." (VRT EEN 2014; Translation by author)

Against the backdrop of this awareness, the name Casco Phil itself is very consciously chosen, for two reasons. Firstly, the term 'casco', that originates in construction and in shipbuilding, is used in the Dutch language with reference to something that is never really finished. Indeed, the orchestra nurtures a culture of continuous production and development, not of mere reproduction and preservation. Secondly, casco is an acronym that embodies everything the organization stands for and forms the basis of its aspired legitimacy. Casco Phil is a Creative, Adventurous, Socially engaged Cultural Organization. Phil is an abbreviation for Philharmonic.

Since the name change, the organization puts stronger emphasis on its modular and flexible form. Analogous to their aversion for predefined structures, the organization (which will be referred to as an orchestra for the remainder of this report) takes on various forms, from fully equipped symphony orchestra, over modern chamber ensemble to impromptu accompaniment for jazz or pop musicians. Casco Phil maintains a careful and unpredictable balance between financially profitable activities and artistically adventurous projects. The profitable formulas take on many forms, ranging from corporate events such as their on-demand project 'Golf goes Classic', in which a musical program is combined with a round of golf and networking possibilities for corporate clients, to music initiation projects for young children. The orchestra has the juridical structure of a not-for-profit organization, and therefore the income from certain repertoire concerts and commercial formulas generate the financial resources for their experimental and more adventurous, atypical projects that mostly operate at a financial loss, or to provide a podium to talented young Belgian composers and soloists. The orchestra has no official home base (although they have a small and rarely used office-space in the city of Mechelen, close to Antwerp) and is not affiliated with a concert

hall or concert series. Therefore, Casco Phil does not only lean on the traditional concert circuit, but also takes to environments different from the concert hall.

Casco Phil's true ambition is to devise an orchestra model able to respond to the challenges of the future, both in artistic and in organizational terms. The orchestra was initially conceived as an antidote to what the founders considered an overly homogeneous orchestral landscape. Haemhouts remarks that there is a wide gap between large traditional orchestras and small ensembles, who each have their own repertoire, audience, concert environment, social habits and market. Orchestras in Flanders could be much more complementary, Haemhouts argues. It would be better for the field as a whole if every orchestra would have an artistic profile, supported by artistic principles. One of the main motivations to found Casco Phil was to create a modular orchestral entity to re-unite these diverging fields.

The main artistic rationale of Casco Phil is that the future of orchestral music can be guided by the orchestra itself, if the organization applies its capacities to their full use. The key to fostering creative curiosity is lowering the threshold without compromising the quality of the artistic content. True to the idea of bridging the gap between traditional orchestras and hermetic repertoire ensembles that often operate in isolation, Casco Phil's aim is to reconcile artistic experiment and accessibility. As the profile of Casco Phil is based on artistic experimentation, the emphasis lies on production rather than reproduction. The orchestra wants to try out new concert formats, push artistic boundaries, and give opportunities to composers and young musicians. In that process, not only the product is important, but also the development of the product itself (Simoens 2013). When possible, Casco Phil aims at breaking open the fourth wall between orchestra and audience by organizing open rehearsals and by organizing workshops for musicians or children. In the Belgian music scene, Casco Phil is the only professional ensemble or orchestra that does not receive a fixed amount of subsidies. For over ten years, the orchestra has succeeded to survive on its own terms and in developing an organizational model to do so. However, the orchestra's profile as a whole reveals the difficulty of striking the right balance between artistic conception and pragmatic feasibility.

Splendor

In 2010, a group of enterprising musicians experienced a lack of performance opportunities in Amsterdam where external factors such as financial concerns, logistics and transportation issues could be minimalized. Most importantly, this group shared the wish of having a place for experimentation outside of the institutionalized environments in which they were employed. Composer David Dramm, who was part of this network, explains:

> "For musicians, it often seems easier to organize something big than something small. What we were looking for was a place where we could hang out frequently, and our

audience as well. We wanted to create a community feeling where everybody felt at home." (Dramm 2018)

This network of performers, 50 strong, collectively invested in a place where experimentation has no boundaries and where artists and their audiences connect to inspire each other. An old centrally located Amsterdam bathhouse was transformed into a professionally equipped music house, which is operated in its entirety by the artists themselves (among which players of the main Dutch orchestras such as the Concertgebouworkest, Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Radio Orchestras, as well as names from the world of opera, jazz, electronics and ethnic music). The location of Splendor reflects the artistic impetus from which the organization was designed: close to traditional institutions such as the opera house and the Rembrandt studio, but just off the beaten path. In 2013, Splendor Amsterdam opened doors. Since then, the venue unites composers, musicians and stage artists, that came together to form an artist-run cooperative that independently exploits a music venue in which the musicians have complete autonomy. Splendor is a second home for the 50 musicians and their public, but also for a vast number of musicians from the Netherland and abroad, that are welcome to rehearse or perform in the venue.

Utilizing a specific organizational model in which responsibility for all aspects of the organization (from acquiring finances to musical programming) is shared among all members, Splendor is an example in which 'commoning' is an integral part of their model. Through their organizational decisions, Splendor is able to fully utilize the twofold character of a common good (De Angelis 2017): on the one hand Splendor exemplifies a use value for a plurality (by providing artistic freedom to all connected artists), on the other hand, it requires a plurality claiming and sustaining the ownership of the common good. Together, these two elements form the core values of the Splendor model: a strive for complete artistic freedom and autonomy, and a collectively shared sense of ownership and responsibility. By operationalizing these core values, the artists have created a venue in which they are free to practice and perform, while being capable of reevaluating and changing the often distant relationship between the artists and their audiences. As the deliberately compact mission statement states, Splendor musicians are not guided by the established traditions and unwritten rules of normal concert practice (Splendor n.d.). At Splendor, musicians and audiences come in through the same doors and meet each other afterwards in the same on-site bar. Apart from all kinds of concert settings, open rehearsals, and workshops form the core activities of Splendor, which can take place at any time of the day. Rather than a concert venue or rehearsal space, therefore, Splendor profiles itself as a laboratory or workplace, where musical ideas can sprout and grow freely, without the interference of external factors.

The first and foremost goal of Splendor is to create an environment with complete artistic independence. As a general rule, Splendor does not make a formal procedure for something unless it is absolutely required. Splendor was meant to be a place free of institutional and

artistic boundaries, where anything is possible and appreciated. Based on this premise of artistic autonomy, Splendor has made several decisions that enables the organization to further exploit its vision. Firstly, Splendor has decided to implement a 'no-programming policy' for the venue. Splendor has an open agenda, in which each of the 50 musicians can reserve a slot for any of the three possible performance spaces in the building (housing an audience of 100, 60 or 30 people respectively) on a first-come, first-served basis. The musicians can reserve a place for a rehearsal or a concert, but are also free to program a concert played by outside musicians that they deem interesting to showcase. By lack of a Splendor programmer, all partaking musicians are free to create what they want, without having to answer to anyone but themselves. Indeed, all musicians are responsible for their own projects, both artistically and financially speaking, as their fees depend on the amount of people that attend the concerts. Based on the same logic, Splendor has deliberately decided to not make a claim for any subsidies, as this choice could push Splendor into a context of increased institutionalization. Subsidies often come with their own set of stipulations toward the organization in terms of elements such as organizational structures, reporting, expectations, and a certain balance in musicians, concerts, reach, etc. (Stockenstrand & Ander, 2014); precisely those restricting stipulations that Splendor set out to avoid. The way Splendor works and positions itself artistically within the city, is not the outcome of any organizational or artistic planning. The present situation, characterized by a heterogeneity of musicians and concerts, is the accidental outcome of the open structure, and is a product of what is considered artistically urgent by the artists themselves.

Aurora Orchestra

The city of London has a reputation of being one of the most fruitful but also competitive musical environments in the world. The city supports no less than five full-time professional symphony orchestras, with each one competing for its own share of a demanding yet admittedly large concert audience. Active since 2005 and growing in prominence each year, Aurora Orchestra aspires to complement the activities of these five orchestras, by rethinking the orchestra model in both artistic and organizational terms. Starting from the observation that the boundaries of art genres and styles have become ever more fluent, the orchestra wants to be an artistic beacon for the 21st-century orchestra. Collaborating across genres, performing in spaces previously unfamiliar to the 'classical' orchestra, and experimenting with new repertoires as well as with concert presentation, form the artistic DNA of Aurora Orchestra. The orchestra rose to prominence during the 2014 BBC Proms, as the first orchestra to ever perform an entire symphony from memory. Constantly calibrating the artistic ambitions and the required organizational conditions, Aurora seeks to develop an adequate model for a truly 21-century orchestra. In May 2018, the orchestra's artistic entrepreneurship has been awarded with the Classical:NEXT Innovation Award.

Today, Aurora Orchestra plays over 80 performances annually in the UK as well as abroad, the majority of which is led by co-founder Nicholas Collon. Every year, the orchestra reaches 40.000 spectators in the UK and abroad. In London itself, Aurora Orchestra has two flagship series: one at Kings Place, the recently completed arts hub near King's Cross station where the orchestra has been resident orchestra since 2010, and one at Southbank Centre, London's most dense arts complex where Aurora has been Associate Orchestra since 2016. In 2019, Aurora Orchestra returned to the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall for the ninth consecutive season, with a staged and memorized performance of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*. Impressed by its artistic contributions, the Arts Council of England has decided to bring Aurora into the National Portfolio in 2011, resulting in an annual grant of £60.000. The support of the Arts Council, which has been renewed up until 2022, not only enabled Aurora Orchestra to artistically sharpen its activities, it also serves as a barometer of the legitimacy of the orchestra within its service area. In the 2017-2018 season, the orchestra has passed the £1.000.000 mark in annual turnover, a symbolic achievement no other UK orchestra founded within the past quarter-decade has accomplished (Aurora Orchestra 2018a).

Although Aurora Orchestra was launched without any structural business plan and gradually took shape through pragmatic choices, it is now a solid orchestra with a clearly delineated artistic mission. The importance of having a clear mission cannot be overestimated in a city such as London, where various orchestras constantly have to fight to gain support from funding bodies such as the Arts Council. Since its inclusion into the National Portfolio in 2011, Aurora Orchestra's philosophy is now much more rooted in the strength of the orchestra itself, and no longer stems from a pragmatic balancing exercise with other orchestras in the area. Aurora Orchestra's 2017 mission statement goes as follows:

> "Aurora aspires to be the world's most creative orchestra, combining the very highest quality of performance with an exceptional breadth of artistic horizons, a passion for adventure, and a trailblazing approach to concert presentation. (…) At all levels of the organization it seeks to cultivate a culture of creativity, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial approach to artistic risk and opportunity." (Aurora Orchestra 2018b, 4)

From this mission statement, three of the orchestra's artistic emphases can be deduced: high quality of performance, adventurousness and innovative concert presentation. Additionally, a culture of artistic and organizational entrepreneurship is worth mentioning, highlighting that organizational and artistic conditions are interpreted to be fundamentally intertwined.

Following the renewed Arts Council commitment for the 2018-2022 period, a new business plan was constructed, including a slightly revised mission statement:

"Aurora creates vibrant musical adventures that share a passion for orchestral music with the broadest possible audience. We produce vivid and intensely powerful musical experiences combining the very highest performance quality with creative presentation and an exceptional breadth of artistic horizons. We harness the extraordinary versatility of the chamber orchestra to make orchestral music speak in powerful new ways for first-time listeners and lifelong classical devotees alike." (Aurora Orchestra 2018a)

In this altered mission statement, the same core values can be identified. However, additional emphasis is put on the accessibility of Aurora's concerts, "for the broadest possible audience"; this new value answers to issues of outreach and education, which are high on the Arts Council's agenda. Most interestingly, Aurora very explicitly declares that the orchestra's model (in its versatile chamber orchestra setting) is put to use in this process of making music understandable to a broad audience. However, the orchestra also commits to not chasing lower-quality performance opportunities in which their creative voice is not central.

The rapid growth of Aurora Orchestra brings to the surface an interesting interaction between the pragmatic and the aesthetic. Starting from first principles, the orchestra has developed itself through opportunities obtained from a range of external partners, allowing the organization to mature into a creative workplace with an increasingly distinctive artistic voice. Having, in a first phase, prioritized short-term income generation over long-term artistic development, the orchestra has gradually become aware of the risks of constantly having to adapt to an external environment. Opportunities occurring by chance soon evolved into Aurora's signature concepts. The Arts Council support that the orchestra has obtained through occupying that niche, permitted the orchestra to further develop these ideas without having to prioritize the pragmatic over the aesthetic.

4.2.2 Comparing organizational models

This subchapter focusses on the organizational side of the research, which means that sustainability is implicitly defined here as the organization's capacity to remain operative. Specifically, the overall potential of the alternative organizations will be explored, and their prospect of remaining operative in the same field as their larger siblings. This analysis will give insight into how these organizational models work, as well as into the variety of tensions these organizations need to mitigate in order to be organizationally sustainable.

4.2.2.1 Organizational parameters

For a cross-case analysis of all six organizations, it may be helpful to first summarize and compare these organizations at face value. In the underlying table, key parameters with regard to each separate orchestra's organizational model are represented.

	Antwerp Symphony Orchestra	Casco Phil	Concertgebouworkest	Splendor	London Symphony Orchestra	Aurora Orchestra
Founded	1955	2008	1888	2013	1904	2010
Staff members	20	5	53	1	94	9
Largest source of income	Subsidies	Partnerships	Subsidies	Activities	Activities	Activities
Musicians' contracts	Salaried	Freelance	Salaried	NA	Freelance	Freelance
Dominant leadership model	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Cooperative	Cooperative	Corporate
Artistic decision-making	Centralized	Centralized	Centralized	Distributed	Distributed	Centralized

Figure 5: Key organizational parameters of the 6 cases

Each separate parameter has implications for the other ones, so addressing one of them is only meaningful when weighed against the other; only then a coherent story comes to the fore. Staff members represented in Figure 5 refer to non-musicians who had a role in the organization at the time of research. The numbers shown are expressed on a headcount basis and do not refer to full-time equivalents, as these equivalents tend to vary significantly in the case of freelance employees. As elaborated in each individual case report, the financial model of each organizational relies on a complex mixture of incomes. Therefore, the parameter 'largest source of income' refers to the income stream that has the most impact on the orchestra's available annual budget. At this point, first causal links already begin to emerge. Casco Phil is the only orchestra in the study that relies on private partnerships for the lion's share of its operational budget. This puts heavy strains on the organization, as a huge amount of time is allocated to the acquisition of these partnerships. By lack of subsidies, it is impossible for Casco Phil to grow beyond the number of 5 freelance staff members. For Splendor, the

largest and only source of income is its own activities, as a fixed percentage of box office incomes goes to the venue. Apart from the Splendor model, it is interesting that both London orchestras also rely on their own activities for the most part. The culturally vibrant city of London is to be accredited, but it should also be noted that both orchestras have developed a strong sensibility for commercially interesting activities such as making recordings. In the case of London Symphony Orchestra, a significant share of the particularly large staff is responsible for acquiring funds. Interestingly, a considerable scale advantage becomes visible in this table: London Symphony Orchestra has the financial resources to maintain a team responsible for acquiring additional resources. On account of its small size, Casco Phil does not have the financial resources for additional staff members, making funding acquisition an extra strenuous affair. In spite of that, the small size of Casco Phil is one of the organization's biggest assets, as will be elaborated below.

The parameter 'musicians' contracts' reveals that fixed salaries are associated with the most amply subsidized orchestras. This parameter is self-explanatory, except for the Splendor case. This particular organization consists of 50 musicians who have no binding contract whatsoever. Their wages depend on the amount of audience they bring in on their concerts, which they organize themselves, mostly on an irregular basis. Therefore, their employment is neither salaried nor freelance. Interestingly though, not all freelance modalities represented in Figure 5 are identical. In London Symphony Orchestra, for example, musicians (being the shareholders of the organization) are employed on a freelance basis but are considered fixed 'members' with guaranteed continued engagement. At the beginning of each season, the musicians themselves decide on the percentage of their work engagement. In Aurora Orchestra and Casco Phil, on the other hand, freelance musicians are employed on a project-to-project basis, without any guaranteed long-term engagement.

Contrary to what the above table may suggest, the leadership model of every orchestra is not a black-or-white matter. Based on a method adopted by Bertolini (2018), the parameter 'dominant leadership model' is therefore further elaborated in the underlying graph, which shows every organization and its relative place on the corporate to cooperative spectrum. Their position is calculated by the relative representation of musicians in the organization's board.
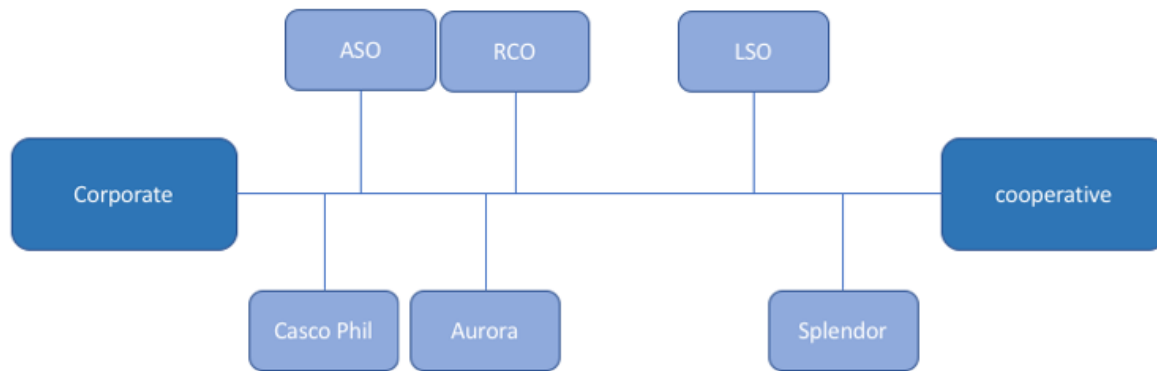
Figure 6: Dominant leadership model of the 6 cases

Casco Phil has no musician representation in its 7-member board. Some regular players do serve as an informal sounding board for management, that mostly coincides with the artistic director and founder. The fact that this orchestra relies on freelance musicians only, can be argued to be an explanation. On the other hand, Aurora Orchestra which also exclusively employs freelance musicians, has two musicians in its 9-member board: one player representative who is present as such and the creative director who is, in this case, also a playing member. As Casco Phil is more financially vulnerable than Aurora Orchestra, by lack of any subsidies whatsoever, enormous efforts have to be made to acquire sufficient incomes. Therefore, a more plausible explanation for the lack of musician representation is that Casco Phil's board prioritizes the strategic operations of the orchestra and does not address any artistic or organizational matters in which musicians (in their modality as musician) can play an advisory role.

Like Casco Phil, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra has no musician representation in the 11-member board. The ASO's musicians are, however, represented in an artistic committee which is involved in programming and other artistic decisions. Musicians report that their influence on these matters is considerable, although their involvement is mostly limited to a more evaluative role such as assessing conductors. The Concertgebouworkest, contrastingly, has a delegation of 3 democratically chosen musicians in the 11-strong Foundation Board, which oversees all operations of the orchestra, both artistic and organizational. In London Symphony Orchestra's 14-member board of directors, 8 musicians are present. There are 6 elected musicians, as well as a playing chairman and vice-chairman, who are both represented as executive administrators of the organization. This proves, again, that being a freelance musician in the LSO is something else entirely than being a freelancer in Casco Phil or Aurora Orchestra. Finally, Splendor's leadership model is almost fully cooperative. Although there is no board in the strictest sense, the 50 musicians themselves form a board-like structure. Only when practical issues arise, there is some interference by the venue manager.

As can be read from Figure 5, the cooperative organizational model coincides with distribution of artistic decision-making, while the corporate model coincides with centralized artistic decision-making. Again, there are some important nuances to each orchestra's model. As mentioned, the musicians of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra are represented in an artistic committee, but their involvement in the artistic trajectory of the orchestra is limited to evaluation. The orchestra's management is hierarchically organized, and although approachability of management is reported to be high, the actual organizational and artistic decisions are distributed over a few management profiles. In Casco Phil, artistic and organizational leadership lies with very few individuals, the amount of which is prone to variations concurring with the available budget. Negotiations with partners and concert presenters are largely in the hands of one person, who is both the artistic director and founder of Casco Phil. The Concertgebouworkest is also hierarchically structured, although systems are in place to govern tensions that may arise between management, staff and musicians. These systems rely on a circle of accountability, which means that every sense of hierarchy is relative: even the highest management profiles are accountable to the musicians in the Foundation Board. The orchestra can still be said to be hierarchically structured, as this circle of accountability is closer to a monitoring system than to an actual distribution of organizational and artistic responsibilities. As is the case in the ASO, musicians' artistic involvement is mostly limited to evaluation and has very little impact on programming decisions. Aurora Orchestra also adopts a hierarchical structure, in the sense that responsibilities are clearly divided over several functions occupied by non-playing members of the organization, with a clear line of accountability. Although the board has two musicians represented, all artistic decisions are essentially made by the Artistic Planning Committee, consisting of the managing director, artistic director and conductor.

London Symphony Orchestra, on the other hand, adheres to a cooperative model, which means that all decisions, whether artistic or not, are not only supervised but also partially sketched out by the musicians themselves. Not every musician is involved in artistic decision-making, but every member of the LSO can be involved at any given time. Of course, day-to-day operations are overseen by a (non-playing) managing director, but she is directly accountable to the musicians themselves. As the organization is, on the highest level, managed by a board, and the chairman of the board is a playing member, musicians' artistic impact is considerable. In theory, even the principal conductor has less impact than the musicians, as he is not a voting member of the board. In practice, a democratically chosen delegation of the LSO's musicians elects a conductor, who is given the freedom to make his own artistic decisions. The resulting long-term trajectory of the orchestra, however, is in the hands of the musicians themselves. Although this system closely resembles the RCO's circle of accountability, the LSO model leaves much more artistic space and initiative for the musicians. At Splendor, finally, artistic decision-making is entirely distributed over the 50 partaking musicians. Each musician owns and manages the building and its artistic agenda.

From the clearly delineated organizational parameters outlined in Figures 5 and 6, additional cross-case observations can be made, based on the reflective analyses delivered in the individual case reports. Firstly, typical and unique for the organizations labelled as alternative organizations is their modular form. The modular or adaptable form is connected with the freelance model and appears in Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra, and in Splendor to some extent. Since Casco Phil operates without any subsidies, the orchestra engages the freelance musicians required for each separate project, basing the musical content of each project by weighing working costs against expected revenues. Aurora Orchestra, which is subsidized to some extent but adopts the freelance model as well, is financially solid enough to design a program from artistic principles, and then engage the musicians which are required for the project. Splendor is of course modular by default. Each of these organizations refers to its agile form as the most important feature for survival among bigger players (cf. below).

A second observation is the fact that there is no clear link between the variable 'subsidized' and an organization's engagement in social projects or outreach. From the side of the organizations labelled as representative, there are remarkable differences. The amply subsidized Antwerp Symphony Orchestra strongly engages in social projects, whereas the percentwise equally amply subsidized Concertgebouworkest barely has any outreach, educational or any other socially beneficial programs. In the case of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, the organization's community engagement in intrinsically present in its performance programs. Several discounts are in place, and outreach programs, a growing offer of educational programs and concerts in disadvantaged regions and locations all contribute to the ASO's aim of being a socially relevant cultural institution. This has everything to do with the ASO's privileged status as an Art Institution of the Flemish Community, which implies guaranteed subsidies. The according management agreement, formulated by the orchestra itself as well as the Flemish government, stipulates that the orchestra should therefore take responsibility in social issues. The Concertgebouworkest does play a role in education, in the form of extensive orchestral training programs such as the European Side-by-Side project. Also in that case, a trajectory towards performing on the highest international level is the orchestra's priority. This difference illustrates that subsidies can be awarded for several reasons. For the ASO, subsidies are granted on the basis of the orchestra's role in community, whereas in the case of the RCO, subsidies seem to be granted on the basis of the historical grandeur of the orchestra itself. London Symphony Orchestra, finally, fosters the world's largest community and outreach department, despite being far less subsidized (in percentage terms) than the other two orchestras. Although the LSO is in the same international peer group as the RCO and aspires towards a comparable level of performance quality, its engagement in community projects is much bigger. The level of social engagement is also much higher than their position as a National Portfolio Organization of the Arts Council England, the national subsidizing body, requires. In the LSO, social engagement is one of the main functions of the orchestra.

From the side of the organizations labelled as alternative, the situation is different and equally ambiguous. Casco Phil loses money on its outreach programs but tries to find ways to limit the losses and develop its social projects anyway. Aurora Orchestra's educational concerts are, on the contrary, sometimes a source of revenue because, firstly, they are extremely popular, secondly, they attract new and different sponsors, and thirdly, they serve as a seedbed for experiments that later find their way to the large-scale Orchestral Theatre series. Splendor only recently launched its education programs. As there is no programming philosophy behind the Splendor idea, these new programs are arguably yet another way to exploit the building to its maximum capacity and have less to do with being socially aware per se. Neither in the representative nor in the alternative cases, there is an unambiguous connection between being subsidized and being socially aware: being subsidized is not always an incentive to think about value creation for society at large, and engaging in social projects is not always a free pass to subsidies. The legitimacy issues on which this borders, will be discussed below.

These first observations allow to draw some preliminary conclusions with regard to different orchestra models. Looking at the parameters in Figures 5 and 6, and taking into account the additional observations above, it becomes clear that the proposed distinction between representative and alternative cases does not hold when looking at separate organizational parameters. Organizations labelled as representative and alternative, firstly, both adopt the freelance and salaried form. Secondly, they both have subsidized and non-subsidized variants, and thirdly, they both adhere to hierarchical and non-hierarchical ways of management. Moreover, being socially aware is an orchestra-specific feature that cannot be attributed to either case sample. The only distinctive feature is the alternative organization's modularity, which will be discussed at length below. This disconfirmation of some expectations with regard to representative and alternative models does not prompt to abandon the initial distinction altogether. Rather, the analysis points out that all parameters are not only interlinked within the context of one orchestra but also depend on dynamics which are specific to their respective environments as well as between each other. This conclusion suggests that an additional mode of analysis is required. A closer look at the alignment of the organization's parameters takes a more discursive approach towards organizational models.

4.2.2.2 Business model alignment

To grasp the specificity of each organization's model and its relation to other models, it can be framed within its particular environment.[7] More specifically, the organization's model can be viewed as the outcome of a process of calibration with its environment, a process that

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[7] Parts of this paragraph are edited from the following article: Van Andel, W., Herman, A., & Schramme, A. (n.d.). Artistic innovation from within the cracks. Unlocking musical creativity. *International Journal of Arts Management*, *Under review*.

requires specific actions and choices to unlock the organization's potential. The underlying analysis is structured through the lens of the business model concept. In the past two decades, many different approaches to the business model concept have been proposed in academic literature, with the commonality that most authors view the concept as the architecture behind value creation (Linder and Cantrell 2001; Shafer, Smith, and Linder 2005; Magretta 2002). An activity-centered approach is gaining ground, in which the business model is defined as a bundle of specific activities which are conducted to satisfy both internal (from the organization's side) and external needs (from the organization's environment). This approach includes the specification of the parties that conduct and benefit from these activities, and especially how these activities are linked to each other (Zott and Amit 2010). By focusing on specific activities and choices that represent direct operationalizations of the organization's core values, as well as the manner in which these activities are bundled together in a larger coherent scheme, this activity-centered perspective takes on a holistic approach towards on organization's capacity for value creation and dissemination. This approach has proven especially suitable for organizations within the cultural field, which can be interpreted as highly value-driven (Van Andel, Herman, and Schramme n.d.).

Following a methodology proposed by Van Andel (2019), the underlying analysis breaks down the process of the transformation of core values into specific business model choices. Firstly, the core values of each organization will be formulated, based on the information from the individual case reports. Secondly, the organization's value proposition will be assessed from the viewpoint of all relevant stakeholders. Finally, the specific business model choices made by the organization are identified. Each graphical representation of the business model alignment also contains a distinctive quote by a central figure in the organization. This specific implementation of the approach has two advantages over the previous analysis of organizational parameters. Firstly, it focusses on both value creation and financial sustainability without necessarily considering those as separable or conflicting aspects. Secondly, this approach to business models emphasizes that value creation occurs in dialogue with an environment that includes various stakeholders. It thus highlights the necessity of not focusing on the organization as a stand-alone entity, but rather on the behavior of the organization within the specific context of its environment (See e.g. Poisson-de Haro and Montpetit 2012). In doing so, this analysis not only shows which specific business model choices are made by the six focus organizations, it equally shows how these actions relate to the dominant logic within the sector.

Examining the business model alignment for the Concertgebouworkest is particularly interesting, because the orchestra's management has made the exercise itself (cf. Figure 4). As can be read in the RCO's individual case report, the orchestra has stipulated clear core values around a basic principle ("to live for music"), which penetrate every aspect of the organization. The four core values are formulated as verbs (to dare, to listen, to connect, to share) which already illustrates the activity-based approach. Furthermore, each core value has

been translated into four corresponding actions which can be immediately implemented in the organization. The four identified core values which mostly concern the organization itself, and the mission statement of the RCO which concerns the orchestra's environment, can be encapsulated into three core values of the organization: supreme quality, cultural awareness and artistic adventurousness. The corresponding organizational parameters, which can now be identified as business model choices, have been discussed above. In Figure 7, however, it becomes clear that these business model choices are directly linked to the core values, in the sense that these choices are aimed at operationalizing these core values. For example, the RCO adopts the subsidized and full-time model (business model choice) because the according job stability (value proposition) is perceived as an indispensable feature for the pursuit of the highest international performance quality (core value).
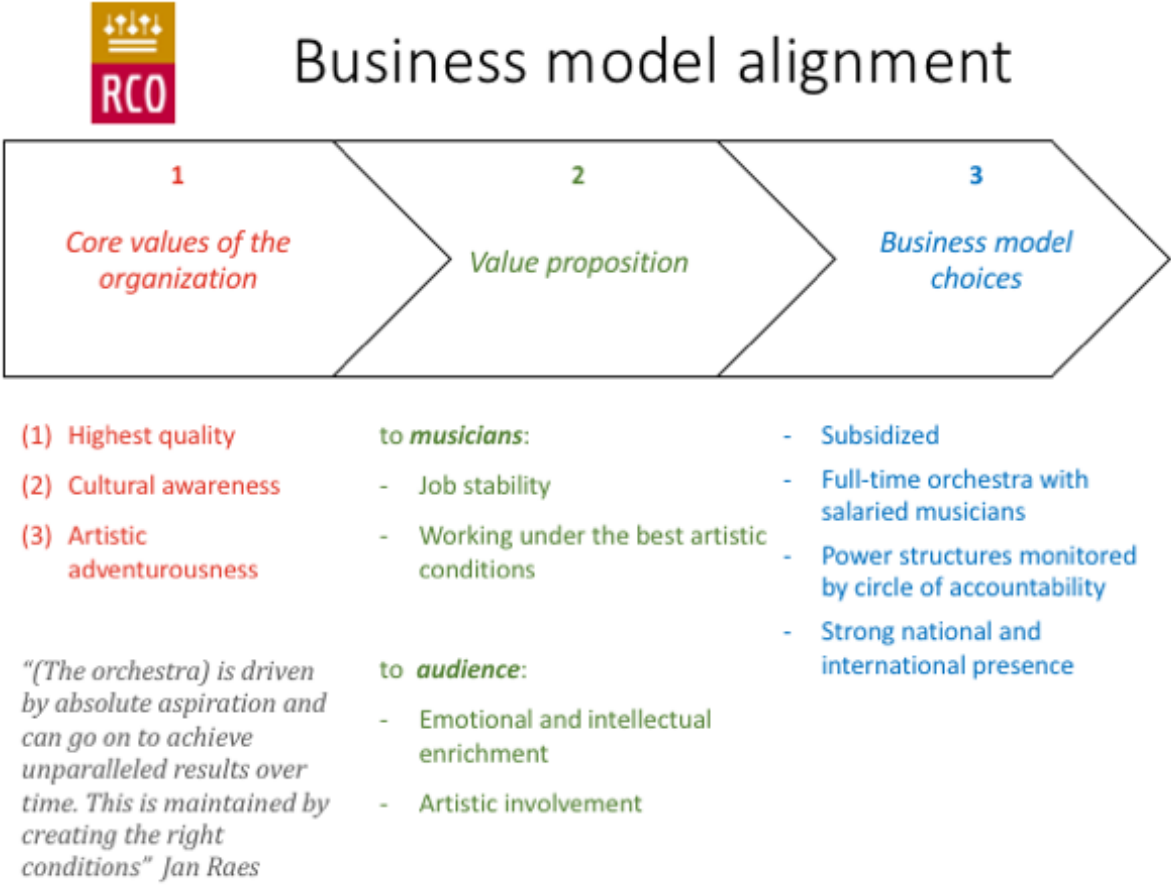
Figure 7: Business model alignment of the Concertgebouworkest

In the case of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, its role as an Arts Institute of the Flemish Community has gained importance over the last decade-and-a-half. Increasing educational and outreach programs have placed the orchestra close to the social fabric of Antwerp. In terms of repertoire, the orchestra's mission statement explicitly mentions the special

attention for Flemish musical heritage, which is perceived as an important value for audiences. The ASO is the only orchestra in the sample that does not stipulate 'high performance quality' as a core value. Accessibility and social relevance are perceived as far more important values. In their case, the subsidized and salaried model, as well as their strong local presence in the city of Antwerp, is in direct service of both core values.
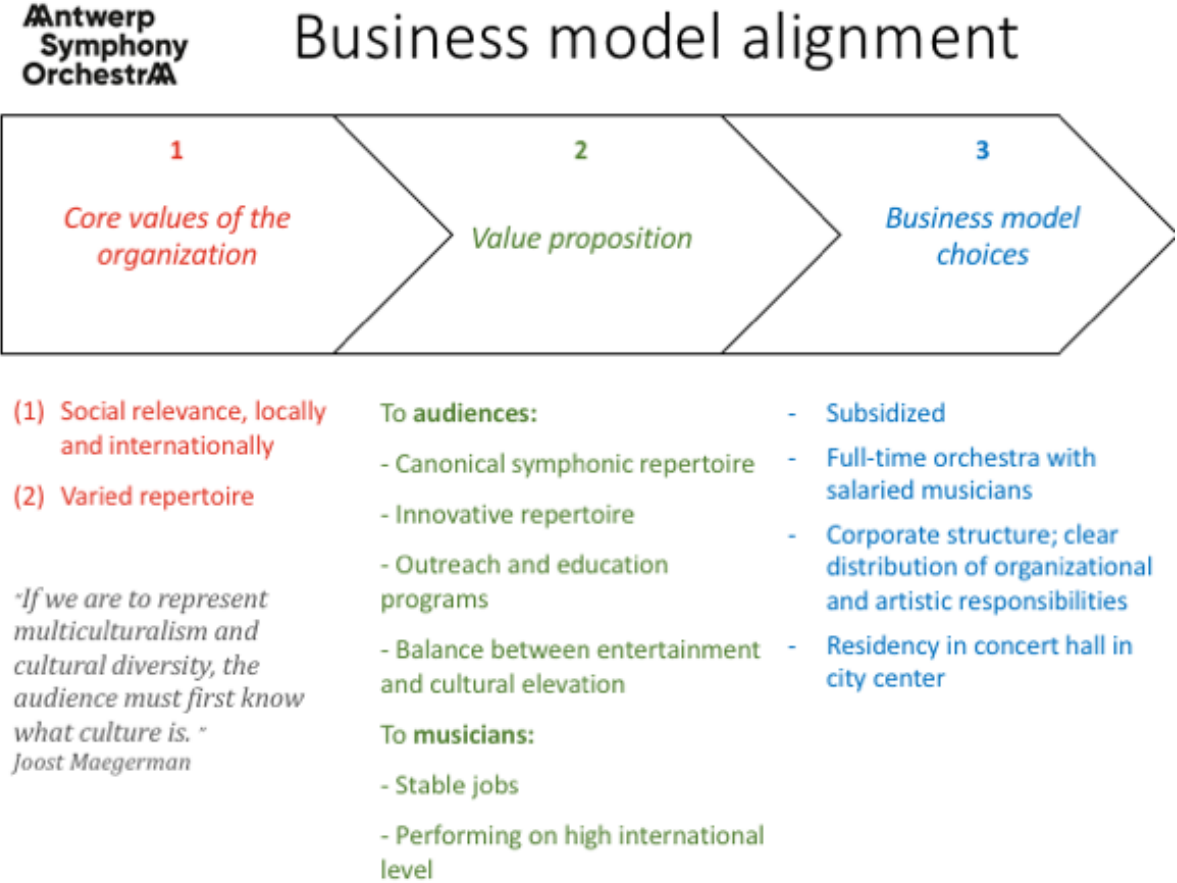
Figure 8: Business model alignment of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra

As a symphony orchestra that needed to survive in a very competitive environment, without the certainty of ample subsidies, London Symphony Orchestra has always been very conscious about the importance of its business model. As the only orchestra in the study that is both full-time and freelance, it seems to combine organizational flexibility and international artistic ambition. Additionally, the orchestra's connection with its immediate environment is remarkable. Two of the three core values of the LSO are directly related to being a beacon of inspiration and a vehicle for value creation for the broadest possible range of people. The LSO Discovery department is of course the showpiece of this approach. The freelance model is convenient for LSO Discovery, because every musician can decide for himself to what extent he engages in LSO Discovery's projects. That way, the department does not take away creative time from the orchestra's performance season.
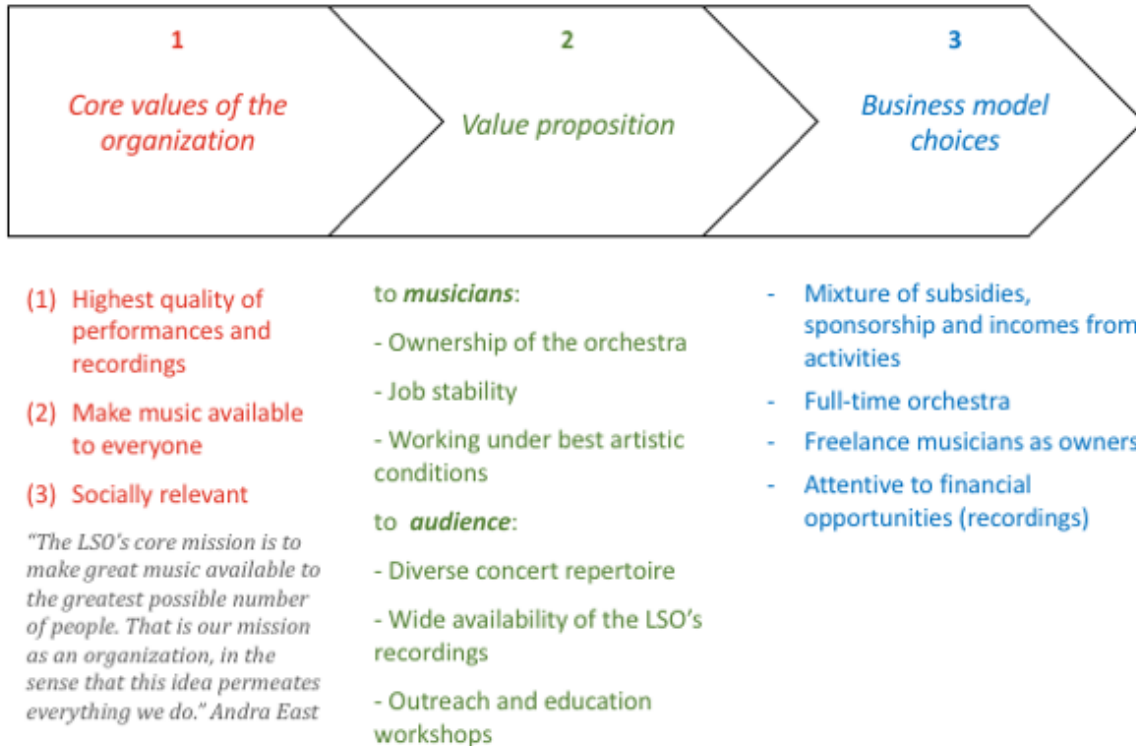
Figure 9: Business model alignment of London Symphony Orchestra

Two observations can be made with regard to the business model alignments of the representative cases. Firstly, the joint core values of 'artistic adventurousness' and 'varied repertoire' from the RCO and the ASO respectively, sometimes conflict with both orchestras' business model choice as a full-time salaried orchestra. Representatives report that a large share of contemporary as well as old repertoire cannot be played because it requires a smaller orchestra. Performing this repertoire with only a part of the salaried musicians would be an inefficient choice. The LSO's freelancer system is better equipped to accommodate to this situation.

Secondly, there is the question as to why these orchestras' respective core values are in place. In some cases, the alignment of core values and business model choices can be read in both directions. For example, does the ASO aspire to be socially relevant because it is subsidized and takes an according social responsibility, or does the orchestra get subsidized because of its original core values? Is the LSO's mission to make music available to everyone a part of an intrinsic social awareness, or a legitimation of its activities such as making commercial recordings? The actual direction of interpretation is in fact irrelevant, but it does highlight the importance of an organization's environment, because both poles are constantly in the

process of calibration. In some cases, a situation can be imagined in which (pragmatic) business model choices dictate the organizations (artistic) core values. The orchestra's environment, as can be concluded from these two observations, can be a driver as well as an obstructer in pursuing certain core values.

The organizations labelled as alternative actively pursue core values that deviate from the sector's dominant logic, within tightly aligned business models that have proven sustainable in their current forms. As a relatively young orchestra seeking to navigate between larger players in the small and dense cultural field of Flanders, Casco Phil has made some specific choices with regard to its business model. For example, Casco Phil is a modular orchestra that consists exclusively of freelancers. Due to the fact that there are no fixed salaries and there is no expectation of the musicians towards employment, the orchestra can be booked in different settings, which also allows them to explore experimental repertoire which requires these different settings. Likewise, the orchestra wants to make use of its flexible structure by being able to realize projects in the very short term. The freelance nature of musicians and management relieves the orchestra from the duty to draw up a concert agenda that is set well in advance and takes into account full-time or part-time relationships. Unexpected opportunities can be planned in the short term, which gives Casco Phil a competitive advantage over larger orchestras that are dependent on long-term programming. This can be an important and unique value for concert presenters looking for immediate commitment. These specific choices and actions enable the orchestra to pursue its core value of artistic experiment.

Business model alignment

1
Core values of the organization

2
Value proposition

3
Business model choices
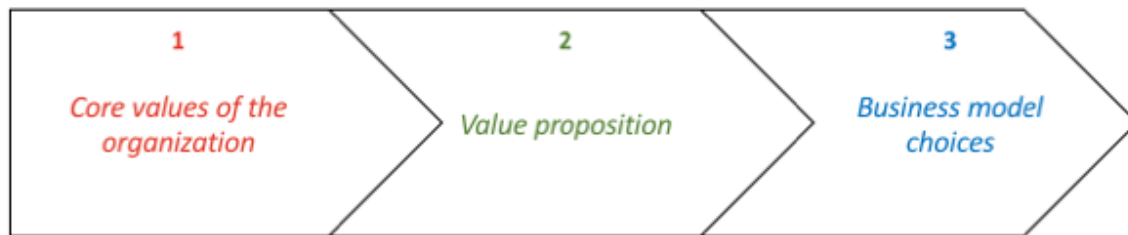
(1) High quality

(2) Artistic experiment

(3) Accessibility

"How can I ensure that I have an audience that continues to come, not just for the reproduction of repertoire music, but also for what a Neyrinck or a Hendrickx recently wrote. That curiosity must be the focus." Ben Haemhouts

to **musicians**:
- Artistic boundary pushing
- Non-binding commitment

to the **audience**:
- Artistic experiments
- Accessibility

to **organizers**:
- On-demand formulas

- No subsidies

- Modularity: freelance musicians and staff + project orchestra

- Centralized decision-making

- Programming: alternating canonical and experimental programs

- Performing outside of traditional concert hall circuit

Figure 10: Business model alignment of Casco Phil

The Splendor model is a comparable example of a very tightly aligned business model. Through a spontaneous process of trial and error, the core values of Splendor have crystallized into a number of specific business model choices. The strength of the business model stems not from focusing on a planned outcome, but rather on being true to the foundational premises: the core values which have been stable, well-defined and calibrated to all participating partners: musicians, audience, and government alike. Because the organization wants to enforce its no-programming policy, they consciously avoid the Dutch subsidy system, which always has conditions and responsibilities attached to it. Secondly, the musicians of Splendor make sure that when new people are to be attracted, the diversity in musical backgrounds is preserved. As experience has taught, jazz musicians tend to use the building in a different way than classical musicians, and composers again in a different way than pop musicians. Moreover, this heterogeneity ensures that the artistic potential of the organization is very broad. Finally, Splendor only engages musicians whose careers have already been launched, and who therefore have a fixed salary elsewhere. Splendor thus minimizes the chance of market conformism in spontaneous programming where artistic autonomy remains more important than audience attendance.

Figure 11: Business model alignment of Splendor

The core values of Aurora Orchestra, finally, are closely connected to the orchestra's aspiration to become the world's most creative orchestra. An adventurous approach to concert programming as well as presentation is reconciled with the idea of accessibility through experiments with various concert formats. In order to make this formula work, Aurora has developed a model through a process of trial and error. The modularity of the orchestra and the freelance engagement of musicians (without any future expectations, which is the biggest difference with the LSO model) is enforced to allow for a broad range of repertoire programming, even within one and the same concert. The thematic concepts on which these experimental concerts are based, are explicitly aimed at making music understandable and enjoyable to all (cf. below). As is the case with Casco Phil, the result of the modularity and lack of one homogeneous group of players is centralized decision-making, which has kept the orchestra successfully up and running for over a decade.

Business model alignment

1 — Core values of the organization
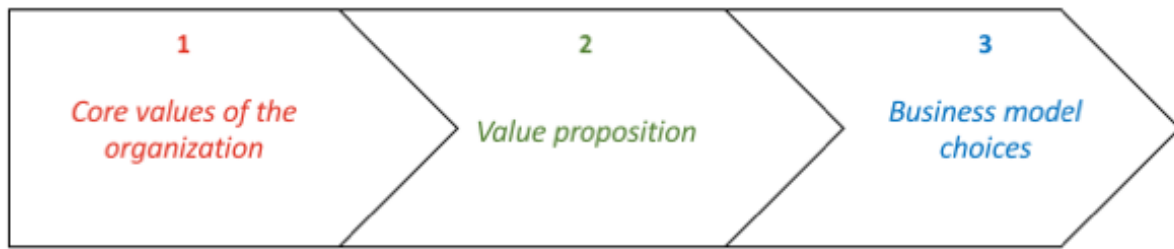
(1) Broad artistic horizon

(2) High quality

(3) Accessibility

"At all levels of the organization, Aurora seeks to cultivate a culture of creativity, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial approach to artistic risk and opportunity"
Mission statement

2 — Value proposition

to *musicians*:

- Adventurous performance opportunities

- Non-binding commitment

to *audience*:

- Artistic experiments

- Accessible shows and concerts of top quality

3 — Business model choices

- Mixture of subsidies, sponsorship and income from activities

- Modularity: freelance musicians in project orchestra

- Centralized decision-making

Figure 12: Business model alignment of Aurora Orchestra

Both the representative and the alternative cases can be viewed as value-driven organizations. They are all operative within the cultural field, which can be argued to be (and traditionally expected to be) more value-driven than commercially driven (Thelwall 2007). One fact that makes a crucial difference, however, is that the organizations labelled as alternative are all young organizations for which the process of calibration with their respective environments lies in their very recent past. The case examples above illustrate that the business model alignment of these alternative orchestras is more consciously designed than in the representative cases, which often rely on more unbending organizational forms. The RCO, for example, has indeed developed a set of core values which are shared by the whole orchestra, but the orchestra's business model has remained unaltered for many decades. The core values, as such, are being projected upon the organizational structure as it is, with minor adaptations as a result. While artistic experiments can be greatly valued, aspects vital to their particular organizational structure simply do not allow for some of these experiments. The model of Splendor provides a perfect counterexample: it has exactly the right features to make its concerts cheap and informal, and to engage in artistic experimentation. The modularity of the three alternative organizations has already been mentioned. Remaining close to the graphic representation, it can be concluded that in the

alternative organizations, the direction of calibration goes from core values to business model choices and not the other way around.

As became apparent in the historical sketch of each case, all six organizations have business models that have matured over a process of trial and error. While the models of the representative cases have stabilized, the alternative cases still thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit under which they saw the light of life. Therefore, apart from providing a more coherent internal alignment of core values and business model choices, the alternative organizations seem more adapted to their current environments. Anticipating legitimacy issues, alternative organization's core values and value propositions often encompass the perceived core values or expectations of the broadest possible audience. The birth of Splendor provides an excellent example. The city of Amsterdam was willing to co-invest in the project on the condition that the initiators were able to collect a large portion of the money themselves. This has served as a litmus test to judge whether the organization-to-be could generate sufficient civil support.

4.2.2.3 Design principles of alternative business models

Casco Phil, Splendor and Aurora Orchestra are paradigmatic examples of a growing number of innovative business models emerging within the cultural sector.[8] These cases are exemplary of the possibilities and limits of organizations that develop their models from core values that deviate from the dominant logic (cf. chapter 1). The alternative business models in this research were designed to face one of the existential challenges of a modern arts organization: how to create a business model that unlocks possibilities for creative flexibility while covering all financial and organizational necessities. These models indicate that an answer to this challenge lies in two important dimensions in which an arts organization can innovate, namely content and form. More specifically, these cases illustrate that these two dimensions are heavily intertwined, meaning that organizational innovation (form) can function as an indispensable condition for unlocking artistic innovation (content). Casco Phil's founder Ben Haemhouts, for example, has formulated this idea almost literally in the following quote (cf. chapter 4.2.1.2):

> "When we started the project, we were an orchestra; a form. And from there we started to think what we were going to do with it. Later, I started to notice that this form stood in the way of the artistic idea. Now we have turned the idea around: we start from an artistic idea and only then we start looking for the ideal form." (VRT EEN 2014)

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[8] Parts of this text are based on an edited translation of: HERMAN, A. 2019. 'Valt creativiteit te orkestreren? Twee cases uit de muzieksector', in *Businessmodellen in de culturele sector: hype, noodzaak of schrikbeeld?* (ed. By A. Schramme and B. Delft), Lannoo Campus, p. 49-60.

All three alternative organizations have managed to remain operative for more than ten years, thereby surviving the start-up phase. The business model lens and its according activity-based approach has highlighted the importance of two aspects for each organization to consider when calibrating form and content: the business model's internal constitution and its adjustment to its external environment. Looking back on the analyses above, two according design principles can be said to contribute to the success of the alternative models.

Firstly, their business model alignment is presented as a logical story: there is coherent transition between the organization's core values and the model itself (see also: Magretta 2002). As illustrated in the quote above, Casco Phil constantly balances artistic conception and pragmatic reality, which translates to a highly hybrid orchestra model. Likewise, the strength of the Splendor business model is being true to the foundational premises. The Splendor core values have been stable, well-defined and broadly recognized among all participating partners, being musicians, audiences and governments alike. The next steps in designing a strong business model are closer to an art than to a science, making sure that all choices that are made reinforce one another and come together in a logically coherent manner. For example, Splendor's choice of limiting the group to 50 musicians allows for a shared ownership, which in turn ensures that all participants contribute in maintaining the system of rights and responsibilities that unlocks the organization's artistic autonomy. At Aurora Orchestra, also, all activities serve the pursuit of the organization's core values. For example, Aurora's highly popular children's concerts attract extra funders, making the format artistically and financially interesting for small-scale experiments to mature into large-scale concert programs. Quite clearly, the form of the orchestra is the driver of its content, as its model is put to use to unlock the orchestra's creative potential.

Although the representative orchestras are equally value-driven, there is a different dynamic between these values and the organizational model. The already quoted aphorism by Mariss Jansons, conductor emeritus of the Concertgebouworkest, provides an adequate metaphor: "The Concertgebouworkest is like a house. It doesn't fall down if you remove one brick." (Bekaert et al. 2017, 112). The three representative orchestras under scrutiny have historically grown into highly efficient and sustainable organizations, but their form can no longer be seen as an enabler for innovation of their content. When core values shift, because of changes in the orchestra's demographic, sociological or aesthetic environment, the model is not able to adapt to these core values. The model is not aimed at constant recalibration of content and form, but is aimed at making the orchestra, indeed, a solid and robust house.

A second design principle is deduced from another observation: in each of the alternative organizations, the notion of complementarity is vital. Each of the researched organizations makes use of the space which larger organizations leave on account of their size and rigidity. Contractual obligations and rights tend to slow down rapid responses within bigger institutions. In the same vein, DiMaggio's theory of institutional isomorphism implies that

change is hard or even impossible to achieve for mature organizational fields (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). As Ben Haemhouts of Casco Phil remarked: "I think that the rigidity of larger institutions ensures that we have something to work with" (Haemhouts 2018). Because the Concertgebouworkest does not own the Concertgebouw itself, the orchestra stands in line with various other orchestras, several years in advance, hoping that it can play its repertoire (Gieler 2019). At Splendor, on the other hand, concerts can be organized at very short notice. Casco Phil relies on the same process: because the orchestra is project-based, it can organize concerts on equally short notice. But this principle of complementarity occurs on a more fundamental scale as well. The Splendor model enables cross-fertilization between established institutions and the innovative field, because the same musicians are involved in both systems: Splendor has various musicians of the Concertgebouworkest in its ranks. For Casco Phil and Aurora, likewise, their freelance and project-based models are tenable because their musicians are not financially dependent on these orchestras and have stable jobs in orchestras like Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra. In order to fulfill their prolific roles, the alternative models seem bound to remain complementary to a larger, institutionalized system, to the extent that they can only survive by virtue of this system. Considering these aspects, it seems that alternative organizations occur within the cracks of the dominant system. They are able to successfully operate only by grace of more muscular players in the field, which adhere to models different from their own.

Although this principle of complementarity is vital to the alternative models, it also exposes their vulnerabilities and limitations. Despite the shared cardinal motto of wanting to create a flexible orchestra model that is adapted to the future, the alternative organizations fully realize that this flexibility implies a continuous adaptation to existing field dynamics.[9] Only within the current state of affairs, these smaller organizations can make use of their competitive advantage on robust orchestras. Should, for example, the subsidy system (or in Aurora Orchestra's case: the well-functioning freelancer system in London) collapse, either as the result of austerity measures or as the ironic consequence of the standardization of these alternative models, a completely new field emerges for the alternative organizations. For example, when the stability that Casco Phil, Splendor and Aurora Orchestra derive from large-scale organizations is eliminated, the pressure on financial profitability will increase, forcing them to fall back on the market principles they set out to avoid. In that case, they can only adopt the dominant logic of pragmatism and reconcile themselves with limitations on artistic independence. Aurora Orchestra, for example, already faces the problem of various copycats (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). Increased competition with almost identical organizations puts additional strains on Aurora, especially in an already arduous environment. Therefore, as discussed in the individual case reports, the potential for upscaling or duplication of each of

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[9] According to Bourdieu's field theory, cultural products are what they are only through their position within a cultural field (see also: chapter 2.3.1). This cultural field situates artistic works within the social conditions of their production, circulation and consumption (Bourdieu 1993). In line of this idea, the field stipulates norms for organizational and artistic behavior. A (tentative) connection between Bourdieu's field theory and Goehr's theory of regulative concepts will be made in the next chapter.

these alternative models is highly uncertain. The principle of complementarity implies that these organizations can survive only within the cracks of the dominant system: not as parasitic actors, but in symbiosis with each other.

It can be concluded that alternative models have been designed in full consciousness of existing field dynamics. As seen from that point of view, the business model approach shows that there is no one ideal business model, but that a good business model is unique in its adequate adaptation to its specific environment. Therefore, this business model conclusion does not insist on ideal and generalizable organizational parameters, but on two abstract design principles on which these successful organizations are based. The first design principle is the calibration of core values and business model choices that is supported by a logical story. The eventual failure of earlier initiatives that explored innovative musical practices arguably lies in the fact that, despite their strive for artistic innovation, they did not assume any novel organizational form to mediate between pragmatic necessities and their artistic aspirations, leading them to reinforce the existing asymmetries between artistic content and organizational form. The second design principle stipulates that a workable business model is adapted to its environment by making efficient use of its complementary potential. At the same time, this principle of complementarity has highlighted that the sustainability of these organizations is not a function of their growth. Upscaling or duplicating these models would compromise their competitive advantage on larger organizations, namely their potential to create a situation in which their model is a driver for innovation.

4.2.3 Comparing musical programming

The first part of this comparative analysis has focused on the organizational side of the research, where sustainability has implicitly been defined as the capacity to remain operative as an organization. In doing so, not only the role of specific business model features has been highlighted, but also the importance of each of the organizations' position within its specific environment. In this next part of the comparative analysis, the organizational model of each organization will be linked to its repertoire tendencies. Sustainability, in this section, will be understood as the capacity to generate an aesthetic output that can be perceived as legitimate. Understanding the conditions under which programming policies can be claimed to be legitimate, will bring this section close to the theoretical concept of the narrative, which will be further untangled in the concluding section.

The programming analysis will occur in three steps. The first part comprises an inventory of the factors that have an impact on programming decisions in the various organizational models. In the second part, the organizations' programming policies will be compared, in order to see what strategies, tactics and specific formulas are being developed. Particular focus will lie on the way these actions are indebted to narratives that reinforce, challenge or modify the dominance of the musical canon. Finally, programming trends of the orchestras will illustrate to what extent these programming policies are reflected in their actual artistic output.

4.2.3.1 Factors impacting programming

The comparison of various organizational models sparks the question as to how this model translates to the level of programming autonomy of each organization. Figure 13 depicts all factors that have to be considered in each organization's process of musical programming. This graphical representation contains every factor that has an actual impact on the organizations' programming policies, meaning those factors which are within and those which are (fully or partially) beyond the reach of the organization itself. Figure 13 is a graphic summary of all factors that have been mentioned in the individual case reports. These results, accordingly, have been gathered from all available sources, ranging from interview data to information drawn from document analysis.
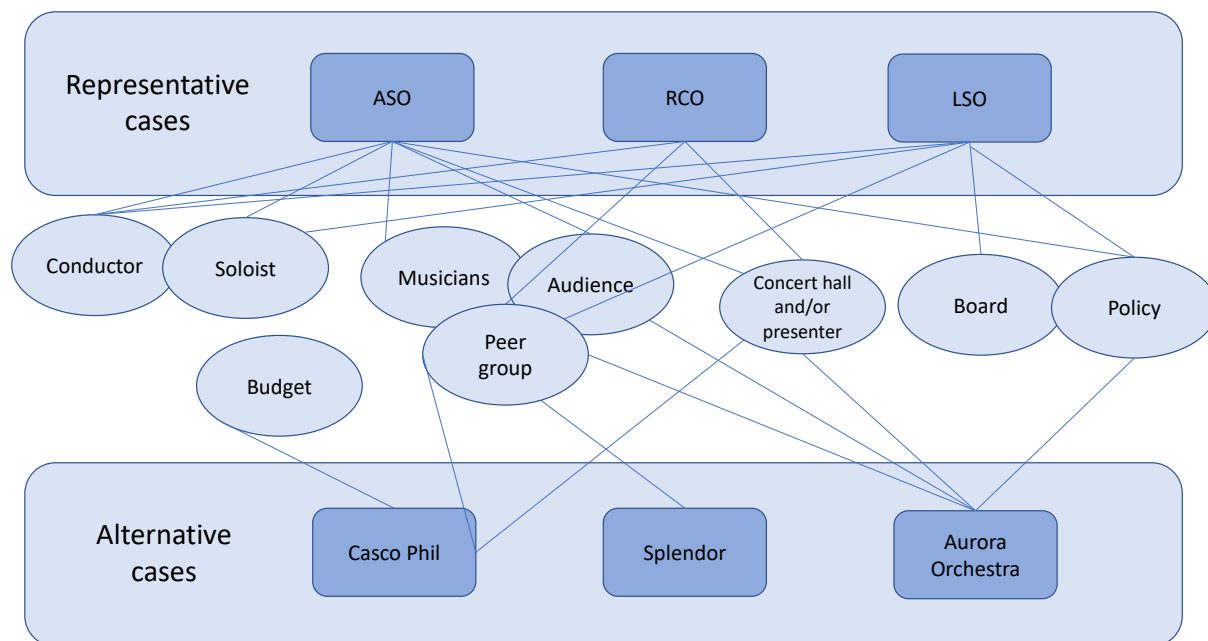
Figure 13: Factors impacting programming decisions in the six cases

It is clear at first glance that the organizations labelled as alternative have less factors to take into account than those labelled as representative. Splendor, most prominently, is the only organization that manages to remain completely free from any external or contextual factors contributing to, or interfering with, its programming decisions. The factor 'peer group' refers to the 50 Splendor musicians themselves, who in fact form their own peer group on which the Splendor organization relies. There is no agreement with any subsidizer or sponsor, nor are there any binding contracts with or among musicians. Every musician makes use of the building and its open agenda in a way he sees fit. This complete autonomy is intrinsically linked to the Splendor model and is paramount to its functioning. One could argue that there is a considerable impact of the audience, as each musician's fee depends on the amount of audience for each concert. In practice, however, this impact is negligible, because the musicians do not financially rely on their Splendor earnings.

In the case of Casco Phil, programming decisions are almost completely in the hands of the conductor. The conductor is, however, not marked as a factor impacting programming, because Casco Phil's conductor is the orchestra's only conductor who also exercises the role of general manager and decides on all aspects of the orchestra's trajectory either way. Equally noteworthy is the presence of the factor 'budget'. Of course, every organization's programming decisions depend on the available budget, but not to this extent: Casco Phil is the only organization in which the orchestra line-up itself depends on the available budget, even before artistic decisions have been made. Apart from that, Casco Phil is relatively free from external factors, because its *modus operandi* embraces conventional programs that provide a financial buffer for experimental programs which are created from artistic principles

only. Casco Phil is dependent on its peer group for programming decisions, as the orchestra survives by filling their gaps.

Aurora Orchestra thrives on the same principle of complementarity with its peer group, as discussed before. Another resemblance with Casco Phil is the orchestra's reliance on its conductor, who is not marked as a factor for the same reason. As a young orchestra, Aurora Orchestra is very conscious of the necessity of having to sell each individual program. Because the organization's financial limitations are not as severe as Casco Phil's, Aurora can strike a more comfortable balance between commercially interesting programs and adventurous repertoires which are close to the organization's core values. Chasing the sweet spot that joins commerce and artistry in one and the same concert, the audience focus of Aurora Orchestra can be said to be the driver for its innovative programs.

The orchestras which are labelled as traditional orchestras have more factors to pay attention to. Their size and the fact that they are more amply subsidized (in percentages as well as in absolute numbers) entail some restrictions and obligations with regard to musical programming. For Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, these obligations have been discussed before. Its role as Art Institution of the Flemish Community requires the orchestra to program contemporary as well as Flemish repertoire, be it to a limited extent. Apart from that, the ASO's programs are mostly conductor-based, which means that a certain conductor is attracted first, and programs are subsequently designed according to that conductor's specialties. The same principle applies to soloists. Finally, it was noted that there is a strong correlation between repertoire choices and audience attendance.

Programming in London Symphony Orchestra is also strongly conductor-based, but the link between concert programs and audience attendance appears to be weaker. The conductor as well as the orchestra itself have sufficient power of attraction to fill the concert hall regardless of the program. A more important factor is the impact of the peer group, in this case mostly referring to the other professional orchestras in London. A clash-diary is in place to avoid overlapping musical programs, conductors and soloists. As the board of the LSO mostly consists of playing members of the orchestra, it is marked as an important factor impacting programming. It is the board who elects the conductors and soloists. As a subsidized National Portfolio Organization of Arts Council England, the LSO has to meet some requirements with regard to programming, as does Aurora Orchestra. Interestingly, there is no evidence that the model of the LSO, which only allows for very limited rehearsal time, influences programming decisions.

As is the case in London Symphony Orchestra, conductor, soloist and peer group are very strong factors in programming decisions of the Concertgebouworkest. These factors are related, because the RCO's peer group often engages the same conductors and soloists. There is one historical difference with the LSO, however. While the LSO has always avoided the

system of one principal conductor, the RCO has known only seven principal conductors, each of whom has had an enormous impact on the distinctive sound quality of the orchestra as well as on its programming affinities. For the RCO, the LSO and the ASO to a lesser extent, concert halls and presenters, especially abroad, put strains on the orchestras' programming autonomy as they tend to favor more conservative programs on account of audience attraction.

Figure 13 allows to make some cross-case observations. First and foremost, the principle of complementarity that was put forward in the previous paragraph, emerges again in the guise of the peer group. In the case of the alternative orchestras, this peer group refers to the bigger institutions as well as their own rivals in scale. In the case of the traditional orchestras, the peer group refers to the likewise structured orchestras that are operative in the same area or the same international concert circuit. This analysis also reveals that the impact of the external conductor is bigger in the representative orchestras, for two reasons. Firstly, the alternative orchestras, at least in these cases, have their own conductor who is the primary architect of the organization's core values. Secondly, the representative orchestras all aspire towards attracting the same circle of international conductors, who each have their own repertoires in their wake.

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from this data is in line with the observations of the previous subchapter. Once more, this inventory has illustrated that organizations cannot be understood as isolated entities, but as actors within a field where certain mechanisms are in place that are largely beyond the control of the organization itself. The alternative organizations are moderately freer from these mechanisms, because they are less constricted by policy demands. On the other hand, their actions need to be carefully coordinated with the actions of the more muscular traditional orchestras. The next paragraphs relate these observations to the organizations' respective programming policies.

4.2.3.2 Programming policies

Although each organization places its own emphases, programming policies among various orchestras often overlap. Certain patterns in the orchestra's actions with regard to musical programming are discernable and can be directly or indirectly linked to the orchestra's quest for legitimacy, taking into account the specific position of each orchestra among its peers. In the following paragraph, the six organizations' programming policies will be broken down into three elements. The first part summarizes the general programming philosophy of each organization. In a second part, their respective outreach, education and diversification efforts (all aimed at addressing audiences less familiar to the symphony orchestra) will be bundled under the name 'broadening formulas', and finally, specific tactics and formulas will be identified which are employed for the development of, and increased familiarity with, the classical repertoire. These formulas will be argued to be endorsed by underlying narratives

that frame individual works into the canon (or indeed, *a* canon). At this point, the 'narrator' comes into view. This section is aimed at deepening the understanding of the factors and actors that shape, or adhere to, the narratives and how these narratives are (consciously or unconsciously) deployed to legitimize the organization's actions. Apart from descriptively enumerating various programming formulas, each part of this subchapter also demonstrates to what extent the organization's distinct approaches are linked to their model. In other words, the overall aim is to explore which narratives are in place, and why they do or do not function as a legitimizing factor within a particular organizational setting.

General programming philosophy

Every organization under research has a very conscious and unique approach to musical programming. Nevertheless, every organization needs to balance similar tensions, and some overarching observations can be made at face value. For example, whether or not the organization is subsidized, plays a significant role in adopting a certain programming philosophy. Equally relevant is the observation that the three orchestras labelled as representative all have delineated concert seasons, enabling the audience to acquire annual subscriptions as well as separate tickets. Because of this season curve, there is a strong inclination in the representative orchestras to organize their concerts in several series, each one with varying repertoire emphases. A final important observation with regard to the representative orchestras is their increasing attention for diversification in terms of repertoires and (potential) audiences. These observations are in line with the dominant logic of pragmatized aesthetics that has been diagnosed in previous chapters. Many of the season series have a particularly strong focus on the traditional and rigid musical canon, and thus incline towards an affirmation of the stagnated canon. Parallel to these series, and largely separate from them, other formulas are in place to accommodate to the increasing demand for audience expansion and civil embeddedness.

In terms of musical programming, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra has relatively ample moving space, as the organization is protected as an Arts Institution of the Flemish Community. Apart from the formulation in the orchestra's management agreement that the orchestra serves as a representative institution for (at least) the Flemish Community, and that it supports the *grandeur* of the canon as well as innovation (cf. chapter 4.2.3.2)**,** there is limited specification of the desired musical programming strategy of the ASO. As mentioned earlier, the orchestra has undergone a metamorphosis towards an institution with a broad task package, while some key elements such as the regular programming of Flemish composers, remained in place. However, while new concert formats and artistic concepts indeed attract new audiences and widen civil support, the artistic curve remains the first priority of the orchestra. Manager Joost Maegerman clarifies:

"The pressure on diversification in programming, and the enormous amount of opportunities that exist for the use of multimedia and interdisciplinarity (anything that falls under the magical word 'innovation'), can be very dangerous in our sector. Before you know it, you forget that there is an artistic growth process that has to be done on stage, and in which certain elements are indispensable: namely performing a certain repertoire with the right conductor, with the right soloist, in the right venues" (Maegerman 2018).

Subscription concerts of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra are divided into various series. The most elaborate one of these series is called 'masterworks' and mostly contains canonical repertoire, performed by well-known soloists and conductors. These traditional concerts still attract the largest amount of audience. Apart from these series, the orchestra has a wide variety of activities beyond the scope of the traditional repertoire, meant to thoroughly engrain the orchestra in the societal fabric of its environment (cf. below).

The programming policy of the Royal Concertgebouworkest consists of three major pillars that sometimes overlap. The orchestra's first priority is to perform the internationally renowned corpus of existing works for symphony orchestra, in other words: the musical canon. Secondly, this canonical corpus must be complemented by newly written works for symphony orchestra, for which the orchestra itself can function as commissioner. Thirdly, works that contribute to diversity can be programmed, under the condition that it is "possible", meaning that these works should be reconcilable with the other priorities of the orchestra's programming policy (Fried 2019). In other words, the third pillar is incorporated in the other two. This careful position in the diversification debate will be discussed at length below. Making abstraction of the third pillar of 'diversity' in the RCO's programming policy, the orchestra fulfills a binary function: that of a museum and that of a laboratory. Joel Ethan Fried, the orchestra's artistic director and programmer, stresses: "In the process of programming, we have to find a balance between those two functions; a balance between new and old, between known and unknown" (Fried 2019). The orchestra's management agrees that every art institution that has the resources, has to take this responsibility.

Although this binary function of the orchestra calls to mind the narration of the canon as open, the idea conflicts with another strongly ingrained aspect of the RCO's programming policy. The Royal Concertgebouworkest has a very pronounced division of its concert programs into separate series. Subscriptions are mainly arranged according to these series, and the series' profiles are amply used in communication and promotion. Decreased subscription rates over the last decade have put an enormous amount of pressure on concert programs, each of which now has to sell well individually. The division into concert series, and the according targeting of certain audiences, provides a partial solution in the sense that it grants legitimacy in the pragmatic domain: segmentation of the repertoire, and most prominently the securing of the perimeter of the traditional canon, generates more incomes. The artistically inspired wish to

convincingly entangle the RCO's functions of the museum and the laboratory, must humble itself to the narrative that affirms the stagnated canon. Just like in the ASO, however, the division of the concert series and the according segmentation of the repertoire are not dogmatic in the RCO's subscriptions. Firstly, there is a temporal overlap in the series, so series are not entirely bound to one period. Secondly, mixed subscriptions are promoted, in which the audience can create its own concert package.

In London Symphony Orchestra, segmentation of the audience is less articulated than in the ASO and especially the RCO. The underlying philosophy of the LSO's programming policy is the idea that music is timeless and must not be pinned down to a specific time period (Alderman 2019). At the heart of the LSO's programming policy, accordingly, lies the idea of creativity and imagination. The title of the 2019-2020 season, "Always Moving. Look back, leap forwards" is a nice paraphrase of the basic idea of creatively combining tradition and experimentation. The orchestra is confident that audiences will remain true to the orchestra if there is a balance between concerts that attract a lot of audiences and concerts that feature unexpected and new things (Alderman 2019). The main ambition of the LSO and of the LSO Discovery department in particular, is to secure the future of classical music. In light of this ambition, it is crucial that LSO Discovery transcends a mere isolated function within the organization and is not degraded to a separate platform to house the more idealistic notions of orchestra work. An example can be found in the way the season brochures are conceived. The brochure presents all of LSO's separate events in the same overview, regardless whether it is part of the Barbican season or LSO Discovery (London Symphony Orchestra 2019). This reflects the ambition to closely involve the more unconventional LSO Discovery projects in the LSO's regular concert season. Accordingly, there is no segmentation of audiences and the LSO, as an integral organization, speaks out to the same audiences for every kind of concert. Unlike the RCO, season subscriptions of the LSO are bundled per theme, each of which covers many musical styles ranging from conventional to experimental (London Symphony Orchestra 2019).

Programming philosophies of the orchestras labelled as alternative differ in interesting ways from those of the representative orchestras. Firstly, there is less focus on a concert season as a whole, which reflects the (vital) flexibility of these organizations. Secondly, the organizations' policies are particularly interesting to study because they have grown and matured in tandem with the organizational models. That link creates tensions. On the one hand, the organizations' respective *raisons d'être* are defined by their distinctive programming policies. As can be read from these organizations' core values, their focus on repertoire development and programming autonomy call into mind the narratives that understand the musical canon as open, in which edging the traditional canon is key. On the other hand, however, their frailer organizational models entail restrictions in that regard. Their programming policies and organizational models are very consciously calibrated and illustrate how pragmatic and aesthetic tensions often collide.

As an emblematic illustration of this coordination, the artistic vision of Casco Phil and its organizational structure are both based on the idea of complementarity. Casco Phil tries to do what other organizations are, for many reasons, unable to do, and thus maneuvers itself into the orchestral environment. The orchestra's programming policy reflects this *modus operandi* to a certain extent. While the orchestra retains a very large amount of flexibility and adaptability to strategically navigate among larger orchestras, the idea of artistic compromise does not stretch endlessly. The orchestra representatives explicitly emphasize that Casco Phil owes its legitimacy to its artistic adventurousness, without allowing too many compromises to the market. The orchestra chairman summarizes:

> "An orchestra needs income, that is nothing to be ashamed of. And in order to earn money, you need to analyze the market. But that does not mean that there aren't any artistic principles and values. Those can easily co-exist." (Vrijsen 2018)

Precisely this idea legitimizes Casco Phil's approach to budget acquisition and handling: to get money where it is abundant and spend it where it is needed. This balancing exercise translates to tailor-made programs. Casco Phil offers a broad span of programs, which are in fact only initial ideas as a basis for further negotiation. These programs can be divided into three categories: outreach concerts, traditional concerts and experimental projects. Commercial projects form an independent category, because they largely fall beyond Casco Phil's own programming policy. On average, artistic director Haemhouts designs twelve different programs every season: two outreach programs, five repertoire concerts and five experimental projects. In any of these concerts, the orchestra set-up differs. For example, within the repertoire concerts, a program of Haydn can be performed with only 17 players, while the Beethoven-program requires 45 musicians. The distinction between these three categories is never absolute: there is at least one piece of contemporary or non-canonical music per program. Even in a concert setting as conservative as the New Year's concert, which is the most profitable annual event of the orchestra, there is always an element of surprise, such as a march by the renaissance composer William Byrd or short modernist pieces by Bartók. As such, Casco Phil's overall programming philosophy is oriented towards creating narratives that understand the musical canon as open.

Comparable to Casco Phil, Aurora Orchestra has an intentionally broad repertoire. During the orchestra's early years of development, the classical and romantic repertoire was avoided to the benefit of contemporary and baroque music. This strategic consideration, comparable to Casco Phil's basic idea of complementarity, resulted in a musicians' base who was familiar with a broad range of repertoires, which manager John Harte now considers to be one of the main strengths of Aurora. The orchestra's program of activities is supported by three primary pillars. Firstly, the experimental Orchestral Theatre series at Southbank Centre, in which various musical repertoires meet other art forms in one dramaturgical unity, can be

interpreted as the most representatively programmed series of Aurora. Secondly, the performance program at Kings Place spans the whole repertoire and covers the majority of Aurora's activities. Finally, educational and participatory programs, which will be referred to as broadening formulas below, are a third pillar on which Aurora Orchestra leans.

Strictly speaking, commercial projects are kept to a minimum at Aurora. Still, artistic director and programmer Jane Mitchell emphasizes that all of Aurora's programs have a strong audience focus. Conscious about having to sell all programs on a program-to-program basis, each program is conceived with marketing perspectives in mind. "If we lose our ability to sell programs, we alienate ourselves" (Mitchell 2019), Mitchell explains. At the same time, this pragmatic audience focus is not perceived as a restriction to the orchestra's creativity and autonomy. In the words of Harte:

> "I think audiences have always been at the heart of what we do. We never shied away from the idea of being commercial, in the sense that I think it's a marker of audience appeal and impact. We have never seen a hard and fast distinction between a purely artistic program on the one hand and commercial audience-driven projects on the other hand. In our view, they interlink; the sweet spot where they join up is what we are aiming for." (Harte 2019)

Superficially, this programming philosophy very closely resembles Casco Phil's, and the artistic impetus is indeed the same. The main difference, however, is that Aurora has less organizational constraints: the freelance statute is much more common in London than in Flanders, and unlike the financially independent Casco Phil, Aurora enjoys a considerable amount of subsidies (for a London-based orchestra of that size). In that sense, Aurora is better equipped to strike a productive balance between a pragmatic reality and an aesthetic mission.

Finally, Splendor's programming philosophy is very straightforward, since the initiators have decided to employ a 'no-programming program' for the venue. Splendor has an open agenda, in which each of the 50 musicians can reserve a slot for any of the three possible performance spaces (housing an audience of 100, 60 or 30 people respectively) in the building on a first-come, first-served basis. For musicians, the main artistic value of Splendor is precisely the fact that there is no interference whatsoever with regard to content, and that artistic cross-fertilization is not explicitly requested:

> "Every Splendor musician employs the venue as he sees fit, and most of them do not even have the explicit goal of doing something together. The outcome on an artistic level, therefore, is very diverse and lacks any kind of logic. Splendor is primarily a facility: there is space to do things, there are plenty of interesting figures walking around, and from time to time an interesting project comes out. Everything happens by chance, and I would not have it otherwise." (Gieler 2019)

The artistic output of Splendor is diverse by default and crosses the entire musical spectrum: conventional concerts can appear alongside experimental projects, because financial responsibility lies entirely with the partaking musicians and not with the organization itself.

Broadening formulas

In this paragraph, all outreach and education programs, as well as popularizing formulas such as movie concerts and cross-over concepts, are bundled together under the term 'broadening formulas'. In short, anything that is aimed at diversifying or expanding the orchestra's traditional audience base and thus increase civil embeddedness, is encapsulated within this term. While the importance of these formulas has only increased over the last few years and is inherently connected to the legitimacy discussion, the specific tactics employed differ from orchestra to orchestra.

In the representative orchestras, the broadening formulas appear in the most prominent fashion. For example, London Symphony Orchestra's platform LSO Discovery places education and outreach at the very heart of the orchestra. Reaching over 60.000 people every year with an average of three activities every day, ranging from workshops to hospital concerts, it is recognized as one of the world's leading music education programs. LSO Discovery involves LSO players as mentors, leaders and performers in projects that are offered free or at minimal cost to participants as well as audiences (London Symphony Orchestra 2015). In general terms, LSO Discovery's programs are aimed at disintegrating all barriers to classical music, whether they are financial, logistical, geographical or educational in nature (East 2019). This core value is an instantiation of the LSO's broader mission to make great music available to the widest possible range of people (Lehman 2000). Judging by the funding and wide acclaim it receives, the LSO Discovery department is one the orchestra's most valuable assets in its struggle for legitimacy.

Although the LSO Discovery department works very closely with the orchestra itself, it is in fact a separate department of the organization. Its outreach and education activities can be divided into two categories, which sometimes overlap. Firstly, so-called 'First Access' projects respond to the idea of social responsibility, and include a children's hospital program, concerts in schools, LSO Discovery choirs for local 8- to 18-year-olds, and interactive storytelling sessions for under-5's and their families (London Symphony Orchestra 2015). Secondly, the 'Lifelong Learning' projects involve frequent pre-concert talks, as well as the LSO Community Choir, an un-auditioned choir of more than 100 local residents that gives concerts alongside the more experienced LSO choral groups. Relating to the idea of lifelong learning, experiments with concert presentation are a crucial part of LSO Discovery's philosophy. Whether it is by putting a speaker on stage telling the audience what to expect, by involving the audience itself,

or by using visual aids, LSO Discovery wants to give audiences the tools they need to understand what is happening on stage. Next to being part of the perceived responsibility of the orchestra, LSO Discovery's activities also nurture the LSO's audiences of the future. Andra East, head of LSO Discovery, explains:

> "We do observe that people develop a continued engagement with the LSO through the Discovery program. For example, I have had adult members of the LSO Community Choir, who had no experience in music before, attending the LSO's concerts. There is a certain progression of people. I think it is a reasonable interpretation that Discovery is sort of a portal." (East 2019)

Just like in the LSO, the management of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra considers the orchestra's outreach and education programs as one of the main pillars. In an effort to contribute to a wider interest in orchestral culture, a range of actions and programs has been designed over the years. First of all, the ASO wants to make its concerts open to everyone by means of diversification in ticket prizes, allowing every individual to visit the ASO's main concerts for prices that in some cases can drop down to 2 euros. Various educational programs by the ASO for babies, toddlers, children and adolescents are increasingly becoming integrated within Antwerp's education system. While these educational programs are mostly intended to arouse curiosity and promote a discourse of multicultural tolerance, comparable programs also reach out to communities that do not easily get into contact with classical music. For example, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra Mobile brings a downsized version of the orchestra to audiences who are unable to attend any outside concerts: the orchestra regularly performs in prisons, hospitals and residential care centers, where it performs an attractive program with accessible classical music. Relatively new to the ASO's programming range are the annual movie concerts, where a popular movie is projected on a large screen while the orchestra provides the live soundtrack. Blockbusters such as *Titanic* and *West Side Story,* and fragments from famous Pixar-movies have each time attracted a full house. Three times per season, the very successful KID-concerts bring classical music to children, enriched by a theatrical frame story. Twice per season, the brand-new Club-concerts introduce fragments of the ASO's featuring repertoire to young and curious audiences in a very informal context, alternated with short explanations by a popular Flemish personality, the soloist or the conductor, and topped off with musical beats in the concert hall's lobby.

These formulas ensure a wide visibility of the orchestra and contribute to the orchestra's wish to be an active platform for cultural exchange. Comparable to the LSO, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra makes enormous efforts to remove the barriers associated with classical music circuit. Unlike the much less subsidized LSO, however, these efforts correspond with requirements stipulated in the orchestra's management agreement. The link with the legitimacy of the orchestra is an interesting one. The ASO's management states that there is currently no proof that the orchestra's broadening efforts lead to a returning audience.

However, the orchestra management stresses that it is important for the ASO to offer these formulas and continue to engage in these broadening efforts, because it creates civil support. For the continued legitimacy of the orchestra and the according claims on subsidies, it is crucial that every individual at least knows what an orchestra is, and that every individual has, at least in theory, accessibility to it. "Recruiting souls", as one manager (Maegerman 2018) puts it, is of secondary importance.

The situation in Amsterdam is somewhat different. As one of the main short-term priorities of the Royal Concertgebouworkest's management is to be approachable (Raes 2019), the orchestra has developed various formats and formulas aimed at attracting new audiences and widening the visibility of the orchestra. Although various formulas are in place, there is much less focus on outreach and education than in the LSO and the ASO. The artistic curve of the orchestra remains the main priority of the RCO. This somewhat cautious position is justified by the orchestra management from two angles. Firstly, although broadening formulas aim at increasing the orchestra's legitimacy, they not always prove effective. Indeed, occasional experiments with film music or rock bands make the orchestra visible to those who haven't experienced it before, and thus contribute to the orchestra's civil support. For example, on April 30th, 2013, the Concertgebouworkest joined forces with the popular Dutch DJ Armin van Buuren, in an open-air concert on the occasion of the first annual King's Day of the new Dutch king Willem-Alexander. "You show your subsidizer that you are not the Plain Jane they may think you are", manager Jan Raes (2019) argues. In general, however, the RCO does not engage in cross-over projects anymore. A few years of working with the combination of popular artists and classical music has not resulted in a formula that was workable for both parties. The percentage of new audience that returned for a classical concert proved very small. Also, contrary to intuition, cross-over projects with famous pop musicians, as well as film music concerts, tend to be more expensive than regular concerts: pop musicians have high fees, film rights are very expensive, and ticket prices have to be low because nobody wants to pay 100 euros for a movie (Raes 2019). Most importantly, orchestra representatives strongly feel that when an orchestra does something that is too far away from its core business, it will not generate new audiences, by lack of affinity. The approachability of the orchestra, in conclusion, is not to be confused with superficiality or lowering the bar artistically. Every attempt of broadening the orchestra's activities, Raes stresses, needs to occur in full knowledge of the artistic intention.

This is related to the second justification for the RCO's somewhat skeptical position towards broadening formulas. In 2014, Jan Raes was quoted in the Belgian magazine Rekto:verso, saying:

> "This debate (on diversification; AH) has started with the best intentions, but you do not solve anything by only filling concert halls with likable things. Music by, say, Stockhausen, Zemlinsky or Szigeti is not always easy to digest. You have to learn to

decode this music, and that does not happen overnight. Do concert halls have to be sold-out all the time? No! We have to be careful that our sector does not crumble into entertainment" (Quoted in: Kennes 2014)

The Concertgebouworkest's broadening formulas are designed to support this process of decoding. The pursuit of diversity and inclusivity occurs in small steps, to which the formulas are, to a certain extent, adapted. The showpiece of the RCO's formulas is the Essentials series, containing three annual concerts that target audiences between ages 25 and 40. Just like the ASO's Club Concerts, the RCO's Essentials series brings short concerts, starting at 9PM, with a well-known and charismatic presenter who introduces the music on stage. Afterwards, the pop-up Entrée Café provides opportunities for drinks and a talk. During the concert itself, the audience is introduced to an essential masterwork from the canonical repertoire. Concerts from the Essentials series have included Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies, but also featured more challenging works such as the entire third act of Wagner's *Die Walküre.* The formula is an enormous success (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018b). It is very clear to the orchestra management that young people are attracted to this formula because they are among their age group: about half of the audience is under 50 years old, compared to 26% during regular concerts. In the 2017-2018 season, the Essentials series has attracted 50% new audience, referring to people who had never attended an RCO concert before. At the time of writing, there were no statistics available yet, but it has become clear that a small percentage of this audience returns for regular subscription concerts. The Essentials series is a crucial part of what can be called a pipeline model which is aimed at facilitating the slow process of decoding music and familiarizing new audiences with various repertoires. Broadening efforts in the RCO are more oriented towards making the repertoire understandable than towards luring in new audience. In the representative orchestras, there seems to be a subtle divide between those who see the broadening formulas as an end and those who see it as a means. The activities of LSO Discovery and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra seem to be largely self-legitimizing, while the activities of the RCO can be viewed as attempts to build the audience of the future (in the German sense of *Bildung*), by familiarizing them with the orchestra's on-stage activities. This divide will be further commented upon in the next chapter, in relation to the narratives of the musical canon.

Looking for new ways of familiarizing audiences with the repertoire is a remarkable common thread in the alternative orchestras under study. The flexibility of their models in combination with their financial limitations, often result in creative and intelligent approaches to outreach and education.

One of the core values of Aurora Orchestra includes sharing orchestral music with a broad range of audiences. While this idea is already strongly represented in the orchestra's theatrical concepts in the Orchestral Theatre series, Aurora also engages in more specific educational activities. The orchestra's 'Learning and Participation' pillar encompasses all work produced

for young audiences as well as for community settings beyond the concert hall, such as schools and hospitals (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). From this approach, two concert series have materialized. Aurora Orchestra's *Far, Far Away* series is a storytelling program which is similar to the orchestral theatre concept. The basic idea is about bringing music to life in an interesting and vivid way, be it on a smaller scale. At Kings Place as well as in alternative venues such as schools and nurseries, musical stories featuring three-player arrangements from well-known classical pieces are presented to young children between 0 and 4 years old and their families. For example, in a 2017 program entitled *Debussy and the Snow Elephant,* preludes by Debussy are used as a soundtrack to help Jimbo the shy snow elephant learn how to dance. Other programs include music by Chopin, Tchaikovsky and Mozart, but also more challenging composers such as Bartók and Britten. The works are included based on their relation to the overarching theme, without reference to their canonical status. The *Far, Far Away* series is Aurora's most popular series, with every show consistently sold-out in every venue (Harte 2019). Another and more recent series includes the *Immersed* workshop, in which young audiences are invited to take place among Aurora's musicians and experience memorized performances from within the orchestra. In the near future, Aurora Orchestra hopes to be able to open the series up to children with special educational needs. In order to do so, Aurora management applies for additional funding for the creative learning programs specifically.

Here, a particularly interesting feature of Aurora's model comes to the fore. Central to Aurora's programming policy is the idea that the orchestra's different activities serve each other's purposes. The education and outreach programs have often proved to be a seedbed for the experimental orchestral theatre projects, which can conveniently be tried out on a smaller scale. This cross-fertilization between small-scale and large-scale projects is not only artistically viable, it also allows the orchestra to budget creative time as well as rehearsal time for its financially challenging experimental concerts.

The same amount of model-specific complementarity and efficacy can be found in Casco Phil's programming strategies, as mentioned earlier. Casco Phil tries to reconcile the idea of experimentation with low threshold. One way to pursue this aspiration is by means of social projects. Since 2016, for example, Casco Phil has organized summer camps called *Croque Malines,* for children between 6 and 12 years old (in cooperation with the subsidized music promotion center called Musica), in which musical initiation is combined with the joy of preparing food together. The admission fee is 130 euro for five days and includes a daily meal. Children from socially disadvantaged families pay only 25 euro. Haemhouts contends that orchestras are "morally obliged" to play a constructive role in their service area, even if they, like Casco Phil, do not receive any government funding. Although the social projects Casco Phil does organize, operate at a financial loss, it is strongly felt that the projects belong to the orchestra's DNA. In fact, as both Haemhouts and the chairman stress, Casco Phil owes its name to the idea of social engagement (cf. chapter 4.2.1.2). This idea not necessarily translates into substantial concert series in schools, neglected neighborhoods or prisons, but rather in a

fundamental attempt to achieve a sense of ownership with audiences from all backgrounds (as well as the musicians themselves), which is enforced by the programming policy. Haemhouts describes his motivation to engage in social projects, with a strong focus on children, as follows:

> "There is a huge gap in education. We want to bring young people into contact with classical music. For me it makes no sense to subsidize institutions heavily, if you do not support the basis as well: the cultural education of young people." (Haemhouts 2018)

Just like in the RCO, it is felt that successful outreach and education efforts have more to do with making the repertoire understandable to audiences than adapting the repertoire to dominant taste patterns.

For Splendor, finally, strong presence of outreach and education programs would contradict the organization's premise of no programming policy. Still, their actual presence can be legitimized through the fact that Splendor is, first and foremost, an organization that needs to think pragmatically. Educational activities are organized during the day, when the venue is the least occupied by Splendor musicians. The main goal of Splendor's educational activities is to familiarize children with the diversity of music. The Splendor Kids program inspires children to engage in creative experimentation, which takes place during workshops in singing, improvisation and composition. Another program called 'Future Orchestra' brings together children between 6 and 13 years old in a creative orchestral setting that welcomes all instruments. During school vacations, the orchestra members come together for two days, to improvise and compose new music. The Future Orchestra plays two or three concerts every year, often around a central theme that has spontaneously emerged during the workshops. Recent examples include programs entitled 'Dirk: A Space Opera', 'Birdcomposition' and 'Halloween Concert'. Other educational projects include choir lessons every Wednesday afternoon, under guidance of a Splendor musician. During workshops sessions, children often visit concerts that are programmed at that time, to get acquainted with various musical instruments and musical styles. The activities are not only a regular source of income, but also a source of legitimacy for the organization.

While it is clear that both representative and alternative orchestras consider it their core business and responsibility to engage in broadening activities, some differences attract attention. Whereas these broadening formulas are used as an additional source of legitimacy for representative orchestras, in some cases strongly associated with their subsidies, and thus form a separate pillar in the orchestra's programming, alternative orchestras seem more capable of incorporating these formulas into their main concerts. This difference allows to draw a link with the concept of the narrative. With regard to the broadening formulas, two different narratives are in place. The representative orchestras, as argued many times before, generally have more difficulties to integrate broadening formulas into their core activities.

Their activities seem to be underpinned by a historically dominant narrative that affirms the stagnated canon, and that stipulates according conditions of access to the imaginary museum. The ritualized concert practice that traditional symphony orchestras have cultivated and benefited from throughout much of their history, is not easily reconciled with the urgent call for accessibility and broader civil embeddedness. The rigid musical canon and the broadening gesture, therefore, seem bound to appear separate from each other. The alternative orchestras under study experience less difficulties with overcoming this division. As these organizations have less historical baggage, their activities are less hindered by traditional and historical conceptions of the musical canon. There appears to be a bigger margin to reconcile accessibility and repertoire in a way that audiences find acceptable. For example, Aurora's outreach programs are designed exclusively according to the overarching theme, and Splendor's Future Orchestra even designs such a theme bottom-up, as it emerges from the children's own imagination. Financial constraints, not historical baggage, prevent the alternative organizations to operationalize these formulas at full potential.

An exceptionally striking pattern that recurred in the interviews is the fact that it remains mostly uncertain whether broadening formulas lead to the continued engagement of audiences at all, leading the orchestras (representative as well as alternative) to look for other ways to connect repertoire and audience. A new focus is directed towards tools for the proper understanding or 'decoding' of classical music. In that sense, there is an increasing sensibility that the key to civil embeddedness and according legitimacy lies not in diversification as a goal in itself, but in familiarizing audiences with the classical music idiom and in thus implanting both existing and new repertoires in the context of the here and now. This omnipresent pursuit of formulas that connect repertoires and audiences testifies to the importance of narrative creation and development, in resistance to the constraining narrative that affirms the stagnated canon.

Development formulas

While the broadening formulas discussed in the previous paragraph were mostly customized for the audience (their success proving uncertain), the strategies categorized under 'development formulas' are more oriented towards making the 'aesthetic output', or the repertoire itself, more appealing. Under this denominator of development formulas, all formulas are encapsulated that are aimed at broadening and expanding the repertoire, while guiding the listener's understanding of it. Using the theoretical terminology, one might argue that these formulas are deliberate attempts to open up the canon. As argued, various tensions have left a very narrow space for formulas that develop the repertoire, in representative as well as alternative orchestras. Yet, an element of legitimacy is increasingly found in these formulas, regardless of the model.

Although it is not felt to be the main purpose of this institution, the management of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra is highly motivated to explore lesser known repertoires in its subscription concerts. In addition, composition assignments are issued regularly, mostly to Flemish composers. Taking the audience's perspective into account, the orchestra takes a rather pragmatic approach towards experimental programming at the subscription series, resulting in a careful attitude towards risk and innovation. The ASO experiments with various strategies. Lesser-known compositions from the symphonic repertoire are often paired with classics to ensure a wide appeal, but the orchestra is also conscious of the risks of that so-called sandwich formula. In one manager's words:

> "Setting up such a program requires careful customization, because the audience doesn't want to be fooled. It is a subtle exercise, because chances are you miss out on both sides" (Ferwerda 2018).

With premieres, the situation is even more difficult, for two reasons. Firstly, familiarity with a non-tonal musical idiom is limited in a large segment of the audience, and the aural education of the audience is not the orchestra's role, as ASO representatives agree. Secondly, there is a pervasive feeling that composers often fail to connect with today's musical reality because of their radicality. "The listening attitude of composers is often alienated from the audience's listening attitude. Composers have to live with the consequences of their artistic freedom", one manager asserts. He continues:

> "We do not necessarily have to return to the harmonic language of the past, just because it is easier to listen to. But we can raise questions about music that has become very niche and sometimes just maintains itself. Composers often point fingers at us for not programming their music. That is not the two-way conversation that I would like to have" (Maegerman 2018).

To accommodate the risks associated with non-conventional programming, the ASO's Shuffle-series presents contemporary composers who conduct their own works and mirror it to a work from the better-known repertoire that once inspired them. For example, the Swedish composer and conductor Christian Lindberg conducted a swan-themed concert in 2018, featuring his own works *Liverpool Lullabies* and *2017* (a world premiere)*,* pairing it with Tchaikovski's *Swan Lake* and Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela.* In 2019, the Hungarian composer and conductor Péter Eötvös conducted two of his own works and reflected on their links with Bartók's *Concerto for orchestra.* This is one clear example of a formula that approaches the canon as an open collection: it interprets individual works through a narration that understands the works as meaningful in relation to each other. The downside of this formula, as one manager notes, is of course the relatively limited number of composer-conductors. Also, a large share of the orchestra's audience is scared away by the lesser known names on the program, regardless of their integration into a coherent story.

The Royal Concertgebouworkest has a tradition of collaborating with contemporary composers that dates back to the days of Mahler and Richard Strauss. Premieres are still considered a very important pillar of the RCO's musical programming. The orchestra commissions up to 8 premieres every season (Raes 2019), and over the last decade, the Concertgebouworkest has commissioned 48 new works, performed 54 world premieres and 63 Dutch premieres. The traditional problem of performing a newly commissioned work a second time is countered by various strategies. Joel Ethan Fried, who is responsible for composition assignments, always looks for partners who not only contribute financially, but also each perform the work with their respective orchestra (Fried 2019).

Within individual concert programs, the RCO has one main strategy for repertoire development, which managing director Jan Raes calls 'homeopathic dosage'. This principle is a variation of the previously mentioned sandwich formula, in which well-known pieces frame a lesser known one. The principle of 'homeopathic dosage' is a related but more gentle form of that idea and is based on limiting the duration of lesser known works. As mentioned before, the segmentation logic in the RCO's subscription series places long and challenging contemporary compositions in their appropriate series, and in other concerts, a short piece by an unknown composer is usually added to the program. In Fried's words: "Nine minutes of Varèse and Kurtag is fine, half an hour is too provocative" (Fried 2019). For example, in January of 2019, the Concertgebouworkest played a sold-out concert in Brussels (and two in Amsterdam, the days before), conducted by the famous conductor Herbert Blomstedt, who is an known advocate of Scandinavian music. Between Brahms' *First Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Third Symphony,* a short piece by the Swedish post-romantic composer Wilhelm Stenhammar was played, entitled *Intermezzo* (from Stenhammar's cantata *Sången*). The combination of the two canonical masterpieces and a famous conductor ensured that the audience was, in this case, not scared away by the unknown name on the concert program. Programmers of all orchestras under review agree that orchestras, conductors and soloists with an established reputation have more programming freedom. The LSO even acknowledges that there is a clear Simon-Rattle-effect on musical programming (East 2019), as audiences tend not to question the artistic intelligence of a world-renowned conductor, even with regard to non-canonical works (cf. below).

Another formula that works rather well for the RCO is thematic programming, which often allows to program a large variety of works, some of which are unknown. In that regard, the most successful formula for repertoire development is the RCO's Horizon series. This series contains three thematic and interdisciplinary festivals in cooperation with other institutions in Amsterdam (in 2017, partners were a publishing house, a foundation supporting the development of technology, and the University of Amsterdam). The concerts often transgress the traditional borders of music by including lectures, dance performances and visual projections. Orchestra representatives note that, contrary to other themed concerts, it is

mostly the interdisciplinary aspect, or the intense 'event-character' of the Horizon series that attracts audiences, not the theme per se (Fried 2019). In addition, the RCO management identifies several intrinsic problems with this way of programming. Both directors remark that the Horizon series is very expensive and that it can only be afforded by large orchestras who have the resources and have established a bond of trust between audience and orchestra. In that sense, Fried accentuates, elaborate thematic dramaturgies will not convince an individual who has difficulties digesting a dissonant or avant-gardist work. Introductions are often needed to prepare the audience, lower the threshold and make thematic programs more accessible. Experience proves, however, that people who go to these introductions are precisely those people who have had a subscription to the orchestra for 30 consecutive years. "It is a service to our public that we will continue to provide, but it does not draw in any newcomers", Fried concludes (Fried 2019).

London Symphony Orchestra's strategy of working with overarching themes is much more articulated than the RCO's. To make sense of unusual combinations of musical works, themes are invented for separate concerts as well as spanning the whole season. The 2019-2020 season, for example, presents a considerable amount of non-canonical works, often clustered around overarching themes that are not restricted to a certain time period or musical style. Taglines such as 'Look back, leap forwards' and themes such as 'Roots and Origins' offer a thematic framework that legitimizes the inclusion of the adventurous into the conventional. In the 'Roots and Origins' concert series, for example, conductor Simon Rattle draws season-spanning links between the origins of the Western musical canon (Beethoven) and those composers who were inspired by this canon and actively fertilized it with other influences (Bartók and Grainger); this mechanism closely resembles the Shuffle-series approach of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. Very popular works are thus paired with newer and more adventurous works, within one coherent theme. The internal architecture of the LSO's separate concert programs exhibits the same dramaturgical sensitivity. In three separate concerts, Rattle explores the aesthetic affinities between two composers, Beethoven and Berg, that embody either extreme of the romantic period. Interestingly, the various season subscription options are largely designed along the lines of these themes, which results in concert packages more diversified in terms of repertoire than those of the RCO.

The prevailing idea that thematic or experimental programming can only be afforded by large orchestras, or only through the authority of well-known conductors and soloists, is disproven by the alternative organizations. Splendor is the most obvious example: experimental programs are realized precisely on account of the absence of established conductors, soloists or even programmers. For Casco Phil as well as Aurora Orchestra, opening up the canon through thematic concepts is core business, although pragmatic constraints sometimes limit the formulas' full development. The idea of building an artistic concept through the mix of canonical and non-canonical (or contemporary) music is dominant in what Casco Phil considers its trademark concepts. More than is the case in the repertoire concerts, Casco Phil's

experimental programs owe their setup and internal coherence to a common thread. For its 2019-2020 season, for example, the orchestra has developed a program around the phrase *tempora mutantur* ('times change'). The underlying idea is that when times change for the worse, people equally change for the worse. The phrase itself is the nickname of Joseph Haydn's 64th symphony, fragments of which will be played while being gradually distorted by means of electronics and visuals. Songs by Kurt Weill that fit into this idea will pass through the performance, as well as songs from Franz Schubert's *Winterreise,* recomposed for modern ensemble by Hans Zender in 1993. Finally, Luciano Berio's 1989 orchestra piece *Rendering,* a modernist completion of Schubert's piano sketches for a *Tenth Symphony,* will also be performed. These adventurous programs that Casco Phil develops, performs and pays for to a large extent, are considered to be the biggest source of legitimacy for the orchestra by the orchestra management. Because these adventurous programs often combine various line-ups, they are much more feasible for modular and flexible orchestras such as Casco Phil, who work with freelancers.

That is exactly the philosophy behind Aurora Orchestra's signature concept of Orchestral Theatre. The concept originates in the idea that audience enlargement and artistic experimentation are not necessarily conflicting ideas. In Aurora's view, adventurous programming can help enable a better understanding of music that can otherwise come across as hard to decipher. The basic idea that underlies the concept of orchestral theatre is working with an abstract theme which, in Harte's words, "ties repertoire together in an interesting way but also leaves enough space to do whatever you want to do" (Harte 2019). One of the main premises underlying this idea, is that musical genres are not fundamentally distinct. Aurora's programs are intentionally curated eclectically, across all musical genres. Canonical works from the orchestra repertoire appear alongside works that are commissioned by the orchestra itself, alongside unfamiliar 20th century music and pop songs. A representative example of this thematic approach is the 2019 concert entitled *Music of the Spheres,* which was part of the Orchestral Theatre series at Southbank Centre. Using Plato's theory about the harmonious sound that celestial bodies produce as a framework, Aurora Orchestra combined a memorized performance of Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony with the newly commissioned work *Journey* by Max Richter (performed in the dark), which is characterized by a continuously upward musical motion. Beethoven's *Molto Adagio* from his 8th string quartet, which is said to have been written under the light of stars, appeared alongside Thomas Adès' violin concerto *Concentric paths.* David Bowie's *Is there life on Mars?* was added as an encore. Elements of stage design, animation and audio made this varied program into a coherent orchestral exploration of the mysticism of space. Artistic director and programmer Jane Mitchell adds that this thematic approach can not only be justified artistically, it also offers marketing perspectives and carefully targets audiences that are less familiar with certain musical styles without leaving more experienced audiences dissatisfied (Mitchell 2019).

The thematic development formulas illustrate perfectly how the narratives underlying the musical canon are deployed in a productive way. The musical program (per separate concert, per series or per season) is constructed as though it tells a story around the individual musical works. With reference to this story, an assemblage of musical works, well-known or unknown, can be understood as a coherent and meaningful collection. In that sense, these programs adhere to narratives of the musical canon as an open collection. Again, the orchestra model proves highly relevant: both Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra have the right organizational conditions to explore thematic development formulas to their full potential. Both orchestras are modular and employ their musicians exclusively on a freelance basis. These features make it easier to develop concepts that cross the entire repertoire and thus require multiple line-ups. While the RCO remarked that its thematic Horizon series can only be afforded by resourceful orchestras, and that establishing a bond of trust between audience and orchestra remains difficult, this argument seems to apply less to the alternative orchestras. Firstly, resources are found elsewhere. For Casco Phil, for example, these resources are often found in traditionally programmed concerts and commercial projects, and for Aurora Orchestra, a lot of creative time is won by testing out small-scale versions of the Orchestral Theatre series in the educational concerts. Finally, because artistic adventurousness is part of the alternative orchestras' DNA, their audiences require less preparation than the traditional audiences in the representative orchestras. In that sense, the representative orchestras have the disadvantage that they have to reorient their audiences that have become accustomed to a more traditional way of programming. Their organizational model, likewise, seems somewhat less equipped to do so.

4.2.3.3 Programming tendencies

Analyzing the organizations' programming policies and strategies urges to look into the organizations' repertoires tendencies, to see to what extent the policies are reflected in the organizations' actual programs. In Figure 14, all data with regard to programming tendencies of the organizations under review have been assembled.[10] The information that is used in Figure 14 is identical to the data in the individual case reports. This means that all available data from each organization are used, with varying timeframes between 8 and 11 concert seasons. The available data from Casco Phil were organized in years, not in seasons, making a season-based comparison impossible. For these reasons, the data are compared on a percentage base and not in actual numbers, making data irregularities inconsequential. Splendor is not represented in this graph, because the organization does not keep record of all the performed concerts: keeping track of all past and future performances would contradict the very ideas of an open diary and complete programming freedom. All artistic projects taking place in Splendor are independent from any strategy and internal or external policy.

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[10] An elaborate methodology and an overview of the choices made, can be consulted in Appendix A.

For a comparative repertoire analysis, Figure 14 makes use of the same temporal demarcations that are used in the individual case reports in appendix. In order to visualize programming tendencies, the quantitative data analysis draws from a method proposed by Gilmore (1993) and similarly adopted by Wolf (2017), in which composers have been categorized into three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. Composers listed as 'anonymous', 'traditional' or 'various' have been removed from the set. The three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to both orchestra musicians and audiences. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertoire, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, often making their styles little known to orchestras and their audiences. In case of any doubt whether a composer was predominantly active in one period or the other, a judgment was made according to the specific composer's style. For example, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland and Shostakovich were categorized in the 1900-1950 period because of their aesthetic affinity with composers of that period. Not every category spans an equally proportioned timeframe, which does not facilitate drawing categorical conclusions. Therefore, this quantitative data analysis focusses more on relative motions such as repertoire evolutions throughout several seasons, and concentration or density levels within each category. Figure 14 represents each orchestra's respective shares of repertoire as divided over these three periods.
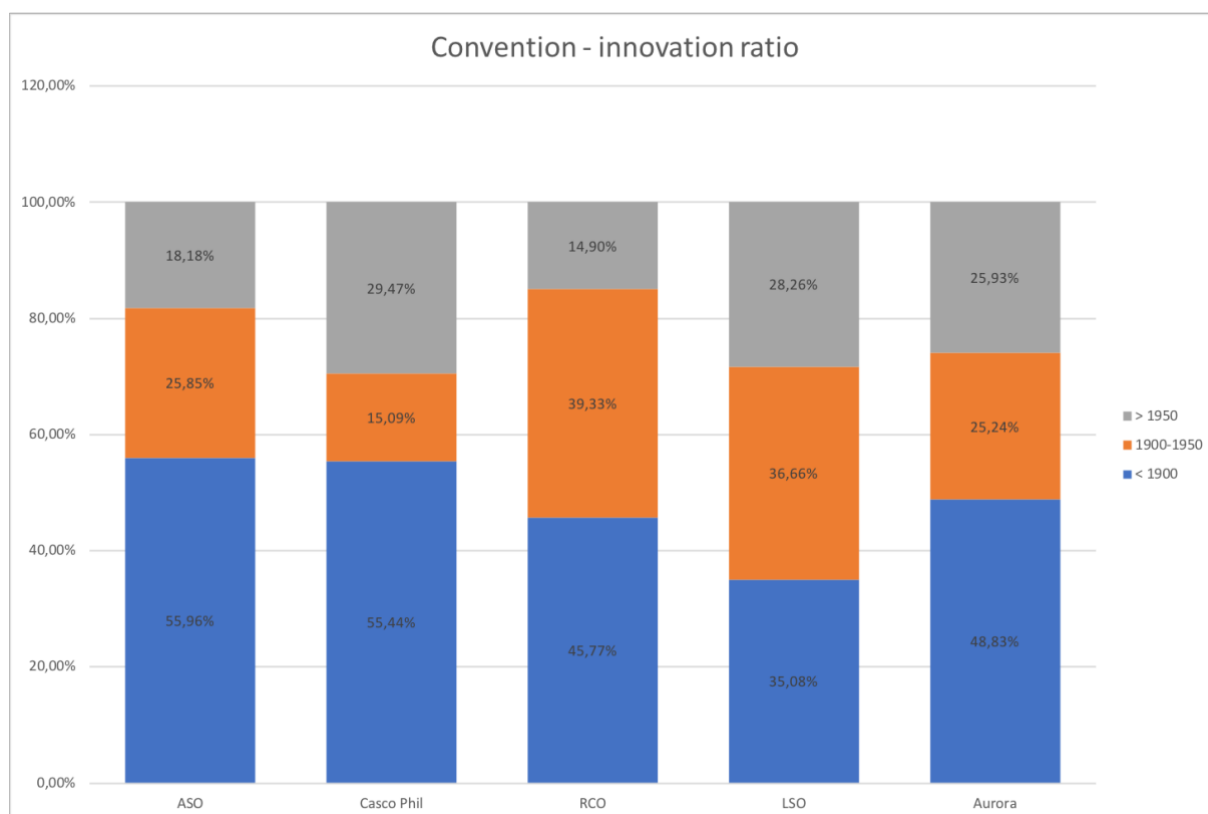
Figure 14: convention-innovation ratio of the five orchestras

After careful consideration, two significant observations can be made, one on the horizontal axis of the analysis, which explores the affinities between the three different regions, and one on the vertical axis, which explores the affinities between the alternative and representative orchestra models (cf. Figure 3). From the perspective of the regions, firstly, the repertoire of the London orchestras is the most evenly spread. The LSO's programs cover the three time periods in almost equal shares, with 35,08% in the pre-1900, 36,66% in the 1900-1950 and 28,26% in the post-1950 categories. Aurora Orchestra follows with 48,83%, 25,24% and 25,93% respectively. Both orchestras make use of different forms of the freelance model and both are subsidized, be it not as strongly as the continental orchestras. Both orchestras are very different in size and leadership models (cf. Figure 5). Their affinities with regard to repertoire distribution endorse the previously discussed observation that the environment of the orchestra to which it needs to calibrate, is more significant than the organizational model itself.

Secondly, from the perspective of orchestra models, the alternative orchestras (Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra) tell a remarkably ambiguous story. On the one hand, both are among the most adventurous orchestras, with 29,47% and 25,93% of their repertoires covering the post-1950 repertoire. On the other hand, they are among the orchestras who rely on the conventional repertoire to the largest extent, with 55,44% and 48,83% of pre-1900 repertoire respectively. In order to understand this ambiguity, it makes sense to further develop insight in each orchestra's programming tendencies from another point of view.

Figure 15 represents every orchestra's iron repertoire by listing each orchestra's 10 most frequently programmed composers, as well as their respective repertoire shares in relation to the orchestra's total. For example, Figure 15 shows that the ASO's and the LSO's 10 most frequently programmed composers account for a little over one-third of their repertoire. Aurora Orchestra's iron repertoire occupies 45,93% of the orchestra's total repertoire, which means that almost half of their repertoire consists of only ten composers. This iron repertoire can be defined as an orchestra-specific musical canon.

Kolom1	ASO	Casco	RCO	LSO	Aurora
1	Mozart	Mozart	Beethoven	Prokofiev	Mozart
2	Johann Strauss jr.	Beethoven	Mozart	Beethoven	Britten
3	Beethoven	Rossini	Strauss	Rachel Leach	Beethoven
4	Tchaikovsky	Haydn	Mahler	Stravinsky	Bach
5	Purcell	Mendelssohn	Brahms	Tchaikovsky	Tchaikovsky
6	John Williams	Ben Haemhouts	Tchaikovsky	Mozart	Schumann
7	Brahms	Puccini	Wagner	Brahms	Ravel
8	Mendelssohn	Tchaikovsky	Shostakovich	John Williams	Debussy
9	Haydn	Helmut Lotti	Stravinsky	Mahler	Mahler
10	Shostakovich	Piazzolla	Bruckner	Elgar	Brahms
Repertoire share	34,66%	37,19%	40,89%	34,28%	45,93%

Figure 15: the iron repertoires and iron repertoire shares of the five orchestras

Interestingly, three composers consistently appear in the top-10 list of each orchestra: Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. Similarly, each orchestra has some composers in its top-10 list that do not appear in the other's lists. The ASO and the RCO each have two of such unique composers: Johann Strauss jr. and Purcell for the ASO, and R. Strauss and Wagner for the RCO. Three composers appear in the LSO's list only: Prokofiev, Leach and Elgar; the final two being closely affiliated with the LSO itself. The alternative orchestras, Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra, each have no less than five unique composers in their top-10 list: Rossini, Haemhouts, Puccini, Lotti and Piazzolla for Casco Phil, and Britten, Bach, Schumann, Ravel and Debussy for Aurora Orchestra.

Overall, Figure 15 tells a story as ambiguous as Figure 14. The fact that the alternative orchestras have more unique composers in their respective top-10 lists, reveals that their iron repertoire is less conventional than the iron repertoires of their representative counterparts. Despite the originality in their own iron repertoire, however, Casco Phil's and Aurora Orchestra's dependence on their own iron repertoire, with 37,19% and 45,93% respectively, is more pronounced than the ASO's and the LSO's. Thus, neither Figure 14 nor Figure 15 convincingly show that the alternative orchestras engage in more adventurous programming, despite their core values.

However, as suggested in the individual case reports, the above analyses each have their limitations which make it hard to judge over the organization's conventionality and adventurousness in programming. Firstly, Figure 14's division into three time categories is useful but arbitrary: not every pre-1900 composer or work is conventional, and not every post-1950 composer or work is experimental. Secondly, Figure 15 has the benefit of approaching the iron repertoires relative to each orchestra but does not take into account any temporal demarcations in the repertoire itself. Therefore, a more detailed approach towards the orchestra's concentration levels is desirable. While figure 15 displayed the concentration levels of each orchestra's overall top 10 composers, Figure 16 breaks these concentration levels down into the proposed time categories, combining the strengths of both previous viewpoints. Figure 16 quantifies and compares each orchestra's reliance on a narrow set of composers in each category, enabling to assess conventionality and adventurousness without speaking in absolute terms, and relative to timeframes.

Figures 16a, 16b and 16c represent the top-5, top-10 and top-15 concentration rates per orchestra per time category.
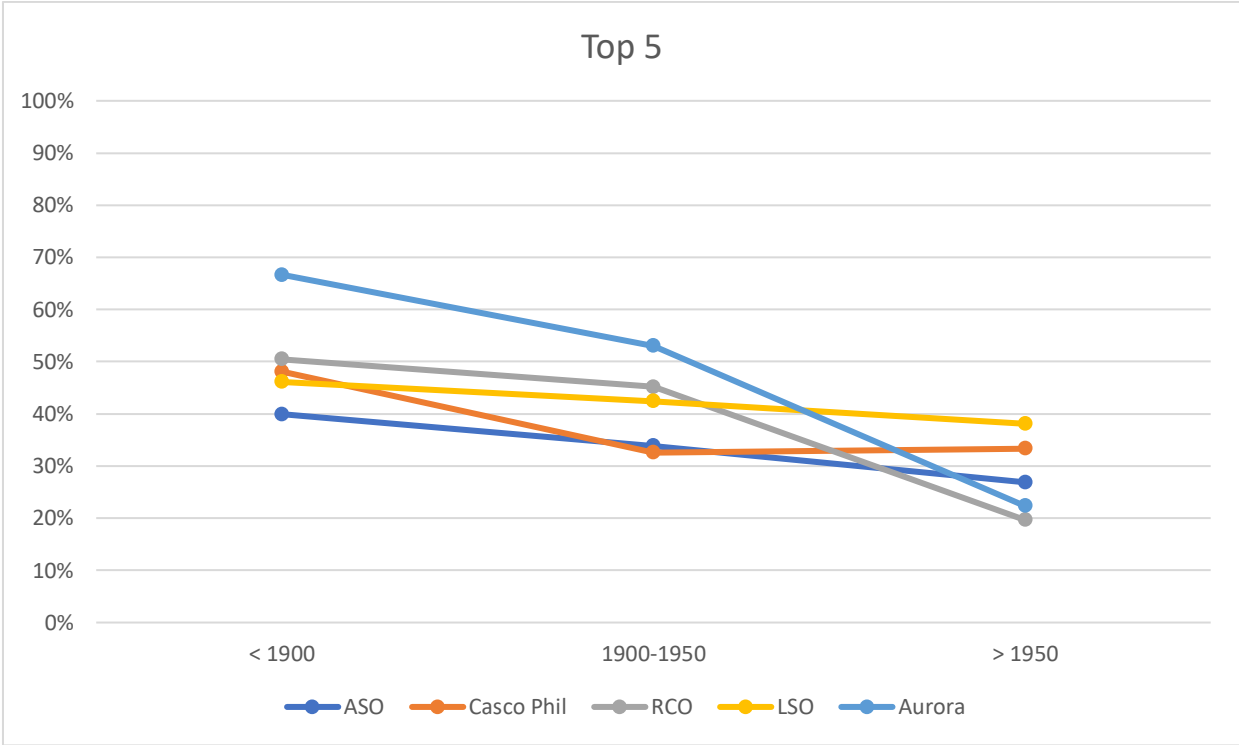
Figure 16a: top-5 concentration rates of the five orchestras, per time category
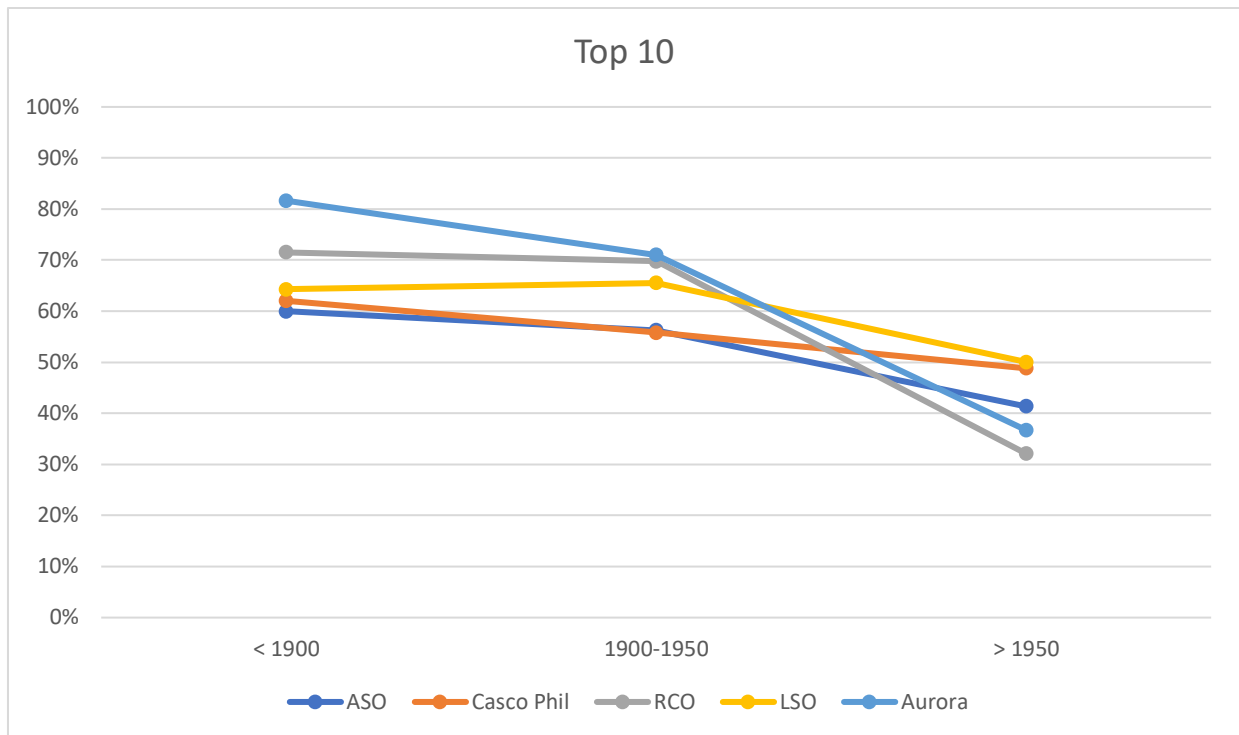
Figure 16b: top-10 concentration rates of the five orchestras, per time category
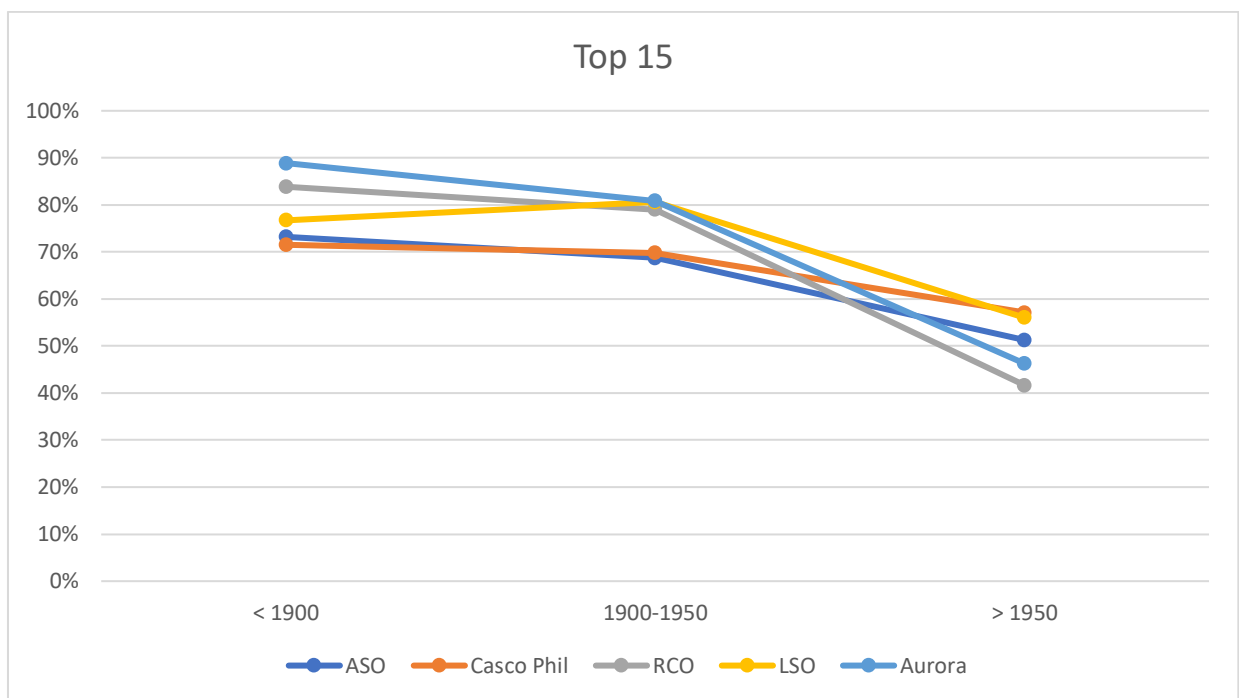
Figure 16c: top-15 concentration rates of the five orchestras, per time category

Figures 16a, 16b and 16c are very similar, in the sense that they all show a significant downward trend. Each orchestra's reliance on a narrow set of composers, being a top-5, top-10 or top-15 set, varies between the proposed time categories. Each orchestra relies more on these narrow sets in the pre-1900 category than in the post-1950 category. The 1900-1950

category lies in between, with the exception of the LSO, whose affinity with this particular repertoire has been discussed in the case report and can also be read from Figure 15. Again, no significant difference between representative and alternative orchestras can be observed.

Figure 17 is a visualization of the other side of the concentration spectrum, representing composers who appear only once in each orchestra's programs. These one-timers have been divided in the same three categories. The resulting graph can be read as follows: in its post-1950 repertoire share, 26,06% of Aurora Orchestra's composers appear only once in the program. This graph allows to visualize the unconventionality of each orchestra's programs.
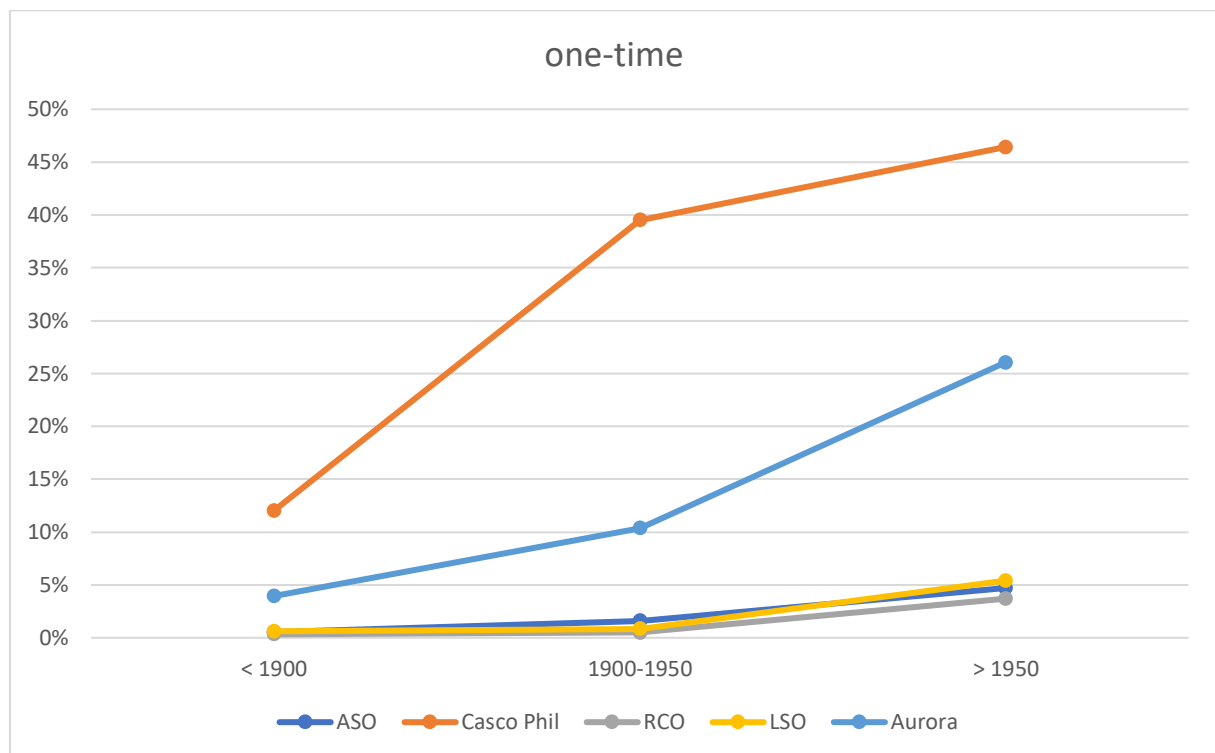
Figure 17: concentration of composers appearing only once, per orchestra per time category

As could be expected with the downward trend of Figures 16a-c in mind, this curve goes upward. If one-time performances would be categorized as 'experiments', the resulting experimentation rate goes upward over progressing time periods. As interpreted from the viewpoint of orchestra models, this graph is far more revealing than the previous ones. The curves of the traditional orchestras are very close to each other, with experimentation rates persistently low and topping a little over 5% in the post-1950 and arguably most experimental category. This means that even within the least conventional category, one-time experiments are infrequent in the three representative orchestras. The alternative orchestras, Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra, rely far more on one-time composers. Their experimentation rates are persistently higher, starting relatively far above the traditional orchestras in the pre-1900 category, and going steeply upwards towards the post-1950 category, topping at 46,43% for Casco Phil, and 26,06% for Aurora Orchestra. This graph, at last, convincingly shows that the

alternative orchestras do engage in repertoire experimentation to a greater extent than their counterparts labelled as representative.

Considering the above, two additional observations deserve proper attention. One stands in relation to the issue that links orchestra models with their repertoires, and one reaches out to overarching questions surrounding the nature of the musical canon. Firstly, although the alternative orchestras have designed their organizational form according to their core value of artistic experimentation, their programming tendencies are remarkably similar to those of the representative orchestras. Although there are clues to the alternative orchestras' pursuit of repertoire expansion and experimentation (cf. Figure 15 and Figure 17), there is at least as much evidence that they, to a considerable extent, rely on the same conventional iron repertoire, and by extension musical canon, as the representative orchestras (cf. Figure 14 and Figures 16a-c). Interestingly, it seems that repertoire choices in the alternative orchestras are as hybrid as their organizational models. They strongly rely on both conventional repertoire and experiments, with very little space in between those polar extremes. Aurora Orchestra provides the best example: as can be read from Figures 14 and 16a-c, Aurora Orchestra relies on a narrow pre-1900 repertoire even more than average, while Figures 14, 15 and 17 show that their post-1950 repertoire share is, respectively, large as well as experimental. Figure 10 also showed that the 1900-1950 repertoire is indeed the least represented in both Casco Phil and Aurora Orchestra, with 15,09% and 25,24% respectively. Despite their value-drivenness and their willingness to move away from homogenized and standardized practices, the alternative orchestras seem unable to transform these values into an according practice. The combined insights from the business model approach and the repertoire approach suggest that the reasons for this inability lie, at least partially, beyond their models and have more to do with the pragmatic and aesthetic field dynamics of the environment in which these models are nested.

Secondly, the above analysis discloses some broader observations with regard to the musical canon. Strictly speaking, the above data show that the older the repertoire that is programmed, the more it depends on a narrow set of composers (cf. Figure 16a-c and Figure 17). This trend is visible in every orchestra under review. Taken as a whole, these data can be argued to reveal a condensation process taking place over time. Not only is each orchestra's reliance on pre-1900 music the highest (with the exception of the LSO; cf. Figure 14), also within that category, the strong reliance on a small set of composers is remarkable (cf. Figures 16a-c). Both tendencies are significantly less present in the post-1950 category: the orchestra's reliance on that category's repertoire is lower, as are concentration levels within that category. These observations support the expectation that from tendencies in orchestral programming, a historical condensation process can be deduced, the intensity of which differs from timeframe to timeframe. This condensation process seems to have been largely completed in the pre-1900 category, while it is still ongoing in the post-1950 category. For each separate orchestra, this condensation process determines the orchestra's own iron

repertoire. When applied on a broader scale, spanning various orchestras, this process is very closely related to the idea of a musical canon: the lower the degree of condensation of a certain repertoire within a certain category, the lower the degree of canonization. In all orchestras under review, the numbers suggest that the degree of canonization decreases over progressing time periods. In other words: the more recent the repertoire, the less it is canonized.

4.2.4 Closing remarks

The observations and intermediate conclusions that have been formulated in this case study chapter, may be frustrating for anyone looking for a definitive solution for the organizational or artistic unsustainability of symphony orchestras. Many of these insights are not necessarily new, and some are consistent with a common understanding over these widely spread issues. This empirical research, however, does illustrate one fact very clearly: the sustainability discussion does not benefit from any *passe-partout* solutions, because the orchestra field is not a field that relies on best practices. No single strategy will guarantee a viable economic and artistic balance, nor will it provide protection from certain field dynamics (Bourdieu 1993) that lie beyond the control of the organization. The complexity of the orchestra field, indeed, demonstrates the futility of quick-fix solutions.

By exploring the link between organizational models and repertoire tendencies, this empirical research has revealed various dynamics to which the orchestra field is exposed. It has highlighted the importance of the organization's embedding in a specific environment to which it needs to adapt. Towards the end of this chapter, it became clear that this environment encompasses more than just the organizational dimension of the research field. The business model methodology focused on specific organizational models and examined the conditions under which these organizational models could unlock certain artistic core values. In the empirical propositions, similarly, it was suggested that if core values were translated into an organizational model that respects those core values, this would result in a high level of autonomy with regard to musical programming. In short, it was repeatedly suggested that core values related to the opening of a canon need to be framed within the appropriate organizational model in order to be operationalized. However, when those organizational models were compared to actual repertoire trends, this suggestion proved to be overly simplistic. Apparently, there is another field dynamic at work that complicates this linear connection between model and repertoire. In the next chapter, these concluding observations will be connected with the narratives of the musical canon.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion: the Musical Canon as a Regulative Concept

In this final chapter, the empirical investigation meets the theory again to which it owes its particular setup. In chapter 3, a conceptual apparatus was developed to tackle a problem that was outlined in chapter 1, referred to as the crisis of the symphony orchestra. The historical and theoretical investigations of the crisis of the orchestra demonstrated the need for additional empirical research, in order to relate a rather abstract discourse to the complexities of present-day realities. This concluding chapter closes the resulting research funnel again. The individual case studies, purposively organized by means of a vertical (by model) and horizontal (by region) dimension, were aimed at providing the information needed to address empirical propositions. These empirical propositions, in turn, allow for a thoroughly informed assessment of the theoretical proposition that was formulated in connection with the research question. Figure 18 visualizes this research setup once more.
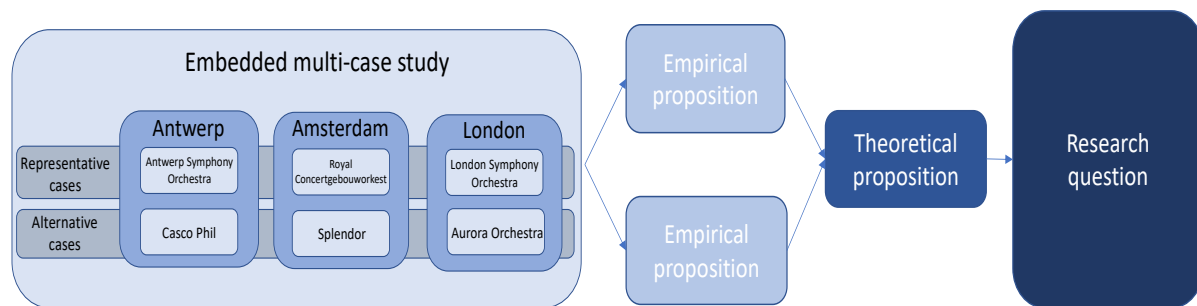
Figure 18: research setup

A brief summary of this setup seems appropriate at this point, as well as a reassessment of the empirical propositions, newly informed by the case study analysis. The first part of this concluding chapter builds up towards the evaluation of the empirical propositions. Specifically, it will evaluate the potential of alternative models to challenge the field's dominant logic by organizing themselves differently in order to distinguish themselves from other players in terms of creative autonomy. By relating the insights to the narratives of the musical canon, the second part of this chapter evaluates the theoretical proposition. Finally, the research question underlying this dissertation will be answered, supplemented by a closing reflection on this research as a whole.

5.1 Empirical propositions: challenging the dominant logic

In chapter 1, a problem has been identified with regard to the sustainability of symphony orchestras. Based on the assertion that orchestras suffer from a legitimacy crisis, the perceived unsustainability of symphony orchestras has been argued to take place on the level of the organization as well as on the level of the repertoire. At that point, a distinction between aesthetic and pragmatic tensions has been identified, which has served as a common thread throughout this research. Drawing from a definition by Suchman, legitimacy was defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995). With their legitimacy under pressure, symphony orchestras have been pushed towards a dominant logic, in which pragmatic and measurable proxies tend to overrule creative vision. This dominant logic essentially comes down to a credo of 'predictability over uncertainty'. Strategically organizing themselves in homogeneous ways, symphony orchestras have, for a long time, successfully defended their legitimacy within the cultural field. In musical programming, the dominant logic has brought to life a pragmatic-aesthetic compromise that has been referred to as pragmatized aesthetics. This compromise encompasses two clearly identifiable trends in musical programming: the prioritization of the musical canon and a broadening gesture towards entertainment and outreach formulas. The musical canon, as a tacit authority on taste which has become a cultural self-evidence, has proven an important source of legitimation for the institution that carries it forward. An argument has been made that in symphony orchestras, prompted by the legitimacy crisis, the priority of pragmatic logic has hybridized the aesthetic domain. By interpreting the problems associated with the twofold pragmatic-aesthetic compromise, a suggestion has been made in chapter 1, that for an arts organization to be sustainable, its aesthetic and pragmatic dimensions require constant reciprocal interaction. To acquire this, a healthy arts organization manages pressures between seemingly opposing tensions such as organizational fitness and artistic pertinence. Spurred by these observations, an empirical setup was designed to establish how this situation relates to programming policies and trends in various orchestras today.

The empirical study has confirmed the implicit presence of the pragmatic-aesthetic compromise in representative orchestras, not only in the sense that their organizational models are very similar, but also in the sense that the programming profiles of these orchestras seem to be underpinned by a pragmatic logic. To illustrate this dominance of pragmatized aesthetics, it has been argued throughout the case studies that their programming philosophy remains fundamentally ambiguous. This ambiguity can be illustrated by a quotation from an influential research on orchestras. In 1998, the Andrew Mellon Foundation issued a report on the legitimacy and sustainability of American symphony orchestras. Almost prophetically, the resulting report concluded:

"When orchestras talk about their community roles, they generally speak in terms of 'outreach' or marketing activities that suggest delivery of orchestra services rather than an assimilation of community values or traditions into the organization's mission, operations, and decision-making. As a result, they continue to make an artificial distinction between their core artistic values and their community role. Failing to understand the principles on which the community operates and which in turn influence the community's perception or expectations of the orchestra reinforces the orchestra's isolation and limits its ability to reach important new constituencies." ("Andrew W. Mellon Foundation - 1998 Annual Report" 1998, 47)

Although this study refers to the situation of American orchestras only, European orchestras show identical symptoms. There are enormous efforts within symphony orchestras to develop formulas and whole new departments that focus on reaching out to the community that surrounds them, but little evidence of sustainable and reciprocal fertilization. LSO Discovery is an enormous success in terms of diversification and community work, but there are no indications that these successes are conveyed to the audiences attending the LSO's concert season, or to the repertoire of the LSO's season. In a similar vein, the programming series of the Royal Concertgebouworkest are delineated, thus channeling what are believed to be the various sections of audiences to their appropriate repertoire. Likewise, increasingly popular movie concerts, creative workshops and cross-over concerts have all played a role in relatively successfully filling concert halls with audiences unfamiliar to the symphony orchestra and its repertoire. There is, however, very little evidence that these broadening concepts, although aimed at drawing in new audiences and gaining legitimacy, contribute to long-term audience engagements. For orchestras such as Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, these concerts are a commercially interesting way to supplement their relatively tightly measured subsidies, but evidence is lacking for long-term audience retention and attraction.

Here, the legitimacy crisis reveals itself in all its irony. This particular idea of development is imbued with a pragmatic logic, in which the orchestra does not claim its legitimacy on account of its aesthetic potential, but rather on account of its functioning as a mere medium for social cohesion, inclusivity and cultural dialogue. Sadly, this means that the legitimacy that is newly bestowed upon the institution, has to be defended on the very terrain where the institution is least equipped to do so. When, for example, pragmatic variables such as ticket incomes or audience headcounts become a yardstick for successful or unsuccessful artistic endeavors, the orchestra becomes pressurized to accommodate to the more popular areas of the musical spectrum, which makes its added value minimal compared to competitors in the entertainment industry, and to institutions responsible for education and social work that observe similar tasks. In the same vein, the ASO management has stressed that their efforts to diversify audiences and to make classical music more accessible are in vain when familiarization with classical music has completely vanished from the education system itself. Strikingly, the ASO's and RCO's cross-over concerts with pop musicians barely generate extra

incomes because of the huge overhead fees. Ironically, therefore, several mechanisms are in place in which the orchestra's quest for a new source of legitimacy simultaneously erodes its former source. Symphony orchestras understand very well that one of the challenges is indeed to integrate and immerse themselves within the societal fabric in its contemporary form. Orchestra managers all agree that this integration is only sustainable when the orchestra is more than a responsive echo chamber and thoroughly reflects on its surroundings through its artistic practice. These aesthetic aspirations, however, require a flexibility that the traditional, institutionalized orchestra cannot easily provide. In that sense, the orchestra's dominant logic has proven to be a blessing and a curse: it has granted the orchestra a collective sense of legitimacy, but it has equally rendered the orchestra paralyzed.

Therefore, this research has extended to alternative organizations that have emerged alongside the bigger institutions and whose core values explicitly deviate from the dominant logic and the pragmatized aesthetics associated with it. From this research setup, a pair of propositions was launched, one with reference to organization types and one with reference to the link between these organization types and their repertoires. The case study research allows to evaluate these propositions.

EMPIRICAL PROPOSITION 1: Orchestra models designed in full knowledge of the legitimacy crisis of orchestras, adhere to organizational structures which (significantly) differ from those of long-established orchestras.

The comparative research on orchestra models provides a nuanced answer to this proposition. On the one hand, the proposition can be rejected. Neither alternative orchestra model under study adheres to organizational structures which are fundamentally different from those of established symphony orchestras. Overall, there are insufficient arguments to make a defendable distinction between representative and alternative orchestras purely on the basis of their organizational models. On the other hand, the proposition can be confirmed to the extent that the orchestras adhering to alternative models are more aware of the restrictions that come with certain organizational parameters. What distinguishes these alternative models from their representative counterparts, is not so much the organizational model itself or any separate parameter, but the way these models are conceived. As elaborated in the case study chapter, the alternative orchestras under study construct their model according to two design principles. Firstly, their respective core values and organizational structures are tightly aligned. For example, Splendor's business model choice of limiting the number of musicians to 50, directly serves the purpose of successfully maintaining the open agenda that provides complete creative autonomy.

A second design principle of the alternative orchestras is the complementarity of their models to the models of other players in the organization's environment. For example, Casco Phil's centralized decision-making and lack of seasonal programming, allows for the orchestra to

react very fast on the needs of concert organizers, thus filling in the gaps that larger orchestras leave on account of their size and rigidity. An important side note was added with reference to this complementarity. The alternative models fall prey to field dynamics such as competitive isomorphism by definition: as they live symbiotically with representative orchestras, their artistic DNA is partially determined by them. The huge benefit of the alternative organizations under study is their modular and highly flexible organizational form; a competitive advantage that creates some expectations with regard to the second empirical proposition.

EMPIRICAL PROPOSITION 2: Adhering to a certain orchestra model gives according advantages and disadvantages to the orchestra in terms of programming autonomy.

Contrary to initial expectations, the cross-case analysis of repertoire trends in orchestras with various organizational models leads to the rejection of this proposition. While orchestras that adhere to alternative models are indeed moderately freer from programming restrictions, this perceived autonomy is not reflected in the actual repertoire trends. Alternative orchestras do engage more in repertoire experimentation, but their reliance on the traditional musical canon is as high as in conventionally organized orchestras. Again, the design principles and more specifically the principle of complementarity, may explain this situation. Existing field dynamics determine and restrict the programming autonomy of even the most value-oriented organization. To a large extent, the field's reliance on pragmatized aesthetics appears to be an ineluctable reality, more than a consciously made choice.

Although they are being driven by core values that deviate from the field's dominant logic (that is: in their organizational forms as well as in their artistic philosophy), alternative orchestras seem unable to transform these values into an actual practice. Something prevents both representative and alternative orchestras from significantly deviating from conventional repertoires; an inability that is not associated with the particular model the organization adheres to. The comparative repertoire graphs in chapter 4.2.3.3 have proven most revealing in that regard. Programming trends of the alternative orchestras have shown a remarkable schism in their repertoire: the conventional repertoire is exceptionally well-represented, as are repertoire experiments on the other, contemporary end of the spectrum, with very little in between. The graphs illustrate that the alternative organizations draw their legitimacy from two different sources. Programming the musical canon aids them in being acknowledged as an arts organization as legitimate as the representative orchestras, and their experimental programs grant them legitimacy as an added value compared to the established orchestras. The principle of complementarity dawns again. This may explain why the middle-section of the repertoire, namely the moderately familiar musical works written between 1900 and 1950, is the least represented in the alternative orchestras' programs. Thus, both representative and alternative orchestras display a significant dualism in their repertoire; a dualism that was hinted at in the quote from the Andrew Mellon Foundation report. In short,

representative orchestras divide their repertoire focusses over the musical canon and more accessible audience development programs, while alternative orchestras divide their repertoire over the musical canon and experimental programs. Regardless of core values, each of their focusses is associated with their respective struggle for legitimacy, as these focusses precisely coincide with the places which are the primary targets for legitimacy challenges. Legitimacy concerns are the essence of these existing field dynamics to which every orchestra has been proven to be subjected.

In conclusion, all orchestra models are dependent on various field dynamics propelled by legitimacy pressures, which makes differences in organizational model not exclusively relevant. These observations not only support the argument made in chapter 1, namely that the crisis of the orchestra is in essence a legitimacy crisis, it also suggests where the heart of this crisis may be looked for. From the above research on the organizational side of this study can be deduced that the solution with regard to the long-term sustainability of the symphony orchestra (either pragmatically or aesthetically speaking) is not only to be looked for in the organizational logic of the orchestra, but at least partially in the aesthetic field dynamics to which the orchestra is subjected. Several arguments have been found throughout chapter 4. Firstly, the design principle of complementarity (cf. chapter 4.2.2.3) has pointed out the importance of coordination with the peer group, both in terms of organizational model and in terms of repertoire. Secondly, the surprising connection between progressive core values and rather conservative repertoire trends in alternative orchestras has confirmed the suspicion that organizational behavior does not fully account for the legitimacy crisis of the orchestra. At this point, Pierre Bourdieu would insist on further exploration of the institutional field dynamics that shape the current orchestra landscape (see: Bourdieu 1993). However, this is not the ultimate objective of this study. Much rather, the crucial observation that field dynamics are at work which fall beyond the reach of any organizational model, allows to shift focus to the transcendental dimension of this study, as it was developed in chapter 3. In the next paragraphs, not the exact field dynamics themselves will be explored, but the dependence of these field dynamics on mediating thought constructions, in the form of narratives that shape and dominate the field. More specifically, the following paragraphs explore how these narratives are collectively construed throughout aesthetic practices, and subsequently stipulate norms for these practices. This shift announces the final step in negotiating a middle position in the canon debate: understanding the musical canon through its narratives means that canonization is not reduced to processes of mystified social relations, nor to spontaneous aesthetic processes occurring in a cultural vacuum.

5.2 Theoretical proposition: the narratives of the musical canon

If the organizational model is not the decisive factor that determines an art organization's legitimacy and sustainability, the artistic output that these organizations generate may be a more insightful factor to focus on. The previous chapters have provided several clues that the potential to reconcile the seemingly opposing pragmatic and aesthetic interests lies within a particular dimension of musical programming: not with the individual works themselves, but with the framework that holds the works together and to which the program owes its consistency. In that context, the musical canon has occupied a central role.

In the previous paragraphs, it became clear that the aesthetic field dynamics that shape the orchestra landscape stand in direct relation to legitimacy claims, which strongly resonates with the understanding of the musical canon as a regulative concept. As observed in the quantitative research, the musical canon is persistently and strongly present in each orchestra's musical programs, and no orchestra model seems equipped to escape its dominance. However, the empirical fact that the musical canon is dominant throughout the orchestras' concert programming, does not necessarily imply that the canon is a regulative concept. According to the theory elaborated in chapter 3, the regulative nature of the musical canon lies in the fact that, as an imaginary construct, it defines and steers this musical practice. The qualitative research has indeed illustrated that the concept of a musical canon not only provides the motivation and legitimation to program the works associated with the canon (in line with the dominant logic), but also to program works which are explicitly not associated with it (against the dominant logic). Interestingly, the alternative orchestras, that set out to elude the dominance of the musical canon, proved as vulnerable to these aesthetic field dynamics as the representative orchestras. Apparently, it is the musical canon that regulates programming decisions in orchestras. More precisely, it is the authority of the narrative that frames individual works into a canon, that regulates programming decisions.

In chapter 3, a narrative has been defined as a collective and historically matured thought-construction that establishes a coherent logic in a collection of separate objects. Because this construction is imaginary, and based on shared beliefs as well as aesthetic consensus, it exhibits narrative features and can be seen as an unwritten 'story' around a collection. As 'coherent stories', narratives interpret the history of the musical canon as a logically unfolding process, in the sense that they assign an exemplary function to works in relation to each other. Robert Morgan stated that a canon "provides models for creation and a standard against which creation is measured" (Morgan 1992, 46). This understanding of the canon is based on the assumption that the works that become incorporated in the canon are aesthetically timeless, superior and represent the best works the art form has to offer (cf. chapter 2.2). Precisely because the canon was assumed to represent eternal beauty, it could become accepted as an unquestionable aesthetic authority. By grace of this narrative, the concept of a canon has historically served as a touchstone that facilitates a changing and developing

practice. It has been argued in chapter 2 that showing affection for what steadily became the traditional musical canon has increased composers' chances of being acknowledged as a legitimate composer (cf. chapter 2.2.3 and 2.3).

Because the collection that results from this narrative performs an exemplary role to an increasing extent, the narrative of the canon as an authority was constantly affirmed. The more works that became included in the canon, the more severely the collection radiated its authority on imminent works, in the sense that works became required to have certain characteristics (common to the works in the collection) in order to be perceived as legitimate. Through this self-affirming process, the narrative of the canon found a compelling and purposively developed logic in the canonized works and therefore tolerated no alterations to the canon's conditions of access. This has resulted in a stagnated canon in which tonality, for example, became a requirement for the works in the canon. In other words, the canon's exemplary function no longer facilitated a developing practice as a touchstone, but stipulated categorical norms for that practice. As the concert world aligned itself with this narrative, the works associated with the canon became so familiar to audiences and critics that contemporary (or unfamiliar) works were approached with increasing suspicion; they did not belong in the 'coherent story' or narrative of the rigidified musical canon. In chapter 3, an argument was developed about a point at which the increasingly affirmed narrative of the canon clashed with the creative realities of aesthetic practice, in a historical period referred to as modernism (cf. chapter 3.2.3). Because of an increasing historical consciousness, the canon's foundational narratives were no longer considered to be unconditionally valid by a more progressive group of composers and critics. Indeed, it was argued in chapter 3 that contemporary works owed their creative incentive partially to the awareness of the dominant narrative of the canon: artistic experiments were often explicitly undertaken to challenge the authority of the canon. This has resulted in increasingly separated concert circuits: one dominated by a stagnated canon supported by a rigidified narrative, and one formed by works that did not comply with the narrative of the stagnated canon and was received with little interest by the wider public.

This final observation has allowed to point to another dimension of the canon as a regulative concept. The musical canon has been argued to be a regulative concept not only in the sense that it stipulates certain norms for a practice, but also in the sense that it embodies historical patterns of interpretation in the form of a coherent story. It is crucial to the argument that while a coherent story is being told about individual works, it is a story that is not entirely intrinsic to the individual works themselves but one that is based on their relation. For instance, the narrative interprets the works of Beethoven as a logical continuation of the works of Haydn (or, in a more teleological variation of the narrative, interprets the works of Haydn as groundwork for the works of Beethoven). This research has insisted on the proposition that a narrative is an imaginary construction that can be traced back to specific choices and actions in aesthetic practices. As these narratives have proven to be historically

traceable and contingent, a narrative has not so much a fixed 'meaning' as a 'potential'. In that sense, it has been argued that no work is intrinsically non-canonical, as a logical story can be imagined in which the work can be incorporated. In other words, the meaning we ascribe to music partially shifts along the narratives we collectively create for them.

This suggestion urges to reassess the theoretical proposition, which stated that these narratives, as imaginary frameworks, regulate the perception of what is legitimate and what is not, in the sense that they determine, on the one hand, what is aesthetically meaningful and, on the other hand, what can be accepted by the audience as relevant in the context of the *hic et nunc.* It is implied in this proposition that if musical practices are regulated by a discourse, based on narratives that have been shaped by historically situated dynamics, this discourse can, under the right conditions, be deployed to render musical practice legitimate and sustainable. In order to explore the dependence of concert programs on these narratives, the following paragraphs shift focus from quantitative to qualitative research. The arguments from the previous paragraphs authorize a shift to what lies beyond the numbers and urge to go back to the 'thick data' by looking into the coherence of individual concert programs and the works they contain. This final, qualitative approach has penetrated more deeply into the artistic logic of musical programming and was aimed at uncovering specific programming formulas that relate to the idea of the narrative.

The main point is that an aesthetic practice has proven to be regulated by a discourse that is embodied in narratives. Throughout this research, two kinds of narratives of the musical canon have been distinguished: narratives that affirm the stagnated canon, and narratives that try to open up this stagnated canon to new or unfamiliar works. Both ways of narrating the musical canon have been argued to have a considerable effect on issues of legitimacy and sustainability. As anticipated by the pragmatized aesthetics argument developed in chapter 1, orchestras' programming policies have shown to be largely dominated by narratives that understand the musical canon as a rigid object. The case studies in chapter 4 have provided a variety of examples of how the dominant narrative of the stagnated canon is deployed to legitimize the organizations' activities. First of all, the traditional musical canon has proven an extraordinarily authoritative component of all orchestras' programming policies and actual tendencies. As argued in chapter 1, a paradoxical effect of rigidification of organizational structures and repertoires is that the most familiar becomes the most legitimate. Familiarity with what is believed to be aesthetically superior generates audiences, incomes and therefore legitimacy.

Secondly, as argued in the previous paragraph, the complementary efforts for audience enlargement and approachability illustrate the orchestra's desire to counter the stagnated canon's perceived elitism, exclusivity and aesthetic superiority. This paradox is corroborated by the previously indicated split in the repertoires of the representative orchestras under review. In order to acquire enough money, whether through ticket sales or through subsidies,

an orchestra is pushed to tend to its audience first, by programming canonical repertoires of which the legitimacy is still fairly self-evident, as well as more popular music. Squeezed in between those extremes, the space for repertoire development is very narrow. The resulting artistic deficit from which these orchestras have been argued to suffer, stems from the fact that there seems to be no common understanding of the orchestra's societal potential in aesthetic terms (See also: Sigurjonsson 2010). Therefore, the long-term survival of classical music, and the contemporary relevance of it, is still under threat under the paradigm of pragmatized aesthetics. Bonita M. Kolb beautifully states that "classical music is in danger of becoming a fly trapped in amber – highly decorative but of interest only to an ageing part of society" (quoted in: Sigurjonsson 2010, 272). The fly trapped in amber is yet another adequate metaphor for the stagnated canon. Under the umbrella of pragmatized aesthetics, the musical canon is deployed as if it were a fixed object that survives from the past as a privileged cultural anachronism. From that point of view, legitimacy challenges are self-explanatory.

However, the empirical research in chapter 4 also urged to look more deeply into the nature of the regulative canon-concept, to probe if its foundational narratives may be deployed in the quest for the sustainability of the symphony orchestra. To that end, the regulative nature of the canon-concept can be looked at in the light of possibilities to break open the traditional canon. As argued, the dominance of the narrative of the stagnated canon does not rule out the existence of other narratives. If the orchestra wants to increase its legitimacy by broadening its audience base, while keeping the aesthetic expressiveness of the art form intact, it might be beneficial to deploy the narratives of the musical canon in an alternative way. By using the narratives of the canon as a tool for understanding and deciphering, a bond of trust with the audience can be developed to overcome the perceived risk and uneasiness associated with unfamiliarity. This approach appeals to the characteristic of the narratives of the canon as a framework to guide our understanding of musical works. One might wonder what would happen to the legitimacy crisis if audience development would also involve improving familiarity with infrequent repertoires and guide the understanding and appreciation of lesser-known musical works. One of the aims of the qualitative case study research was to identify specific programming strategies utilized by orchestras, which are effective in maintaining a balance between audience attraction and repertoire development.

Fairly recently emerging strategies deployed by the orchestras to reconcile these pragmatic and aesthetic factors, rely on the concept of what can be referred to as aesthetic narrativization, which is embodied in the thematic concerts that gain popularity in every orchestra. In this thematic formula, canonical and familiar works appear alongside lesser-known works that can be connected to the familiar work in a way that makes sense, as though the program tells a coherent story about a certain theme. These programming formulas deploy the authority and familiarity of canonical works in order to develop new narratives and break open the rigid musical canon. The example has been given of Aurora Orchestra, that combined Mozart's well-known *Jupiter Symphony* for full orchestra, a fragment from

Beethoven's *Eighth String Quartet* and the world premiere of Max Richter's *Journey* for strings under the theme 'Music of the Spheres' that combined these works under one coherent dramaturgical framework of celestial awe. This formula is different from the so-called sandwich formula, because the combination of the various works in the thematic formula is not at all random. The works are connected by an underlying story (or narrative structure) that legitimizes the pairing of the works, and through which the process of musical decoding is facilitated. Richter's *Journey* proved to be a very transparent musical work, once skillfully paired with the other, familiar works that were inspired by the same underlying idea. While symphonic concerts, in general, miss the visual aspects and the immediate narratological opportunities of the opera, a sense of dramaturgy can thus be applied to instrumental concerts as well, which is a vital tool in the process of understanding and deciphering music. The artistic and pragmatic merits of this formula are captured in this quote from Aurora Orchestra's chief executive John Harte:

> "I think audiences have always been at the heart of what we do. (…) We have never seen a hard and fast distinction between a purely artistic program on the one hand and commercial audience-driven projects on the other hand. In our view, they interlink; the sweet spot where they join up is what we are aiming for." (Harte 2019)

Examples of this thematic approach have been mentioned above (see also the individual case reports in appendix) and include the RCO's Horizon series, Aurora Orchestra's Orchestral Theatre series and most of Casco Phil's experimental programs. Similarly, there is a strong tendency to include local composers in the orchestras' programming, again reinforcing the idea of a story to which the audience can relate. The ASO, finally, devices programs in which a composer conducts his own works as well as the stylistically similar, often canonical works that inspired him. On one occasion, for example, the music of the contemporary composer and conductor Péter Eötvös was disclosed via its pairing to the music of his fellow-countryman and musical ancestor Béla Bartók. Although the trend of thematic programs can increasingly be discerned in the representative orchestras, it is more pronounced in the alternative orchestras: the fact that their organizational form is conditional to their artistic core values, provides superior organizational conditions to pursue this thematic approach. A summarizing conclusion reads that the formula of aesthetic narrativization allows innovation to occur in concert practice as well as in the repertoire itself. Concerts relying on this particular thematic approach are imbued with the consciousness of having to attune content and form of a concert. Earlier examples of repertoire innovation, including those of the Nutcracker movement (cf. the RCO's case report in appendix), have arguably crashed on the conventions of the classical concert format in which these innovations were uncomfortably presented. In the same vein, the sandwich formula has been discarded by most orchestras because this hybrid concert form proved uncomfortable to audiences: random combinations of familiar and unfamiliar works have proven rather ineffective. In the words of the ASO's programmer:

> "Setting up such a program requires careful customization, because the audience doesn't want to be fooled. It is a subtle exercise, because chances are you miss out on both sides" (Ferwerda 2018).

Similarly, recent examples of concert format innovation have relied on an idea that was earlier referred to as 'inverted snobbism', namely the forced removal of conventional classical music from its original habitat and its deportation to trendy cocktail bars or abandoned industrial sites. Also in those cases, it seems that concert format and repertoire are insufficiently aligned. In the formula of aesthetic narrativization, on the other hand, the concert format and the repertoire are deduced from the same overarching idea. As stated in the previous section, the alternative orchestras are, in general, slightly better equipped to attune concert format and repertoire, because their agile form allows for various line-ups during the same concert, and because they are less committed to traditional concert environments.

More relevant than yet another enumeration of examples, at this point, is the underlying idea of a concert that is framed by a theme (or 'story') that brings a sense of coherence into a certain combination of individual works. As such, these programs make use of the narrative character that has been attributed to the musical canon. They construe a new 'story' or temporary narrative for the works, allowing for the canon to be viewed from a new point of view. This thematic formula relates to the question of the affinities between past, present and future repertoires, and thus provides an interesting viewpoint on repertoire development issues. In the LSO's 2019-2020 brochure, principal guest conductor Noseda writes:

> "To record Shostakovich in the 1970's and to record Shostakovich in 2019 and 2020 is different, because the world is different, because we are different. And music speaks to all of us, even if it was written in a different historical period." (London Symphony Orchestra 2019, 16)

This quote suggests that musical works attain different meanings when they are interpreted in a different historical light. Following this logic, the meaning and relevance of a musical work is not set in stone but is, to a large degree, historically contingent. The thematic formula considers music in a shifting historical light, as it allows to build bridges between what is old and what is new. The concept of the narrative connects past repertoires, which can be familiar to audiences but the present aesthetic pertinence of which is sometimes unclear, with contemporary or less familiar repertoires, which are conceived in the present historical light but the musical idiom of which requires keys for understanding. Drawing from the narrative, the so-called keys for deciphering can be encountered in the canonical and familiar work. With regard to this attuning of the familiar and the unfamiliar, orchestra representatives have repeatedly stressed the role of the composer and have stated that their likelihood of being programmed, partly depends on their relation to the existing repertoire:

"Composers have to live with the consequences of their artistic freedom. We do not necessarily have to return to the harmonic language of the past, just because it is easier to listen to. But we can raise questions about music that has become very niche and sometimes just maintains itself. Composers often point fingers at us for not programming their music. That is not the two-way conversation that I would like to have" (Maegerman 2018).

The bridge between the old and the new (or between the familiar and the unfamiliar), is in fact a two-way path: through the thematic format, past repertoires are interpreted against a present backdrop, while the present is simultaneously being interpreted as a logical result of the past.[11] Thus, if these thematic programs are well-crafted, they form an implicit answer to legitimacy concerns in the sense that, through the thematic approach, the lesser-known works borrow legitimacy of the canonical works. By adhering to this aesthetic of narrativization, the orchestra has formulated an artistically valid answer to legitimacy issues on its own terms. By extension, the orchestra has found its formula to accommodate the pragmatic and the aesthetic, which has been argued to be the precondition for its sustainability.

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[11] These ideas will be further developed in the Epilogue.

5.2 Research Question: the sustainable symphony orchestra

This research, as a whole, has explored the narratives that underly the musical canon, and the structural role they play in legitimizing orchestras. Two overarching conclusions with regard to the musical canon can be drawn, in anticipation of answering the research question. The first conclusion concerns the historical process of canonization and the relation of that process to narratives. The second and related conclusion offers insights as to how the musical canon, as a regulative concept, stipulates norms for aesthetic practices that make them sustainable.

The first overarching conclusion reads that canonization processes are intricately interwoven with the formation of narratives. The historical overview of the canon's genesis (cf. chapter 3.2.3) suggested that a gradual process of standardization of the symphonic repertoire has taken place from the 19th century onwards. The case studies have corroborated that suggestion, in the sense that a gradual process of 'condensation' can be read from the orchestras' repertoires (cf. graphs 16a-c in chapter 4.2.3.3), which testifies to this historical process of increasing standardization. From these observations, it has been concluded that the canonization of musical works can be interpreted as a selection process unfolding with decreasing intensity over progressive time periods: the more recent the repertoire, the less it is canonized. It has also been argued in chapter 3 that the musical canon is not a mere standardized collection of musical works, but also a collection that is indebted to a narrative that understands a musical work in relation to the collection as a whole. As an illustration of this narrative character of the canon, the thematic concert formula has been argued to derive its efficacy from the authority and familiarity of the canonized works, to which a new story is successfully attached that makes the new works accessible. At this point, the historical process of standardization or canonization can be interpreted in relation to this formation of narratives. Narratives are collectively shaped stories that frame individual works into a canon. As argued, these collectively shaped stories or narratives have a narrator, in the sense that they originate in a specific practice where concert programmers, composers, critics and listeners collectively shape the narrative through their actions and judgments. From that point of view, narratives are constitutive of a canon.

In that sense, it seems authorized to speak of a certain 'inertia' of the canon. A significant part of this study was devoted to exploring under what conditions works can be included into a narrative that discloses the works' meaning in relation to other works. The above arguments show that time is needed for certain patterns to emerge, and to create a coherent story around a series of events. For a narrative to become influential, it requires a cumulative history of judgements and interpretive writings over a period of time, which eventually forms a coherent pattern. Newly written works, in that respect, temporarily suffer from a lack of cumulative history (Kolbas 2001). This disadvantage temporarily excludes these works from the musical canon's narrative. Inattentively considered, this argument seems to imply that there are as many canons as there are interpretive strategies, which seems to validate the

position of aesthetic relativism. However, to say that a narrative is always mediated by interpretation, does not mean that every narrative for the canon is as legitimate as the other. Some of the feminist's or ethnomusicologist's calls to immediately open up the canon to neglected female and exotic composers seems based on a misreckoning of this principle of the 'inertia' of the canon. The same can be said of the oxymoronic notion of the 'instant classic'. The apparent inertia of the canon points to the existence of complex processes of interpretation that take place in institutions as well as via the exemplary function the musical canon performs; a dialectical property that is inherent to the canon as a regulative concept.

Many of the described dynamics between the canon and its narratives are very particular and take place in very specific historical circumstances. The intricacies of this discussion largely fall beyond the scope of this research. This research confines itself to the conclusion that the undeniably increasing dominance of the canon is endorsed by two inertial forces: firstly, by the institutional dynamics that, via the narrative, determine the legitimacy of arts organizations such as symphony orchestras, and secondly, by the exemplary function of the canon's works, bestowed upon them by grace of the narrative. Thus interpreted, the process of canonization is a slow process where pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions interlock. This summarizes how the canon can be understood as a regulative concept. The musical canon is indeed an imaginary construction, that has historically emerged out of the interplay of aesthetic and pragmatic dynamics that takes place in specific practices. It is a regulative concept, in the sense that the idea of a musical canon, as embodied in common narratives, subsequently gives shape to these aesthetic practices and weighs on the pragmatic choices made in the field.

The second conclusion reads that, through the understanding of the musical canon as a regulative concept, the relationship between the aesthetic and the pragmatic can be properly understood. Against the background of the musical canon as a regulative concept, the empirical part of this research has confirmed the existence and evaluated the effectiveness of two narratives: one that affirms the stagnated canon and one that understands the canon as open. Most importantly, it has been illustrated how these narratives relate to the organization's quest for legitimacy and for sustainability. It can be concluded that under the paradigm of pragmatized aesthetics, the narrative of the stagnated canon has been deployed by organizations on account of its pragmatic effectiveness. In that case, the well-established, stagnated musical canon appears as an eternal aesthetic authority surviving from the past, that generates audiences and incomes by grace of its authority. In the same organizations, however, thematic programming is on the rise, a formula that tries to open up the canon by increasing the intelligibility of both canonical repertoire and unknown or new repertoire. In this formula, a 'story' is created through which separate works are understood as meaningful in relation to each other. As argued earlier, this appeals to the potential of the regulative concept to serve as a framework that guides our understanding of musical works. As such, narratives of the canon are deployed on account of their aesthetic effectiveness.

However, this characterization is an oversimplification to some extent. From the way these narratives resonate within the case studies can be concluded that there is no such thing as operationalizing a purely pragmatic narrative or a purely aesthetic narrative. The most noteworthy observation stemming from the case studies is the fact that in both narratives, there is an aesthetic (or artistic) as well as a pragmatic (or organizational) component. For example, the thematic programming formulas that have been advocated as formulas starting from an aesthetic impetus, work best in orchestras who have the organizational flexibility for it. Similarly, while the narrative of the stagnated canon entails pragmatic advantages such as large audiences, it can only do so because its aesthetic authority is still endorsed by that audience. In connection with the theory, this study testifies to the awareness that the aesthetic has always been hybrid to a certain extent, in the sense that aesthetic developments are always dependent on specific organizational and socio-cultural conditions. The aesthetic and the pragmatic, separated for the benefit of conceptual clarity, are two interlocking dimensions that require the right proportions in order to be able to mutually reinforce each other.

As such, this research has shown how the seemingly opposite dimensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic are fundamentally interconnected, not only in the sense that both have a profound impact on each other, but to the extent that both poles require each other's presence in order to survive. Through their dialectical tension, these contraries have been argued to provide the space within which creativity can thrive. This final conclusion prompts to answer the research question, which was formulated as follows: how does the repertoire of symphony orchestras relate to their prospect of sustainability?

First of all, following the arguments above, if any definition of sustainability is to be put forward in response to the unsettling interpretation of it as an empty signifier (cf. chapter 1.4.1), it would have to insist on the necessity to detach the notion of sustainability from constancy. One might instead argue that sustainability, in this context, is a condition that is achieved only by acknowledging the tensions between aesthetic interests and pragmatic interests, or, adapted to the scale of the empirical research, between the artistic and the organizational. These tensions are embodied in the narratives that stipulate the norms for aesthetic practice. The collective and constructed aspect of narratives resonates with the definition of legitimacy as a generalized, or indeed imaginary perception of what is appropriate within a given context. Under the right conditions and in the right proportions, the seemingly opposite tensions of the aesthetic and the pragmatic have been argued to contribute not to the demise of the symphony orchestra (as a *pars pro toto* for aesthetic practice) but to its very prospect of sustainability.

Secondly, the idea of a musical canon, the study of which urged us to understand it as a regulative concept, has proven a valuable concept to trace the tensions between the aesthetic

and the pragmatic, and to see how their relationship is embodied in narratives. More specifically, this research shows that the narratives underlying the musical canon are historically traceable and therefore contingent: the narrative is not entirely intrinsic to the musical works it connects, as it is a collective and imaginary construction that, under the right conditions, can be reconfigured. The case studies have illustrated that the willingness of the organization to adapt to shifts in both its social and its aesthetic surroundings is vital to achieve a condition of legitimacy and sustainability. Striving for the sustainability of the symphony orchestra, in that vein, requires a proactive approach not only in designing and constantly adapting a viable business model, but also in musical programming. Precisely in this proactive approach with regard to the aesthetic and the pragmatic, lies a potential for the creation of new narratives.

In order for interpretations to form a coherent pattern in time and to overcome the inertia of the canon, active recontextualization of the available musical material is imperative. In other words: a performing practice that accumulates interpretations, is vital to that practice's sustainability. The study has shown that institutions can play a vital role in that process. The case studies in chapter 4 have exemplified that a thematic approach to concert programming has a strong appeal to audiences, and the theoretical proposition of this dissertation explains why: thematic programming makes adequate use of narratives about the musical canon by linking individual works together. Via these new links, cumulative patterns of interpretation are slowly created, which in time contribute to a new understanding of these works. That way, the case studies have suggested that a potential answer to opening up the canon lies in the audacity and perseverance to continuously create and re-create narratives which can be understood against the interpretive horizon of today. Indeed, a practice confident in the tension between what a work is in itself and what it becomes as part of a narrative, arguably holds more promises for a sustainable future than a practice that is legitimized through affirming the unquestionable aesthetic autonomy of musical works, or through endorsing an extreme contextualization (or indeed pragmatization) of musical value. This process of puzzle-solving, aimed at the creation of contingent but coherent narratives, can be argued to be the motor behind sustainable aesthetic development. By constantly 'charging' musical works with meaning, the symphony orchestra will be granted the time to shift focus from the reproduction of a narrative that has outlived its pertinence to the production of new ones.

Thirdly, precisely because of the regulative character of the musical canon, this research has argued against the exclusive authority of the traditional canon, but in favor of its guiding features as a referential framework. The musical canon establishes a relation between the musical work itself and the narratives that are collectively construed for it. Here, the notion of the regulative canon-concept proves its indebtedness to, and distinctness from, Goehr's notion of the regulative work-concept. Goehr had argued that in the early 19th century, musical practice became organized in terms of strictly delineated 'works', where these works were thought to carry a fixed meaning and eternal value. The specificity of the regulative

canon-concept lies in its relationship with overarching narratives that cannot be fully reduced to the sum of the properties of separate works but are at least partially reliant on the perceived (or imaginary) logic of their relation. In other words, not only the intrinsic characteristics of the work itself but also the work's inclusion into an overarching narrative generate meaning and value for the individual work. It is crucial to see that these narratives are indeed constructed under the umbrella of a set of social mechanisms, but they are not confined by it. This summarizes the previously negotiated middle position in the polarized canon debate. The canon's conservative defenders' argument that the canon is an eternal aesthetic authority that represents the true, the good and the beautiful and therefore tolerates no alterations, is based on a disregard for the collectively constructed, narrative and imaginary character of a canon. Similarly, the canon detractor's argument that the construction of a museum of 'representative' works (as a metaphor of the canon) is exclusive by default, does not hold ground. The museum, quite on the contrary, enables to continuously devise new narratives, and allows to curate the museum in light of the shifting understanding of its collection.

In that sense, it is quite liberating to realize that musical practices are regulated by a discourse which is not only the outcome of historical and specifically traceable dynamics, but which can also, under the right circumstances, be deployed to create new patterns of interpretation. By allowing new narratives to take shape, and by being conscious of the fact that these narratives are constructions, a shifting aesthetic consensus can be achieved that is necessary to steer clear from the extremities of aesthetic relativism and aesthetic universalism. The narrative's future, and therefore the canon's, is secured only in continuous dialogue with works that do not yet belong to the canon. The concept of a canon does not render meaningless the works that do not belong to it, but rather invites to disclose the meaningful content of these works in light of their radical alterity in relation to the canon. Precisely in this alterity they cause friction; a friction that is ironed out by the very same future that someday will be called the past.

Finally, one may wonder if these conclusions imply a shift on the conceptual level of the musical canon. Consciously allowing new narratives to bring into life a new and constantly shifting canon, means tampering with the very concept of a canon. To explain this suggestion, Goehr's distinction between open and closed concept (cf. chapter 3.2.2) is helpful in that regard. A concept is closed, Goehr describes, as soon as the object that it covers, is required to possess certain fixed features. Historically speaking, the concept of a canon has always been a closed concept. It was argued that the musical canon as a closed concept was inevitably oriented towards uniformity. As a closed concept bringing about an increasingly stagnated canon, the canon has served as a source of legitimacy that has been challenged in the context of the pragmatized aesthetics argument developed in chapter 1. Briefly summarized: a practice regulated by the closed canon-concept does not acknowledge that the narratives that constitute the canon, are contingent. The story that is being told, is a coherent story about

specific works that are regarded as aesthetically superior based on their intrinsic aesthetic qualities. It was exactly this belief in the eternal validity of that narrative that has been deconstructed throughout this research: narratives are always historically situated and can be traced back to very specific actions and choices. In chapter 3, therefore, it has been suggested that the canon may be understood as an open concept, namely as a concept that is "intensionally incomplete, because the possibility of an unforeseen situation arising which would lead us to modify our definition can never be eliminated" (Goehr 2007). This requires a whole new understanding of what a canon is: the authority that it boasts, is always relative to its changing narratives; narratives that not mutually exclusive. A practice regulated by an open canon-concept, in other words, is conscious of the fact that the narratives of the musical canon are contingent and can be altered. Indeed, it has been argued that a practice regulated by the open canon-concept deploys the dynamics between the aesthetic and the pragmatic in a way that allows for the development of new narratives. This research went as far as to state that music needs these narratives in order to be understood. It that sense, the conclusion reads that a musical practice that is regulated by an open canon-concept has the prospect of sustainability. Implied by this conclusion is a critical comment on the contemporary canon debate: what is being challenged in the debate is not the concept of a canon, but rather the authority of the canon as a closed concept. This research concludes that the concept of a canon can be preserved, namely as an open concept, because it embodies the historically changing narratives required to unlock a significant part of the meaning of music.

At the same time, however, one may wonder whether the suggestion that musical works can be understood through historically changing narratives does not compel us to abandon the very concept of a canon. To what extent can a concept that has been recognized as an imaginary construction, regulate a practice? A similar observation was made in the context of the historical point where the canon appeared to have stagnated: once 'unmasked' as a regulating system, it starts to work differently. One may indeed wonder whether not recognizing the contingency of a regulating system is a precondition for the system to work at all. Furthermore, maybe musical practice will not get rid of the idea that a canon implies that the works within it have a certain degree of self-evidence, and that they serve as a universal standard across times and cultures. It may turn out that the authority of the stagnated canon is not relative to narratives, and that it can be traced back to intrinsic aesthetic qualities which are superior to other. Tonality, for example, may yet prove to be a necessary 'grammar' to coordinate the musical language. How long should we labor philosophically against an intuitive idea that proves extraordinarily hard to overturn in practice? Time will tell whether there is such a thing as an inertia of the canon which can be overcome with the creation of new narratives. In the meantime, relying on the narratives of the open canon-concept may be our best shot at a sustainable musical culture.

5.4 Closing words

I have opened this dissertation with the widely used cliché that music is a universal language, and these final paragraphs provide the opportunity to close with it as well. If music is indeed a universal language, it means that when we listen to music, we enter into a discourse that is not only our own. In other words: music speaks to us in ways we find collectively meaningful. In the introduction to this document, I commented that listeners invariably navigate in the space between what music is as an autonomous and delineated aesthetic entity and what music is as part of a certain context. The position that I have tried to defend throughout this dissertation, is that our understanding of music lies at the junction of music and discourse. It is fascinating that an aesthetic practice appears to be regulated by a discourse that is, while fictional, vital to the art form's functioning. While an argument can be made that every art form is rendered understandable only through the tension of the work and its narrative, I do think that music is somewhat different. In the case of music, even the 'work' is a collectively endorsed fiction. As music has no fixed referent and only exists by grace of its performance, it seems that music is rendered understandable only through the fictional stories that we have called narratives (cf. Epilogue). These collectively developed narratives create an aesthetic sphere of relative consensus, in which music appears as a universal language in which different songs can be sung.

The need to 'perform' burdens the orchestra with an inevitable cost disease, but at the same time this necessity harbors music's greatest asset, namely the contingency of its meaning. Via its musical programming, the orchestra provides conditions for the creation of cumulative patterns of judgments, which are delivered by anyone who dwells in the Imaginary Museum, be it the critic, the musician or the casual listener. As such, the orchestra (or any aesthetic practice) holds the potential to continuously create and re-create the narratives that are needed to understand musical works against the interpretive horizon of today; narratives that vibrate with our lifeworld because they hold tradition up to the light of contemporaneity. The inertia of the canon, referring to the time required for cumulative patterns of judgment to solidify into a coherent narrative, should not be an excuse to steer clear from adventurous or experimental programming. If we do not edge the canon, it will never grow. Only by means of this proactive approach, and by thus navigating within the dialectical space between music and its narratives, the curatorship of the Imaginary Museum falls into the hands of a real practice again. That way, the Imaginary Museum shall no longer be burdened by the authority of its own stagnated collection.

Epilogue - Final Reflections on the Musical Canon

This epilogue marks the end of a long and winding road. Looking back at the trajectory, it is striking (although perhaps not atypical for a doctoral dissertation) that what initially started off as a research about sustainable symphony orchestras eventually turned into a much more broadly spanned research. While digging for the roots of the orchestra's legitimacy crisis I stumbled onto a broader, though very much related discussion about the accessibility of music's meaning. I am very much aware that taking this turn means opening Pandora's box, but I do not think that it would be an inexcusable digression from the initial topic. On the contrary, I consider it a necessary plot twist. The whole investigation of the history, authority and creative potential of the musical canon proved to be native to one of the oldest and most pertinent questions in music philosophy; the question as to where the conditions of our musical understanding reside. In this epilogue, I want to seize the opportunity to sharpen some insights with regard to the musical canon in light of its contingent narratives, in the hope that they might serve as a stepping stone for further research.

This research has contributed to the understanding of the musical canon as a regulative concept, which means that the musical canon is interwoven with narratives in which aesthetic and pragmatic interests interlock. Against that background, it has been argued that musical practices are regulated by a discourse which is not only the outcome of historical and specifically traceable dynamics, but which can also, under the right circumstances, be deployed to render those practices sustainable. By preserving the idea of a canon in light of its changing narratives, this research has occupied a midway position in the polarized canon debate: between aesthetic relativism associated with the canon's detractors and aesthetic objectivism associated with the canon's defenders. Thusly understood as a referential framework that facilitates a developing practice, the canon has assumed the role of "a necessary evil to make sense of the world" (Rutherford-Johnson 2017).

This interpretation of the canon has one very important implication that begs for further elaboration. As the musical canon is interwoven with a narrative that is collectively shaped by specific practices, the canon establishes a relationship between the musical work itself and its history; a relation which is neither ontological nor entirely contingent. More specifically, the idea of the narrative implies that a work's meaning cannot be deduced from its own formal characteristics and cannot be reduced to social convention. Throughout this research, it has repeatedly been proposed that individual works derive a significant part of their meaning from the narrative that understands these individual works in relation to each other. It is indeed the narrative that draws imaginary patterns of understanding between individual works, leading to a certain understanding of these works. If that narrative is always under construction, this implies that the meaning of the works that fall under the narrative is equally shifting. For example, considering the works of Joseph Haydn to be the culmination of the

tradition of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, leads to a different understanding of these works than considering the same works to be anticipating the works of Beethoven. Under the paradigm of the open canon-concept, therefore, the interpretation and meaning of the individual works is no longer fixed but shifts along the narratives that account for the canon's coherence as a whole. The attribution of meaning under the paradigm of the open canon-concept will be tentatively explored in this epilogue, as an incentive for research in the vein of this proposition.

The idea that our understanding of music shifts along with the narratives we collectively construe, does not arrive unopposed. As the first part of this epilogue will elucidate, the opening of the musical canon through continuous narrative creation, in many ways challenges the principle of *Werktreue,* or the unwritten rule of having to remain true to the artistic integrity of the work itself (see e.g. Goehr 2007). Thematic concert formats that are gaining ground in the alternative orchestras in particular, tend to forfeit historical accuracy in performance, thereby violating this principle of *Werktreue.* Therefore, questions will be raised in this section as to the conditions under which the idea of contingent narratives can be authorized, and what that means for the interpretation and performance of musical works. By revaluing the performative nature of music and the capacity of judgement along with it, the midway position between the polar extremes of aesthetic relativism and aesthetic objectivism is further strengthened. In the final part of this epilogue, the Imaginary Museum of Musical Works will be visited once more. The Imaginary Museum will be concluded to be the place where the narratives are plotted which are needed to "make sense of the world".

Interpretation and the ideal of *Werktreue*

Connected to the canon debate outlined in chapter 3, discussions over the interpretation of musical works and the attribution of meaning to them, tend to oscillate between the polar positions of aesthetic immediacy (which ascribes meaning purely to the intrinsic aesthetic properties of the work) and historical awareness (which ascribes meaning purely to the extrinsic historical situatedness of the work) (see also: Tomlinson 1994). Once more, highlighting the narrative characteristics of the canon authorizes a midway position, because this approach puts emphasis on music as a performative art form, dealing with musical material that needs to be engaged with in order to reveal its meaning. A performance of a musical work closes the distance in time between the creation of the work and the listener's act of listening to it. In that sense, every work carries a historical baggage, but is contemporary in its performance. Under the paradigm of the open canon-concept, therefore, the attribution of meaning does not urge to choose between aesthetic immediacy and historical awareness. The true question becomes to whom the act of validating the artwork belongs: to the specialized authority who identifies the remnants from history, or to the listener who creates the living messages from it?

"Do we really want to talk about 'authenticity' anymore?" The opening statement of Richard Taruskin's *The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past* (Taruskin 1995, 90) barely conceals the author's annoyance with the topic of authenticity in musical performance. The 1960's saw the rise of a new movement in classical music performance that strived to approach the composer's initial intentions as closely as possible (Vervliet and Van Looy 2010). Initially, it was a movement that challenged the way 17th- and 18th-century music, in particular, was commonly performed (Thom 2011). Conductors such as Wilhelm Furtwängler and Herbert von Karajan, for example, had expanded orchestras to perform Beethoven and Brahms symphonies at twice the size the composer had prescribed, and Glenn Gould had antagonized classical music purists with his idiosyncratic 1956 recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on a Steinway grand piano. The so-called Early Music Movement advocated a return to the original instruments for which the music was written and based its performance practice and stylistic interpretations on academic study of original sources. This practice is commonly referred to as authentic performance practice (or APP). Conductors such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Gustav Leonhardt and Philippe Herreweghe became authorities for historically informed performance practices along with periodic ensembles such as the Concentus Musicus Wien, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Les Arts Florissants. The movement initiated a transformation of the interpretation of the repertoire that traditionally fell outside the borders of the established musical canon, but later also of the repertoire within. Examples of the latter trend include Sharon Kam's performance of Mozart's clarinet concerto on a basset clarinet instead of the more common clarinet in A, Roger Norrington's Beethoven symphonies without vibrato, or the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Mahler symphonies performed with gut strings and narrow-bore valves.

Authentic performance practice has sometimes been caricaturized as 'bounded creativity', because the emphasis on reconstruction is believed to restrict or eliminate the performer's own creative activity[12] (Vervliet and Van Looy 2010). If imitation is the aim, creativity is a disturbing factor rather than a productive one. Taruskin clarifies his annoyance with APP by quoting a colorful comment once made by Donald Grout:

> "(If a composer of 'old music') could by some miracle be brought to life in the twentieth century to be quizzed about the methods of performance in his own times, his first reaction would certainly be one of astonishment at our interest in such matters. Have we no living tradition of music, that we must be seeking to revive a dead one? The question might be embarrassing. Musical archaism may be a symptom of a disintegrating civilization." (as quoted in: Taruskin 1995, 94)

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[12] Recently, the alternative term 'historically informed performance' (or HIP) became in vogue, putting more emphasis on the expressive act of performing as well as moderating the universalist claim on authenticity implied by the term 'authentic performance practice'.

This "musical archaism" of which the APP movement stands accused, can be seen as a radical operationalization of the ideal of *Werktreue,* or the principle of being faithful to the work. In *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works,* Lydia Goehr (2007) argued that *Werktreue* is the aesthetic paradigm of 19th-century idealism: being true to the work is only possible after the concept of the 'work' is institutionalized and when the musical work is considered a fixed 'text'. The ideal of being true to the musical text, most adequately represented in the score, established a new relation between the work and its performance, as well as between the composer and the performer. In *The Quest for Voice,* Goehr insists on this idea by distinguishing two possible relationships between the performer and the work: the 'perfect performance of music' and the 'perfect musical performance' (Goehr 2002b). The 'perfect performance of music' embodies the tendency in formalist aesthetics to minimize the role of the performer as an artist. The 'perfect performance of music' complies with the ideal of *Werktreue* and is aimed at understanding the work through the performer, or even despite of the performer. More poetically phrased, if the 'perfect performance of music' can be described as Apollonian, the 'perfect musical performance' is Dionysian (Goehr 2002b). The 'perfect musical performance' emphasizes the personal dimension of musicianship involved in the event of performing. In this case, the performer is understood through the work, rather than the other way around.

Although both relations may well be embodied in the same actions on stage, both conceptions are essentially different. The notion of the 'perfect musical performance' is centered around the idea of developing. In this case, the idea is upheld that it is the performance itself that carries meaning, rather than the work itself. The ideal of the 'perfect performance of music', on the other hand, carries static connotations. The ideal of *Werktreue*, and of APP, has advocated the 'perfect performance of music' at the expense of the 'perfect musical performance'. It can be argued that this movement has been a paralyzing one, in the sense that it has taken satisfaction in polishing the established canon, rather than in developing it (Rink 2001). Despite the antagonistic and revitalizing impetus of the Early Music Movement, its ideal of *Werktreue* and the assumption that there is one 'true' way of performing a work, can be argued to be a radical effect of, as well as a significant contribution to, the narrative of the stagnated canon.

Parallel to the emergence of the authentic performance practice of the Early Music Movement, and equally antagonistic towards mainstream performance practices, a second wave of avant-gardists has challenged the authority of the work-concept as well as the associated ideal of *Werktreue.* The problematization of the ideal of *Werktreue* has manifested itself in at least four different ways: one with reference to the role of the performer and one to the composer, one with reference to the form of the work itself, and one to the content of the work.

Firstly, avant-gardists have criticized the reduction of the performer from an interpreter to a mere transmitter (Leech-Wilkinson 2009). György Ligeti's 1962 composition entitled *Poème Symphonique for 100 Metronomes* thematizes the role of the performer, by confronting the audience with the most radical form of *Werktreue* imaginable: the entire piece is scored for one hundred mechanical metronomes. Does it make sense to produce music without the interpretive mediation or 'interference' of the performer?

In the same vein, secondly, the role of the composer has been thematized very recently with the completion of Beethoven's tenth symphony by artificial intelligence, scheduled for the end of the Beethoven year 2020 (Foulkes 2019). It raises fundamental questions as to where the beauty and meaning of such a 'work' reside: is the beauty inherent to the work itself, or is it bestowed on it by history, which is completely absent in this case. Upon listening to a fragment of Beethoven's tenth symphony, Beethoven expert Barry Cooper commented: "It did not sound remotely like a convincing reconstruction of what Beethoven intended" (as quoted in: Delbert 2019). The question is whether this comment is to the point or not.

Thirdly, works like the famous 1956 *Klavierstück XI* by Karlheinz Stockhausen problematize the ideal of *Werktreue* on the account of formlessness. The piece consists of various scattered fragments which the performer can arrange at will, thus deciding on the momentary form of the work. This raises questions as to where the 'work'-aspect resides: in the pitch organization, in the contingent form, or in the very idea that the form is contingent? In the same vein, one can wonder whether two performances of Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* are performances of the same work. Does *Werktreue* entail fidelity to the score or fidelity to the ontologically different category of the work (see also: Thom 2011)?

Finally, the material of which the musical work consists, became problematized. The score of John Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis*, composed between 1961 and 1962, consists of an astronomy map, on which the constellation of dots indicates relative pitches while their sizes determine their amplitude. In other words, the form is relatively fixed within the score, but the pitches are not. Performers create the content of the work on the spot through chance operations. "Nothing one does gives rise to anything that is preconceived", Cage (1994, 69) would explain. In doing so, Cage redefined musical practice from a work-based practice towards a radically performative practice (Gloag 2012). In such an aleatoric context, it is impossible to fixate the boundaries of the 'work'.

In short, a significant part of the 20th-century repertoire has intentionally rendered the ideal of *Werktreue* untenable. Of course, the discussion itself on APP and the untenability of *Werktreue* is of secondary importance in the present study.[13] Also, the distinction between

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[13] The interested reader may be directed towards the recent overview on the discourse of ontology of musical works and the according discussion on authenticity in Carl Matheson's and Ben Caplan's *Ontology* section of *The Routledge Companion to Music and Philosophy* (Gracyk and Kania 2011).

'perfect performance of music' and 'perfect musical performance' is a methodological simplification that is not found in practice in such extremity. Yet, this background to Taruskin's outcry "Do we really want to talk about 'authenticity' anymore?" permits to make a crucial point. The whole discussion comes down to two fundamental questions. Firstly, does a work of art forfeit its aesthetic authenticity when displaced from its original chronological position? And secondly, to whom exactly does the authority of judgment over aesthetic authenticity belong?

The first question may serve to deepen the understanding of the canon as an open concept. At face value, APP as well as the open canon-concept paradigm presume that the chronological position of a work of art is vital to its understanding. More precisely, both positions start from the basic hermeneutic premise that context is necessary to understand the text (i.e. the work itself) as it was intended. Establishing the boundaries of that context, however, is where both positions disagree. The position of authentic performance practice regards the reconstruction of the exact same historical context in which the musical work was written as elementary for its proper interpretation. In that sense, this position is both positivist and essentialist, because it assumes that the meaning of the work is fixed. The open canon-concept position fundamentally differs from the APP position because it suggests that the interpretation of the work relies on a temporary and contingent construction of a context (namely, a narrative) in which the work of art presents itself. The meaning of the work, accordingly, is neither entirely intrinsic to the work, nor entirely extrinsic to the work. The contingency of context may promptly raise the question if the open canon-concept position is relativist after all. The answer is yes and no. It is relativist, in the sense that the meaning of a musical work, conditional to its interpretation and embodied in its performance, depends on the way the work is framed. It is not relativist, in the sense that the open canon-concept paradigm allows the work to perform the same aesthetic function it was intended to perform, without pinning down its meaning to the work's original historical context. As such, the work reclaims its aesthetic function by allowing varying interpretations to take shape and by thus reinstating performance as an expressive act (see also: Goehr 2002b). The fundamental difference with relativism is that the equivalence of narratives does not imply the triviality of interpretation. In short: relativity of aesthetics does not entail aesthetic relativism.

The second and related question is to whom the authority of judgment over aesthetic authenticity belongs. In his 1982 essay *Thoughts on Biography,* the famous Beethoven biographer Maynard Solomon wrote:

> "The meanings of a completed work of art are in constant flux: a work of art, once created, is a structure that has become entirely separated from its creator, that has started to live its own life. Its value is now utterly independent of its originator's intentions." (as quoted in: Navickaite-Martinelli 2014, 103)

These words perfectly summarize this paragraph. Once the music is written, it starts a new life as a work. This first removal of the musical work from the originator's intentions was referred to by Goehr as the separability principle (Goehr 2007). If the work is eventually incorporated in the Imaginary Museum, the work performs yet another function: the musical canon allows the work to be included into a narrative that infuses the work with a meaning that reaches out beyond the intrinsic characteristics of the individual work. If that infusion with meaning is a form of *hineininterpretierung* that stands opposed to the composer's original intentions, this drawback is amply outweighed by the newly gained layer of expressiveness.[14] The open canon-concept paradigm makes music, once again, subjective without rendering it meaningless. In the Imaginary Museum, the work is charged with meaning by the listener. This answers the above question as to whom the power of judgement and the attribution of meaning belongs to. In 1824, founding father of historiography Leopold von Ranke started a famous quest towards understanding history "wie es eigentlich gewesen". One can now sympathize with Taruskin, who hopes that a new paradigm shift may finally initiate a move towards understanding music "wie es eigentlich uns gefällt" (Taruskin 1995, 148).

The Imaginary Museum revisited

The proposed argumentation on the importance of performance serves to illustrate that narrating requires an act. Every narrative, however imaginary, has its narrator, however collective. The necessity to perform, or to enact narratives, shows that narratives mediate not in creating a relation between the works and the historical context in which they have been *conceived*, but in creating a relation between the works and the historical context in which they are *performed*. By thus interpreting and re-enacting the past against the horizon of the present, an important aspect of the art work's meaning is disclosed. This is indeed the strength of the musical canon narrated as an open concept. To conclude this epilogue, this final paragraph visits the Imaginary Museum of Musical Works once more. The Imaginary Museum (the familiar metaphor for the mental space which is the musical canon) can be concluded to be the place where narratives are plotted. Much like the performer finds clues in the score to create their interpretative plot (Rink 2001), programmers, teachers, historiographers and casual listeners, who serve as the collective curators of the Museum, construct music's narratives by following indications in the repertoire. By grace of their constellation into a coherent pattern of historical interpretations, musical works thus enact a history in which the listener can be an active agent.

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[14] In that sense, it could be legitimate to distinguish, as Peter Kivy did in his book *Authenticities* (1998), 'sonic authenticity' or the exact reconstruction of the intended notes, from 'sensible authenticity' or the exact reconstruction of the intended aesthetic expression (Thom 2011).

André Malraux' original notion of the *Musée Imaginaire* has been translated as *Imaginary Museum* (Goehr 2007) as well as *Museum without Walls* (Malraux 1967). Although less frequently used, the latter translation is particularly interesting as it allows for one final distinction based on the museum metaphor. While the Imaginary Museum (with walls) may ultimately serve as a metaphor for the closed canon-concept, the Museum without Walls may serve as a metaphor for the open canon-concept. The Museum without Walls, or open canon-concept, holds the opportunity to produce meanings relative to the museum's incidental boundaries. It is based on the principle that not only the selection of canonized artefacts is mutable, but also the criteria according to which these artefacts are classified as canonical. In its open guise, the canon-concept thus presents itself as a regulative guide, without the imminent danger of running into its own walls.

Every musical work (broadly defined as a musical utterance that was pre-planned reflectively) contains a universe in itself, in the sense that it provides logical coherence (Johnson 2002). At the same time, it is embedded in a historical system and thus derives its coherence from models outside of the work itself. In the same vein, progress of the musical material, in whatever way, is never arbitrary, not even in the case of aleatoric music: the choice of being aleatoric is a conscious choice made against the backdrop of history. Therefore, any musical work, new or old, can be perceived as new as much as it transcends the logic within which it is momentarily framed. A work written centuries ago is not necessarily and intrinsically old: any work can enact newness as the narrative unfolds. Narrative creation in the Imaginary Museum (without walls) links music back to expressive acts, thereby revaluating processes of interpretation and the attribution of meaning. In *The Quest for Voice,* Goehr argues:

> "The advantage of linking music back to expressive acts is that it allows us to claim that, in the broadest sense of 'political', musical practice is already political whether or not one finds in any given arrangement of notes an explicit ideological message. Music is political already in virtue of the fact that music is a practice of human expression or performance working itself out in the world." (Goehr 2002b, 128)

The Imaginary Museum without Walls conceived under the open canon-concept authorizes the creation and enactment of several concurrent narratives, in which musical meaning is neither arbitrary nor absolute. As the Museum is the prime locus for interpretation, the idea of musical meaning can be retained from a non-relativist stance. The Museum is where new works of art (as well as the already collected ones) acquire a significant part of their meaning, as it provides a context that is always under construction. In that sense, a musical work derives a part of its meaning from a causal chain in which the work has its origin; a chain that is forged by interpretation and displayed in the museum. In that sense, one can easily agree with Dahlhaus who states that "meaning in art bears the stamp of history" (Dahlhaus 1983, 64).

In conclusion, understanding the musical canon as a regulative concept amounts to acknowledging that aesthetic practices are regulated by a discourse of narratives. In that sense, the potential of the Imaginary Museum without Walls recalls the classic *Gestalt* experiments: in the famous duck-rabbit *Gestalt* experiment, the observer sees the lines on the paper either as a rabbit or as a duck, depending on the observer's mindset (Kuhn 1970). What one sees, depends on what one believes. Quite similarly, the Imaginary Museum represents a narratological rendering of history, while in fact, it houses nothing more than a set of separate works. This discourse is necessary for the works to disclose their full meaning and appeal. The Imaginary Museum emerged out of past artistic utterances and structures imminent artistic utterances by imposing its boundary conditions on the individual objects; it thus organizes aesthetic reality. This idea strongly resonates with one of Malraux' central claims, that it is the Museum itself that changes the very nature of the items it houses:

> "Though our museums conjure up for us a Greece that never existed, the Greek works in them patently exist; Athens was never white, but her statues, bereft of color, have conditioned the artistic sensibility of Europe." (Malraux 1965, 47)

In other words, the observer interprets the past in the light of what he understands, and plots the future accordingly: the intrinsic characteristics of the works are only a starting point for their shifting interpretation. The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works enables to hear the aural progressions as musically meaningful against the background of its narratives: one does not *hear* new things, but one *listens to* new things. Therefore, the musical canon holds a performative potential: not through representing one single model of history, but through temporarily enacting one.

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APPENDIX A: Methodology

The following paragraphs provide a description of strategies as well as specific methods and tactics deployed over the course of the empirical study. The methodology that bundles all of these tactics together is aimed at generating trustworthy, complete and unbiased information that goes beyond the setting of the specific cases under scrutiny.

Legitimation and aim of the case study approach

The aim of the research is not to test existing theories but rather to reflect on an actual practice and expand theory by drawing links based on what is observed. The case study method is particularly well suited for this approach, because it describes the mechanisms and context of particular phenomena in a specific setting (Yin 2014; Eisenhardt 1989). The phenomenon under scrutiny can in this case be described as the development of programming trends in symphony orchestras in relation to their organizational model.

The case study approach was chosen for various reasons, which closely fit the requirements formulated by Yin (2014). Firstly, this research focusses on contemporary phenomena in real-world contexts, over which the researcher has no control. Secondly, as suggested before, cases are chosen to corroborate the proposed theoretical framework (spanning the dynamics of the biotope as well as the hypotheses) and, if necessary and possible, to expand it with emergent theory. As such, the presumed causal links between the phenomena under scrutiny will be exposed and clarified. Thirdly, the phenomenon under study is not expected to have one single set of outcomes, and finally, the assessment of the above propositions requires multiple sources of evidence.

The goal of these case studies is to construct a holistic and pluralist interpretive framework that allows for conflicting explanations, rather than a linear or singular understanding of the observed causalities. The case study approach thus allows me to understand the variety of causes and motivations for programming choices, and to look for the influence of contexts, both historical and circumstantial. Contexts will be understood as nested environments that shape these causes and motivations, while they are at the same time formed by these very causes and motivations.

Case selection

To take on a pluralist perspective, I have opted for an embedded multi-case study (Yin 2014), for which I have selected six cases in three cities. The choice for organizations within these cities is partially pragmatic (in terms of access and proximity) but mainly depended on the

extent to which the selected orchestra model could be considered as relevant to the research question. As the primary purpose of my research is to develop or extend theory, and not to test it, the principle of purpose-bound sampling is most appropriate, which means that cases are selected because they are suitable for illuminating the system under examination (Tellis 1997). The selected cases all have a specific and well-considered stance towards the musical repertoire and adopt an according organizational model. These conditions guarantee a close fit with my theoretical framework and hypotheses, and the case selection stands in direct relation with my research question. The principle of purpose-bound sampling authorizes the inclusion of one organization (Splendor) which is not a symphony orchestra, but a music venue that has developed an organizational model which precisely fits my research requirements.

The six cases have been selected from three culturally divergent cities: Antwerp, Amsterdam and London. Musical life in each of these regions is influenced by very different cultural histories and policies, providing an important lens through which each organization will be observed. However, the particular city background, history and recent developments in the cultural, demographic, social or economic fabric of the city, are only looked at to the extent to which they are relevant for the selected organizations within that city. It is a fact that Antwerp, Amsterdam and London continue to lead the way in the elaboration and implementation of so-called 'creative city' frameworks (see e.g.: Waitt and Gibson 2009; Gielen 2010; Schramme and Segers 2012). Although this might have provided a relevant additional lens, this discourse has not been integrated in this particular study. The ultimate aim is to investigate and compare orchestra models and their repertoires. Therefore, the three regions are nothing more than a methodological tool for an adequate and sound comparison and are themselves not a focal point of the study. It may, in the end, be suspected that some of the investigated models require the surroundings of a big city in order to remain operative as they are. These considerations mostly fall beyond the scope of this particular study.

Within each of the cities, the selected cases envelop the span of options within my field of interest. In each city, one representative case has been chosen, and one alternative case. The representative case is an orchestra that cannot be neglected in the regional (and international) field because of its historical importance to the cultural development of that area. The alternative case consists of an orchestra or organization with a distinctive and novel approach towards organizing, programming and performing. It is important to note that this dual approach should not be confused with the polar case approach as formulated by Pettigrew (1990): both the representative and alternative organizations are typical organizations, not radical or unique examples. The embedded multi-case study is visualized in Figure 19. Apart from being ingrained in their respective cities, each selected organization is nested in the same international field and depends on the same contextual mechanisms. Each of the selected organizations operates at the highest professional level of live music performance. The research considers all normative judgments over quality of performance or management as irrelevant.
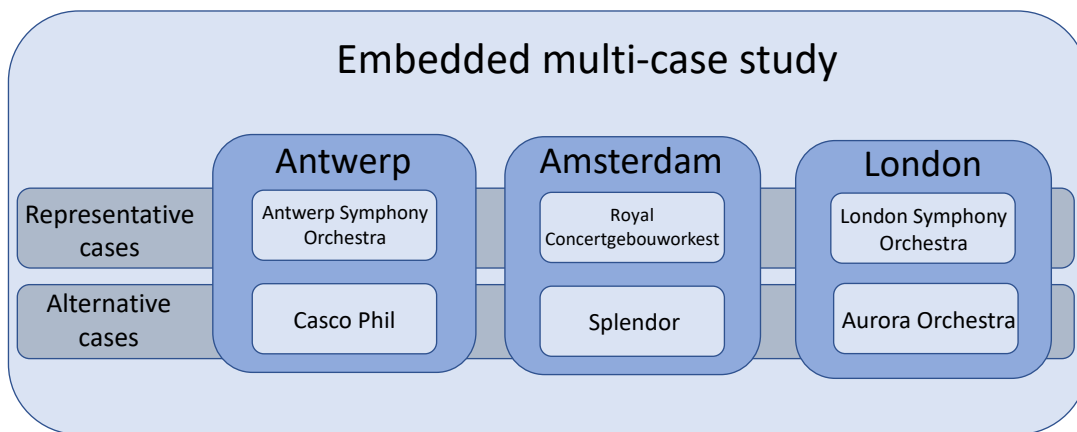
Figure 19: Embedded multi-case study

Each separate case study incorporates the organization as a whole. In the context of the case study, a symphony orchestra is defined as the players, management structure, marketing strategies, artistic profile, history, performance context, and all other possible aspects that contribute to the organization's distinct entity as a performing musical ensemble of twelve or more players. This definition shows that this research approaches the orchestra as a holistic entity and that its constituents are not considered as separable research entries.

To complement these cases, I have selected a few transversal, cross-case 'research units' (individuals, mostly as representatives of an arts organization) to inform me from an unbiased, though knowledgeable point of view. The purpose of the accordingly organized interviews or informal conversations was twofold: some were meant to sharpen my research framework before the actual case study interviews, while other were aimed at saturating or validating the already collected data. These additional research units are:

-Hans Waege: artistic director of the Belgian National Orchestra, and former artistic director of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.
-Jerry Aerts: artistic director and programmer of the concert hall deSingel in Antwerp, and programmer of the international symphonic concert series at the Elisabeth Hall in Antwerp.
-Ulrich Hauschild: director of music and programmer at BOZAR arts centre in Brussels.

Access conditions for some of the above cases have proven exceptionally hard. Especially for well-known and prestigious orchestra such as the Concertgebouworkest and London Symphony Orchestra (and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra to a lesser extent), an extensive strategic employment of my personal and professional networks was required, resulting in access strategies that each time extended over more than a year. Throughout this process, it became clear that issues of trust were at the basis of these access difficulties, and not availability and time management. Only series of personal recommendations have eventually

led to access. In general, the alternative cases provided access more easily and were more ready to contribute to the research. Two envisaged cases, one alternative orchestra in Amsterdam and one representative orchestra in Berlin, had to be dropped eventually, after long and repeated access efforts.

Data collection procedures

Developments in music as well as in organizational behavior cannot be fully understood without both synchronic and diachronic approaches (Carse 1976). Therefore, data collection procedures have involved a variety of methodological techniques to connect organizational behavior with various components of artistic practice, including programming trends and policies. To guarantee trustworthy data by means of data triangulation (Yin 2014), I opted for a mixed-method approach to the data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Accordingly, measurement and evaluation have been valued equally. Adhering to this third option to the classical qualitative versus quantitative methods dichotomy, this empirical study can be argued to have taken shape under the epistemological paradigm of pragmatism (Bishop 2015). Initial components of the research framework stem from thorough literature study that shaped the hypotheses. Methodological triangulation (Denzin 1978) was realized through the confrontation of this theoretical framework with both qualitative and quantitative data, for which the collection procedures take on various forms.

Firstly, empirical observation of the cases under scrutiny has placed both theoretical premises and qualitative data in an immediate empirical context. Field notes made during these observations have provided additional points of entry during interviews. At least two different concerts and one rehearsal in the orchestra's familiar environment have been attended for each case.

Secondly, documentary and archival sources such as databases, budget plans, annual reports, subsidy applications and policy documents have supplied more detailed and straight-to-the-point information. A preparatory investigation prior to the actual interviews has included an analysis of each case's programming trends since its foundation (both long-term programming strategies and short-term tactics), an overview of the governance structure, a financial analysis including the identification of the most important monetary sources (including both subsidies and private money), a closer look at the board structure and familiarization with the policy environment. This preparatory process for actual qualitative data collection was aimed at identifying research entry points that match the concepts under scrutiny, as well as qualitative data validation.

Thirdly and most importantly, series of in-depth interviews with key informants have provided the bulk of the data. For each case, interviewees have been selected based on their

representative position in the organization under study. To limit bias and desirable answers, data triangulation (Yin 2014) has been ensured by selecting representatives with various levels of personal and professional involvement, offering alternative perspectives on the organization. For each case, series of interviews with the head of the organization have been organized, as well as with an artistic director or programmer, and at least one musician. Figure 20 contains a full list of interviewees and their role in the selected cases. Interviews can be called in-depth, because the process involved a series of conversations which revolved around open questions, oriented towards my hypotheses and research question. Each interview was semi-structured, meaning that no more than ten open questions were prepared as a starting point for a conversation, thus not limiting the choice of answers (Dubois and Gadde 2002). The purpose was to provide an atmosphere in which interviewer and interviewee could discuss the relevant topic in detail (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). For the preparation of the open questions, the same topic list was used for each case. Although this topic list itself remained unaltered, specific questions were prepared for each case individually. Through that approach, answers to these questions were related to the specific organization under study, but the retrieved information remained comparable across the various cases (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Interviewees were informed about this topic list, giving them an idea about the content of the study but not about the case report format and the precise research requirements and hypotheses.

	Head of organization	Artistic management	Musicians
Antwerp Symphony Orchestra	Joost Maegerman	Hans Ferwerda	Alain De Rudder, Bart Vanistendael, Peter Verhoyen, Nele Delafonteyne
Casco Phil	Ben Haemhouts	Pieter Lembrechts	Lena La Mela, Anthony Gröger
Concertgebouworkest	Jan Raes	Joel Ethan Fried	Michael Gieler
Splendor	Norman van Dartel	David Dramm	Michael Gieler, David Dramm
London Symphony Orchestra	Kathryn McDowell	Andra East, David Alderman	Alix Lagasse, David Alderman, Nele Delafonteyne
Aurora Orchestra	John Harte	Jane Mitchell	Reinoud Ford, Jaime Campbell

Figure 20: list of interviewees per case

The collection process of qualitative data through interviews has been a highly iterative one. To ensure data saturation, each case has been revisited at least once throughout the course of the research, for a process of validation (Yin 2014). Case representatives have also been given the chance to review the resulting case report and make additional remarks or suggestions. These feedback opportunities were deliberately kept to a minimum to avoid *post factum* alteration and retrospective sensemaking of the original interview material. Through these overlapping cycles of data analysis and data collection, the level of data interpretation has been deepened considerably.

Data analysis procedures

Overlapping stages of data collection and analysis equally requires constant iterations between theory and data (Orton 1997).Therefore, the underlying strategy linking the data to the propositions is nested between inductive and deductive research and is generally referred to as framework analysis (Srivastava and Thomson 2009; Joanna Smith and Firth 2011). This approach is consistent with the mixed-methods approach described above. Srivastava and Thomson (2009) state that framework analysis is appropriate for research that has specific questions, a limited time frame and a pre-designed case study sample. Over several cycles of coding, interview data have been coded, indexed, charted and interpreted. The thematic framework that lies at the basis of the framework analysis and that stems from initial theoretical research, is tentative and leaves sufficient space for emergent theory at subsequent stages of analysis (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). The following paragraphs contain a detailed description of the framework analysis procedure.

After each set of interviews, I have transcribed the interviews verbatim. The first stage of analysis was a process of familiarization with the data. Before attributing codes to the data, particularly striking elements that emerged from the interviews were highlighted, and first personal reflections such as field notes and memos were reviewed. All subsequent stages of data analysis were realized by means of the data analysis software NVivo. Using the query command of the software, word-clouds were made to identify recurring themes and guide the process of coding. A first coding cycle consisted of descriptive coding (Yin 2014), meaning that open codes were attributed to certain fragments of text, each time in the original wording and the original language (Saldaña 2009). In a second coding cycle, often referred to as indexing (Srivastava and Thomson 2009), the data were broken down into separate parts, and logical patterns were identified, resulting in a node structure of axial codes: larger containers in which several pieces of data were categorized. The node structure (Saldaña 2009) was then structurally homogenized, meaning that the codes were reformulated in the appropriate English terminology. Every axial code that had only one or two references in the original data has been readdressed to determine whether or not it could be categorized in another axial code (Joanna Smith and Firth 2011). The resulting node structure, or structure of axial codes, was different for each separate case, as it was aimed at adequately reflecting the specific interview-data. When axial codes had been attributed to each individual interview, interviews were bundled per case, and their respective axial codes where accumulated.

The accumulation of these axial codes introduced the fourth stage in the data analysis, namely charting (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). In this process, the data were lifted from their original context and placed in charts that consisted of the themes that were designed to match the requirements of *a priori* research. These themes can be interpreted as stand-alone containers, which had already been designed in accordance with the hypotheses and research question and were to be filled in with already structured data (namely the axial codes). It is important to insist upon the fact that the axial codes were drawn from the actual data, and not deduced from the fixed thematic framework. The resulting hierarchical tree structure was

therefore based on the data and was subsequently confronted with the themes for further interpretation. In this framework analysis, accordingly, the axial codes were the primary arena for interpretation, as the proposed themes (or framework) and the structured data (or axial codes) were confronted, thereby combining deductive and inductive strategies. This principle is visualized in Figure 21.
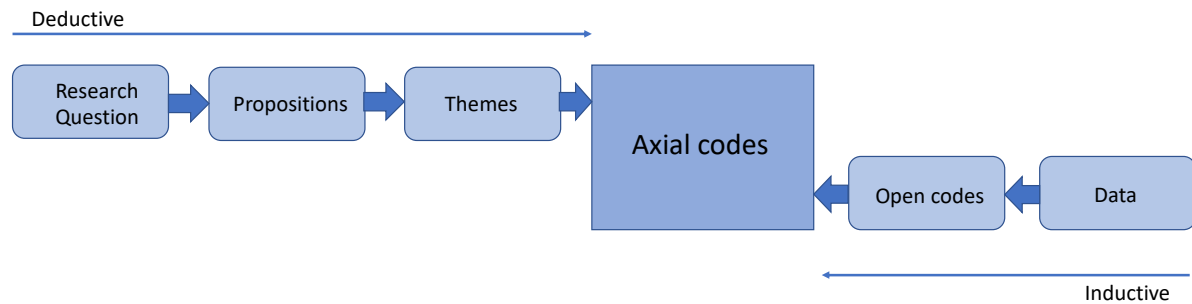
Figure 21: the framework analysis strategy

This step made the transition to a perspective that matched my theoretical concepts. Gradually, new insights have emerged that were confronted with the initial premises, expectations and propositions. During this process of pattern matching (Yin 2014), the final sensemaking of the data has occurred through cycles of expanding complexity and simplification (Pettigrew 1990). Periods of unconstrained openness towards the data have alternated with periods of focalized understanding emanating from the framework that guided the research. Corroboration, modification, rejection or advancement of the initial theoretical framework has allowed to critically readdress the propositions. Contradictory outcomes provided by the data have been acknowledged as alternative explanations if there was no reason to reject them on account of comparison or literature study. In a final step, the axial codes and themes have been organized in the manner that was most appropriate to report. This full process of data analysis was executed for each case study individually.

Summarizing, the case study methodology has been chosen to illustrate and further develop a theoretical issue by drawing from empirical phenomena. The framework analysis strategy has been chosen to limit bias, either from theory to data (in the design of interview questions and themes employed) or from data to theory (to avoid premature conclusions from shaping the interpretation of other cases), and to leave sufficient space for emerging theory. Like any methodological strategy, this particular approach has its strengths and weaknesses. The main strength of this methodology is the variety of angles from which the relevant issue is approached. These angles are:

-processual, as they emphasize actions as well as gradual evolutions over time;
-comparative, as data are drawn from a range of separate studies;
-pluralist, as the data describe often competing explanations;

-historical, as they take into account the historical evolution of the studied phenomena;

-contextual, as they examine the reciprocal relations between the phenomena and their contexts (Pettigrew 1990).

The shortcomings of this methodology are all related to potential bias. Firstly, desirable answers by representatives of the cases can never be fully avoided. Data triangulation (the use of multiple sources of evidence) and methodological triangulation (the selection of interviewees with varying levels of engagement) have been pursued to limit this problem. In addition, the combination of retrospective sources of data (interviews and chronicles) and real-time sources of data (observations and numeric databases) was aimed at reducing the impact of retrospective or overly subjective sensemaking by interviewees. Secondly, the impact of the external context over which the selected organization has no control, is impossible to grasp to its full extent. Efforts have been made to at least address the external factors that have the most perceivable impact on the relevant aspects of the organization.

Case report format

This embedded multi-case study follows a replication logic (Yin 2014), which means that each individual case study consists of a whole study that has been critically assessed as such before its comparison with other cases. Only in an ultimate stage, recurring themes across the cases have been compared. Not only does this replication logic reflect the chronology of the executed case study research, it is also reflected in the case study format as delivered in this dissertation. As the aim of the research is to develop theory, and not to compare the actual cases per se, each individual case study is presented separately, followed by a comparative chapter that immediately links the research to the theoretical framework. The case reports quote extensively from formal interviews as well as from informal conversations, and draw on field notes and observations made during rehearsals, concerts, coffee breaks and recording sessions. As argued, the deployment and representation of various types of documentation, interviews and observations, serves to counter concerns as to the reliability of the data.

Each individual case report starts with an overview of the history of the orchestra or organization, as far as this information is relevant to the interpretation of the organization's artistic vision, organizational model, long-term programming policies and short-term programming tactics. This sketch is followed by a paragraph covering recent developments of the organization. This section differs from the historical section because it adopts a more critical approach: primary sources such as actual documents and reports have been used, instead of the secondary sources such as chronicles that were reviewed for the historical outline. The demarcation of 'recent' differs between cases and depends on the availability of such critical primary sources. The third section of each case report covers the organization's programming policies. In a first part of this section, the programming policy is outlined in

general terms, while in the second part of the section, actual repertoire formulas are explored. Here, a distinction has been made between formulas for repertoire expansion (covering outreach and education) and formulas for repertoire development (covering the organization's efforts to program non-conventional or contemporary classical music).

Each case report of orchestras (meaning all cases except Splendor) contains a quantitative analysis of the orchestra's actual programming tendencies. These sections do not have the pretention to contain a meticulously exercised quantitative analysis but serve the double purpose of making the orchestra's repertoire emphases more tangible, and to confront theory with practice. The datasets used for this quantitative analysis were based on performance databases provided by the orchestras themselves, which were modified to meet the requirements of this research. The datasets include one separate entry for every time a work is performed.[15] The duration of the listed works has not been taken into account, as this tends to vary according to historically shifting aesthetic preferences. In order to visualize programming tendencies, the majority of the quantitative data analysis draws from a method proposed by Gilmore (1993) and similarly adopted by Wolf (2017), in which composers have been categorized into three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. Composers listed as 'anonymous', 'traditional' or 'various' have been removed from the set. The three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to both orchestra musicians and audiences. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertoire, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, often making their styles little known to orchestras and their audiences. In case of any doubt whether a composer was predominantly active in one period or the other, a judgment was made according to the specific composer's style. For example, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland and Shostakovich were categorized in the 1900-1950 period because of their aesthetic affinity with composers of that period. Not every category spans an equally proportioned timeframe, which does not facilitate drawing categorical conclusions. Therefore, this quantitative data analysis focusses more on relative motions such as repertoire evolutions throughout a span of several seasons, and concentration or density levels within each category. The specifics of this approach are stipulated for each case individually.

Each individual case report concludes with a discussion-section. In this section, case-specific observations and conclusions are formulated, and the qualitative and quantitative data are interpreted against the backdrop of the research framework.

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[15] With the exception of Casco Phil, as will be clarified below.

Methodological shortcomings

This methodology has been carefully constructed and administered with the aim of generating relevant, complete and trustworthy results. However, some imperfections were inevitable. The quantitative analysis of repertoire trends has some flaws.

Firstly, for the quantitative repertoire analysis of most cases, datasets have included one separate entry for every time a work was performed. In the case of Casco Phil, however, data analysis has been performed on the orchestra's digital library. In the resulting dataset, every work has been listed as one separate entry, regardless of the amount of performances. A disadvantage of this dataset is the fact that a work that has been performed only once, weighs as much in analysis as a work that has been performed twenty times. For that reason, comparative analysis with the other orchestras for which each performance has been weighed, may seem somewhat flawed. As a compensation for this shortcoming, a corroborating analysis has been performed on the concert calendar that was available on Casco Phil's website. This analysis of performances throughout the 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 seasons generated similar results. For example, while the library analysis generated a convention-innovation ratio of 55,44%, 15,09% and 29,47% for the three repertoire categories respectively, the performance analysis generated a similar convention-innovation ratio of 66,37%, 12,01% and 21,62%. The listings of 10 most frequently performed composers proved similar as well. In the library analysis, 7 composers appear from the pre-1900 category, none from the 1900-1950 category and 3 from the post-1950 category. In the performance analysis, 6 composers appear from the pre-1900 category, 1 from the 1900-1950 category and 3 from the post-1950 category. Despite minor variations in the results, either approach arrived at the same conclusions for every item in the comparative analysis. In the eventual cross-case analysis, a representation of the library analysis has been favored because the available performance calendar was incomplete and spanned a narrower timeframe.

The second problem with the quantitative approach adopted in the case studies is that the temporal division of composers into three time-categories remains somewhat speculative. Obviously, some composers belong in two of these time-categories. More importantly, though, not every pre-1900 composer is familiar to audiences and not every post-1900 composer is experimental. As will be elucidated in the case reports, an alternative approach focusing on relative concentration levels attends to this shortcoming, but still an argument can be made for the slight inaccuracy of the time-category approach when applied on a cross-case scale.

A third problem is more fundamental. If this research is, in the end, aimed at exploring the concept of the musical canon (cf. theoretical proposition), it should return to musical works

as soon as possible, and not linger around composers. The reasons why the quantitative approach has taken place on the level of the composer and not the musical work, are twofold: firstly, the available data did not always allow to distinguish separate works. Especially in the alternative cases, many programs involved fragments of works, arrangements and cross-over formats. In those cases, it made much more sense to list the composer and not the work. Secondly, the composer-approach was chosen because it promised to generate much more significant results. There are not that many musical works that are programmed more than a few times every ten years, so an according analysis based on works would have generated poor results. For example, if the work-approach would have been adopted, the majority of works would have been categorized as one-time experiments, making the analysis both deceitful and insignificant.

The constant shift between quantitative and qualitative data, especially in the comparative section of the study, is aimed at countering these imperfections.

APPENDIX B: Individual Case Reports

1. Antwerp Symphony Orchestra

Introduction

The battle for territory can sometimes be a bitter one in a country as small as Belgium. However necessary, the maintenance of sustainable cooperation among art organizations, and the adequate distribution of resources is not easy in its politically turbid climate. Apart from the federal government, three separate governments see to the cultural needs of the three demographic regions Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital Region. To complicate things, some policy issues are administered at the city level, which often results in a back-and-forth play of who exactly takes responsibility over which matters. In contrast to nearby countries such as The Netherlands and Italy, Belgian symphony orchestras have managed to stay upright during various political crises. The conditions, however, have not been favorable: especially in Flanders, subsidized symphony orchestras have survived under the persistent threat of budget cuts and austerity measures for several decades. While the Belgian performing arts scene has nurtured such innovative and influential individuals such as Gerard Mortier for opera and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker for contemporary dance, Belgian symphony orchestras have yet to shake their reputation of being out-of-date. As a result of an ongoing dialogue between the various players in the cultural sector itself and the maze of regional policies, cultural institutions have increasingly showed themselves willing to cooperate in both artistic and logistic matters.

Belgium counts eight professional symphony orchestras that receive a considerable amount of subsidies from at least one government. Flanders (population: 6.5 million) has three symphony orchestras, Wallonia (population: 3.5 million) and Brussels-Capital Region (population: 1.2 million) each have one. In addition, each of these regions has one opera orchestra. These orchestras roughly count between 50 and 90 musicians, have a non-profit structure, and are subsidized by the municipality in which it resides and either by the Flemish, Walloon or (in the case of the Belgian National Orchestra and the orchestra of La Monnaie Opera House) federal government. As such, orchestras in Belgium operate under rather strict constraints, following complex rules set by the city in which they are located as well as those stipulated by the federal, Walloon or Flemish governments. A typical Belgian orchestra is governed by a board consisting of artistic experts, politicians and partners from the business world. Musicians themselves are represented in a union and receive fixed wages according to regionally determined wage scales. Apart from structural subsidies over a period of 5 years, each of these orchestras can apply for additional funding in case they organize a project that requires supplementary funds. In addition, each orchestra is required to generate a minimum percentage of financial resources from ticket sales, sponsorship incomes and donations. Since

2005, the Brussels Philharmonic, the Orchestra Opera Vlaanderen and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra have been labelled as 'Art Institutes of the Flemish Community'. Along with four other art institutes in Flanders, these orchestras are considered institutes with an indispensable symbolical value to the Flanders Region and thus enjoy a preferential status (Gielen 2007).

Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (ASO) can be seen as an emblematic orchestra in Belgium. As one of the Art Institutes of the Flemish Community, the ASO profiles itself as a regional orchestra with international ambitions (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016b). With a staff of 20 people and 77 musicians on the payroll, the orchestra finds its way to most Belgian stages as well as prestigious venues abroad. The ASO finds itself in an interesting geographical position in the economic and cultural center of Flanders. The historical city of Antwerp, at only 25 miles from Brussels, is a crossroads of cultures, gaining international esteem thanks to its historical significance and the prestige of the Port of Antwerp as the second-largest port in Europe. Housing over 170 nationalities, the city of Antwerp is the European city with the second-largest number of different nationalities, after Amsterdam. In that context, arts and culture are considered to be important vehicles for participation, social cohesion and urban regeneration (Schramme and Segers 2012). After nearly 60 years of nomadic existence, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra recently found a new home in the brand-new and acoustically state-of-the-art Queen Elisabeth Hall in the heart of Antwerp. With its 1800 seats, a large number for a city with approximately 500.000 inhabitants, the ASO is able to attract the largest amount of audiences of all Flemish orchestras (Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016). In 2018, the ASO reached a total of 130.083 people, divided over its 498 concerts and other activities. In that year, 94 concerts were performed in Belgium, 46 of which in the orchestra's own Queen Elisabeth Hall. An additional 14 concerts were performed abroad (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2019). At the time of research, the ASO was in search of a new chief conductor to complement the roles of primary guest conductor Philippe Herreweghe and honorary conductor Edo de Waart. From the 2019-2010 season onwards, Elim Chan will become the first female chief conductor in Belgium and the youngest chief conductor of the ASO.

The history of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra exposes emphases in their repertoire and the aspired position of the orchestra within its service area. Through close examination and comparison of various aspects of their programming choices and management actions, it is possible to grasp the iconic value of this orchestra within its social and cultural contexts. This analysis shows under which conditions, constraints and motivations these actions occur, be it from aesthetic or pragmatic angles. By means of a close reading of literature sources, regular concert attendance, review of policy documents and in-depth interviews with key representatives of the institution (the intendant, the artistic manager and three musicians), it is possible to map out the dynamics between aesthetic and pragmatic concerns that account for a continuous cycle of crisis and survival.

A brief history of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra

A vagrant existence

Unlike many symphony orchestras in the second half of the 20th century, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra was not founded by the government but was the outcome of an individual's aspirations. Hoping to attract an internationally touring musical-version of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* to Antwerp in 1954, impresario Gaston Ariën founded the Symfonische Orkestvereniging (Symphonic Orchestra Society) in Antwerp, mimicking the organizational structure of the already existing National Orchestra of Belgium and the NIR Radio Orchestra which is now called the Brussels Philharmonic (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005). Although the Symphonic Orchestra Society was not commissioned by the city of Antwerp, it fit perfectly in a broad project of the Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts to stimulate Belgian cultural life after World War II. The state therefore committed itself to double all subsidies that municipalities were willing to spend on symphony orchestras. In 1955, 'De Philharmonie van Antwerpen' (The Antwerp Philharmonic) was established as a separate non-profit structure, operating under governance of the Symphonic Orchestra Society. On December 10, 1956, De Philharmonie gave its first concert in the opera house of Antwerp, performing Brahms' *Akademische Festouverture,* Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* and the *Second Pianoconcerto* by Rachmaninoff. The program also featured the *First Symphony* by Jef Maes, the conductor of the new orchestra. When a more or less fixed orchestra of 60 musicians was established in 1957, the municipality bestowed them with an annual 25.000-euro subsidy, which was doubled by the state. The lack of a decent concert hall and sufficient logistical support is the main theme throughout the first years of De Philharmonie. An old movie theater, within a stone's throw from their current venue, served as a temporary concert hall. The vast professional network of Ariën attracted renowned soloists such as Artur Rubinstein and Arthur Grumiaux, which pressurized the Antwerp legislators to increase subsidies and offer the prospect of a new venue (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005).

Eduard Flipse, chief conductor of De Philharmonie between 1959 and 1970, strongly believed in the pedagogical power of the orchestra and organized concerts to enhance familiarity of the larger public, including Antwerp's youth, with the symphony orchestra and its repertoire. For subscription concerts, a large-scale series called 'Cycle of the Great Masters' covered the established repertoire with works by notably Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Schubert, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky. On the other hand, Flipse showed a particular taste for lesser known repertoire by composers such as Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Honegger, Penderecki, Ligeti and Tomasi. The Symphonic Orchestra Society and De Philharmonie regarded it their main task to promote contemporary Flemish composers such as Mortelmans, Alpaerts and De

Vocht. Local composers such as Baervoets and Maes regularly made it to De Philharmonie's concert programs. Flipse tried, as a rule, to include at least one Flemish composition in each concert program. In 1960, Flipse's efforts to promote the widest possible repertoire to the widest possible audience were awarded with a residency in a concert venue in the city center – a venue that was later renovated to their current concert hall (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005).

In the late '60s and early 70s, De Philharmonie strongly invested in pedagogical projects and rejuvenation of its audience. A concert series called Youth Promenade Concerts not only featured obvious choices such as Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Saint-Saëns' *Carnaval des Animaux,* but also contemporary classical music and even musical excursions to The Beatles. This concept not only became a successful series in the orchestra's own concert venue but was also brought to smaller cities and municipalities throughout Flanders (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005).

Crisis and turmoil

In the year 1980, De Philharmonie suffered its first structural crisis. Despite rapidly increasing wage costs within the orchestra, the city of Antwerp decided to freeze the orchestra's subsidies because of austerity measures. In 1981, an independent audit confirmed the dire financial state and artistic deficits of De Philharmonie, and wild plans circulated to merge De Philharmonie with either Antwerp's opera orchestra or the NIR Radio Orchestra (then called the BRT Philharmonic Orchestra). On the night of November 30, 1981, syndicalists actively disturbed a sold-out concert of De Philharmonie to protest the financial condition of orchestras and their musicians, leading conductor Avi Ostrowsky to leave the stage along with a number of musicians. This shockwave urged De Philharmonie's management to thoroughly reorganize the orchestra's structure and to take on a more professional profile. A new chairman was elected, along with a new intendant and artistic manager. The number of board members increased from 13 to 21, and all staff handed in 7 percent of their wage. On July 28, 1983, this renewed organization pledged to work 200 days a year and perform 100 concerts annually. In 1985, the organization was renamed the Koninklijk Filharmonisch Orkest van Vlaanderen (Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra). This rather drastic restructuring of the orchestra did not have a large effect on programming trends. In addition to the standard repertoire of the 18th and 19th centuries, the amount of 20th-century music even increased. Hindemith, Zemlinsky, Scriabin and Berg were paired with Flemish composers such as Goeyvaerts, Westerlinck and Luc Brewaeys who informally became the orchestra's first composer in residence (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005).

The conjuncture of the early 90's blazed up the discussion of possible merges of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic with similar orchestras in Flanders. Protest actions tipped the balance in favor of the orchestra and the plans were shelved once more. However, the orchestra felt

the increasing economization of Flanders' cultural landscape. In 1992, chairman Hendrik Daems, often criticized by the orchestra's artistic staff because of his corporate mentality, concluded his letter of resignation as follows:

> "The management of the cultural sector sets increasingly high standards, under pressure by economic evolution. However hard and perhaps unmusical it may sound: if one does not run a cultural institution like a company, with the same means and techniques, it is doomed to disappear, in the short or long term." (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005, 45)

Economic considerations now strongly permeated in artistic actions of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic. When possible, every major production was now scheduled more than once to reduce production costs, but the lack of decent venues still proved to be an undeniable hindrance. The outlines of programming remained largely unaltered. The world premiere of at least one Flemish composition became a rule and in 1996, Gija Kantsjeli became the first formal composer in residence. After a long period of working with one chief conductor, the Royal Flemish Philharmonic turned to a system in which separate conductors were responsible for a particular part of the orchestra's program. In 1998, the repertoire was in hands of an artistic triumvirate, with Philippe Herreweghe appointed for the 19th-century repertoire, Walter Weller for international exposure and Peter Rundel for contemporary music (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005).

A vibrant orchestra for a vibrant city

At the turn of the millennium, the orchestra's strength was reduced from 96 to 76 musicians because of a growing productivity gap. Increased subsidies held off a graver demise, but the orchestra's preferred repertoire (romanticism) required a larger number of musicians. This conundrum sparked political discussions whether it would be better to organize Flanders' orchestras as large ensembles (or even as one very large ensemble) working project-based instead of spending fixed subsidies on a rooted institution that requires flexible strength depending on repertoire. Arguably as a strategic defense, the Royal Flemish Philharmonic changed its name to deFilharmonie (literally 'thePhilharmonic') in 2002, an action which the press praised as "a healthy Antwerp habit to consider itself unique in the genre" (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005, 67). The orchestra's most recent name change from deFilharmonie to Antwerp Symphony Orchestra confirms their aspiration to join in the row of major international orchestras, taking pride in using their home city in their names. This name change may be a capitulation to international peer pressure, it also honors the orchestra's primary objective to symbolically represent its service area. In an open letter from 1982, the ASO's founder Gaston Ariën reacted to the orchestra's first name change:

> "The Antwerp Philharmonic was founded in Antwerp, emerged from Antwerp and grew

through Antwerp. When I helped founding the orchestra 27 years ago, I only thought about two things: providing work to musicians and building something that would grow over time to add to the glory of Antwerp. Now that this goal has been achieved, the name 'Antwerp' should disappear. Why? Orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic or the Vienna Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris and so many others, are kept alive by an entire community, but no one asks them to change names. Why here?" (de Zutter, Dewilde, and Eelen 2005, 140)

Recent developments in the ASO

The past fifteen years arguably span the most turbulent period in Antwerp Symphony Orchestra's history. The comparison between the ASO's mission statements of 2004 and 2016 exhibits the orchestra's remarkable evolution towards a more solidly defined profile.

Artistic mission

In 2004, the official mission statement spells out that Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (then deFilharmonie) is "an ensemble that:
-plays and programs at a high international level
-brings stylistically informed repertoire in an attractive and relevant way
-preserves masterpieces, scans for new developments, gives composition assignments and supports Flemish music." (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2004, 1)

In 2016, the recently renamed Antwerp Symphony Orchestra profiles itself as "an enterprising institution" that:
-produces concerts and socially relevant classical music projects; and sells nationally and internationally
-maintains sustainable and constructive relations with partners, governments, the business world and the broad social environment
-is a recognized Art Institute of the Flemish Community, and serves as a Flemish cultural ambassador abroad
-brings a varied program spanning baroque and romanticism to contemporary music, with special attention for Flemish musical heritage, innovative projects and education
-is anchored locally, thanks to its social and educational activities." (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016b, 1)

In a decade-and-a-half time, the ASO transformed from an institution defined as an ensemble to an enterprising institution. The choice of wording is in line with this pattern: the orchestra

no longer 'plays' and 'programs', but rather 'produces' and 'sells'. Apart from this apparent shift towards a more business-oriented approach, specific themes stand out.

Firstly, the ASO expresses a clear ambition to become broadly networked within the city's, the region's and the international social fabric. Concerts are complemented with socially relevant projects and educational efforts, especially locally. In addition, the orchestra serves as a cultural ambassador on the international stage, maintaining and actively promoting Flemish musical heritage. The orchestra also breaks through its presumed isolation and maintains relations not only with the business world, but also with all sections of society, pursuing a broad civil support. Secondly, programming emphases are more clearly defined in the new mission statement. The orchestra's musical program essentially spans the whole symphonic repertoire from (late) baroque to contemporary music, but also makes a broadening gesture. The orchestra's core business now also includes classical music projects aimed at diversification, innovation and education (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2004). The concept of 'innovative projects' is not further defined, which allows for a very broad interpretation.

This evolution is the result of various nationwide audits, hearings and debates over a period of fifteen years. This timeframe, which also spans the global crisis of 2008, was a difficult period of instability and uncertainty over the future of Flanders' symphony orchestras. In what follows, the recent history of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra will be reconstructed by means of important policy documents issued between 2001 and 2016 by the Flemish government. Special attention goes to the role of the orchestra in society, subsidies and programming trends. For reasons of readability, the orchestra will be called Antwerp Symphony Orchestra for the remainder of this chapter.

A: The Art Institutions of the Flemish Community

The turn of the millennium proved to be an important shifting point for Flanders' symphony orchestras. The report of this 2001 hearing sketches a general picture of uncertainty among representatives of Flanders' symphony orchestras. An important recurring theme is the nonproductive competition among orchestras because it is felt that there is only a small, and shrinking, audience to share among various orchestras with more or less the same cultural task. Orchestra managers voice the wish to work in a more thought-out, complementary way. In addition, the lack of concert halls adaptable for symphonic concerts and the growing competition with other musical forms are considered major threats. Orchestra representatives and political delegates agree that the orchestra has functioned as a static museum for too long and has focused excessively on internal issues such as authentic performance practice and premieres. A twofold solution is suggested: musical programming should be more targeted to separate audience segment and orchestras should take up a more socially engaged task. Jan Raes, appointed as crisis manager of the ASO during the struggles

around the year 2000, supports this solution and expresses his ambition to reinforce the orchestra's profile and identity by playing a broad repertoire and by focusing on Flemish classical music (Vandenbossche 2001).

In 2003, the Flemish government issued a policy note called 'Grote Kunstinstellingen' (Big Art Institutions). In this note, five major art institutes in Flanders (a number increased to seven in 2015) receive a protected status, implying a.o. the certainty to receive a considerable amount of subsidies. These Art Institutions formulate a management agreement in dialogue with the Flemish government, in which the institution's rights, tasks and responsibilities are defined. The selection of these Art Institutes occurred on a basis somewhat vaguely described in terms of symbolic value and sensitizing value (Gielen 2007). If these institutions want to fulfill their role as cultural ambassador, they will have to compete, budget-wise, with comparable foreign arts institutions. Therefore, the Flemish government charged the external consulting bureau Nikè Consult with an explicitly pragmatic study around the question: "What legitimacy do complementary financial requests have?". In the resulting report (Nikè Consult 2004) directly anticipating the implementation of the Art Institutions system in 2005, the core tasks of the Art Institutions and the financial feasibility are weighed. Following the themes of the 2001 hearing, the study mainly insists on mutual cooperation and attention to socially relevant projects.

The ASO has formally been one of the seven Art Institutions of the Flemish Community since 2005. The Nikè audit suggested an optimization movement for the orchestra, of which the central elements were:
- The clear affirmation of the ASO's core tasks
- Consensus in the orchestra's strength, and residence
- The one-time attribution of complementary subsidies to cover the recent deficits
- Development of a marketing and sales strategy
- Development of a policy plan as a basis for negotiations over the management agreement.

The report also advises on some formulations deemed suitable for the eventual management agreement. According to the Nikè study, the ASO's foreseen status as an Art Institution relies on their "symbolic capital that contributes to the identity formation of Flanders and the Flemish Community", and on the expectation that these Art Institutes "try, without wanting to seize too much, to set the tone internationally, and that they influence shifts of the cultural and artistic norms" (Nikè Consult 2004, 16).

The management agreement should also include the implication of the ASO's ambassador role on programming choices. The Nikè study suggests, per season: two debuts of a Flemish soloist or conductor, two composition assignments to a Flemish composer, one Flemish premiere of

an international composer, and one Flemish recovery of an international composition (Nikè Consult 2004).

In 2005, a new hearing of orchestra representatives was organized in the Flemish parliament, to evaluate the study by Nikè Consult the previous year (Caron 2005). The Flemish orchestras share the frustration that nothing has been done with the outcome of the Nikè study. Cooperation, complementary programming and infrastructure remain fundamental field-wide problems. Although orchestra representatives share the feeling that Flemish orchestras are doing very well, qualitatively speaking, their concerns about the role and legitimacy of orchestras in Flanders have only gained strength. New in the discussion is the artistic argument that if nothing happens in a structural manner, a certain repertoire will be neglected, orchestras will perform less and see no option than to turn to more commercial activities. Hans Waege, then intendant of the ASO, elaborates on the link between money, orchestra occupation and repertoire:

> "Substitutions and additions are problematic for a style-flexible orchestra like ours, that brings both Beethoven and Strauss correctly. (…) A permanent staff of sufficient size can also retrieve repertoire much faster. One simply needs fewer days of rehearsal, and productivity increases." (Caron 2005, 6)

The ASO's repertoire now consists of the following percentages (in number of compositions, not their duration):

ASO Repertoire division (2005)

- 20th-century repertoire
- Classicist repertoire
- Contemporary repertoire
- Pre-classicist repertoire
- romantic repertoire
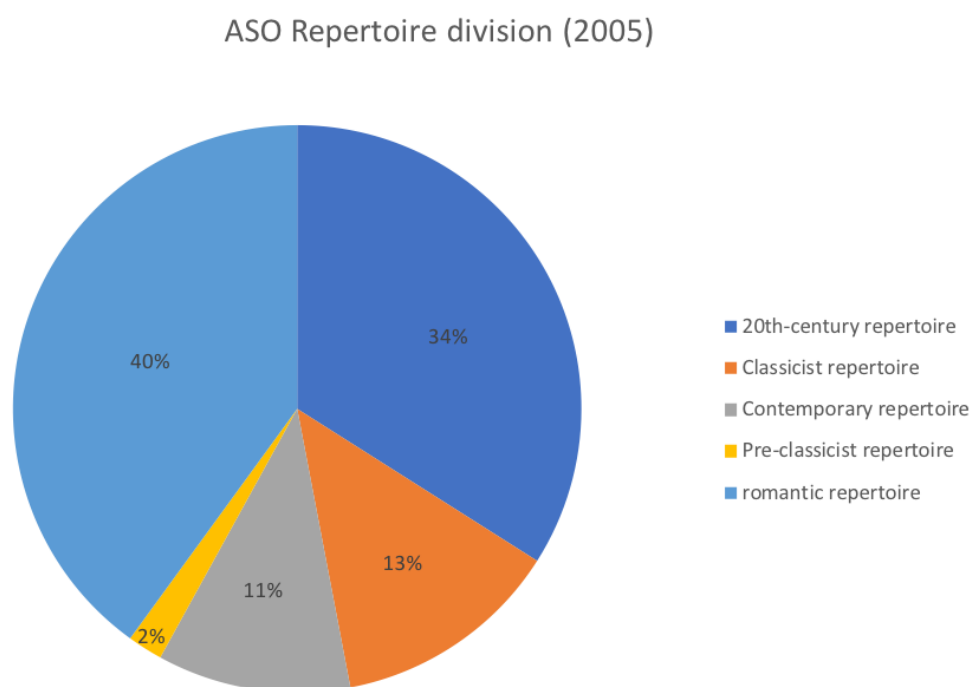
Figure 22: Repertoire division of the ASO anno 2005 (Caron 2005)

In 2011, a comparable hearing exposes the discrepancy between the desired international profile of the ASO and other Flemish orchestras, and their financial equipment. Clearly, the financial gap of the Flemish orchestras cannot be filled up easily. At this point, a schism can be discerned in the discussion. Among orchestra representatives, policy administrators and politicians, two solutions are voiced. Some prefer the formation of one qualitatively superior and very well subsidized orchestra over the maintenance of several middle-range and moderately subsidized orchestras. Others argue that this would go against principles such as the need for regional distribution and the educational role of the orchestra. For them, a broad civil support is more important than the ability to perform in the international A-league. From this point onwards, the legitimacy debate is being formulated repeatedly. There remains a considerable amount of discussion over the precise role of the orchestra in society (Delva and De Gucht 2011).

B: The new Arts Decree of 2013

Since December 13, 2013, all cultural endeavors in Flanders are being governed by a new overarching Arts Decree, replacing the one that had existed since 1999. The ministry of culture writes that the new Arts Decree is:

> "… a transparent and integrated arts policy. It aims at an integrated approach for all artistic expressions (music, visual and audiovisual arts, theater, literature, dance, film and new media). The Arts Decree aims to create a space within which continuous changes characteristic of the arts can be maintained." (Caron 2012, 5)

Driven by the previous hearings of representatives of Flanders' art world, the aims and profiles of the seven Art Institutions of the Flemish Community are now more clearly defined. The Art Institutions form a pool of institutes that have the capacity to both represent and continuously redefine the artistic landscape in Flanders and beyond. The Art Institutions are selected because of their tradition, action radius, international appeal, size and budget. Minister of Culture Sven Gatz described them as "showpieces within the Flemish arts landscape" (Gatz 2015).

The Arts Institutions' separate management agreements stipulate that the institute should meet seven requirements:

"1. Artistic excellence: the institution functions as a beacon within the arts field, with attention to classical repertoire as well as important artistic developments and new talents.

2. International context: the institution sets the tone internationally and influences cultural/artistic norms. It ensures the international appeal of Flemish artists.

3. Chain of functions:
>   -development: the institution plays a supporting role in artistic research, experimentation and innovation.
>   -production: the institution demonstrates its vision on quality of creation and production processes
>   -presentation: the institution ensures quality of the program and context of presentation
>   -participation: the institution ensures quality of participatory concepts, its methods and support
>   -reflection: the institution reflects on the art field and practice in the Flemish region and/or capital region, and ensures the accessibility of this reflection.

4. Sustainable creation of tradition and innovation: the institution supports the *grandeur* of the canon, as well as innovation within a development-based artistic culture; always with the largest possible audience in mind. The legitimacy of the institution is not up for discussion. It can present a long history and has existed for at least ten years. The institution gives innovation a sustainable character.

5. Social and cultural embedding, and engagement: the institution represents cultural and social responsibilities. It is committed to various target groups in terms of diversity, participation and emancipation. The institution also ensures the distribution of its productions at locations outside of the own region.

6. Scale and infrastructure: the institution has its own infrastructure that offers sufficient opportunities to fulfill its own assignments and to offer an infrastructure to other players. The institution has funds from various sources, both subsidies and sufficient own income.

7. Strong and dynamic management and governance: the institution is a non-profit organization that demonstrates a responsible and dynamic entrepreneurship, efficient governance and adequate management." (Caron 2012, 17)

This formulation reflects the discussion on the precise role of Flemish symphony orchestras. The orchestra should both reflect on aesthetic matters in an exemplary way, and play an active and involved role in a broader civil discussion. By lack of clear priorities, it is up to the institution itself to adequately balance both requirements.

Three years after the installation of the new Arts Decree, the Flemish government inquired a new audit of the four Flemish symphony orchestras, by Vandyck Arts Management. The consultants combined a desktop research of key indicators such as subsidies, amount of activities and wages with interviews with key operators within the orchestra field.

The report tackles some fundamental issues by positioning the crisis of the Flemish orchestras in a broader societal perspective. The opening statement of the report ascribes the legitimacy problem of symphony orchestras to the "dual focus of orchestras: artistic excellence and social embedding" (Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016, 3). The study thereby draws the attention to contextual constraints in the pursuit of artistic quality. According to the study, orchestras need to adapt their infrastructure, organizational structure and management to external factors such as a graying audience base and changing listening patterns. The weight of tradition should not prevent orchestras to reassess their core functions, their action radius and the pragmatic feasibility of these potential new priorities. The study also points to the fact that although many concert visits are incidental, the average amount of audiences is slowly increasing, heralding a new curiosity for the symphony orchestra. In its conclusion, the study recommends that Flemish orchestras do not aspire to compete with world-class orchestras, but rather broaden their task package and scope:

> "… it seems more appropriate to think in terms of an ecosystem in which orchestras of different (but always defendable) levels serve various audience groups and communities in various ways. The pursuit of artistic quality should not become a fetish. After all, an exclusive focus on quality can overshadow a number of important elements that should also be part of the strategic logic of an orchestra." (Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016, 17)

Like the Nikè study of 2004, the Vandyck study is primarily a pragmatic study. It set out to reinforce the Flemish orchestras' positioning and internal set of strategies, regarding their intrinsic musical quality as a given. By using terms such as 'ecosystem', the authors stress that a symphony orchestra's way of working depends on a variety of contextual factors that not always lie within the orchestra's own reach. The orchestras' survival, the authors hold, lies in their potential to adapt to these external circumstances.

In a following hearing of the Flemish orchestras in September 2016, representatives are mainly positive about the outcome of the Vandyck study (Bastiaens and Idrissi 2016). Although some orchestra delegates regret that the report mainly uses quantitative data in the analyses of each orchestra's artistic profile, leading to unfair judgments over quality, all interpret the report as an opportunity for evaluation rather than an impulse for austerity measures. In order to meet with the scope-broadening suggestions of the audit, subsidies need to go up and sustainable synergy between the various cultural institutions in Flanders must be aimed for.

Joost Maegerman, intendant of the ASO since May of that year, expresses his ambition to further explore his orchestras' potential to play a role in music education, and to increase the orchestra's budget by forging sustainable alliances with sponsors and the business world. On the other hand, Maegerman stresses that if the ASO should broaden its scope and action radius, supplementary subsidies are indispensable to ensure the artistic integrity of the orchestra. A stronger focus on financial efficiency is a dangerous evolution, he argues, and will not result in artistic profit (Bastiaens and Idrissi 2016).

Organizational model

Governance structure

Since its establishment, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra has always been a non-profit organization, which means that all revenue goes immediately to the execution of the organization's activities. The organization's operations are overseen and evaluated by a board, consisting of 6 representatives from the Flemish government, 1 representative from the city of Antwerp and 4 independent board members. A larger general assembly, which includes representatives from the business world as well as the artistic world, is held once a year. For its day-to-day operations, the organization is led by a managing director, who designs the overall artistic and strategic trajectory of the orchestra. Reporting to him, is the management team consisting of an artistic director, financial director, director of communications and marketing, and an orchestra director (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016b).

As a matter of principle, all ASO musicians that pass the audition as well as the two-year trial period, are salaried. Depending on the program, the orchestra is complemented by freelance musicians who are paid per project. Musicians report that the orchestra tries to work with a fixed pool of freelance musicians as much as possible, to secure the stability and specific sound quality of the orchestra (Delafonteyne 2019). Musicians are represented in an artistic committee which is involved in programming and other artistic decisions. Musicians report that their influence on artistic matters is considerable, and that they feel respected and heard. One musician gives an example:

> "Every time a guest conductor is invited, we receive a survey. I think that, in theory, if everyone would fill it in, we could prevent a conductor from coming back." (Delafonteyne 2019)

Financial model

Financial reports of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra show a significant increase in subsidies between 2006 and 2017. Figure 23 shows the total amount of accredited subsidies per year. Variable incomes such as private donations and ticket revenues have not been included in this

graph. Over the same period, fixed annual costs that almost entirely consist of personnel costs, have risen at a comparable pace. These personnel costs consist of wages of musicians and staff on the payroll. The resulting operating budget that arises from the subtraction of fixed incomes and fixed costs, shows only a very modest increase of available financial means over the total period. This operating budget includes the artistic budget such as conductor and soloist fees, and working costs such as marketing (Antwerp Symphony Orchestra 2016a).

This period immediately follows Antwerp Symphony Orchestra's recognition as a sheltered Arts Institution of the Flemish Government. Figure 23 shows that this symbolic recognition did not entail a subsidy increase (on the other hand, it did guarantee the orchestra's eligibility for subsidies). Following the Arts Decree of 2013, the orchestra had to observe a broader range of tasks, as explained above. Figure 23 shows that subsidies until 2016 remain roughly constant, but higher personnel costs as a result of an increased number of employees make the operating budget smaller. The year 2017 is an exception to this trend and holds promise for the orchestra's future. In conclusion: the artistic budget has barely increased although the range of the orchestra's tasks has expanded. The same financial means have to be distributed among a broader range of activities.
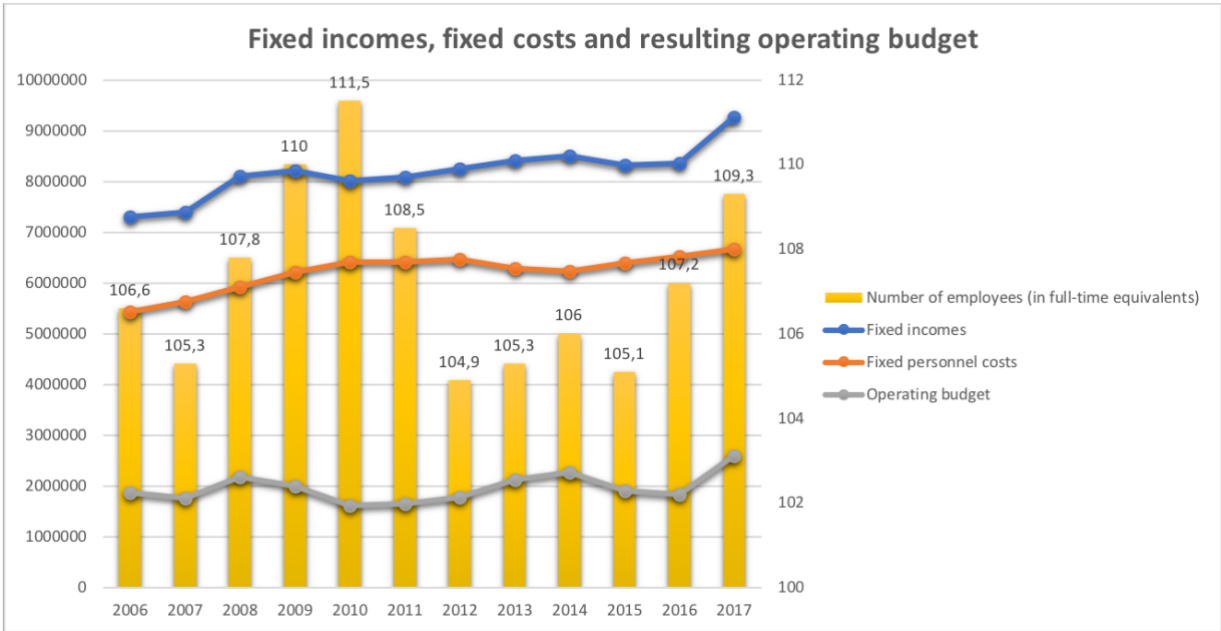
Figure 23: Operating budget of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra between 2006 and 2017.

Programming policy of the ASO

The new Arts Decree of 2013 stipulates that the legitimacy of the Art Institutions of the Flemish Community is never up for discussion, as long as the conditions which are spelled out in the management agreement are met (Caron 2012). Apart from the formulation in the management agreement that the orchestra counts as a representative institution for (at least)

Flemish society, and that it supports the *grandeur* of the canon as well as innovation, there is limited specification of the desired musical programming of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. Over the course of the above timeframe, the ASO has underwent a metamorphosis towards an institution with a much broader task package, while some key elements such as the regular programming of Flemish composers, remained in place. Certain patterns in the orchestra's actions with regard to musical programming are discernable and can be directly or indirectly linked to the orchestra's status as an Art Institution of the Flemish Community.

Legitimacy: the ASO's view on being an Art Institution of the Flemish Community

As can be expected, there is a field-wide acclaim for structural subsidies among Flanders' cultural institutions. The importance of subsidies is widely held to be fundamental to the operationalization of the institution's priorities. If the subsidizing system should be dismantled, it is felt that the current economical context would force orchestras to engage in more commercial and profitable activities. This would position the symphony orchestra in direct competition with the entertainment sector, for which the orchestra is ill-equipped. It is also noted that the Anglo-Saxon model, where large private sponsorship contracts form the monetary basis for the symphony orchestra, is not congruent with our culture in which high government taxes are standardized.

The management of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra acknowledges that their statute as a representative Art Institution gives certainty to the organization and shows mutual trust. Despite (or thanks to) the vagueness of some formulations, the management agreement is overall considered to be "a healthy guide" and an opportunity to freely decide on priorities and emphases. It also shields the long-term artistic development of the ASO from short-term political fluctuations. On the other hand, there is a strong recognition, shared by management and musicians alike, that the orchestra's subsidized and recognized position entails certain responsibilities towards society. Especially in a city as culturally and demographically diverse as Antwerp, to be an Art Institution means to represent this diversity, according to orchestra delegates. The legitimacy of the orchestra is therefore felt to be strongly related to the way it positions itself within the community. The management of the ASO acknowledges that there is a tendency to judge the orchestra based on what is directly measurable, such as rentability, the amount of invested time (rehearsals, concerts, …), audience numbers, etcetera. Any conclusion based on improper and insufficiently specialized interpretation of these quantitative factors will always be faulty, Maegerman argues:

> "I have seen the same tendency in the Netherlands, where it had an unbelievably perverse effect. People suddenly became aware of the enormous cost of what is on stage. In annual figures, of course, that amounts to several millions. As a result,

orchestras received less money, came in a bad light and had fewer audiences in the following years, resulting in less income. (…) It is a very dangerous act to look at all of this in absolute figures. Without the necessary substantiated explanation, these figures mean very little" (Maegerman 2018).

Artistic results are difficult to quantify, Maegerman adds, and Flanders is a small region for unbiased artistic judgments by independent specialists.

This side-note notwithstanding, Maegerman continues that there still is a correlation between measurable factors and intrinsic quality. If audience attendance is low, it often means that the intrinsic artistic quality is not good enough. Over the last decades, the legitimacy pressure that comes from measurable factors such as financial health and direct civil support such as audience attendance, has indeed increased, but has also forced the organization to more creative, flexible and approachable. Taking these figures into account is not only a mechanism of survival, but an act of responsibility that is inherent to a subsidized institution, orchestra representatives agree.

The exclusive focus on numbers, however, is not an adequate guide for musical programming, says Maegerman. While new concert formats and artistic concepts indeed attract new audiences and widen civil support, the artistic curve must remain the first priority of the orchestra:

> "The pressure on diversification in programming, and the enormous amount of opportunities that exist for the use of multimedia and interdisciplinarity (anything that falls under the magical word 'innovation'), can be very dangerous in our sector. Before you know it, you forget that there is an artistic growth process that has to be done on stage, and in which certain elements are indispensable: namely performing a certain repertoire with the right conductor, with the right soloist, in the right venues" (Maegerman 2018).

Although subsidies are strongly associated with a responsibility towards society, subsidies are not only meant for crowd-pleasing, the management adds. Subsidies are also in place to support musical programs that do not attract much audience. Subsidies, as awarded to Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, are associated with two motives. Firstly, subsidies shield the institution from competitive market forces and discharge the orchestra from the continuous necessity of monetary return. Secondly, subsidies are a symbolic recognition that the actions of the institution are deemed valuable. This recognition comes with a responsibility to adapt to external, societal conditions.

In a similar vein, the management agreement that ensures these subsidies, is perceived as an ambiguous guide. On the one hand, it generates the responsibility to reach out to the society

that provides the money. On the other hand, through this process of accountability, the focus of the subsidizer easily shifts towards quantifiable factors that are perceived to be problematic for judgments over quality.

Division of the repertoire

As the orchestra crisis in Flanders reached its peak in the years before the new Arts Decree, the option was voiced to facilitate the division of the repertoire among the existing orchestras by assigning a specific portion of the musical repertoire to each orchestra. The alleged problem of oversupply would be tackled, and artistic quality was believed to increase.

Within the ranks of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, there is a strong opposition against this inquiry to divide Flanders' orchestra field into specialized orchestras. Arguments are both artistic and non-artistic. From a performing musician's perspective, such a division of the field would not be artistically defendable. The ability to perform music in a historically informed way is cumulative: an appropriate interpretation of 19th-century music presupposes the ability to perform 18th-century music, and so on. Musicians of the ASO do see a specializing task for smaller ensembles, especially for repertoire on the margins of the traditional symphonic repertoire, such as baroque music and contemporary music.
As seen by one of the musicians:

> "I think it is good for the orchestra to offer a mix. And I think that in Flanders, where we only have three symphony orchestras and an opera orchestra, the ambition should be there to do so. Even with these four orchestras, we can only bring a very small portion of the entire repertoire. On the other hand, I would be in favor of avoiding performing the same works in different orchestras within the same season, which happens occasionally. Something can be done in that area" (Verhoyen 2018).

More pragmatic arguments were voiced by the ASO management, who contend that orchestras are able to make ends meet by striking a balance between more commercial activities (such as cooperating with crowd-pleasing pop stars or bands) and more unyielding programming of specialized or contemporary music for a niche audience. In the case of repertoire division among orchestras, ensembles specializing in contemporary music would soon be suffocated by more audience-attracting ensembles.

Orchestra representatives also argued that such a division would be contradictory with key points of the Arts Decree, which stipulates that institutions should serve diverse target audiences in the same region. One of the strengths of the Arts Decree, according to one musician, is precisely its ability to prevent the music world from becoming an in-crowd affaire.

Factors impacting programming trends in the ASO

In terms of musical programming, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra views it as its main task to bring the traditional musical canon. According to the management, the focus on the musical canon is an important source of legitimacy for various reasons:

-The emphasis on the core symphonic tradition reflects the artistic predilections of the management agreement.
-The musical canon corresponds to a great extent with audience preferences.
-Because the canon is in line with audience preferences, revenues are highest when programming the canon. This gives financial security, but also provides a measurable resource for legitimacy
-The canon has endured a continuous process of selection that is legitimate. History showed these works to be exemplary for Western musical culture. On the other hand, one manager adds, precisely because the heyday of the orchestra lies in the past, it is the orchestra's duty to search for new purposes.
-The current orchestra occupation corresponds with the requirements for canonical symphonic works.

Despite these arguments in favor of traditional programming, motivation for diversity, understood as stepping outside of the traditional concert format, is rather high among the staff and musicians of the ASO. Programming within the constraints and stipulations of the management agreement, and in search for civil legitimacy, artistic pertinence and financial security, is considered to be a very difficult exercise in which various concerns sometimes contradict each other. Apart from the above factors favoring traditional programming, the following factors were identified by the orchestra's management as the most important influencers of programming decisions in general:

-The impact of soloists and conductors.
Some soloists or conductors have an appeal to the audience, to that extent that the work itself or even the quality of performance is of secondary importance. While big names often claim a large portion of the artistic budget, the balance between reputation and quality is not always honest. The ASO has worked with several conductors at the same time, each responsible for a particular part of the repertoire. Musicians of the ASO see the current lack of one chief conductor as an opportunity (at least for a short period), because it narrows one particular conductor's impact on the artistic trajectory of the orchestra. Musicians find it very attractive and motivating to perform according to the repertoire preferences of a conductor, as long as there is an upward artistic curve.

-Musician's preferences.

Firstly, musicians of the ASO emphasize the importance of making a connection with the audience while performing on stage. The quality of the performance increases when musicians feel that their artistic product is being appreciated. The opinion is shared among the musicians that if the orchestra convincingly supports a non-canonical work, their enthusiasm will convince the audience of the work's quality. Secondly, musicians' motivation depends more on their joy of playing than on financial compensation. In one musician's words:

> "I am less interested in a raise than I am in the continuous development of our artistic project. I get more excited in a discussion about a new chief conductor or about musical programming" (Verhoyen 2018).

-Audiences.

The orchestra management expresses the feeling that there are programming constraints because potential new audiences (particularly younger audiences) are often not accustomed to hearing sounds they do not recognize. On the one hand, this argument has an aesthetic dimension, because non-canonical music often has less audible anchor points. On the other hand, familiarity with classical music in general is diminishing. One manager argues that this lack of familiarity limits the potential to diversify in both audiences and in repertoires:

> "If we are to represent multiculturalism and cultural diversity, the audience must first know what culture is. The education system should make sure that the culture we produce and reproduce is familiar, especially to younger audiences" (Maegerman 2018).

Music education is only felt to be a minor responsibility for the symphony orchestra, as will be elaborated below.

-It was never reported that the board of the orchestra interfered with programming decisions.

Diversification formulas in the ASO

In line with the international trend-line, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra has suffered from a rather homogeneous audience base for its subscription concerts. However, audience rates in general have been in a steady incline for several years (Bastiaens and Idrissi 2016). From the perspective of the intendant, the key to this success is that the orchestra has broadened its scope towards more diverse musical programming, low ticket prices and outreach projects. At the same time, the brand-new concert hall, easily accessible and equipped with logistics able to support all kinds of performance formats, attracts new audiences as well and promises an upward curve in the performance quality of the orchestra. The concert hall also attracts internationally renowned symphony orchestras in a new concert series. This international

network fosters a fruitful dynamic between the locality of the ASO and an international performance context.

The diversification efforts of the ASO can be categorized into two movements. Firstly, the orchestra performs its creative role, while also aiming at the enlargement of their audience, by diversifying its regular concert programs. Secondly, outreach and education projects are installed from a belief in the beneficial social impact of music, but also to arouse curiosity for the symphony orchestra and its repertoire. Throughout an average season, the orchestra plays around 90 subscription concerts and organize about as much projects under the denominator of outreach and education.

Development formulas

Subscription concerts of the ASO are divided into various series. One of these series is called 'masterworks' and mostly contains canonical repertoire, performed by well-known soloists and conductors. These traditional concerts still attract the largest amount of audience. Relatively new to the ASO's programming range are the annual movie concerts, where a popular movie is projected on a large screen while the orchestra provides the live soundtrack. Blockbusters such as *Titanic* and *West Side Story,* and fragments from famous Pixar-movies have each time attracted a full house. Three times per season, the very successful KID-concerts bring classical music to children, enriched by a theatrical frame story. Twice per season, the brand-new Club-concerts introduce fragments of the ASO's featuring repertoire to young and curious audiences in a very informal context, alternated with short explanations by a popular Flemish personality, the soloist or the conductor, and topped off with musical beats in the concert hall's lobby. However, there is currently no proof that these efforts lead to a returning audience.

Although it is not felt to be the main purpose of this institution, the ASO management is highly motivated to explore lesser known repertoires in subscription concerts. In addition, composition assignments are issued regularly, mostly to Flemish composers. Taking the audience's perspective into account, the orchestra takes a rather pragmatic approach towards programming at the subscription series, resulting in a careful attitude towards risk and innovation. In one manager's words:

> "Setting up such a program requires careful customization, because the audience doesn't want to be fooled. It is a subtle exercise, because chances are you miss out on both sides" (Ferwerda 2018).

The ASO experiments with various strategies. Lesser-known compositions from the symphonic repertoire are often paired with classics to ensure a wide appeal. In the 2017-2018 season, for example, the relatively unknown *Symphony no. 2 "The Four Temperaments"* by Carl Nielsen

was preceded by Liszt's popular symphonic poem *Les Préludes* and Beethoven's *Piano Concerto no. 4,* played by famous pianist Radu Lupu[16]*.* The ASO's Shuffle-series presents contemporary composers who conduct their own works and mirror it to a work from the better-known repertoire that once inspired them. The Swedish composer and conductor Christian Lindberg conducted a swan-themed concert in 2018, featuring his own works *Liverpool Lullabies* and *2017* (a world premiere)*,* pairing it with Tchaikovski's *Swan Lake* and Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela.* In 2019, Hungarian composer and conductor Péter Eötvös will conduct two of his own works and reflect on their links with Bartók's *Concerto for orchestra.* The downside of this formula, as one manager notes, is of course the relatively limited number of composer-conductors.

With contemporary works, the situation is more difficult still, for two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned before, familiarity with the non-tonal musical idiom is limited in a large segment of the audience. The aural education of the audience is not the orchestra's role, ASO representatives agree. Secondly, there is a pervasive feeling that composers often fail to connect with today's musical reality because of their radicality. "The listening attitude of composers is often alienated from the audience's listening attitude. Composers have to live with the consequences of their artistic freedom", one manager asserts. He continues:

> "We do not necessarily have to return to the harmonic language of the past, just because it is easier to listen to. But we can raise questions about music that has become very niche and sometimes just maintains itself. Composers often point fingers at us for not programming their music. That is not the two-way conversation that I would like to have" (Maegerman 2018).

His colleague continues:

> "The audience has partly pulled out of that area, but I think we have already passed that (radical, ed.) phase some time ago. Only the audience doesn't realize it yet" (Ferwerda 2018).

A similar argument was voiced by the ASO's own composer in residence Wim Henderickx (Henderickx 2018). However, premieres of Henderickx' orchestral compositions have been a successful regularity in the orchestra's repertoire, suggesting that openness towards contemporary music is also an issue of gaining trust and familiarity from the audience's side. Moreover, considering the ASO's performance history, it is not surprising that Flemish composers continue to find an interested audience.

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[16] Eventually, Radu Lupu cancelled four days before the concert. Although the ASO found an appropriate substitute for Lupu (the Scottish pianist Stephen Osborne), the orchestra management reported to have received numerous angry phone-calls and emails by subscribers because of Lupu's cancellation. This confirms that a soloist's reputation can be a decisive factor for the concert's success.

The ASO management considers their outreach and education programs as one of their main pillars. In an effort to contribute to a wider interest in orchestral culture, a range of actions and programs was designed over the years. First of all, the ASO wants to make its concerts open to everyone by means of diversification in ticket prizes. Subscribers under 30 years old pay 10 euro for any concert, and financially less capable people can get a ticket for as little as 2 euro. Every season, the ASO performs at least one accessible repertoire concert for free at open air concerts in Antwerp's city center, in collaboration with the Orchestra of the Flemish Opera. Every concert of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra in the orchestra's own Queen Elisabeth Hall is preceded by an oral introduction, aimed at familiarizing the audience with the works they will hear.

Various educational programs by the ASO for babies, toddlers, children and adolescents become firmly established within Antwerp's education system. For example, the opMaatorkest (an untranslatable wordplay between upBeat Orchestra and Custom-made Orchestra) gives children in Antwerp's primary schools, mostly from multicultural and socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, the chance to learn an instrument. For two years, music lessons by instrumentalists from the orchestra itself are part of the children's curriculum for an hour per week. During that time, the orchestra musicians prepare a concert with the children, held every two years in the ASO's prestigious concert hall. In addition to that, the Re-Mix Orchestra forms a meeting place for adolescents between 12 and 26 years old from diverse cultures, social backgrounds and with varying prior musical knowledge. Under guidance of British music education expert Paul Griffiths, a mix of all conceivable instruments forms a band of grand proportions performing all kinds of music connected to a central theme.

While these educational programs are intended to arouse curiosity and promote a discourse of multicultural tolerance, comparable programs reach out to communities that do not easily get into contact with classical music. Antwerp Symphony Orchestra Mobile brings a downsized version of the orchestra to audiences who are unable to attend any outside concerts. The orchestra regularly performs in prisons, hospitals and residential care centers, where it performs an attractive program with accessible classical music.

The ASO management emphasizes that neither the education nor the outreach programs "are launched to recruit souls" (Maegerman 2018) for their subscription concerts but are designed from a belief in the power and impact of classical symphonic music.

Programming trends

The underlying figures are drawn from a dataset comprising the entire programming entries of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra from the seasons 2006-2007 until 2017-2018. The dataset includes one separate entry for every time a work is performed. For the analysis of the dataset, composers have been listed in three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. These three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to orchestras. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertory, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, and thus their styles are often little known to orchestras and their audiences.

Figure 24 shows that Antwerp Symphony Orchestra's reliance on a traditional repertoire of deceased composers that were mostly active before 1900, is high, following the international trendline (Glynn 2002; Osborne 1999). 55,96% of the orchestra's total repertoire between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 seasons consists of music composed before 1900. Music composed between 1900 and 1950 accounts for roughly a quarter of the repertoire, leaving only 18,18% for the post-1950 period. Because of different categorizations, a comparison with the repertoire division graph of 2005 (cf. supra) is delicate. Undeniably, the share of pre-1900 repertoire has remained constant since 2005, at 55%.
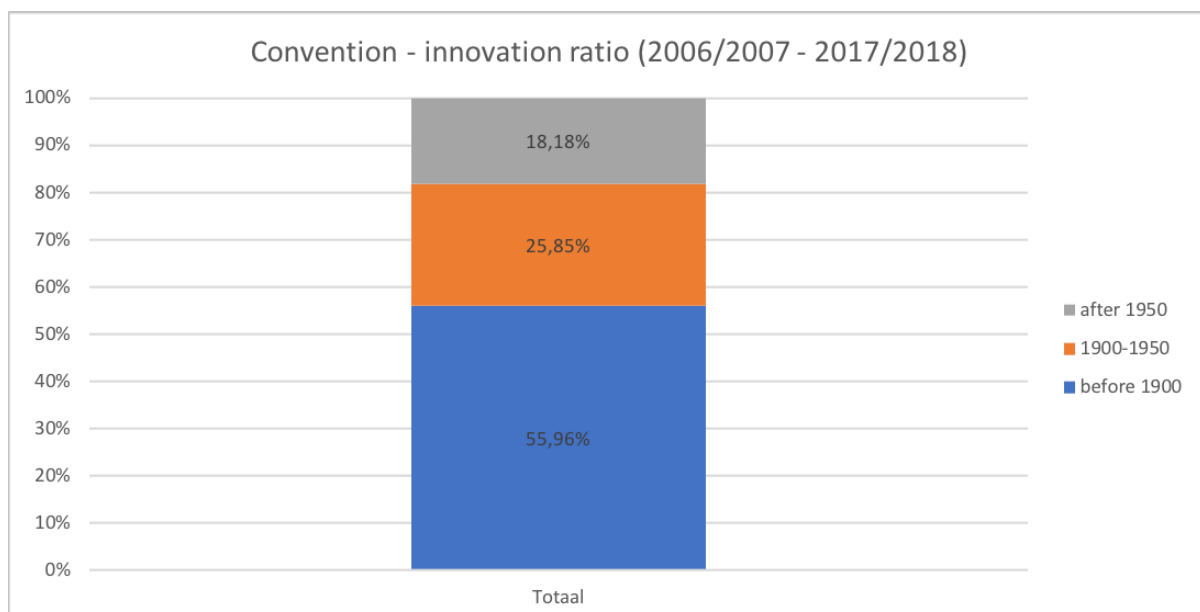

Figure 24: Repertoire convention and innovation ratio

Performance data show that the overall top-10 of programmed composers (Mozart, Johann Strauss jr., Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Purcell, John Williams, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Haydn and Shostakovich) comprise 35% of the orchestral repertoire of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra over the twelve-year period. From the 27 composers that obtained at least 1% of performance time within that same time span, 17 composed actively before 1900, 9 between 1900-1950, and only 1 after 1950. On the other side of the spectrum, the 98 composers who have been programmed only once, account for 2% of the repertoire in the same time span.

Figure 25 shows that concentration levels of composers (the orchestra's reliance on a limited set of composers) vary rather strongly between programming categories. In all three categories, a select group of composers tends to dominate performances, leading to an 'iron repertoire' of the ASO. This pattern is particularly visible in the pre-1900 category. The top-5 composers for this category (Mozart, Strauss jr., Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Purcell) make up for almost 40% of performances (1340 separate entries). The top-10 composers account for 60% of performances, and the top-15 exhibits the same trend, accounting for roughly three-quarters of performances, and thus leaving only 26,80% of performances for a remaining 84 (99 - 15) composers. The middle-category shows a moderate decrease of concentration levels, with a top-five (Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Mahler, Ravel and Lehár) accounting for 33,87% of performances. In comparison, the figures for post-1950 composers show a much less significant degree of concentration. The top-five composers in this category (Williams, Bernstein, Norman, Horner and Piazzolla) takes 26,88% of performances, while the top-ten and top-fifteen account for 41,35% and 51,28% respectively, leaving almost half of the performances to the 129 (144 – 15) remaining composers.

A perspective on the other extreme of the concentration spectrum is also telling. Figure 25 shows that the orchestra's reliance on one-time composers (one-time entries in the orchestra's program between 2006-2007 and 2017-2018) is only 0,54% in the pre-1900 category, while that percentage increases steeply to 4,71% in the post-1950 category. Additionally, these one-time entries also allow to calculate a percentage of composers that have been programmed only once. In the pre-1900 category, 17% of composers have been programmed only once (18 of 99 composers), compared to 37,5% (55 of 144 composers) in the post-1950 category. If one-time entries in the orchestra's repertoire would be defined as 'experiment', the level of experimentation is considerably higher in the post-1950 category than the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 categories.

	< 1900	**1900-1950**	**> 1950**
Top 5	1340 (39,94%)	525 (33,87%)	314 (26,88%)
Top 10	2013 (60,00%)	872 (56,26%)	483 (41,35%)
Top 15	2456 (73,20%)	1065 (68,71%)	599 (51,28%)
One-time	18 (0,54%)	25 (1,61%)	55 (4,71%)
All	3355 (100%)	1550 (100%)	1168 (100%)
	(99 composers)	(97 composers)	(144 composers)

Figure 25: Concentration levels of performances among composers by programming category

From figure 25 can be concluded that the orchestra's reliance on small set of composers is high in the pre-1900 category, and the level of experiment in that category is small. In the post-1950 category, concentration levels are much lower, showing less reliance on fixed sets of composers. Also, the concentration level of one-time composers is much higher in this category, pointing out that there is more experimentation in that category.

Figure 26 breaks these data down into the orchestra's seasons and shows that pre-1900 composers dominate orchestral programming over the twelve-year timespan. There is, however, a significant downward trend in that curve, with the amount of pre-1900 repertoire decreasing from 75% in the 2006-2007 season to 54% in the 2017-2018 season (average: 55,96%, cf. figure 24). Music composed in the 1900-1950 period slightly increased over the years, peaking at 34% in the 2011-2012 season and reaching an overall average of 26%. Contemporary music, labelled as music composed after 1950, strongly increases from a mere 12% to 23% ten years later (average: 18%). Overall, the gap between the conventional repertoire and innovative programming has diminished over the course of these twelve seasons.
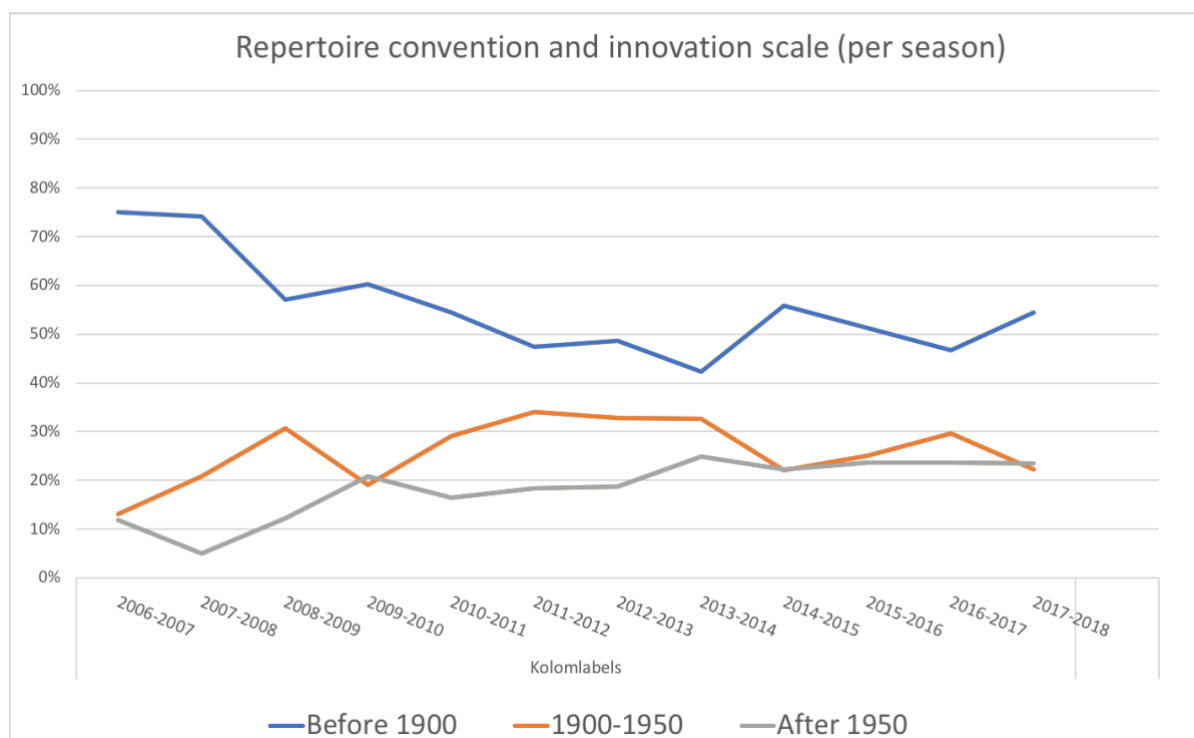
Figure 26: Repertoire convention and innovation scale

The performance frequency of the orchestra's repertoire allows to establish an iron repertoire, a concept strongly related to the concept of a musical canon. However, drawing conclusions with regard to canon formation is delicate, and the above employed differentiation between convention and innovation needs to be handled with some care. The above temporally categorization does not fully overlap with categorizations of canonicity (granted that such categorizations exist). Not all works prior to 1900 are canonical by every definition, and the post-1950 category contains composers and works that can arguably called canonical. While the top-5 in the pre-1900 category is canonical by every reasonable account, the denotation of the top-5 composers in the post-1950 category as canonical would spark resistance. The comparably low concentration levels within the post-1950 category partially explain this resistance. Also, the relation between the post-1950 category and innovation is not absolute. It is worth noting that the top-5 composers in the post-1950 category include 3 composers from film music scores (John Williams, Monty Norman and James Horner) which are not written in a particularly contemporary style. Therefore, these composers may be more appropriately called 'calendar-contemporary' (Zolberg 1980).

Staying close to the actual data, top-5 percentages from figure 25, for example, do not explicitly refer to the formation of a musical canon per se, but they do display that these composers account for a very significant proportion of the actual repertoire of this specific orchestra. Still, a strong relation can be established between these performance data and the musical canon. These data are illustrative for a condensation process taking place over time. Not only is the orchestra's reliance on older music (the pre-1900 category) rather high, also within that category, the strong reliance on a small set of composers is remarkable. Both

262

tendencies are significantly less present in the post-1950 category: the orchestra's reliance on these composers is lower, and concentration levels within that category are also low. The degree of canonization within that category can therefore be said to be lower.

From figure 26 can be concluded that despite Antwerp Symphony Orchestra's strong reliance on the pre-1900 category (in which the degree of canonization is high), efforts have been made over the years to reduce the gap between what can be called the conventional and the innovative. Over the years, performance levels of music from the 1900-1950 and post-1950 categories rise significantly. At the same time, the reliance on a limited number of composers is much lower in these categories, and levels of experimentation higher. Taking both of these tendencies into account, the total levels of experimentation and differentiation within Antwerp Symphony Orchestra's programming can be concluded to be rising.

Discussion

Antwerp Symphony Orchestra presents an emblematic example in the symphony orchestra's ongoing struggle to negotiate its place within the present-day society. The keyword in this debate is diversification, which manifests itself in two categories: artistic diversification within regular concert programming, and audience diversification by means of outreach and education. Within regular concert programming, there is an increasing number of broadening concepts, presented outside of the traditional concert format. The share of regular symphonic concerts, therefore, becomes smaller. Within that segment, there remains only very little space for repertoire development formulas.

With regard to the above analysis of the ASO's artistic profile, two points can be made. First of all, there is the obvious observation that diversification in programming is a double-sided coin. On the one hand, it pressurizes the organization to be more creative and innovative. It also arouses curiosity among potential new audiences. On the other hand, its implementation requires an enormous amount of flexibility from players and management, which is not always tenable and sometimes threatens to hamper the artistic curve of the orchestra.

A second point is more fundamental. The urge for diversification in musical programming originates in a legitimacy anxiety. Truly remarkable and important is the fact that the broadening gesture of symphony orchestras does not stem from an inquiry from the actual audience. Although many efforts to diversify the audience base have been moderately successful, concert audiences in general remain notoriously old, white and educated. This traditional audience base has proved to be mostly interested in the traditional concert format, where canonical music is performed. The inquiry to diversify audiences and concert formats comes from society at large, which is the potential audience rather than the actual audience. The term outreach itself somewhat implies that diversifying audiences amounts to answering

an unasked question. The orchestra's diversifying profile, therefore, cannot be interpreted as a case of supply and demand. Neither is it a case of creating a market for an underexposed product. Rather, this adaptive approach seems to be a mechanism of survival. The subsidizing system reinforces this correlation between legitimacy and musical programming. Subsidies decrease when the legitimacy of the institution is no longer obvious, and as soon as subsidies increase, so will the public inquiry to legitimize the organization's claim on the community's money. The orchestra's focus on broadening formulas are at least partly aimed at enhancing this civil support, thus legitimizing their claim on subsidies.

Research and experience both prove that diversity in concert formats and broadening gestures of outreach and education enhance civil support. Diversifying in repertoire programming by including contemporary music, on the other hand, does not. On the contrary, contemporary music programming only adds to the in-crowd reputation of the symphony orchestra and its repertoire. This discrepancy synthesizes the core of the orchestra's legitimacy problem. This central issue is the result of the orchestra's difficult task to reconcile symbolic cultural value with civil embeddedness. While symbolic cultural value is associated with repertoire of the past, the repertoire of the present does not correspond with civil society. As a consequence, diversification in the concert's context rather than its content has to be considered.

These aspects of symbolic value and civil engagement come together in the orchestra's presumed role as cultural ambassador. The ASO, for example, has been called a "showpiece of the Flemish artistic landscape" by Flanders' minister of culture Sven Gatz (2015). In that context, the ASO received additional funds for taking part in a political and cultural mission to Shanghai and Seoul in 2016. The program of these diplomatic concerts featured Mendelssohn's overture *Die Hebriden,* Mozart's *Violin Concerto nr. 21* and Brahms' *Fourth Symphony.* Plainly, the ASO's statute as Flanders' cultural showpieces relies on their capacity to preserve and honor the *grandeur* of the Western musical canon rather than actively engage in a (inter-)cultural dialogue. Especially for an orchestra with a longstanding tradition and explicit task of performing Flemish music, this capitulation to international standards is remarkable. Most of all, this directly contradicts the strength-gaining discourse on cultural inclusivity, outreach and participation in which the orchestra is indirectly forced to navigate.

2. Casco Phil

Introduction

On April 8, 2008, the Antwerp concert venue deSingel hosted the official baptism of fire of the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic, an initiative that owes its existence to Benjamin Haemhouts, who exchanged his career as a solo trombone player in the Bamberg Symphony for a career in orchestral conducting. This first concert of the brand-new orchestra immediately reflected its dual ambition: to enrich the classical repertoire with new or unknown works for orchestra and to increase the accessibility of classical music in general. On the opening concert's program, a newly commissioned and still untitled work by the young Belgian composer Steven Prengels was flanked by two monuments from the symphonic repertoire: Beethoven's first and Schubert's second symphonies. The Belgian Chamber Philharmonic, however, boasted broader ambitions still. The mission statement that has remained unaltered since 2008, reads: "The organization aims to promote musical culture in all its aspects. To this end, it may set up all services and develop all activities, such as forming an orchestra and giving musical performances" (Casco Phil 2007, 1). Clearly, the artistic vision of the organization takes priority over its incidental form. From the outset of the project, the organizers aimed at breaking open the structure of the traditional orchestra, to explore and push the creative boundaries of a musical ensemble and the repertoire it is able to perform. Rather than an orchestra per se, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic presented itself as a musical laboratory, where boundaryless experimentation in dialogue with various art forms is promoted. Strongly committed to this idea of creative experimentation, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic applied for subsidies for four consecutive years, only to be rejected on account of the saturation of the orchestral landscape in Flanders. Disappointed by the irony of the rejection (the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic was formed to counterbalance this saturation, by revitalizing the repertoire and break open the solid structure of the orchestra), the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic changed course: not in artistic mission but in organizational form.

In 2013, the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic officially changed its name to Casco Phil. In a television interview, artistic inspirer and conductor Ben Haemhouts explained the main rationale of this move:

> "When we started the project, we were an orchestra; a form. And from there we started to think what we were going to do with it. Later, I started to notice that this form stood in the way of the artistic idea. Now we have turned the idea around: we start from an artistic idea and only then we start looking for the ideal form." (VRT EEN 2014; Translation by author)

The second reason for the name change is political and fully dependent on the incidental political situation in Belgium. In 2008, the adjective 'Belgian' was still a very neutral designation, but it has attracted a political connotation over the years. Because of the organization's desire to remain politically neutral, the adjective was removed. A third and final reason is a strategical one. Haemhouts admits that the original name of the Belgian Chamber Philharmonic was, in part, chosen because it carried along a certain connotation of archaism and therefore of artistic authority. By means of the name, the orchestra initially aspired to join the ranks of the more traditional orchestras, in prestige if not in artistic approach. Over the years, the orchestra has concluded that it wanted exactly the opposite, hence the name change. Against the backdrop of this awareness, the name Casco Phil itself is very consciously chosen, for two reasons. Firstly, the term 'casco', that originates in construction and in ship-building, is used in the Dutch language with reference to something that is never really finished. Indeed, the orchestra nurtures a culture of continuous production and development, not of mere reproduction and preservation. Secondly, casco is an acronym that embodies everything the organization stands for and forms the basis of its aspired legitimacy. Casco Phil is a Creative, Adventurous, Socially engaged, Cultural Organization. Phil is an abbreviation for Philharmonic (Casco Phil 2018).

Since the name change, the organization puts a larger emphasis on its modular and flexible form. Analogous to their aversion for predefined structures, the organization (which will be referred to as an orchestra for the remainder of this report) takes on various forms, from fully equipped symphony orchestra, over modern chamber ensemble to impromptu accompaniment for jazz or pop musicians. Instead of relying on a fixed amount of government money, Casco Phil maintains a careful and unpredictable balance between financially profitable activities and artistically adventurous projects. The profitable formulas take on many forms, ranging from corporate events such as their on-demand project 'Golf goes Classic', in which a musical program is combined with a round of golf and networking possibilities for corporate clients, to music initiation projects for young children. The orchestra has the juridical structure of a not-for-profit organization, and therefore the income from certain repertoire concerts and commercial formulas generate the financial resources for their experimental and more adventurous, atypical projects that mostly operate at a financial loss, or to provide a podium to talented young Belgian composers and soloists. The orchestra has no official home base (although they have a small and rarely used office-space in the city of Mechelen, close to Antwerp) and is not affiliated with a concert hall or concert series. Therefore, Casco Phil does not only lean on the traditional concert circuit, but also takes to environments different from the concert hall.

On March 15, 2018, Casco Phil celebrated its 10-year anniversary with a Gala Concert, again in deSingel in Antwerp. Just like their very first concert, the program featured a mix of repertoire and experiment, with Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Violin concerto* placed alongside world premieres by the Belgian composers Wim Henderickx and

Frederick Neyrinck. Over the course of their 10-year existence, the orchestra's activities have increased from 3 to more than 30 concerts annually. Highlights of the orchestra include three appearances in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, performing twice as in-house orchestra for the annual event 'Iedereen Klassiek' ('Classical for Everybody') of the Flemish classical radio channel, and a collaboration with jazz legend Wayne Shorter. Their biggest achievement however, as expressed by the orchestra's chairman of the board, is the fact that they have managed to survive for ten years, without any subsidies and in a region as small and politically unstable as Flanders (Vrijsen 2018). In the Belgian music scene, Casco Phil is the only professional ensemble or orchestra that does not receive a fixed amount of subsidies. By means of a thorough study of literature sources (in this case limited to newspaper articles and opinion pieces), an overview of financial reports and policy documents, regular concert attendance, as well as in-depth interviews with key representatives (the conductor alias artistic director, the chairman of the board and two musicians), a profile will be sketched of an orchestra willing to survive on its own terms and successful in developing an organizational model to do so. This profile reveals, however, the difficulty of striking the right balance between artistic conception and pragmatic feasibility.

Foundational principles of Casco Phil

Casco Phil's true ambition is to devise an orchestra model able to respond to the challenges of the future, both in artistic and in organizational terms. The orchestra was initially conceived as an antidote to what the founders considered an overly homogeneous orchestral landscape. Haemhouts remarks that there is a wide gap between large traditional orchestras and small ensembles, who each have their own repertoire, audience, concert environment, social habits and market. One of the main motivations to found Casco Phil was to create a modular orchestral entity to re-unite these diverging fields.

Novelty in the field

The main artistic rationale of Casco Phil is that the future of orchestral music can be guided by the orchestra itself, if the organization applies its capacities to their full use. While Haemhouts acknowledges that the symbolic recognition of certain orchestras as Art Institutions of the Flemish Community is legitimate, he equally finds that this advantageous status, along with the involved certainty of subsidies, may lead to creative stagnation and organizational inefficiency. In a fixed organizational form and according creative formats, traditional orchestras are no longer put to the test by their competitors. Also, Haemhouts adds, the symbolic recognition emphasizes the reproductive nature of an orchestra and no longer stimulates creative production. Therefore, Haemhouts concludes, it is regrettable that traditional orchestras only contribute marginally to the revitalization of the musical environment, although they have the most power to do so. Orchestras in Flanders could also

be much more complementary, Haemhouts adds. It would be better for the field as a whole if every orchestra would have an artistic profile, supported by artistic principles. While Haemhouts emphasizes that the division of repertoire among orchestras is not a defendable option (cf. infra), a certain degree of well-thought-out complementarity would be desirable. Traditional orchestras' gestures towards more popular genres and concert formats, Haemhouts thinks, do not address today's repertoire issues adequately:

> "(Complementarity) is a good way of thinking, if there are artistic principles to support it. I strongly feel that this is not the case in many orchestras. If you look at their programming strategies, you notice that they play film music to try to sell their Beethoven concerts. That is completely the wrong remedy, because actually the problem is that people don't show up when there is contemporary repertoire. You have to ask yourself: how can I make sure that I get an audience that returns, and that is not only interested in reproduced repertoire, but is also curious about what composers like Neyrinck or Henderickx recently wrote. This curiosity must be the focus; to make them say 'I want to be there!'" (Haemhouts 2018)

Experimentation vs. low threshold

The key to fostering this idea of curiosity is lowering the threshold without compromising the quality of the artistic content. True to the idea of bridging the gap between traditional orchestras and hermetic repertoire ensembles that often operate in isolation, Casco Phil's aim is to reconcile artistic experiment and accessibility. The profile of Casco Phil is based on artistic experimentation, and therefore the emphasis lies on production rather than reproduction. The orchestra wants to try out new concert formats, push artistic boundaries, and give opportunities to composers and young musicians. In that process, not only the product is important, but also the development itself of the product (Simoens 2013). When possible, Casco Phil aims at breaking open the fourth wall between orchestra and audience by organizing open rehearsals and by organizing workshops for musicians or children. At the time of the Casco Phil name change, an official kick-off moment included a co-operative project in the city of Mechelen, in which the young Belgian composer Hans Vercauteren created a musical baseline for the orchestra, by using notes that random passers-by provided.

In that same vein of lowering the threshold, Haemhouts equally stands for more compact concerts:

> "I think that one of our strengths is the fact that our concerts are not as heavy as others. Almost all of the concerts that we conceive of ourselves, last about 75 minutes. In our view, a concert should be part of the evening, not the entire evening. I think it is much more interesting to have a compact concert with a clear theme, then cutting a concert in two halves that have nothing to do with each other, and where in the end

everyone is so drained that they no longer know what's happening on stage. This idea is experienced as very pleasant by both our regular concertgoers, our musicians and our sponsors." (Haemhouts 2018)

This idea of a concert as a pleasant experience rather than a long and burdensome ordeal is also enforced by means of on-stage introductions to every concert's works and themes, by a well-known former radio-personality.

Another way to reconcile the idea of experimentation with a low threshold, is by means of social projects. Haemhouts contends that orchestras are "morally obliged" to play a constructive role in their service area, even if they, like Casco Phil, do not receive any government funding. Although the social projects Casco Phil organizes, operate at a financial loss, it is strongly felt that the projects belong to the orchestra's DNA. In fact, as both Haemhouts and the chairman stress, Casco Phil owes its name to the idea of social engagement. This idea not necessarily translates into substantial concert series in schools, neglected neighborhoods or prisons, but rather in a fundamental attempt to achieve a sense of ownership with audiences from all backgrounds (as well as the musicians themselves), which is enforced by the programming policy.

Organizational model

The artistic vision of Casco Phil, which can be summarized as the idea of a future-proof orchestra model in which artistic experimentation and accessibility converge, is not easily implemented without any structural income. Therefore, Casco Phil needs to constantly speculate on the needs in which the bigger orchestras cannot provide. The idea of complementarity is crucial, just as it was with regard to the artistic vision itself. Over the years, and with increasing insight, Casco Phil has designed an orchestra format and budgetary strategy that attends to this difficulty.

Format of Casco Phil

For Haemhouts, the idea of complementarity is paramount to the success of Casco Phil: "I think that the inefficiency of larger institutions ensures that we have something to work with" (Haemhouts 2018). One musician remarks that two principles are closely bound with this idea and that their application summarizes the organizational logic of Casco Phil: flexibility and efficiency. Since 2017, there is not one single person on Casco Phil's payroll. The staff of five freelancers covers all aspects of production, communication, sales, programming and artistic planning, keeping the orchestra's overhead fee very low compared to the artistic output. The board of the orchestra consists of seven unpaid individuals from both artistic and corporate backgrounds. Casco Phil exclusively works with musicians on a freelance basis and is therefore

able to arrange the setup of the orchestra according to a potential programmer's demands. The orchestra only engages the musicians required for each separate project using a stable pool of about 40 musicians which is expanded or reduced depending on the project. As such, Casco Phil designs the musical content of each project by efficiently balancing a programmer's demands, working costs and expected revenues. In this modular form, the orchestra can play an evening's concert within one week's notice, either by falling back on a repertoire that requires very little rehearsal time for the orchestra (such as their success-formula *Mozart meets Piazzola* or Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*), or, should musician's availability or the programmer's budget be a problem, by performing chamber music works that requires a minimal amount of musicians, such as Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat,* scored for seven musicians only. This amount of flexibility cannot be afforded by larger orchestras, because of their use of fixed contracts and clearly stipulated employment agreements. Although this way of working increases possibilities for performances, the continuous uncertainty in terms of artistic planning requires a high degree of flexibility and tolerance from the organization's side and the musicians' side. Levels of pre-rehearsal preparation are high, as musicians note (La Mela 2018; Gröger 2018).

Budget of Casco Phil

Parallel to the artistic mission of the orchestra, Casco Phil also anticipates a future condition of symphony orchestras in its financial structure. Haemhouts is not optimistic about the future of government subsidies:

> "I think we are evolving towards an Anglo-Saxon model, and everything points in that direction. There are colleagues who are being cut off from subsidies, and organizations that want to grow and therefore apply for additional funding, their plea is often declined. This all points out that subsidies will further decrease, and that we will be more and more dependent on input from outside" (Haemhouts 2018).

Although Casco Phil now deliberately operates without subsidies, anticipating the further demise of the subsidizing system, this has not always been the case. The first years of its existence, the orchestra has persistently applied for subsidies, without much success, for reasons stipulated above. Once, the orchestra received a part of the requested amount, only to turn out being paralyzed by the obligations it brought along with it, such as reporting obligation, along with fixed salaries and strict employment conditions for the musicians. With the remaining budget, the orchestra was unable to work out the project artistically in the way they had originally conceived it. After these negative experiences, the orchestra worked out a system to generate incomes to keep their business running in an artistically satisfactory way. That system consists of three pillars.

Firstly, there is the usual concert circuit in small and large concert halls, which puts Casco Phil in direct competition with other orchestras. Casco Phil presents a range of concert programs to cultural centers and concert organizers, who are given the opportunity to book one or more of these programs. By lack of subsidies, Casco Phil is forced to charge all production costs, including all wages, plus an overhead fee, to the organizer. As competition with subsidized orchestras and ensembles is fierce, the orchestra is very flexible with the programs they present. An average of 10 percent of the original programs is retained by organizers, the rest is renegotiated between orchestra and concert organizer. Although frustrating, Haemhouts sees this process as the main strength of Casco Phil: its capacity to constantly adapt to unforeseen situations, and being a good sparring partner for projects that emerge from other impulses than the market. The content of Casco Phil's concerts will be addressed at length below.

Secondly, the musicians of Casco Phil are sometimes engaged as session musicians for commercial recordings, often in collaboration with a recording studio based in Mechelen. Under the name of Casco Phil, *ad hoc* formations of players have provided music for various famous Belgian artists, and sometimes take place on stage with them.

A third pillar to generate incomes is considered unique to the Casco Phil model. The organization maintains very close ties with the corporate world. Using a very personal and time-consuming method, the orchestra binds sponsors and individuals to the orchestra. Every sponsor is viewed more as a partner than a sponsor per se, as there are usually several mutual conditions attached to every engagement. What usually happens, is that the orchestra only receives a relatively small percentage of a certain amount of money as direct sponsoring. The largest part of the amount are VIP arrangements on which the orchestra has an ample margin. For example, a partner buys a number of concert tickets, for 125 euros each. From that price, the costs of a generous reception are subtracted, and the rest is pure profit for the orchestra. Haemhouts emphasizes that this process is very intensive and time-consuming:

> "This is of course a delicate way of working, because if you happen to lose two partners in one year, you face a structural problem. So, we have to constantly keep working on new contacts. And that is a bit of a race against the clock, because everyone is fishing in the same pond. It is not easy for a small organization such as Casco Phil to have sufficient muscularity" (Haemhouts 2018).

To compensate this uncertainty in the sponsorship mechanism, other corporate formulas take place outside of the concert circuit. Casco Phil developed a *Golf goes Classic* format, in which an accessible musical program is combined with a golf initiation for a partner's clients, business relations or personnel, followed by a walking dinner with networking possibilities. A comparable concept *Symphonic leadership* is a workshop in which the similarities between running a company and conducting an orchestra are exposed. Participants, often consisting of

a company's middle-management, take place between the orchestra musicians and experience the multi-layered interactions among musicians and with the conductor. Both corporate events are organized at relatively high profits. Linked to this strategy to tie companies to the orchestra, Casco Phil started a tailor-made concert series called *The Sound of Innovation*, which is still under construction. Finally, the annual Gala Concert and New-Year's Concerts are also very lucrative, thanks to traditionally ample audience attendance and the enabling of extensive networking opportunities and VIP-arrangements.

The conductor, chairman and musicians of Casco Phil all emphasize that the logic behind these various ways of generating incomes, is purely artistic. The orchestra's engagement in profitable undertakings is their way to pay for their own artistic projects that systematically operate at financial loss. The ultimate aim is a financial break-even at the end of the accounting year: all the money that comes in, goes out immediately.

Motivation of Casco Phil's musicians

A crucial aspect in Casco Phil's way of working is the high motivation of its musicians. Casco Phil's freelancer wages are slightly higher than freelancer wages in subsidized Belgian orchestras and only slightly lower than those of contracted musicians in these orchestras. Most importantly, however, musicians generally like playing with Casco Phil because they feel that their individual contribution as a musician is being appreciated. One musician says:

> "A lot of attention goes to the musicians themselves. Everyone can contribute his own experience and know-how, and also has the feeling that it means something. You can really develop yourself as an individual." (Gröger 2018)

Another musician adds:

> "I strongly feel that I get the opportunity to grow artistically." (La Mela 2018)

Musicians agree that they experience an atmosphere of familiarity that they do not experience in larger orchestras. This sense of collective ownership from the musician's side strongly increases the amount of tolerance that musicians display when something in the organization goes wrong:

> "I have been playing with Casco Phil for 7 years now, and I am proud of what they have achieved over the years. When something goes wrong in the organization (with scores or with catering), you let it pass. That would never happen in the big orchestras I play in. " (Gröger 2018)

The contractual basis on which Casco Phil's musicians operate is not perceived as a disadvantage. On the contrary, musicians enjoy the fact that they are free to select the projects they are interested in, enabling them to combine these with other engagements according to their own schedule and preferences. These aspects are considered to be typical to the Casco Phil model and, in the musicians' view, compensate the non-competitive wages to some extent.

Programming policy of Casco Phil

The artistic vision of Casco Phil and its organizational structure are both based on the idea of complementarity. Casco Phil tries to do what other organizations are, for many reasons, unable to do, and thus forces itself into the orchestral environment. The orchestra's programming policy reflects this *modus operandi* only to a certain extent. While the orchestra retains a very large amount of flexibility and adaptability to strategically maneuver its way between larger orchestras, the idea of artistic compromise does not stretch endlessly. The orchestra representatives explicitly emphasize that Casco Phil owes its legitimacy to its artistic adventurousness, without allowing any compromises to the market. The orchestra chairman summarizes:

> "An orchestra needs income, that is nothing to be ashamed of. And in order to earn money, you need to analyze the market. But that does not mean that there aren't any artistic principles and values. Those can easily co-exist." (Vrijsen 2018)

Precisely this idea legitimizes Casco Phil's approach to budget acquisition and handling: to get money where it is abundant, and spend it where it is needed. The programming of Casco Phil is the result of this overarching balancing exercise.

Division of the repertoire

As the orchestra crisis in Flanders reached its peak in the years before the new Arts Decree, the option was voiced to facilitate the division of the repertoire among the existing orchestras by assigning a specific portion of the musical repertoire to each orchestra (Vandenbossche 2001). The alleged problem of oversupply would be tackled, and artistic quality was believed to increase. Over the years, Casco Phil has been mentioned many times in these political debates around the Flemish orchestras and their legitimacy, perceived redundancy and complementarity (Caron 2005; Vandyck and Vandenbroeck 2016).

Within Casco Phil, there is a strong opposition to the idea of strictly enforced repertoire complementarity in orchestras. When asked whether it would be a good idea to ascribe an

experimental role to smaller orchestras, and a reproductive role to larger symphony orchestras, one musician answers:

> "I think that's a very strange idea, because what does 'larger orchestra' mean? In music history, there are so many different forms and sizes of orchestras; you cannot pin down a chamber orchestra on a period of time, a certain repertoire or a certain profile, when there is so much other music available for that particular size. Much of the repertoire will be lost." (Gröger 2018)

While the orchestra manager Ben Haemhouts agrees that a strict division of repertoire would be an unfortunate idea, he does recognize the need for more explicit coordination among the orchestras and regrets that subsidized orchestras tend to behave similarly and thus get in each other's way:

> "Personally, I think that (strict repertoire division) should not be imposed, but I do think that everyone must have their own, clear profile. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Last season we have heard the *Ninth Symphony* of Mahler twice in the same concert hall, and the same thing happened with a Wagner opera. I think that those issues are very closely related with the artistic profile you want to convey as an orchestra. (…) When we play film music, it is clear that we are doing it to invest the revenue in our artistically innovative projects. That is legitimate. But the fact that all subsidized orchestras also do that, is strange. They can afford not to do it. (…) Likewise, it is not our ambition to play a Mahler symphony. There are others who can do that better and also have the necessary means for it." (Haemhouts 2018)

The link with Paul DiMaggio's (1983) concept of isomorphism has been touched on above.

Factors impacting programming

As a matter of principle, programming decisions are made by Ben Haemhouts, artistic manager and conductor of Casco Phil. The board of the orchestra is not involved in programming decisions. However, a range of factors influences these decisions. Casco Phil's way of working automatically implies that their programming decisions partially depend on external factors such as budget acquisition. Some factors, such as rehearsal time and availability of musicians, have been mentioned already. Contrary to some musicians' intuitions, Haemhouts stresses that programming decisions of Casco Phil are not affected by rehearsal time:

> "Whether we play classical music or contemporary music, the rehearsal time is about the same, at least if the musicians are well-prepared. That is a matter of mentality." (Haemhouts 2018)

Orchestra members and management agree that their financial dependence on partnership contracts does not influence musical programming negatively. Some partners prefer for their contribution to be used in its entirety for a specific project. More than once, it has happened that the orchestra could thus develop an experimental project that they would otherwise never have been able to realize. Yet, because corporate partners have nothing to win or lose from Casco Phil's programming decisions, they do not intervene in the artistic process itself. On the contrary, Haemhouts stresses, the most significant interference with programming decisions comes from the side of programmers in the traditional, subsidized concert circuit:

> "I don't feel hindered by sponsors or partners. I often have very constructive discussions with them about the program, mostly about the contemporary repertoire. I feel more hampered by instances that you would not expect, namely the cultural centers. They tend to be focused on selling tickets. When I approach them with a program Ligeti-Beethoven-Boulez, we finally end up with Beethoven only. The cultural institutions that have the duty to be the center of culture, and are also subsidized for that, force you to level and commercialize your programming. That is frustrating." (Haemhouts 2018)

The most impactful external factor for Casco Phil's programming decisions is the market, in the sense that the orchestra has a very ambiguous relation to it. On the one hand, the orchestra is forced to employ every opportunity to acquire finances, but on the other hand, the artistic idea always remains the main priority. One musician clarifies:

> "It may seem as though we are doing everything to fill in certain holes, for the money. That is absolutely not the case. I do think we are filling niches, but in an intelligent way. First, you must recognize the gaps and then think in a future-oriented way: in which gaps do we play? In fact, we are looking for a market instead of analyzing the market at the moment and jumping into it in the short term. If anything, I think we are creating our own market." (Gröger 2018)

Ben Haemhouts equally states that moving the existing market and pushing its boundaries is the key to sustainable artistic revitalization. He acknowledges that this is a long-term process in which cultural institutions have responsibility:

> "I think that you can partly determine the market. Even we, as a small player, can mean something in that process, and it is a shame that the big institutions, who have the power for it, refuse to do so. They really have the ability to change their audience by adjusting their repertoire and their way of working, and they don't do it." (Haemhouts 2018)

Casco Phil's dependence on external factors is the outcome of the orchestra's way of working. To a certain extent, compromises to these factors are made, mostly in the case of concerts that are organized to acquire money. Thanks to these compromises, other programs can be realized fully independent of external factors.

One of Casco Phil's experiences with musical programming deserves additional attention. Although the orchestra balances profitable projects and loss-making projects, their respective locations do not always fit intuition. It is important to stress that experimental formulas and repertoire formulas do not necessarily overlap with concerts that cost money and profitable concerts, respectively. Casco Phil generally sells its most experimental formulas in the non-artistic circuit, often to private partners. The subsidized circuit of concert halls and programmers mostly prefer Casco Phil's repertoire concerts over artistically challenging projects that include a considerable portion of innovative or contemporary music. Whether a concert is lucrative for the orchestra or not, does not fully depend on the content of the musical program, but also, for a large part, on the financer or organizer. Taking this into account, one might argue that subsidized programmers are more focused on selling tickets and filling their concert halls precisely because they are subsidized, and therefore rely on social support to acquire legitimacy, rather than on artistic pertinence.

Programming formulas

The threefold strategy of flexibility, efficiency and complementarity of Casco Phil translates to tailor-made programs. Casco Phil offers a broad span of programs, which are in fact only initial ideas as a basis for further negotiation. These programs can be divided into three categories: outreach concerts, traditional concerts and experimental projects. Commercial projects form an independent category, because they largely fall beyond Casco Phil's own programming policy. On average, Haemhouts designs twelve different programs every season: two outreach programs, five repertoire concerts and five experimental projects. In any of these concerts, the orchestra set-up differs. For example, within the repertoire concerts, a program of Haydn can be performed with only 17 players, while the Beethoven-program requires 45 musicians. As mentioned before, the distinction between these three categories is not absolute: there is at least one piece of contemporary or non-canonical music per program. Even in a concert setting as conservative as the New Year's concert, which is the most profitable annual event of the orchestra, there is always an element of surprise, such as a march by the renaissance composer William Byrd or short modernist pieces by Bartók.

Outreach concerts

Although the orchestra sees outreach project as a moral responsibility, the number of social projects it organizes, is limited due to the lack of budget. Since 2016, however, Casco Phil has

organized summer camps called *Croque Malines,* for children between 6 and 12 years old (in cooperation with the subsidized music promotion center called Musica), in which musical initiation is combined with the joy of preparing food together. The objective of this project can be read from the tagline of this project, which goes: "Making music together is the sauce that connects creativity, healthy food and children with different backgrounds" (Musica 2017). The admission fee is 130 euro for five days and includes a daily meal. Children from socially disadvantaged families pay only 25 euro. Because Casco Phil receives a small amount of subsidies from the city of Mechelen (7500 euro annually), the orchestra is able to run break-even on this project, only because Haemhouts coordinates the event unpaid.

Every December, Casco Phil cooperates with the Flanders Festival to organize *Voices for Peace,* in which children from various schools sing together, accompanied by the orchestra. The children are coached by a professional singer for several days, and the orchestration of traditional songs are made by an orchestra musician. The revenue of this project goes to a social organization that supports cultural participation of people with a mental restriction. Haemhouts describes his motivation to engage in social projects, with a strong focus on children, as follows:

> "There is a huge gap in education. We want to bring young people into contact with classical music. For me it makes no sense to subsidize institutions heavily, if you do not support the basis as well: the cultural education of young people." (Haemhouts 2018)

Casco Phil's annual open-air concert at the music festival *Moonrock* in Mechelen*,* is also considered an outreach project. The festival is labelled as a festival for all people of the city of Mechelen, and Casco Phil reflects this concept by performing a very light program of classical music, preceded by an open rehearsal at the same location.

The social and broadening projects of Casco Phil are organized in a way that they only minimally interfere with the regular way of working. In total, the orchestra's social projects cost about 7000 euro per year, half of which is structural loss that is budgeted as a manageable loss. Although it is the orchestra's ambition to organize more social projects, the lack of budget and staff hinders them to do so, which one musician calls "a bitter pill" (Gröger 2018).

Traditional concerts

As a chamber orchestra, Casco Phil performs the canonical repertoire that is written for this orchestra setting. A considerable part of Casco Phil's concerts consists of repertoire music, such as symphonies by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Haydn and Mozart. Financially speaking, the traditional concert series of Casco Phil are profitable, or run break-even at least. The orchestra benefits from the situation that there is only one professional chamber orchestra active in Flanders, but is burdened by the fact that their price is inevitably higher than the average full-

strength symphony orchestra. Therefore, the orchestra constantly looks for an artistic added value to their program, in order to arouse curiosity. Unless the organizer explicitly resists to the idea of including a piece of non-canonical music into the program, Casco Phil always slips in at least one piece of experimental repertoire. The orchestra's most successful concert series of 2018, for example, featured Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* along with Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto.* In one case, the orchestra was allowed to also include a contemporary piece, by the Belgian composer Mathias Coppens. In two other cases they performed *A Simple Symphony* by Benjamin Britten, which can arguably be called non-canonical. Haemhouts explains:

> "For me, this is still the best way to lure new audiences to the concert hall and to make sure they stay there. Of course, you have to remain fair to the audience. So if I program a contemporary work, it will never last an hour, or I will never consider half a concert Boulez. That way, we would only shoot ourselves in the foot while we are rather trying to build something up. If contemporary music is too dominant, audiences will drop out and subscriptions will go down. But under the right conditions, there will be a switch in that curve. That is the challenge for the future." (Haemhouts 2018)

Haemhouts stresses the importance of a meaningful link between the pieces on the program. Only when this link is clear, this so-called 'sandwich-formula' is legitimate. For example, the first two composition assignments that Casco Phil commissioned, were linked to a Beethoven symphony. Later, Casco Phil combined Fauré's *Requiem* with a short composition entitled *Ich glaube nicht an den Himmel* by the Belgian composer Hans Vercauteren, thus speculating and questioning the liturgical significance of the requiem. Haemhouts realizes that these conceptual ideas escape a large part of the audience. The orchestra's presenter usually highlights some conceptual themes, but the orchestra does not want to risk the concert becoming overly intellectual. "The suggestive, multi-layered aspect is the power of art," Haemhouts elucidates, "whether you discover it or not" (Haemhouts 2018).

Experimental concerts

The idea of building an artistic concept through the mix of canonical and non-canonical or contemporary music, is dominant in what Casco Phil considers its trademark concepts. The experimental programs that Casco Phil develops, performs and pays for to a large extent, are considered to be the biggest source of legitimacy for the orchestra by the orchestra management. These concepts are either sold to the same programmers that buy the repertoire concerts, which happens rarely, or organized independently. In both cases however, the orchestra organizes the concert at what Haemhouts calls "a heavy financial loss" (Haemhouts 2018). As stated earlier, this loss is compensated by the revenue from either commercial formulas or repertoire concerts.

More than is the case in the repertoire concerts, the experimental programs owe their setup and internal coherence to a common thread. For their 2019-2020 season, for example, the orchestra has developed a program around the phrase *tempora mutantur* (times have changed). The underlying idea is that when times change for the worse, people equally change for the worse. The phrase itself is the nickname of Joseph Haydn's 64th symphony, fragments of which will be played while being gradually distorted by means of electronics and visuals. Songs by Kurt Weill that fit into this idea will pass through the performance, as well as songs from Franz Schubert's *Winterreise,* recomposed for modern ensemble by Hans Zender in 1993. Finally, Luciano Berio's 1989 orchestra piece *Rendering,* a modernist completion of Schubert's piano sketches for a *Tenth Symphony,* will also be performed.

One successful program entitled *Soirée Fantastique,* constantly shifted between heaven and hell, juxtaposing Erik Satie's heavenly *Gymnopédie nr. 1* and Giuseppe Tartini's notorious *Devil's thrill sonata,* or Johann Sebastian Bach's *Erbarme dich, mein Gott* and Luigi Boccherini's *Sixth Symphony 'The House of the Devil'.* In 2019, Casco Phil cooperates with the regional arts center KC NONA in Mechelen, for an experimental concert-series called *Late Night Avant-Garde,* in which Casco Phil will perform an evening's program of brand-new music, followed by a Whisky Bar. The program itself will only be announced at the night of the concert.

Apart from the fact that concert programmers are, in general, reluctant to include experimental or non-canonical music into their season programs, Haemhouts points to another problem. Casco Phil's experimental concepts often include visual aspects as well as dance performances. Programmers find it difficult to place these concepts in a category that fits their season template, not knowing whether to categorize it as music, music theater or performance. As Haemhouts reflects:

> "That is a problem we are really struggling with. We are experimenting, but the results do not fit the traditional classifications. We are working on something that we do not know what it will turn out to be. But exactly that is our role!" (Haemhouts 2018)

Programming trends

The underlying figures are drawn from Casco Phil's digital library, which consists of all works that the orchestra has performed between 2008 and 2018. In the resulting dataset, every work is listed as one separate entry, regardless of the amount of performances the work received. One disadvantage of this dataset is the absence of data per season, making trends in programming decisions throughout the orchestra's ten-year existence impossible to identify. Another disadvantage of this dataset is the fact that a work that has been performed only once, weighs as much in analysis as a work that has been performed twenty times. Because it does not take frequency of performances into account, the dataset is only illustrative to certain trends in Casco Phil's musical programming. For the analysis of the dataset, composers

have been listed in three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. These three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to orchestras. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertory, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, and thus their styles are often little known to orchestras and their audiences.

Figure 27 shows that Casco Phil's reliance on works composed prior to 1900 is high. These works comprise 55,44% of the orchestra's library. For the period between 1900 and 1950, this number drops to a mere 15,09%. The works from composers who were active after 1950, finally, account for 29,47% of the orchestra's catalogue. In addition, analysis shows that the 10 most listed composers (Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Ben Haemhouts, Puccini, Tchaikovsky, Helmut Lotti and Piazzolla) account for 37,19% of the orchestra's repertoire, 7 of which were active prior to 1900 and 3 in the period after 1950. None of the overall top-10 composers was active in the 1900-1950 period.
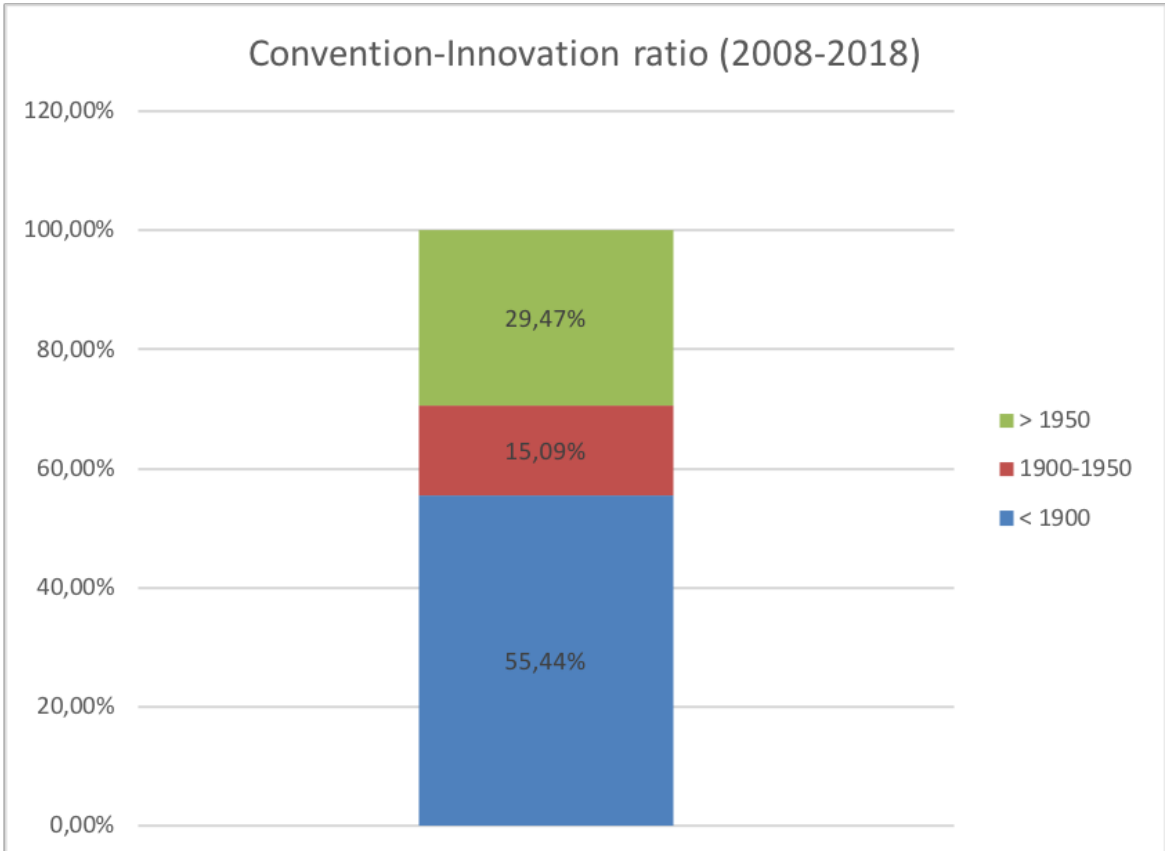

Figure 27: Repertoire convention and innovation ratio

Figure 28 shows that concentration levels of compositions (the orchestra's reliance on a limited set of composers) vary between programming categories. In all three categories, the works of a select group of composers dominates performances. In the pre-1900 category, for example, five composers (Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Haydn and Mendelssohn) account for 48,10% of the works in the orchestra's library. For composers active between 1900 and 1950, the concentration level drops to 32,56% for top-five composers Gershwin, Weill, Barber, Webern and Richard Strauss. The post-1950 category shows a comparable pattern, with exactly one-third of listed works written by Haemhouts, Lotti, Lasoen, Piazzolla and Brel. The top-ten composers and top-fifteen composers, respectively, exhibit comparable trends among the categories.

	< 1900	1900-1950	> 1950
Top 5	76 (48,10%)	14 (32,56%)	28 (33,33%)
Top 10	98 (62,03%)	24 (55,81%)	41 (48,81%)
Top 15	113 (71,52%)	30 (69,77%)	48 (57,14%)
One-time	19 (12,03%)	17 (39,53%)	39 (46,43%)
All	158 (100%) (46 composers)	43 (100%) (28 composers)	84 (100%) (51 composers)

Figure 28: Concentration levels of compositions by programming category

What stands out in figure 28, however, is the orchestra's reliance on one-time composers (composers that appear only once, and thus with one work, in the orchestra's library). These percentages vary strongly between programming categories. 19 of the 46 composers in the pre-1900 category appear once in the pre-1900 category, or 41,30%. In the 1900-1950 category, that number is 60,71% (17 of the 28 composers), and 46,42% in the post-1950 category (39 of the 84 composers). If compositions from which the composer only appears once in the catalogue are dubbed 'experimental', and considering the 158 library works in that category, the experimentation rate in the pre-1900 category is only 12,03%. This experimentation rate rises drastically to 39,53% in the 1900-1950 category, and reaches its peak at 46,43% in the post-1950 category. This means that almost half of the post-1950 works that Casco Phil has programmed, can be called experimental.

From figure 28 can be concluded that the orchestra's reliance on small sets of composers is high in every category, although significantly higher in the pre-1900 category. In that category, the experimentation rate is relatively low. In the post-1950 category, the experimentation rate is very high, reaching a concentration level comparable to the top-ten concentration level (which means that the 39 least listed composers in that category get as much attention as the ten most performed composers).

Drawing conclusions with regard to Casco Phil's reliance on the musical canon is not straightforward. Firstly, staying close to the actual data, top-5 percentages from figure 28, for

example, do not explicitly refer to the formation of a musical canon per se, but only display that these composers account for a very significant proportion of the actual repertoire of this specific orchestra. The definition of the musical canon, in this particular case, would be strictly based on performance frequency. Secondly, the above employed distinction between convention and innovation should be handled with care, because this categorization does not fully overlap with categorizations of canonicity (granted that such categorizations exist). Not all works prior to 1900 are canonical by every definition, and the post-1950 category contains composers and works that can arguably called canonical. While Casco Phil's top-5 in the pre-1900 category is canonical by every reasonable account, the denotation of the top-5 composers in the post-1950 category as canonical would spark resistance. Of these five composers, three are Belgian song-writers from the entertainment industry to which categorizations of either 'experimental' or 'composer' hardly applies. Still, a relation can be established between these library data and the musical canon. Not only is the orchestra's reliance on older music (the pre-1900 category) rather high, also within that category, the strong reliance on a small set of composers and their works is remarkable. Both tendencies are significantly less present in the 1900-1950 category: the orchestra's reliance on these composers is much lower, and concentration levels within that category are also low. The degree of canonization within that category can therefore be said to be lower. The post-1950 category exhibits an even more egalitarian spread, leaving much more space for experimentation.

As such, these numbers reflect and illustrate Casco Phil's way of working very clearly. For an orchestra of which the main artistic intention consists of increasing innovative programming and deviate from the canon, their reliance on conventional pre-1900 repertoire is remarkably high (cf. figure 27). On the other side of the spectrum, however, their reliance on post-1950 music is also rather high, especially compared to the middle-category of 1900-1950 that remains only moderately represented. Taking into account the concentration levels displayed in figure 28, especially the very high experimentation rate in the post-1950 category, Casco Phil's tendency to innovate can be concluded to be very high. Inevitably, repertoire choices in Casco Phil are as hybrid as their organizational model: they rely strongly on both canonical repertoire and experimentation, with very little repertoire between those polar extremes.

Discussion

The main ambition of Casco Phil is to reconcile inevitable financial dependence with artistic independence. The orchestra's solution to this challenge is threefold. Firstly, the orchestra tries to create its own market by making full use of artistic gaps that larger orchestras are unable to fill on account of their structure. The modular organization of Casco Phil is a prerequisite of this approach. Secondly, in order to guarantee the orchestra's financial stability, Casco Phil's musical programming strategy involves balancing profitable components that are perceived as artistically common, with loss-making components that are considered

artistically innovative and pertinent. Finally, Casco Phil's artistic aim to bridge the gap between the traditional and the innovative is reflected within the programs themselves. Non-canonical or non-conventional music is smoothly incorporated and legitimized by means of an overarching conceptual idea. Every concert tells a coherent story in which the distinction between traditional and experimental music is irrelevant, because of their subordination to the artistic idea.

From an artistic point of view, Casco Phil's flexibility unlocks many possibilities with regard to creativity. Independent from any predetermined form, the orchestra cultivates a sense of collective creative ownership on three levels. Firstly, although the conductor is perceived as the artistic leader, musicians feel that they can contribute artistically by playing according to their own inspiration. As a result, a sense of artistic pride over the projects is shared by the core musicians, leading to increased motivation and therefore to increased musical quality. Secondly, the process of creative production, as well as the means of production, are opened up to the audience, lowering the threshold for musical enjoyment. The orchestra is highly aware of audience's demands and tastes, but also aspires to nurture their curiosity by incorporating novelties and elements of surprise into the programs. The orchestra's open rehearsals and informal demeanor on stage both support this ambition. Finally, Casco Phil's partial on-demand approach to musical programming feeds the sense of collective ownership among artistic and corporate partners.

While Casco Phil has grown considerably over the course of its 10-year existence, there are still some fundamental limitations to the model they developed. Critics of Casco Phil argue that the orchestra strongly resembles an *ad hoc* project orchestra or assumes the form of an artistic employment office. Four months before the start of a new season, the orchestra musicians receive a list of all the concerts that have been sold so far. Musicians can sign in on this list for the projects they are able to engage in, resulting in a group of musicians that is selected on an accidental basis. While Haemhouts acknowledges that there is indeed some coming and going within the orchestra ranks, he immediately corrects:

> "The coming and going is carefully administered. Only the people who have successfully played an audition with us, get the list. That distinguishes us from a so-called telephone orchestra. (…) Moreover, we can increasingly rely on a stable pool of musicians. In both the string and the wind sections, there is a fixed core of musicians. When we play Beethoven, for example, the orchestra already knows how I want to hear the dotted quavers. These are collective characteristics that have developed over time and make up the acoustic identity of the orchestra." (Haemhouts 2018)

Haemhouts ascribes this coming and going of musicians to the fact that the orchestra's players only partly depend on Casco Phil in financial terms. The orchestra's musicians equally admit that a higher fee would make a difference, because in general their priority goes to the best-

payed projects. Therefore, Haemhouts' first priority for the future is to increase the musicians' fees. The orchestra management is willing to sacrifice other projects for this wage increase, also because taking on more projects with a 5-headed staff is unmanageable. And more importantly, growth would compromise Casco Phil's basic idea of flexibility, to which it owes its success.

A second point is related to these limits of pragmatic feasibility. It is often voiced within the field that the Casco Phil model presents a dangerous precedent with regard to the much-feared total abandonment of subsidies. The idea that the Casco Phil model can be duplicated and employed as a standard model (an idea that was coined in the Vandyck report (2016; cf. supra) is a very unpopular idea among the subsidized orchestras. Haemhouts evaluates the situation differently:

> "We don't shout from the rooftops: 'look what we can do without subsidies!' It is exactly the other way around: the government misuses us as a precedent. I see it like this: we are actually the ultimate example that shows that you do need subsidies. We cannot continue to grow, and we constantly have to compromise our artistic ideas to the dynamics of an existing market. We are the best proof that if you want to grow, and if you want to play a role in the international league, you need subsidies. The problem is that we lack the communicative power to give voice to this problem." (Haemhouts 2018)

Orchestra representatives voice their concern that the perception of Casco Phil, within the field, is not always in line with the orchestra's actual core values. Casco Phil is sometimes viewed as a market-oriented orchestra, taking advantage of every opportunity that arises. The orchestra's vital focus on funding acquisition, therefore, sometimes hampers the adequate perception of the orchestra's true artistic intentions (Lembrechts 2019). With regard to the question of duplication opportunities, it is strongly felt among Casco Phil's musicians and management alike that if Flanders' cultural world would be organized in the same way as Casco Phil, completely relying on its own incomes, the musical field would impoverish. If every musician would be paid per shift, and total production costs would have to be carried by the organizer, a large part of the musical repertoire would become impossible to perform. Symphony orchestras are now able to keep their overhead fee rather low even for a program that requires more than a hundred performers, thanks to their subsidies. No concert programmer, who in this scenario would equally lose his subsidies, would be able to carry full production costs for a large-scale symphonic program. The employment of alternative incomes to compensate this financial gap (as Casco Phil does) would not be a solution either, because the number of potential sponsors and partners is limited, especially in a country as small as Belgium. Even small concessions such as tax-shelter would make competition among orchestras of all sizes impossible when applied on a large scale.

In light of these findings, the Casco Phil model should be interpreted as a necessary addition to the existing subsidized field. As one musician argues:

> "I think that Casco Phil is doing well because of its flexibility, which makes it possible to jump into niches that are being created. This advantage on big orchestras is the strength of such a small organization, and that is the reason why we have existed for over 10 years." (Gröger 2018)

Only the existence of a subsidized field allows for Casco Phil's flexible and complementary way of working. Without its subsidized siblings, both the artistic and organizational model of Casco Phil would fall short: artistically, because the absence of subsidized orchestras would indirectly force Casco Phil to neglect large portions of the repertoire by focusing even more on market demands, and in terms of organization, because the pool of sponsors and private funders is too small to fully support all orchestras.

A final worry of Casco Phil is the uncertainty over what might happen if the artistic manager and conductor, Ben Haemhouts, should withdraw. These worries are artistic in nature as well as organizational. Despite the reported feeling of shared ownership that contributes to the individual musician's motivation, it is strongly felt that Haemhouts is the person who keeps Casco Phil up and running. In the orchestra's current form, all overarching artistic ideas come from Haemhouts, who also decides on programming and future projects. In addition to that, he takes the lead in making new contacts and finding the right partners. One musician summarizes Haemhouts' role as follows:

> "An orchestra is not a democracy. An orchestra model in which everyone has equal saying, is unworkable. In a small organization, it makes little sense to do the same thing with too many people. You need a charismatic person who takes the lead in everything. In Casco Phil, you can always voice your opinion, but as far as the artistic is concerned, we trust in Ben. Up to now that has always worked." (Gröger 2018)

Haemhouts is very aware of this problem ("It is crucial that we don't just become another private orchestra" (Haemhouts 2018)), and anticipates this situation by inviting guest conductors for about 20 percent of the concerts. Only financial considerations prevent the orchestra from increasing this percentage. The pragmatic feasibility of certain concerts is in part secured by Haemhouts who calculates his own wage relative to the available budget and sometimes conducts unpaid. In addition to that, musicians agree on the fact that their motivation to engage in Casco Phil's projects has much to do with Haemhouts himself. The musicians admit that if he would withdraw, they might reconsider their commitment to the orchestra. At the time of writing, Casco Phil was experimenting with new ways of growing, and had just attracted a new general manager on a freelance basis. The eventual formula for

further growth, both artistically and pragmatically speaking, always led to the conclusion that further upscaling would be impossible without the financial security of structural subsidies.

3. Royal Concertgebouworkest

Introduction

Despite the fact that the Netherlands have only played a limited role in the historical development of symphonic music, the Dutch have been known to tend to their orchestras. The country of only about 17 million inhabitants counts 10 professional symphony orchestras, among which are some leading symphony orchestras in the European and global musical landscape. Dutch cultural policymakers, on the other hand, have not always been soft on their orchestras. In 2013, two orchestras have disappeared through policy reforms, and severe austerity measures have put financial strains on the remaining orchestras. In a similar vein, the legitimacy of the Netherlands' orchestras has only recently become a subject of intense political and public debate (van Gennip, Streevelaar, and Walinga 2014). Over the last decade, the dominant view has been that subsidies have maintained arts organizations for too long, while they are only there for the cultural elite. In 2015, the performing arts sector in the Netherlands took a serious blow of 20 percent in budget cuts (Davoudi and Zonneveld 2012). For a country with little tradition of philanthropy and private support, this situation has instigated shifts within the sector, away from the typically continental tradition of government intervention, and towards marketization (Davoudi and Zonneveld 2012). Only one orchestra in the Netherlands seems to have escaped any form of critical scrutiny: the Royal Concertgebouworkest in Amsterdam.

In 2008, the prestigious music magazine *Gramophone* ranked the Royal Concertgebouworkest (RCO) as the best orchestra in the world, based on specialized opinions by music critics and orchestra musicians (Gramophone 2008). Relative though such a qualitative ranking may be, the RCO is traditionally seen as one of the leading symphony orchestras worldwide. Striking is the fact that the orchestra rose to prominence only a few years after its foundation in 1888 and has maintained a leading position ever since. This trend is partly accounted for by the fact that the orchestra has known only seven chief conductors, each of whom has had an enormous impact on the homogeneous development and maintenance of the orchestra's musical quality. Orchestra founder Willem Kes has led the orchestra between 1888 and 1895 and was followed by the RCO's arguably most notorious conductor, Willem Mengelberg, who conducted the orchestra for half a century, between 1895 and 1945. His successor, Eduard van Beinum, held the baton between 1945 and 1959, to be followed by Bernard Haitink in the period between 1959 and 1988. The first non-Dutch conductor, the Italian maestro Riccardo Chailly, occupied the post between 1988 and 2004 and the Latvian conductor Mariss Jansons between 2004 and 2015. Finally, Daniele Gatti was appointed the new chief conductor in 2016. It is no coincidence that the Royal Concertgebouworkest derives its name from the building in which it resides. An equally important factor in the enormous continuity of the RCO has been

its concert hall of superior acoustic quality. Located at the Museumplein in the cultural heart of Amsterdam, the Concertgebouw has hosted the RCO for its rehearsals and performances on a daily basis, from day one.

The Royal Concertgebouworkest now counts 117 musicians, supplemented by a staff of 53, comprising 25 nationalities in total. Globally speaking, the orchestra occupies a central position among peer orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and London Symphony Orchestra, and regularly performs in the world's most prestigious concert halls. Nonetheless, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam hosts the vast majority of the RCO's concerts, and the Dutch National Opera (having no resident orchestra) can rely on the RCO for one opera-production every season. Throughout the years, the Concertgebouworkest has collaborated with prominent conductors for recordings spanning the whole symphonic repertoire, many of which are now seen as referential recordings for the works in question. Since 2004, the RCO fosters its own recording label, RCO Live. At the time of research, the Concertgebouworkest was in the process of looking for a new chief conductor, as the collaboration with chief conductor Gatti was terminated in the summer of 2018, after accusations of sexually transgressive behavior reported by the Washington Post and corroborated by RCO musicians (Midgette and McGlone 2018).

Programming trends of the RCO show the vision and aim of the orchestra within its various service areas. Some repertoire emphases are very visible in the RCO's programs. Firstly, the orchestra maintains a very strong Mahler- and Strauss-tradition, rooted in the composers' collaboration with the Concertgebouworkest in the early 20th century. Chief conductor Eduard van Beinum was among the first conductors to regularly include Bruckner on concert programs, thereby establishing a third strong tradition in the RCO. Finally, performances of Bach's *Matthäuspassion* and *Johannespassion* have been standard features in every RCO season. Through close examination and comparison of various aspects of the RCO's programming choices and management actions, it is possible to grasp the iconic value of this orchestra within its social and cultural contexts. This analysis shows under which conditions, constraints and motivations these actions occur, be it from aesthetic or pragmatic angles. By means of a close reading of literature sources, regular concert attendance, review of recent policy documents and in-depth interviews with key representatives of the institution (managing director Jan Raes, artistic director Joel Ethan Fried, and principal viola player Michael Gieler), it is possible to map out the dynamics between aesthetic and pragmatic concerns that account for the orchestra's globally leading position.

A brief history of the RCO

The history of the Royal Concertgebouworkest is very well documented in literature. Overviews of the artistic and organizational obstacles the RCO has faced throughout its more than 130 years of existence, document a gradual process towards the very specific model the orchestra adheres to today. Most of all, they expose a continuous dynamic between artistic vision and the sometimes bitter organizational or contextual reality. In the underlying historical overview, the RCO's history is divided into three parts, each one demarcated by a fundamental shift in the orchestra's dynamics between the aesthetic and the pragmatic.

A forced marriage between the orchestra and the concert hall

The economic growth of the final decennia of the 19th century contributed to a new *élan* for the city of Amsterdam. The cultural nationalism cultivated by the upcoming bourgeoisie in Amsterdam, supported an enormous expansion of the city's cultural institutions. In 1888, the autonomous foundation 'Het Concertgebouw NV' was created by Willem Kes, the first chief conductor of the foundation's symphony orchestra. For over fifty years, the orchestra that took residence in the brand-new Concertgebouw fell under the same foundation as the building itself. This joint structure had many advantages. Firstly, its legal form as a foundation facilitated the attraction of external capital, which was at that time abundant in the Dutch mercantilist environment. The foundation thus adopted a legal framework more adapted to the economic environment than, for example, most German orchestras that gradually emancipated from a rich but fading court culture or clerical environment (Koopman 2018). Secondly, in terms of governance, the distribution of responsibilities seemed obvious: one director was in charge of the building, and the chief conductor was in charge of the orchestra. Together, and coequally, they observed all artistic and organizational tasks. However, the joint structure had one fundamental flaw, that manifested itself various times in the first decades of the foundation's existence. While for the director of the Concertgebouw, efficient exploitation of the building was the main priority, the orchestra's motivation was an artistic vision that was developed and enforced by notoriously authoritarian musical personalities.

The artistic vision of the Concertgebouworkest developed from the very beginning. The first conductor Willem Kes almost immediately joined the internationally emerging trend of intensified listening attitudes in concert halls: in 1890, he closed the doors during every performance of the orchestra, and in 1893 he removed the tables that initially filled the concert hall, in replaced them by lined-up and fixed seats. The real founding father of the Concertgebouworkest, however, was his successor Willem Mengelberg, whose dictatorial attitude earned him the nickname 'the little corporal' (Bekaert et al. 2017, 134). Mengelberg set high standards for the orchestra, and not only focused on the internationally standardized symphonic repertoire comprising Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Beethoven, but also added then far lesser-known composers such as Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky (Koopman 2018). In

addition to that, Mengelberg maintained a personal contact with many composers such as Max Reger and Arnold Schoenberg, whom he invited to Amsterdam. The engagement of notably Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, who conducted their own works in around 5 and 36 concerts respectively, initiated a tradition that stands to this day. After the death of Mahler, Mengelberg conducted the composers' symphonies himself at various occasions, despite the audience's protest (Koopman 2018). Mengelberg's hardheaded approach to musical programming came into direct confrontation with the director's priorities for the first time during the season of 1903-1904, in what became known as the Concertgebouw Conflict (Source comp). The power struggle between Mengelberg and the building's director Hutschenruyter was eventually settled in favor of Mengelberg, with Hutschenruyter eventually fired and voluntarily followed by a handful of orchestra musicians. The Concertgebouw Conflict motivated the Concertgebouw foundation to draw clear lines between artistic and organizational responsibilities, though it eventually could not prevent a second conflict between Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw director Rudolf Mengelberg (not related) in the early 1930's.

The stock market crash of 1929 heralded a period of demise for the Concertgebouw foundation. Although Mengelberg was able to attract prominent composers such as Bartók and Stravinsky and conductors such as Bruno Walter and Pierre Monteux to his meanwhile famous orchestra, the interbellum saw the inevitable rise of the entertainment industry, with movie theaters and jazz clubs as harsh competitors. The orchestras took its most severe blow in the wake of World War II, when Mengelberg paid for his ambiguous relation to the Nazi regime with a conducting ban for six years. His successor Eduard van Beinum was the authoritarian conductor's opposite in every way and often shunned the public appearances that were so important for the orchestra's patronage model. After a difficult transition period, Van Beinum stepped out of the shadow of his predecessor and maintained the orchestra's high musical quality, enriching the orchestra's repertoire with Mozart, Beethoven and Bruckner, and deepening the orchestra's affection with Bartok, Debussy and Ravel. After Van Beinum's untimely death in 1959, the young Bernard Haitink took his place in 1963, after sharing the conductor's baton with Eugen Jochum for a few years (de Jong 2006).

The appointment of Haitink overlapped with the most important structural shift in the structure of the Concertgebouw NV, namely the split of building and orchestra, a long process that started in 1952 when a number of difficulties piled up. At a financial level, the maintenance costs of the building rose, as did the musicians' salaries. At a more artistic level, the problematic relationship between the casual Van Beinum and the very professional Rudolf Mengelberg escalated. Finally, during a performance of Verdi's *Messa di Requiem* on the 28 of January 1951, 62 members of the orchestra left the stage to protest the guest appearance of conductor Paul Van Kempen, who was a known collaborator during World War II. The protesting members of the orchestra were fired on the spot, which made the already tense situation untenable. Soon after the incident, the Concertgebouworkest and the

Concertgebouw were housed in two separate foundations, effective since 1952 (the 62 fired musicians were eventually reinstalled). Despite their official independence, the orchestra and the building heavily relied on each other, mainly because the Concertgebouw was still in charge of the administration of both entities and was the official owner of the orchestra's library. Only in 1992, orchestra and building were separated definitively. The building remained the most prominent employer for the orchestra, but at the same time became its biggest competitor, especially after the initiation of an international concert series from the 1984-1985 season onwards (Koopman 2018). At the same time, the presence of this prestigious concert series motivated the resident orchestra to perform according to these international standards.

The Concertgebouw NV relied on private patronage and its own entrepreneurial spirit from the very beginning. Because the operating costs of the orchestra could no longer be carried by the supporting Amsterdam patrons alone, the city of Amsterdam decided to subsidize the orchestra from 1911 onwards. Policymakers' motivations were twofold. In economic terms, the orchestra had proven to become an important attraction pole for the city of Amsterdam, capable of binding the wealthy class to the city. In artistic terms, policymakers believed that the orchestra could play a role in the cultural education of its citizens. Therefore, the city prescribed one condition: the orchestra should play seven public concerts with an accessible program and at an affordable rate. Subsidies on a national level followed in 1918, along with strictly enforced labor conditions. The province of North-Holland granted subsidies to the Concertgebouworkest between 1919 and 1979. From the split of orchestra and building in 1952 onwards, the orchestra had an immediate connection with its subsidizing governments, which led to a considerable amount of artistic freedom: these subsidies shielded the orchestra from market conformity, even more so because it was no longer financially dependent on the exploitation of the building. By 1960, the Concertgebouworkest was subsidized for two-thirds of its operating budget (Koopman 2018).

The Nutcracker incident

November 17th, 1969 is widely reported as a landmark event for Dutch musical life. A group of protesters actively disturbed a performance of the *Flute Concerto* of Johan Joachim Quantz by making noise with rattles and whistles, while throwing pamphlets from the balconies and cracking nuts in the audience. The protesters were led by five composers Reinbert de Leeuw, Louis Andriessen, Mischa Mengelberg, Peter Schat and Jan van Vlijmen, all students of Kees van Baaren, the director of the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, who called themselves the 'Notenkrakers' or 'Nutcrackers'. The name is derived from a pun on the Dutch words 'noten', which means both 'nuts' and 'musical notes', and 'kraken', which means both 'to crack' and 'to squat' (Rubinoff 2009). The protesters meant to 'squat' the Concertgebouworkest by disturbing one of their concerts that they perceived as too elitist, calling the Concertgebouworkest "the most expensive status symbol of a ruling top layer in our society"

(Reichenfeld 1969a). The pamphlets of the Nutcrackers criticized the artistic policy of the Concertgebouworkest, as well as its non-transparent governance structure and its alleged reliance on past repertoires. The audience, however, did not share the Nutcrackers' criticism and the protesters, one of which (Andriessen's girlfriend) climbed the stage, were escorted outside by the police (Rubinoff 2009). Only then, maestro Haitink returned on stage and the concert went on as planned.

The Nutcrackers' criticism was primarily motivated by their unhappiness with the Concertgebouworkest's musical programming, which they found to be too much reliant on the traditional musical canon. More specifically, they criticized the orchestra's decision to turn down the Italian composer and conductor Bruno Maderna as chief conductor alongside Haitink. The Nutcrackers referred to the productive role of Willem Mengelberg, who had integrated then contemporary composers such as Mahler and Strauss on the orchestra's concert programs. It was no secret that Haitink felt uneasy in the contemporary symphonic repertoire (Koopman 2018).

The Nutcracker incident was not a standalone incident. A few weeks before the most famous event in Amsterdam, students from Tilburg had disrupted a concert of the Brabants Orkest for the same reason, and in 1966, the so-called Provo movement set off smoke bombs during the internationally broadcasted wedding of Princess Beatrix and Prince Claus. During Action Tomato, protesters threw tomatoes on stage at the Amsterdam *Schouwburg* and *Nieuw Rotterdams Toneel Theater* (Rubinoff 2009). The Nutcracker incident, therefore, can be interpreted as a typical display of a broader culture of protest in the late 1960's. With regard to the Concertgebouworkest especially, the protests seemed not fully justified. Especially in the 1960's, the Concertgebouworkest was among the most progressive orchestras in the Netherlands, regularly programming contemporary repertoire, comprising music composed by the protesters themselves at various occasions (Koopman and Berkhout 2015). After the events of November 17th, the orchestra published a letter by Nutcrackers Schat and Andriessen, in which they praise the Concertgebouworkest for their active contribution to a series of politically-engaged and experimental concerts (the orchestra had engaged some of its musicians and had lent out their instruments). Secondly, Bruno Maderna had been invited as a guest conductor at various occasions, as well as notable composer-conductors such as Luciano Berio and Pierre Boulez (Koopman and Berkhout 2015). Thirdly, the Concertgebouworkest had developed extensive contemporary music series in 1961, one of which was a concert format in which the audience was asked which of the pieces they wanted to hear again after the break. The economic reality of heavy losses because of low attendance, had forced the orchestra to dismantle these series (Reichenfeld 1969b). Still, the image of a conservativism clung to the Concertgebouworkest.

However, there was more to the Nutcracker's criticism than musical programming alone. Protesters also called for a revision of the orchestra's undemocratic governance structure,

which they believed to be in the hands of commercial enterprises such as the Dutch record company and main sponsor Philips (Reichenfeld 1969a). In answer to this criticism, the Concertgebouworkest published an article in the NRC Handelsblad in December 1969, offering insight in their governance structure which they claimed to be based on a democratic system of representation and mutual power structures (Reichenfeld 1969b).

The discussion in the media faded out, and the tone softened. On February 20, 1970, a twelve-hour concert-happening entitled 'Musical manifestation in Frascati' was held in an old tobacco warehouse. Different kinds of music were historically brought together in a single performance event, in which a lot of Concertgebouworkest musicians participated. The eclectic program consisted of 20th-century composers like Bartok, Stravinsky, Cage and Nutcrackers Andriessen and Schat, but also featured classics by Mozart and Schubert as well as pop- and jazz-music (Rubinoff 2009). This period of careless exchange of musical preferences was short-lived. On March 14, 1970, the Nutcrackers organized an open meeting at De Brakke Grond in Amsterdam between the protesters and the orchestra board. In relatively civilized discussions, attendants primarily discussed the role of musical education of the audience and musicians (Boswinkel 1970). The repertoire issue was also high on the agenda. The prominent recorder soloist Frans Brüggen threatened to break his contract as a soloist with the Concertgebouworkest, famously declaring that "every note of Mozart and Beethoven that the Concertgebouworkest plays, is, musically speaking, a lie" (Rubinoff 2009, 4). This statement symbolizes an important paradigm shift within musical culture in the early 1970's. The skepticism towards the traditional symphony orchestra as a viable medium for the performance of all repertoires, instigated the rise of an ensemble culture that particularly blossomed in the 1970's and 1980's. New music aficionados and early music adherents became the strangely-joined pioneers of specialized ensembles that tied both temporal extremes of the musical repertoire to them. Nutcracker Reinbert de Leeuw, for example, founded the world-famous Schoenberg Ensemble (presently Asko/Schoenberg) in 1974, developing a musicologically supported performance practice for new music. In 1979, Dutch conductor and harpsichordist Ton Koopman became a leading figure in the authentic performance movement after having founded the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. The Concertgebouworkest did not stay immune to this new trend. In 1975, chief conductor Haitink lost a part of his repertoire to the Austrian authentic-performance-practice specialist Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who was now largely responsible for the orchestra's pre-classical and classical repertoire. On the other side of the spectrum, the contemporary repertoire was increasingly entrusted to specialized guest conductors (Koopman 2018).

This paradigm shift has two sides. On the one hand, the trend of authentic performance practice and the Nutcracker's explicit call for more non-canonical repertoire, has enriched the Concertgebouworkest's repertoire on both sides of the temporal spectrum and has deepened the orchestra's familiarity with different musical styles. On the other hand, this trend added to the isolation of musical styles in concert series that each attracted their own audiences.

The Concertgebouworkest equally lost part of its credibility in performing non-canonical music, both old and new, while operating in close proximity to specialized ensembles. The Nutcracker incident, therefore, can be argued to have led to further alienation rather than reconciliation.

Commercialization

The period following the Nutcracker incident was troubled for reasons other than the division of the musical repertoire. In the early 1980's, Baumol's 'cost disease' manifested itself when subsidies dropped and wage costs rose, and other changes were brought about. Firstly, the Concertgebouw itself underwent structural alterations, but Haitink insisted that the orchestra kept its residence there during the renovation ("One should not take away an orchestra's instrument!"). Secondly, financial challenges motivated the orchestra management to replace the cultural voices in the orchestra's Foundation Board by representatives from the financial world and orientate the orchestra into a market-driven direction; which was in fact a return to the initial mercantilist model of the Concertgebouw NV. In the 1988-1989 season, ironically following the 100th anniversary of the Concertgebouworkest and the addition of the prefix 'Royal' to its name, a financial deficit of 1.24 million euros brought the orchestra on the verge of bankruptcy. Financial injections by corporations such as ING, Nuon and Philips prevented a fatal disintegration. Finally, the definitive split of the orchestra and the Concertgebouw itself was finalized in the period between 1990 and 1992, not without difficulties (Koopman 2018).

During this period, a veritable shockwave went through the orchestra, and management realized that in order to survive and to keep their subsidies, the orchestra needed to innovate. A silver lining to this situation was the fact that entrepreneurship within the orchestra was incentivized by a subsidy system that did not blindly accommodate the orchestra's losses, thereby paralyzing every urge to innovate. In 1989, the orchestra board found a promising successor for Haitink (who had withdrawn the year before): Riccardo Chailly. The young and dynamic Italian maestro proved himself a modernist with a feeling for tradition (Koopman 2018). His analytical approach to a broad repertoire earned him successes with recordings of Messiaen and Varèse, while honoring the longstanding Mahler-tradition. The charismatic Chailly also found his way in the new business attitude of the RCO, striking a productive balance between the artistic and pragmatic sides of his job. In the early 1990's however, facing decreasing audience attendance, cultural policy in the Netherlands shifted its focus towards audience expansion and commercialization, thereby breaking with the post-World War II trend of increasing programming adventurousness (de Jong 2006). Ticket prices rose by pragmatic necessity, and Chailly's innovative approach to programming, among which a doubling of the adventurously programmed concert series, was soon reversed due to the unprofitable outcome.

Recent developments in the RCO

The transition of the Royal Concertgebouworkest into the 21st century coincided with the appointment of the orchestra's sixth chief conductor Mariss Jansons, who started his career at the RCO in 2004. With Janssons, the repertoire of the RCO spanned works from Bach to Berio, with emphases on the romantic and early modernist repertoire, notably Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Stravinsky and Shostakovich's. Because of Janssons' double engagement as chief conductor of both the Concertgebouworkest and the Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, he consciously left the new repertoire to specialists. With the appointment of Janssons also came a new governance structure, presenting the managing director as the equal partner of the chief conductor in artistic affairs. Together with the financial director, both artistic leaders are responsible for navigating the essentially nineteenth-century orchestra through the challenges of the 21st century.

Mission statement

Anno 2019, the official mission statement of the Royal Concertgebouworkest goes as follows:

> "The Royal Concertgebouworkest is a symphony orchestra that gives orchestral performances of the highest caliber in the world's leading concert halls under the direction of the very best conductors. The activities it carries out in Amsterdam form the basis of its role as the Netherlands' ambassador for international excellence. The Royal Concertgebouworkest offers audiences emotional and intellectual enrichment, generating involvement and active loyalty." (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 3)

Central to the orchestra's mission is its value creation, which they define in terms of non-material services such as offering intellectual enrichment and generating both involvement and loyalty. In order to unlock these values, the orchestra has developed a set of conditions that include artistic priorities and organizational choices. This set of conditions was the focal point of a book entitled *Iconic. How to create a virtuous circle of success,* co-edited by managing director Jan Raes in 2016. The book describes the RCO's virtuous circle of success as a self-sustaining circle:

> "Their (the musicians; AH) outstanding performance attracts the best talent, and with these people, they are able to form high-performing teams that are driven by absolute aspiration and can go on to achieve unparalleled results over time. (This circle is) maintained by creating the right conditions." (Bekaert et al. 2017, 14)

The business-angle of this book does not allow for any further specifications of these conditions, at least not in artistic terms. In the two years following the publication of *Iconic,* a series of conversations and group sessions was organized internally, in which over half of all

the RCO's employees was engaged, in an effort to establish the core values of the organization (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a), shared by staff, board and musicians alike. This systematic process has led to the conceptualization of four core values and sixteen corresponding attitudes. These core values and attitudes, not by chance visualized in a circle, allow for a more specific interpretation of the orchestra's balancing exercise between opposing demands of keeping an artistic organization on the rails.

At the heart of the RCO's identity lies one core principle that even antecedes the formulation of the core values. 'To live for music' came out as a basic principle, common to every member of the RCO's organization, be it staff, musicians, board members or maintenance personnel. Before all else, every RCO employee is driven by their passion for music. That one common ground has driven the orchestra towards a more conceptual formulation spanning four core values. Managing director Raes stresses that this conceptualization has been the result of an internally observed reflection, not the outcome of an external consulting analysis. At the time of writing, the core values were only distributed via the internal informative bulletin, and not communicated via press, social media, website or elsewhere.
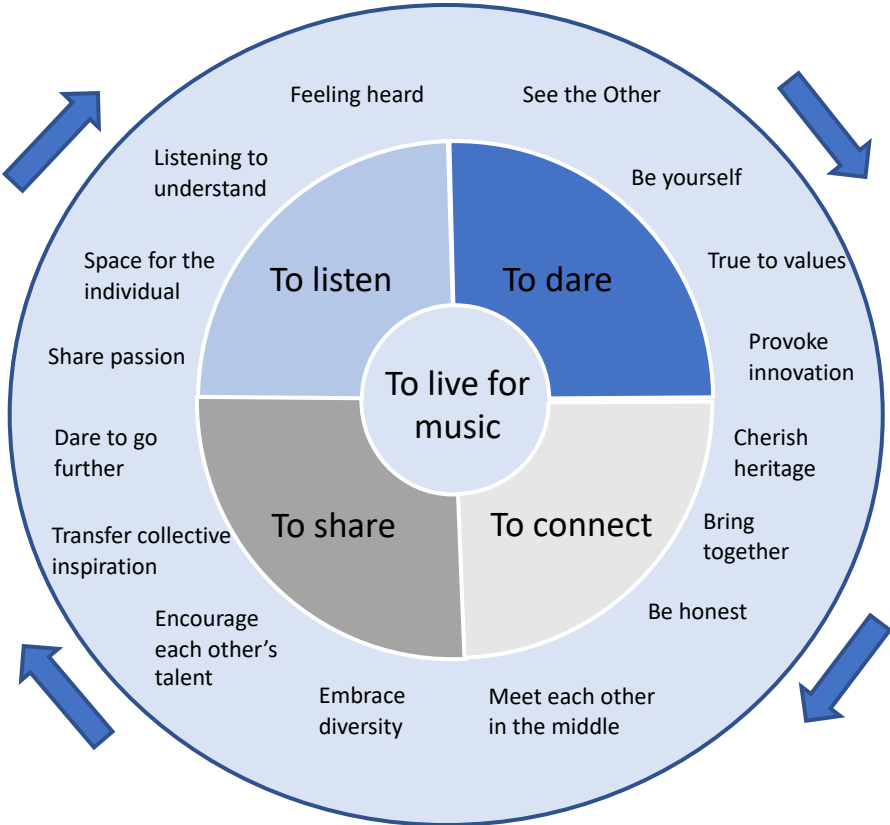

Figure 29: the RCO's core values and attitudes (Translated from: *KCOurant* 2018, 7)

The first of the RCO's core values is 'to listen'. First of all, the concert hall itself requires an attentive listening attitude from the orchestra's musicians, with the acoustics far more comfortable in the audience than on stage. Apart from this general attitude, and more

conceptual, listening also means listening to what Raes calls "the Levinasian Other" (Raes 2019), thereby confirming the orchestra's open attitude towards the needs of today's society. 'To dare', the RCO's second core value, refers to the orchestra's readiness to take risks. On the one hand, Raes clarifies, this means to prevent the orchestra from falling into a routine. On the other hand, to dare means to not only do what the audience expects. This core value, Raes summarizes, is the result of "not playing safe", or in other words striking the right balance between tradition and innovation, which was also put forward in *Iconic* as one of the key properties of businesses that have been successful for a long period of time (Bekaert et al. 2017).

The meaning of the third core value 'to connect' consists of two elements. Connection with the audience, first of all, means believing in what you play. Again, this requires a certain attitude from the orchestra's players. "A concert can only be a sublime experience that connects audiences, when the players themselves radiate their enthusiasm", Raes (2019) clarifies, thereby implicitly illustrating how the mission statement's phrasing with regard to value creation connects to these core values. A second aspect to the idea of connection has a deeper social meaning. When the RCO went on its 125th-anniversary world tour in 2013, the orchestra explicitly wanted to play in Africa for the first time, although the orchestra would performs its concerts there at a considerable financial loss. To connect, in the words of Raes, means to "climb out of the ivory tower" and play among people who have never even heard a classical orchestra. This specific occasion in Africa also provided opportunities for cultural interaction. Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* was performed with a black narrator who had been in prison for many years, and a long-term partnership was established with the South-African National Youth Orchestra, that has been coached by six RCO musicians, twice since 2013. To connect, in other words, is perceived as the ideal and aspired result of the orchestra's activities.

Finally, 'to share', the RCO's fourth core value, entails everything that has to do with education and passing on what you have, for which the orchestra has developed various formulas that will be discussed at length below.

The RCO's conceptualization of four core values has important implications. First of all, 'to live for music' is a basic principle from which all other principles are deduced, making them subordinate. The basic principle penetrates deep into the organization: marketing and personnel policies, programming, auditions, etc., are all based on this principle. This means that, for example, within musical programming, the starting point is the artistic vision, not marketing and ticket sales. Therefore, the RCO never engages conductors or soloists based on their popular status with the audience and only works with artists in whom they believe. On the other hand, core values 'to share' and 'to connect' imply that the orchestra never engages in idiosyncratic or radical contemporary projects that are estimably unpopular with larger audiences. The orchestra believes, as can be deduced from its core values, that artistic relevance lies at the crossroads of urgency and attractiveness.

Sharing core values is particularly important for the attraction of musicians. Although the orchestra pays significantly less than other top-ranked orchestras (Bekaert et al. 2017), the power of attraction is large in the RCO. Musicians experience a high amount of trust among each other, because they are all oriented towards a common goal: playing at the highest level with the world's foremost conductors.

Organizational form

The Royal Concertgebouworkest's organizational form is the outcome of government policies and the orchestra's core values, combined with the increasing insight of generations of trial and error. The complex model is described by the orchestra's representatives as unique in the orchestral landscape.

In legal terms, the Royal Concertgebouworkest is a foundation, which means it is registered as a not-for-profit structure in the sense that profits are not paid to the orchestra's founders or board representatives. Funds are acquired by means of subsidies, the regular operations of the foundation such as selling tickets, sponsorship contracts and donations. A foundation can have a varying amount of people on its payroll and complement its ranks with freelancers. In the case of the RCO, the Foundation Board carries final responsibility over the foundation, decides on the foundation's key positions among which the managing director, and plays an advisory role in internal policy issues. The Foundation Board interferes with the artistic policy of the orchestra minimally, or "only from a height of 30.000 feet", in the words of former chairman Robert Reibestein (Bekaert et al. 2017, 108). The orchestra's managing board oversees day-to-day leadership of musicians and staff, and consists of a managing director, an artistic director and a director of business and media. The managing director is appointed by, and accountable to, the Foundation Board, where he is represented without a right to vote. Artistic policy is in hands of the Artistic Advisory, which consists of the managing director, the artistic director, chief conductor and a rotating artistic committee of 5 democratically delegated musicians. The Association Board unites orchestra members and staff members and represents their interests to management and conductor. The Association Board chooses five of its representatives to also sit in the Association Board (Bekaert et al. 2017). It is precisely this Association Board which is unique to the RCO's governance structure. Because it, firstly, consists of both staff members and musicians who are able to communicate and negotiate directly with the Artistic Advisory (and therefore with the upper management), and, secondly, a delegation of it also sits in the Foundation Board which decides on key positions, the Association Board ensures that power and impact are distributed fairly equally. This Association Board has existed since 1915 and has played a key role in the historically developed stability of the orchestra that has enabled the Concertgebouworkest to remain a world class orchestra.
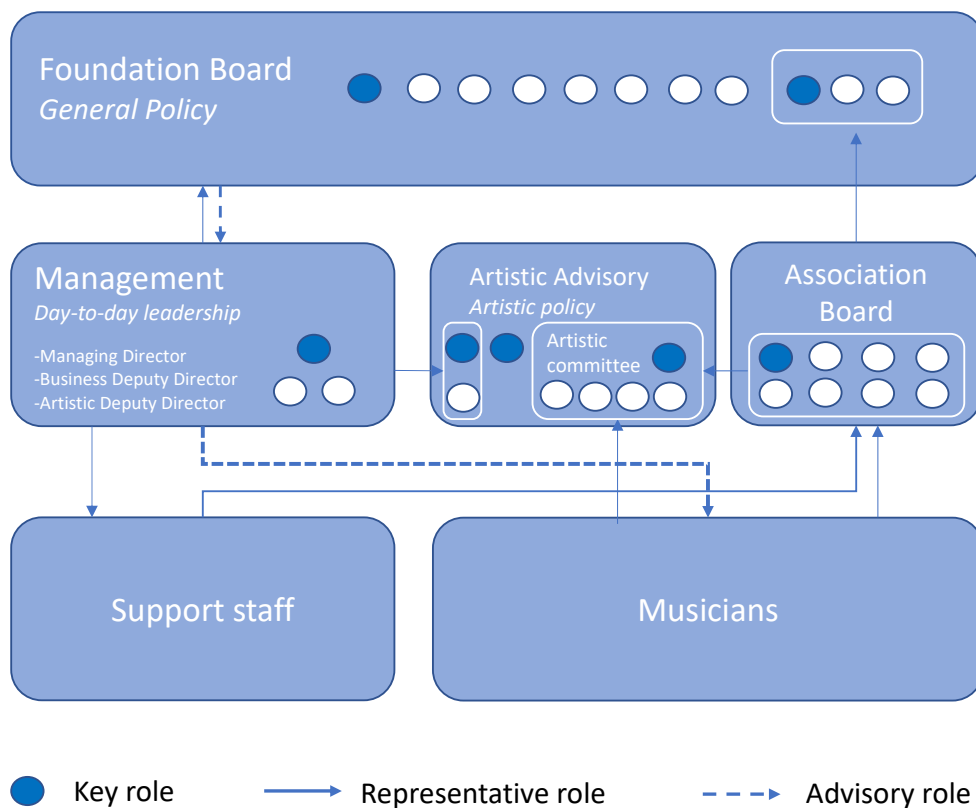
Figure 30: The RCO's governance structure (Bekaert et al. 2017, 106)

The orchestra has replaced the traditional role of unions with a system that leans on the potential involvement of every member of the organization. Managing director Jan Raes explains:

"Because everyone is represented by people who are elected from the orchestra, every member of the organization has control and insight in crucial aspects such as the orchestra's strategies, budgets, results, programming, … Everything is very transparent." (Raes 2019)

As is visible in Figure 30, checks and balances of the RCO's governance structure go in every direction, avoiding one entity to hold absolute power. This structure, management and musicians agree, avoids the classical pitfalls of a traditional top-down structure. Former managing director Jan Willem Loot argues:

"This way of leading is more difficult than in a top-down structure. It's an awkward structure to work in, because the people whose boss you are, are also your bosses, through the Association Board and the Foundation Board. Ultimately, everything works, because musicians and managers share the same goals. And the big advantage

for the orchestra members involved in management is that they commit to the policy and explain it to the rest of the orchestra." (Bekaert et al. 2017, 108)

This governance structure cultivates a feeling of shared responsibility and therefore corelates with the common principle 'to live for music'. This complex system can be explained through the orchestra's often troubled history, where authoritative conductors have often clashed with managing directors. To avoid these clashes, the orchestra has built, as the authors of *Iconic* put it, "lines of defense for maintaining the balance of power" (Bekaert et al. 2017, 111).

Since January 2019, all departments of the RCO are housed under one roof, in the newly renovated RCO House at a stone's throw from the Concertgebouw itself. Communication and personal interaction between the various segments of the organization is facilitated in this location that includes 10 rehearsal rooms of different sizes, polyvalent spaces, a foyer, and ample offices with 69 working spaces. The front of this former school building is now ornamented with 96 green tiles carrying a verse by K. Schippers, Amsterdam's city poet. The 25 meter long line literally reads: "Let op wat iedereen kan horen en pas dan komt het hier toevallig tevoorschijn een nieuwe klank" ("Pay attention to what everybody can hear and only then it accidentally emerges a new sound"); a clear echo, once more, of the orchestra's core values.

Financial model

The Royal Concertgebouworkest engages in 125 concert activities every season, around 80 of which take place in Amsterdam, not counting the annual opera production. In 2017, 49 RCO activities were related to education and outreach. Drawing a strict line between regular concerts and educational concerts is unattainable, because many concerts of the regular concert series are counted as educational or outreach concerts as well.

In 2017, the orchestra's total amount of concert activities attracted 211.488 visits (non-unique visitors; not counting the annual opera production): 142.280 in Amsterdam, 2.956 elsewhere in the Netherlands, and 66.252 abroad. The concert hall occupation in Amsterdam averaged around 90% for all regular concert series. For the concerts in Amsterdam, 26% of ticket holders was registered as new, meaning that they made no RCO-purchase during the 3 years before the event (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 16).
The number of tourists that attend the orchestra's concerts, increases by 25% annually. In 2017, 10.5% of the audience in Amsterdam came from outside the Netherlands (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 16). Apart from the RCO's qualitative reputation, Jan Raes points to the role of the concert hall itself, which is world-famous for its splendid acoustics and architecture.
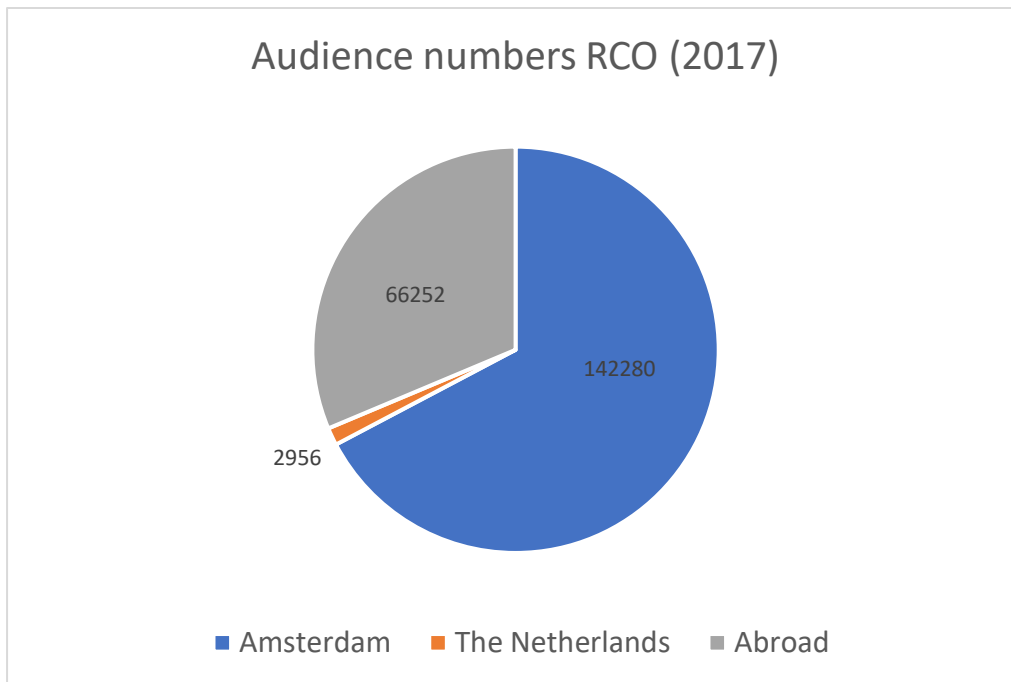
Figure 31: Audience attraction of the Concertgebouw Orchestra

The total operational cost of the RCO amounts to an estimated €28 million annually. In 2017, €13.373.329 of this total amount, or 48%, consisted of subsidies: €7.212.158 (or 26%) was granted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and €6.160.171 (or 22%) by the city of Amsterdam. In the same year, €14.597.538 (or 52% of total costs) of own incomes was generated, €12.300.969 (44% of total costs) of which consisted of ticket incomes. Baumol's cost disease creates an annual cost increase of 2% (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 24).
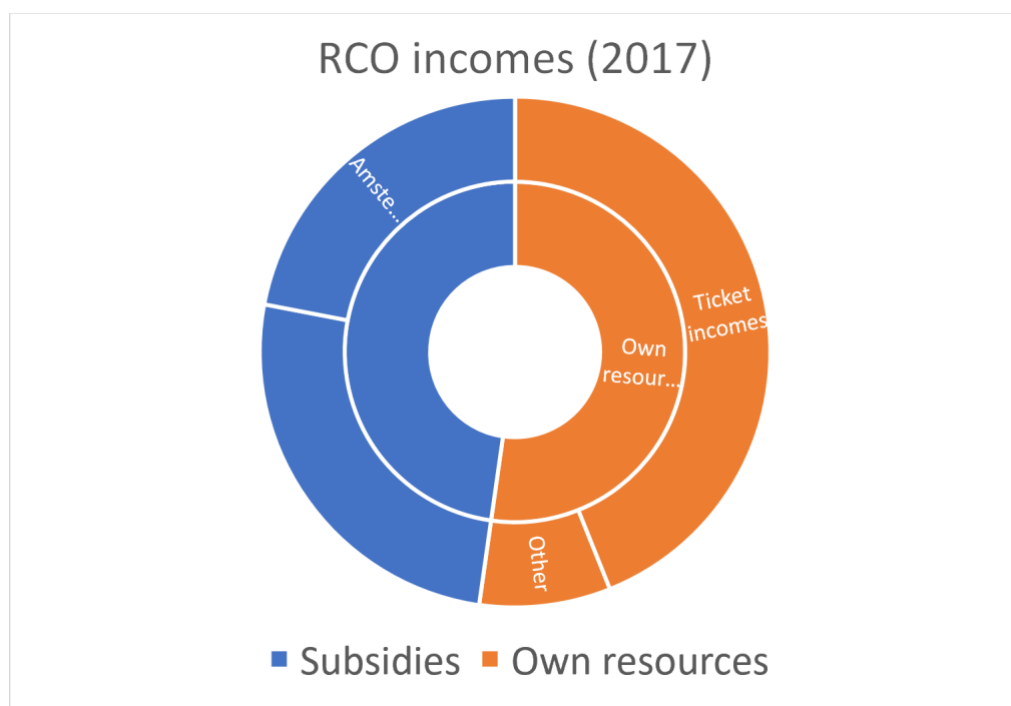
Figure 32: Incomes of the Concertgebouw Orchestra

In 2017, the Royal Concertgebouworkest received subsidies for a total amount of €13.372.329, a little under half of the orchestra's total operational cost of around €28.000.000 (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 28). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science contributed €7.212.158, and the city of Amsterdam contributed €6.160.171. Since 1979, the province of North-Holland does not subsidize the orchestra anymore. Managing director Jan Raes hints at a very ambiguous relation between these subsidies and the orchestra's core values. On the one hand, Raes contends, the core values generate the basis for the orchestra's legitimacy and therefore the necessary conditions for subsidies. Establishing a meaningful connection with the society that surrounds the organization, not only creates visibility but also civil support. On the other hand, core values such as 'to dare' are only achievable when the adjudgment of a considerable amount of subsidies is already in effect: "We choose to be daring, but there are only a few orchestras that can afford this", Raes argues. The awkward reality, therefore, seems to be that in order to gain subsidies, an organization requires subsidies. The role of legitimacy and civil support is not to be underestimated in this process. Decreasing subsidies, Raes continues, create a very strange paradox:

> "One accuses art institutions of only being there for the elite, but we have to make our tickets more expensive when we are not sufficiently subsidized." (Raes 2019)

A decreasing amount of subsidies also leads to another perverse effect. Subsidies enable an orchestra to play a certain concert more than once, making it possible to grow in terms of performance quality. When subsidies are diminished, orchestras can only rehearse a minimal amount of time, and perform only once or twice. The quality of the orchestra is very likely to diminish, and attractiveness to audiences and sponsors as well. Subsidies, in conclusion, have a reinforcing effect on other money streams, making diminishing subsidies into a vicious circle of decreasing quality.

Challenges for the RCO

While the RCO's history and vision may look like a story of increasing success, and their organizational model may seem future-proof, the orchestra's challenges are similar to other orchestras'. Most importantly, the RCO slowly reaches the borders of its growth. The number of concerts per season, the occupation of the hall and ticket prices have almost reached their maximum level (Koopman and Berkhout 2015). Classical music's growth markets in Asia and South-America confront European and North-American orchestras with fierce competition. In the annual report in 2017, one voiced threat to the RCO is its dependence on the exploitation of the Concertgebouw itself, which is only moderately subsidized:

> "The intertwining of the Concertgebouworkest with the concert hall is of this nature, that a forced (temporary) closure of the Concertgebouw or a drastic limitation of the rental possibilities of the Concertgebouw, resulting from a deteriorated exploitation or maintenance of the building, can have a major effect on the activities and exploitation of the Concertgebouworkest." (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 24)

Orchestra representatives agree that the biggest challenge for the orchestra, however, is the decline in popularity of classical music among young people. The orchestra now operates in a social context far different from the one it was founded in. For example, until the first decade of the 21st century, subscription tickets were so popular that they were passed on through wills. In a social environment in which two-income households have become the standard, and in which leisure time is increasingly affected by traffic, media, the entertainment industry and decreasing subsidies, symphony orchestras now need strong marketing pushes for nearly every program. New formulas have to be designed to make up for this social development.

Both Raes and programmer Joel Ethan Fried describe this challenge as twofold. Firstly, the traditional audiences need to be cherished, and new ones need to be attracted. In order to do so, the traditional concert offer needs to be complemented with what can be called a pipeline model, covering all intermediary steps from music education and initiation to regular concert attendance, and actively reaching out to all segments of society. Secondly, the orchestra hopes to receive sufficient support to take creative risks such as engaging in large productions, commissioning new works, and developing new repertoires. The orchestra's answer to these challenges exposes a very delicate and multi-faceted process that encompasses not only artistic components, but also many difficulties with regard to funds acquisition and organizational sustainability. With regard to organizational sustainability, Jan Raes is very clear:

> "I think that a number of Anglo-Saxon models (which are only minimally subsidized; AH) only saw the legs from under the symphony orchestra's future. (...) Many politicians have no idea what the Anglo-Saxon model entails." (Raes 2019)

In 2004, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research issued a report in which they offered "a coherent description of the situation of social and cultural well-being in this country and of the developments to be expected in this area" (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2004, 48). Based on thorough field research and questionnaires, this report attempts to make a prediction of the biggest changes and shifts that social and cultural organizations will have experienced by 2020. These changes were summarized as five processes (the "Five i's") inevitably taking place within the socio-cultural field, and requiring well-considered actions and choices from the cultural organization's side (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2004).

The first 'i' stands for individualization. On the level of the individual, people consider themselves increasingly as the designers of their own lives, based on choices they make themselves. This results, the report argues, in a situation where market competition (profits and losses) becomes the criterion for success and failure.

This process of individualization and self-determination leads to egalitarian and therefore more informal interpersonal relations. Informalization, therefore, is the second 'i'. According to the report, this process of de-hierarchization manifests itself most clearly in the de-institutionalization of organizations that took form in the nineteenth century, such as the symphony orchestra, which more and more become the crystallization of a loose egalitarian network instead of a hierarchically structured and robust institutional form. Involvement with the organization's services is based on *ad hoc* individual preferences, not on social distinctions such as class. The third 'i' stands for informatization, which became most apparent in the increased use of the internet and mobile phones that skyrocketed the options for communication. Internationalization, fourthly, means both the increasing external influence on cultural organizations and the diminishing of differences between societies. The result, according to the report, is "not an average of what was different, but a new general pattern with national, regional and local variants" (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2004, 61). The international aspect thus becomes interpreted as the domestic ("No Japanese considers classical music as exotic"; (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2004, 62)). Importantly, the report notes that this process can spark resistance within cultural institutions, who can, depending on their rootedness in society, either speed up or slow down the pace of these changes. Intensification, finally, stands in close relation to individualism, and refers to an increasing demand for hedonistic experiences (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2004).

In many ways, the RCO's current management priorities and programming strategies can be interpreted from this background. The Five i's summarize certain tendencies that, indeed, have only gained strength since 2004. Adequately responding to these trends, without sacrificing the core values of the organization, can be argued to be the key to the RCO's future.

Programming policy of the RCO

In the annual report of 2017, the programming policy of the Royal Concertgebouworkest is defined as follows:

> "The programming of the RCO is determined by the internationally renowned corpus of existing and newly to be written works for symphony orchestra. Where possible, the orchestra will program high-quality works that contribute to diversity." (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 4)

As can be deduced from this definition, the RCO's programming policy consists of three major pillars, that sometimes overlap. The orchestra's first priority is to perform the internationally renowned corpus of existing works for symphony orchestra, in other words: the musical canon. Secondly, this canonical corpus must be complemented by newly written works for symphony orchestra, for which the orchestra itself can function as commissioner. Thirdly, works that contribute to diversity can be programmed, under the condition that it is "possible", meaning that these works should be reconcilable with the other priorities of the orchestra's programming policy. In other words, the third pillar is incorporated in the other two. Making abstraction of the third pillar of 'diversity' in the RCO's programming policy, the orchestra fulfills a binary function: that of a museum and that of a laboratory. Joel Fried, the orchestra's artistic director and programmer, stresses: "In the process of programming, we have to find a balance between those two functions; a balance between new and old, between known and unknown" (Fried 2019). The orchestra's management agrees that every art institution that has the resources, has to take this responsibility.

Another fundamental principle is the fact the Concertgebouworkest plays every musical style that is appropriate for a symphony orchestra. The RCO does not aspire to specialize in a certain repertoire demarcated in time. While the orchestra has a special affection for the works of Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler, this is not a conscious artistic decision but the outcome of a historical process. Although the RCO's management acknowledges that specializing in a certain repertoire can give opportunities in the international concert scene, the arguments for the orchestra's style flexibility, and according broad programming 'between Bach and Berio', are decisive. Firstly, Raes stresses that it is important for the quality of the orchestra that it is familiar with every historical style: "You play a better Mozart if you also know how to play baroque, and a better Mendelssohn if you have played Mozart before, and so on" (Raes 2019). Secondly, this style flexibility extends the orchestra's possibilities on the international music market. And finally, musicians' motivations strongly rely on variation in the program.

The most dominant repertoire in the RCO's programs, is the repertoire of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This core repertoire of the Royal Concertgebouorkest, as mentioned above, is determined by the orchestra's history to a considerable extent. Apart from Strauss and Mahler, the RCO's conductors (especially Mengelberg) have maintained close contacts with other prominent composers who can now be said to belong to the musical canon, such as Ravel, Debussy and Stravinsky. Important to note is the fact that at the time of their appearance at the Concertgebouorkest, most of these composers did not enjoy this favored status yet. Especially in the case of Mahler and Bruckner (who was regularly put on the RCO's program by Van Beinum), the orchestra has, in turn, played a decisive role in some composers' canonization. The fruitful interplay of the museum and laboratory functions of the orchestra is illustrated historically. It is the RCO's explicit wish, both Raes and Fried assure, to nurture and stimulate this interplay. Fried stresses the delicacy of such a curatical process:

"From the works that already exist, we want to choose the best ones. Some of them are 10/10, some 8,5/10, but you do not want to program a 4/10. But if you give the assignment yourself, you may get a 4/10. At the same time, we are expected to choose for the audience. That does not mean that we have to select what is most accessible to the public, which is not a challenge at all. We have to choose the best, and to find the best can sometimes be a challenge. And, of course, you do not want to chase away your audience…" (Fried 2019)

Factors impacting programming

The governance structure of the Royal Concertgebouworkest allows for the involvement of each individual in the organization. Creative involvement of musicians in programming decisions, however, remains limited in practice. As one musician notes:

"Musical programming in practice is rather unaccommodating. There are many external factors in programming which are all interlinked. These are so strong that the artistic commission can indeed play an advisory role, but without a large impact." (Gieler 2019)

The process of programming does not take place in a vacuum. Various external factors play a role in a balancing exercise that involves pragmatic as well as artistic considerations. Programmer Joel Fried immediately mentions the element of locality, stressing that "all programming is local" (Fried 2019). Although the RCO never takes its ranking as one of the world's leading orchestras as a starting-point for programming, other top-ranked orchestras are considered as an international benchmark, among which the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic are named.

For the RCO's concerts in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, other factors are at play than on the international stage, where the actions of the peer-group play a more authoritative role. In a similar vein, the European concert scene tends to be less conservative than the American scene or especially the Asian concert scene, where the musical canon is reported to be narrower than in Europe. Even within Europe, variations are reported: Berlin, for example, is more lenient than Lucerne. From the RCO's 33 annual concert programs, 8 programs tour internationally. Since the 1990's, the RCO's international concert tours are profitable (Koopman and Berkhout 2015), providing an important incentive. Both Raes and Fried acknowledge, however, that international tours can be a factor of repertoire constraints. Apart from the authoritative role of the peer-group, Joel Fried suspects two main reasons for this situation. The concert world, Fried explains, increasingly inclines towards an Anglo-Saxon model, in which ticket sales are paramount and for which not every repertoire is equally

suitable. Touring orchestras play their program on various locations, which often results in a lowest common denominator: if one concert programmer insists on only hearing Brahms and Beethoven, and no Berio, the orchestra is often forced to adapt. On solution to this problem is to go on tour with alternating programs. For example, the RCO recently played two consecutive concerts in Carnegie Hall, only one of which featured Louis Andriessen's *Mysteriën,* as a compromise. Fried equally stresses that these compromises tend to be an option only for orchestras that have a strong negotiation position, such as the Concertgebouworkest. Secondly, orchestras mostly go on tour with their own chief conductor, who has his own repertoire preferences or specialties, which are often already relatively dominant in the orchestra's home base.

The most impactful and yet the most delicate element that interferes with the orchestra's concert programming, is the conductor. If an orchestra pursues an internationally leading quality, a well thought-of selection of conductors is paramount. As mentioned earlier, the presence of only seven chief conductors in the RCO's 130 years of existence brought about a continuity that contributed to the orchestra's supreme quality to a large extent. On the other hand, every conductor has his preferences that limit the repertoire possibilities. Apart from the chief conductor, there is only a limited number of guest conductors that are engaged for the RCO, who are, for a large part, the same conductors who are employed by the orchestras from the RCO's peer-group. This leads to a considerable homogenization of the field, although Joel Fried also relativizes the problem:

> "There are 15 to 20 top conductors, that often also conduct the orchestras of our peer-group, and a dozen young conductors who have the potential to grow to this level. But we also invite specialists for baroque and 20th century repertoire, who are not necessarily leading conductors, but they are in this or that particular repertoire. Our choice of conductors depends on the type of program, so we can indeed cover a broad repertoire. But it remains a challenge." (Fried 2019)

This nuances the image of a conductor-driven orchestra, that adapts its programs to the availability of leading conductors. Managing director Jan Raes joins his colleague in adjusting the cliché:

> "We are not conductor-driven, we are program-driven. I don't want to be sanctimonious about it, and of course it is often a combination: if we can engage Haitink or another great conductor within a year, we will go into dialogue or start shuffling weeks. But we will never allow a great conductor or a great soloist to perform something in which we do not believe. Ideally, we have our programs that we then connect to the conductors in which we believe. But that is a very complex game with many facets." (Raes 2019)

The many facets of this game of reconciling artistic autonomy and feasibility is also reflected in the concert series of the Concertgebouworkest.

Division of the repertoire in concert series

Arguably the most notable and interesting aspect to the Royal Concertgebouworkest's programming policy, is the division of their concert programs in separate series. Subscriptions are mainly arranged according to these series, and the series' profiles are amply used in communication and promotion. The division is largely based on temporal demarcations and has grown historically. Artistic director and programmer Joel Fried explains that in the 1970's and 1980's, the orchestra played concerts in which various musical styles were mingled. The audience, however, tended to respond unsatisfied: one part wanted to hear Beethoven and Brahms, not Rihm and Kurtag, and vice versa. In reaction to the audience's complaint, the orchestra decided to divide the concert offer into various series, each one with a clear profile. Over the years, this division has only sharpened, according to Fried.

The actual concert series take on the following form:
-Series A ("Actual, adventurous, affecting") consists of six annual concerts focusing on the symphonic repertoire of the past century.
-Series B ("The great symphonic repertoire") is the oldest series, organized on two evenings, and focusses on the whole symphonic repertoire from Haydn to Andriessen.
-Series D ("The classics") consists of the iron repertoire, in eight concerts on alternating evenings.
-Series E ("The great maestros") is built around leading conductors, such as Mariss Jansons, John Elliot Gardiner and Daniel Harding in the 2018-2019 season.
-Series F ("Family series") consists of three annual concerts, for children between 8 and 16 years old, and is preceded by an attractive introduction to the program.
-Series H ("Horizon") brings revolutionary concerts built around a present-day theme, in collaboration with an external partner.
-Series S ("Essentials") consists of three relatively short concerts with well-known classics, and targets young audiences.
-Series Z ("Matinee") on Sunday afternoons mostly consists of well-known repertoire with leading conductors and soloists.

This segmentation of the repertoire, and the explicit accentuation of the series for subscriptions, is the RCO's answer to sociological changes. Joel Fried identifies two reasons for the segmentation of the repertoire. Firstly, the audience's demands have shifted:

> "We live in a time of narrow-casting, due to the impact of the internet. You can find a channel on YouTube with a million hits, but you can also find a channel for connoisseurs of your favorite singer. In that sense, people become a bit spoiled: they

have certain specific demands. Moreover, we used to think that there is only one audience that visits the RCO and subscribes. But there is no such thing as a monolithic audience, it has different segments. There are people who want to hear shorter concerts, or longer ones. There are people who have much more affinity with new music than with Beethoven." (Fried 2019)

This increasing segmentation of the audience also entails that people want to sit in their own peer-group: older people like to sit among other older people, and young people want to be surrounded by young people. The same goes for new music aficionados, who do not mingle very well with the traditional audience. In that sense, some of the so-called Five 'i's manifest themselves clearly: the increasing demand for individualization of concert programs translates very well to the division in concert series, and the informalization process is visible in the peer-group logic. Fried also points to the impact of decreased subscriptions:

> "If you know that someone who subscribes will attend 10 or 12 concerts either way, you can occasionally slip in something which is not entirely to his liking. If you have to appeal to a person's short-term engagement, that person needs to like this or that specific program." (Fried 2019)

Decreased subscription rates put an enormous amount of pressure on concert programs, each of which now has to sell well individually. The division in concert series, and the according targeting of certain audiences, provides a partial solution.

Secondly, the segmentation of concert series is an answer to the decreased level of musical education among audiences in general. Fried starts of by saying that what is considered as a well-known musical canon does not automatically attract as many audiences as one would think:

> "We now have a new generation that grew up with fewer music schools and less music in the classroom. And if you have not become acquainted with classical music, you do not come to a concert so easily, even if it is a Beethoven program. It is a misconception that if you play well-known works, audiences just flock to the concert hall. For a person who has little affinity with classical music, it does not matter whether you play Beethoven or a brand-new piece: everything is new. And sometimes, because new music can be more dynamic or can have a relaxing atmosphere in which little happens, new music can be easier to take in than a Brahms symphony, let alone Mahler and Bruckner. Also in that sense, the audience has different segments." (Fried 2019)

In conclusion, the highly individualized demand and the increasing lack of familiarity with any repertoire in a large segment of the audience, legitimizes the RCO's segmentation of concert series, at least from a pragmatic angle.

Both Fried and Raes emphasize that this pragmatic logic does not necessarily interfere with the RCO's artistic vision. Indeed, Raes immediately recognizes that 'ghetto-programming', against which the Nutcrackers were so strongly opposed, would stand in direct opposition to the orchestra's core value 'to connect'. As hinted at before, this idea of connection does not only mean the literal connection of the same audience to different repertoires, but also implies a horizon-widening social outcome that is believed to be effectuated by the strictly literal interpretation of connection. In Raes' words: "The idea of *l'art pour l'art* certainly had its value, but we also want to think about *l'art pour l'autre*" (Raes 2019). Therefore, the division of the concert series and the according segmentation of the repertoire are not dogmatic. Firstly, there is a temporal overlap in the series: the rather traditional B-series includes repertoire until 1945, while the progressive A-series and H-series already start from 1900. Likewise, the principally adventurous H-series sometimes features a well-known masterwork from the 20th century. Secondly, Raes ensures, there is a large segment of the audience that either has a subscription to various series or has a mixed subscription. He explains:

> "The postmodern individual likes different things: high art as well as low art. And we want to facilitate that." (Raes 2019)

Again, the Five 'i's are not far off. In conclusion, the difficult balancing exercise of concert programming can, in this case, be identified more specifically as the reconciliation of the logic of segmentation on the one hand, and the plural demands of the postmodern audience on the other hand. This balance is at play on the level of whole concert series as well as on the level of each individual concert, and is thus reflected in the RCO's concert formulas.

Development formulas

As mentioned above, the Royal Concertgebouworkest has had a strong connection to contemporary composers since the Mengelberg period. Mahler conducted his own symphonies on a handful occasions, and Richard Strauss stood before the orchestra no less than 36 times. Not only did this establish the orchestra's long-standing Mahler- and Strauss-tradition, it also laid the foundation of Amsterdam's commitment to contemporary music. The RCO proudly continues this tradition by regularly inviting composing conductors. British composer George Benjamin regularly conducts his own works, which are often commissioned by the RCO. In the 2019-2020 season, composer and conductor Thomas Adès will be the

orchestra's composer in residence. Artistic director and programmer Joel Fried emphasizes that this is a very successful formula to include new repertoire into various concert series.

The overarching principle of segmentation into concert series and the overlapping logics of these series have been mentioned above. There is also one main strategy for repertoire development within individual concert programs, which managing director Jan Raes calls the 'homeopathic dosage'. This principle is a variation of the so-called sandwich-formula, in which well-known pieces frame a lesser-known one. Both Raes and Fried have reasons to renounce the sandwich-formula. Fried gives two examples:

> "We had a few difficult evenings about ten years ago. We played standard repertoire during the first part of the concert, and lesser-known repertoire during the second part. For example, we played the *Lyrical Symphony* by Zemlinsky, which does not sound very different from Mahler, but Zemlinsky is not a big name. Or we played a symphony by Glazunov, which is not far from Tchaikovsky, but the audience does not know it. The result was that many people were already gone during the break." (Fried 2019)

The other example illustrates the other side of the spectrum:

> "We had one or two seasons in which Jan Raes welcomed the audience and gave an introduction on stage. For example, if we used an alto flute, he would explain what it was, and then the instrument was shown. There were a few people on the balcony who shouted: "We are not illiterate!"" (Fried 2019)

The pitfall of the sandwich-formula, according to RCO representatives, is the lack of any thematic unity or coherence in the concert itself, which is often perceived as a cheap trick by the audience.

The principle of 'homeopathic dosage' is a related but more gentle form of proposing something unknown to the audience and is based on a temporal limitation. The segmentation logic places long and challenging contemporary compositions in its appropriate series, and in other concerts, a short piece by an unknown composer is added to the program. In Fried's words: "Nine minutes of Varèse and Kurtag is fine, half an hour is too provocative" (Fried 2019). On January 11th, 2019, the Concertgebouworkest played a sold-out concert in Brussels (and twice in Amsterdam, the days before), conducted by the famous conductor Herbert Blomstedt, who is an advocate of Scandinavian music. Between Brahms' *First Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Third Symphony,* a short piece by the Swedish post-romantic composer Wilhelm Stenhammar was played, entitled *Intermezzo* (from Stenhammar's cantata *Sången*). The combination of the two canonical masterpieces and a famous conductor ensured that the

audience was not scared away by the unknown name on the concert program. The audience was pleasantly surprised by the piece, which probably no-one had ever heard before.

Another formula that works very well for the RCO is thematic programming, which often allows to program a large variety of works, some of which are unknown. In June of 2001, for example, the RCO organized the *Festival Slava!*, in which the iconic cellist Mstislav Rostropovich played a major role. Rostropovich not only performed classics such as Dvořák's and Shostakovich' cello concertos, he also conducted the orchestra three times during that period, featuring relatively unknown works by Henri Dutilleux and Alberto Ginastera. Still, Fried accentuates, elaborate thematic dramaturgies will not convince an individual who has difficulties digesting a dissonant or avant-gardist work. Moreover, thematic programming often requires adequate preparation of the audience. Introductions are often needed to lower the threshold and make thematic programs more accessible. Experience proves, however, that people who go to these introductions are precisely those people who have had a subscription to the orchestra for 30 consecutive years. "It is a service to our public that we will continue to provide, but it does not draw in any newcomers", Fried concludes (Fried 2019).

The most successful formula for repertoire development is the RCO's Horizon-series, which is often coupled with the A-series. The Horizon-series contains three thematic and interdisciplinary festivals in cooperation with other institutions in Amsterdam (in 2017, partners were a publishing house, a foundation supporting the development of technology, and the University of Amsterdam). The concerts often transgress the traditional borders of music by including lectures, dance performances and visual projections. Contrary to the themed concerts, it is mostly the interdisciplinary aspect, or the intense 'event-character' that attracts audiences, not the theme per se. The 'intensification' motive included in the Five 'i's, assumes a concrete guise here. Musician Michael Gieler adds that changing a format alone can sometimes attract new audiences, regardless of the program:

> "You need to make the audience trust you and make them confident that they will experience something. That has everything to do with communication and how you interact with the audience. In principle, you can literally program everything and make completely illogical programs, if you are able to present it as a story. There is no formula for a good program. You have made a good program when people go outside and think 'I have experienced something'." (Gieler 2019)

On January 17th, 2019, a Horizon concert called *Barcelona and Amsterdam 1919* paid tribute to the idealistic architecture from the early 20th century, accompanied by music from that period as well as contemporary music. This thematic approach worked very well in this Horizon formula, as well as the principle of homeopathic dosage. Raes explains:

"Actually, it was a challenging program: we played George Benjamin (who also conducted the concert; AH) and a newly commissioned work by Christiaan Richter. We played this concert twice, and the concert hall was almost full. That may also have to do with Ravel's *Bolero* as the final piece. You can call this a sandwich-program, but that principle is a bit outdated. We always work with an overarching theme. Of course, there is a marketing idea behind that, but without any kind of artistic compromise. The point is that everyone there has heard these wonderful new works by Benjamin and Richter." (Raes 2019)

Both directors remark that this Horizon series is very expensive, and that it can only be afforded by large orchestras who have the resources and have established a bond of trust between audience and orchestra. Apart from the extremely high production costs, there is a salient difference in concert hall occupation between the H and A series (ca. 75%) and the traditional B and C series (ca. 90%). Still, both directors agree that it would be artistically improper to play an adventurous program only once for a full house, especially because there is often a world premiere involved in the Horizon programs.

Premieres are indeed considered a very important pillar of new music programming. The Horizon series commissions up to 8 premieres every season (Raes 2019), and over the last decade, the Concertgebouworkest has commissioned 48 new works, performed 54 world premieres and 63 Dutch premieres. The traditional problem of performing a commissioned work a second time is countered by various strategies. Fried, who is responsible for composition assignments, always looks for partners who not only contribute financially, but also each perform the work with their respective orchestra. For example, a premiere of a new work by Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho was realized by the joint forces of the RCO and five partners. Fried considers it a leading orchestra's responsibility to program at least some of the commissioned works again. Premiered works by Michel van der Aa and George Benjamin, for example, have been performed regularly by the RCO. The RCO records all world premieres and almost all Dutch premieres on its house label RCO Live, to make sure that the works are spread or at least documented. "That is the advantage of a house label: you don't necessarily have to make profits", Fried adds.

Broadening formulas

As is the case in most orchestras, the RCO has a strong need to attract new audiences. Until the year 2000, nearly every chair in the concert hall was sold by subscriptions only, except for a fixed amount of 150 tickets that were reserved for individual sale. Since the early 2000's, subscriptions to the RCO are no longer passed on through wills, and aging audience members disappear faster than new audiences come in. Although the hall occupation has remained stable around 90%, this situation presents the orchestra with a growing concern. In the annual report of 2017, the basis of audience composition is phrased as follows:

"We notice that the choice of repertoire is decisive for the final composition of the audience. Since the orchestra primarily performs the Western symphonic canon, the audience is often composed accordingly." (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 9)

It is important to remark that the attraction of audiences is subordinate to the basic principle that the RCO principally performs a high-quality musical repertoire, a priority that was also voiced in the programming policy definition (cf. above). The orchestra firmly believes that audience attraction and development can and should only occur by pursuing its core values.

Parallel to the RCO's regular concert programming, the orchestra has developed various formats and formulas aimed at attracting new audiences and widening the visibility of the orchestra. One of the main short-term priorities of the orchestra management, is to be approachable. Fried links this idea of approachability to the different segments of the audience:

"We want to show that everyone is welcome. You do not need prior knowledge, and you do not have to wear a black tie. Everyone can enjoy in their own way, whether you have never even heard about Beethoven or you have analyzed his *Fifth Symphony* down to the last detail. And everything in between." (Fried 2019)

Besides attracting new audiences to the concert hall, the corresponding broadening formulas are justified by the orchestra management from two angles. Firstly, broadening formulas aim at increasing the orchestra's legitimacy. Jan Raes points out that not many politicians who decide on the orchestra's funding, have a personal affinity with the orchestra. Occasional experiments with film music or rock bands make the orchestra visible to those who haven't experienced it before, and thus contribute to the orchestra's civil support. "You show your subsidizer that you are not the Plain Jane they may think you are", Raes (2019) concludes. On April 30th, 2013, the Concertgebouworkest joined forces with the popular Dutch DJ Armin van Buuren, in an open-air concert on the occasion of the first annual King's Day of the new Dutch king Willem-Alexander. The performance was broadcasted live and featured a 12 minute cross-over experiment with both orchestra and DJ, as well as short programs by orchestra and DJ individually. Jan Raes defends this rather controversial event as such:

"I immediately said yes. I had to explain this to the orchestra, and also to myself. (...) But at that moment we reached 5 million live viewers. I think I did well to say yes. Later I was asked if a CD single could be made of this event, and then I said no. We just caught a momentum there." (Raes 2019)

The equilibrium of marketing and artistic pertinence is viewed from a larger scale than each concert individually, and seizing the momentum can sometimes be more important than the artistic content. In general, however, the RCO does not engage in cross-over projects anymore. A few years of working with the combination of popular artists and classical music has not resulted in a formula that was workable for both parties. The percentage of new audience that came back for a classical concert was very small. Also, contrary to intuition, cross-over projects with famous pop musicians, as well as film music concerts, tend to be more expensive than regular concerts: pop musicians have high fees, film rights are very expensive, and ticket prices have to be low because nobody wants to pay 100 euros for a movie. Most importantly, orchestra representatives strongly feel that when an orchestra does something that is too far away from its core business, it will not generate new audiences, by lack of affinity. The approachability of the orchestra, in conclusion, is not to be confused with superficiality or lowering the bar artistically. Every attempt of broadening the orchestra's activities, Raes stresses, needs to occur in full knowledge of the artistic intention.

This is related to the second justification for the orchestra's broadening formulas. In 2014, Jan Raes was quoted in the Belgian magazine Rekto:verso, saying:

"This debate (on diversification; AH) has started with the best intentions, but you do not solve anything by only filling concert halls with likable things. Music by, say, Stockhausen, Zemlinsky or Szigeti is not always easy to digest. You have to learn to decode this music, and that does not happen overnight. Do concert halls have to be sold-out all the time? No! We have to be careful that our sector does not crumble into entertainment" (Quoted in: Kennes 2014)

The Concertgebouworkest's broadening formulas are designed to support this process of decoding. The pursuit of diversity and inclusivity occurs in small steps, to which the formulas are, to a certain extent, adapted. The showpiece of the RCO's formulas is the Essentials series, containing three annual concerts that target audiences between ages 25 and 40. The Essentials series brings short concerts, starting at 9PM, with a well-known and charismatic presenter who introduces the music on stage. Afterwards, the pop-up Entrée Café provides opportunities for drinks and a talk. During the concert itself, the audience is introduced to an essential masterwork from the symphonic repertoire. Concerts from the Essentials series have included Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies, but also featured more challenging works such as the entire third act of Wagner's *Die Walküre.* The formula is an enormous success (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018b). It is very clear to the orchestra management that young people are attracted to this formula because they are among their age group: about half of the audience is under 50 years old, compared to 26% during regular concerts. In the 2017-2018 season, the Essentials series has attracted 50% new audience, referring to people who had never attended an RCO concert before. At the time of writing, there were no statistics

available yet, but it has become clear that a small percentage of this audience returns for regular subscription concerts. The Essentials series is a crucial part of the pipeline model that has been mentioned above and is thus aimed at facilitating the slow process of decoding music and familiarizing new audiences with various repertoires. Other formulas include the annual family concerts featuring *Peter and the Wolf* and *Carnival des Animaux* in the 2018-2019 season, 8 annual open rehearsals presented as free lunch concerts, and the biannual RCO Club Night, an adventurously programmed concert on an atypical location with a tradition in non-classical music (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 14). Joel Fried points out that although these concert formulas are partially adjusted to market demands, consciously target a specific part of the audience, and adapt their marketing accordingly, these formulas are mostly unprofitable. Production costs are often as high as with regular concerts, or higher (both the Essentials and the family concerts are led by world-class conductors).

In terms of outreach and education, the RCO is in full development. A recent series of concert tours called 'RCO meets Europe' to every one of the 28 member-states of the European Union, included a formula called 'Side by Side' in which the RCO played one concert together with a local youth orchestra. Early 2019, this experience has resulted in the launch of the RCO's own youth orchestra called RCO Young. Since 2003, the RCO Academy selects promising young musicians who are given the opportunity to play with the RCO for one season, enjoy masterclasses and perform chamber music concerts. The orchestra magazine, Preludium, received a face-lift in 2018, and now offers a peek behind the scenes of the RCO, as well as program notes for notable concerts, interviews and an in-depth analysis of one musical work. Finally, the orchestra developed a multimedia platform called RCO Universe, with recordings of concerts and interesting facts, operational since 2013 (Van den Anker 2012). One app is designed for primary schools and features Saint-Saëns *Carnival des Animaux* with popular young pianists Arthur and Lucas Jussen. By the end of 2017, four apps were in use in 1376 schools, reaching around 70.000 students (Royal Concertgebouworkest 2018a, 13).

Programming trends

A relatively recent and similar research on the RCO's repertoire trends has established a list of the orchestra's most frequently programmed composers between 1950 and 1994: Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Bruckner, Stravinsky, Richard Strauss and Berlioz (in this particular research, the duration of the performed works was taken into account). The performed works by these composers were called the orchestra's 'iron repertoire' (de Jong 2006). Two significant conclusions were reached. Firstly, in the 1970's and 1980's, as the study makes clear, the share of iron repertoire slightly diminishes, in favor of composers that are not included in the top-10 list.

Secondly, the study shows that the RCO has increasingly narrowed its focus on music between 1800 and 1950. The only notable exception to this trend is the music Bach, whose presence

has remained dominant because of the orchestra's long-established tradition of performing at least one of his *Passions* every season.

Both evolutions can be approached from various angles. Firstly, it can be argued that the RCO's more egalitarian spread of programmed composers in the 1970's and 1980's is the outcome of the Nutcrackers' protests in 1969. The second conclusion, however, somewhat contradicts this explanation: in that case, the Nutcrackers' protests can be argued to have become the cause of the increasing temporary demarcation of the RCO's repertoire. The pre-1800 and post-1950 repertoires, from that point of view, have been claimed by specialized period orchestras. Secondly, the role of official policies can be considered. From that angle, it makes sense that the evolution from a subsidizing government at arms-length to an interfering one, insisting on the orchestra's plan of activities in the latter case only, has resulted in a more balanced programming policy with emphases on both its museum and its laboratory function. Another element from the study points in that direction. From the 1990's onwards, shifting cultural policies in the Netherlands have forced the orchestra into a more market-driven state of mind. The share of iron repertoire, from that period onwards, slightly increases again (de Jong 2006). Michael Gieler, RCO violist since 1994, confirms that the RCO's repertoire has somewhat rigidified over the last two decades. One explanation, according Gieler, is the increasing demand from policy makers to attract a large audience for each and every program. The role of external cultural policies, therefore, can be said to have a rather drastic impact on programming trends. However, there is one more rival explanation to this interpretation. Throughout the 1950-1994 period, the status of composers such as Bartok, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Schoenberg, Debussy and Mahler have changed rather drastically. What counted as a contemporary experiment in the 1950's, counted as a safe programming choice in the 1990's. In addition, the copyrights of some of these composers have expired within this timeframe, making performances of their works cheaper. In other words, the overarching conclusion that the RCO has relied on its iron repertoire less and less and has spread its programmed composers more egalitarian, comes with an important nuance: the iron repertoire of the orchestra, or the musical canon in generalizing terms, has changed within the given timeframe. The larger the timeframe under research, the more speculative any conclusion will be with regard to programming trends, let alone canonization. Therefore, the underlying quantitative study spans the RCO's twelve most recent seasons only.

The underlying graphs and numbers are drawn from a dataset comprising the entire programming entries of the Royal Concertgebouworkest from the seasons 2006-2007 until 2017-2018. The dataset includes one separate entry for every time a work is performed. For the analysis of the dataset, composers have been listed in three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. These three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be

highly familiar to both orchestra musicians and audiences. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertoire, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, and thus their styles are often little known to orchestras and their audiences. In case of any doubt whether a composer was predominantly active in one period or the other, a judgment was made according to the specific composer's style. For example, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland and Shostakovich were categorized in the 1900-1950 period because of their aesthetic affinity with composers of that period. Not every category spans an equally proportioned time frame, which does not facilitate drawing any meaningful conclusions. Therefore, the underlying data focus more on relative motions such as repertoire evolutions throughout the analyzed seasons, and concentration or density levels within each category.

Figure 33 shows how the repertoire of the Royal Concertgebouworkest is divided among the proposed timeframe, between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 season. As could be expected, the share of pre-1900 music is the largest, consisting of almost 46% of the RCO's total repertoire. Music composed between 1900 and 1950 accounts for roughly 40% of the orchestra's repertoire, leaving just a little under 15% for the post-1950 repertoire. The fact that the 1900-1950 category is almost as strongly represented as the pre-1900 repertoire, can partially be explained by the historically evolved dominance of Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss in the RCO's programs, two composers that are categorized under the 1900-1950 category.
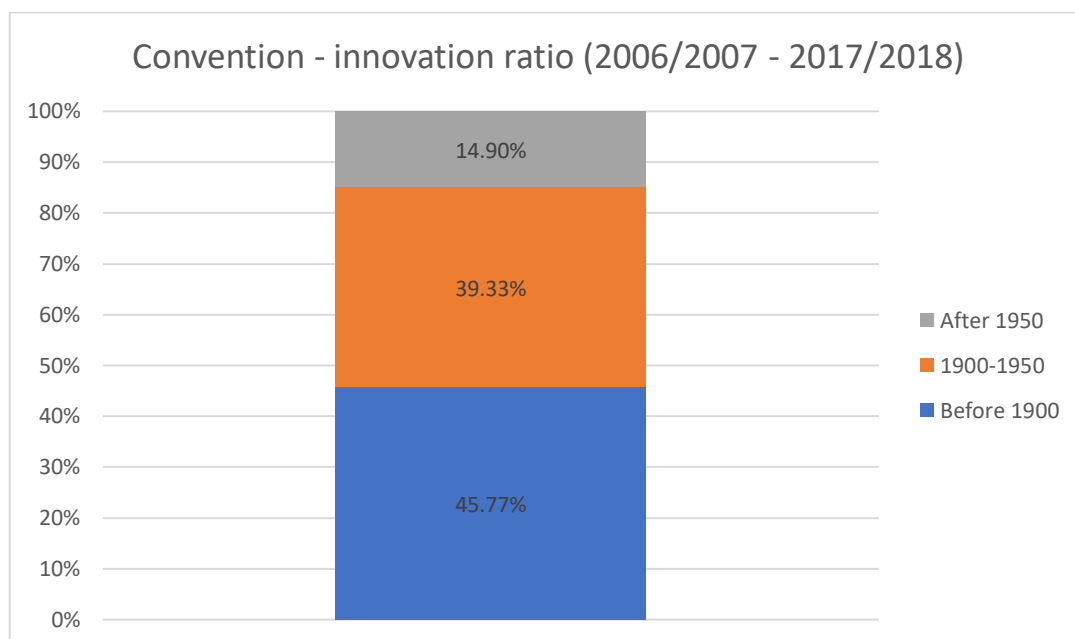

Figure 33: Repertoire convention and innovation ratio of the RCO

Further analysis shows that the 10 most frequently performed composers are, in descending order: Beethoven, Mozart, Richard Strauss, Mahler, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Bruckner. Together, these 10 composers account for 40,89% of the RCO's repertoire, between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 seasons. On the other side of the spectrum, the 36 composers who have been programmed only once, account for 0,90% of the orchestra's repertoire in the same time span. Of the 10 most frequently performed composers, 6 are categorized in the pre-1900 category (Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Bruckner) and 4 in the 1900-1950 category (Strauss, Mahler, Shostakovich and Stravinsky). From the 23 composers that account for at least 1% of performances, 13 were active in the pre-1900 category, 10 in the 1900-1950 category, and, strikingly, none in the post-1950 category. Most frequently performed from the post-1950 category, are composers Olivier Messiaen and Leonard Bernstein, each obtaining 0,73% of all performances, and ranking them 30th. These details confirm the proportions visualized in figure 33. In addition, they make clear that in the pre-1900 category, reliance on just a few composers is even higher than in the 1900-1950 category, in which the reliance on few composers is, in turn, higher than in the post-1950 category. Therefore, it seems useful to analyze these concentration rates in more detail.

Figure 34 shows concentration levels of performances among composers by programming category, enabling to quantify the orchestra's reliance on a narrow set of composers in each category. First of all, it is remarkable that the pre-1900 category, which spans the longest time frame by far, consists of only 56 composers, while the much shorter post-1950 category counts 114 composers, more than twice as much as the former. Secondly, these figures confirm that concentration levels of composers vary strongly between programming categories. In the pre-1900 category, most notably, the top 5 composers (Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Wagner) account for half of the orchestra's repertoire from that period (922 separate entries in the orchestra's programs). At 45%, the 1900-1950 category shows comparable numbers for its top five list comprising Richard Strauss, Mahler, Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Debussy. In the post-1950 category, however, barely 20% of performances goes to top five composers Messiaen, Bernstein, Watson, Lutoslawski, and Adams. This trendline is repeated in the top 10 and top 15 lists, with the post-1950 period showing significantly less reliance on fixed sets of composers. Remarkable is that the top 15 composers in the pre-1900 category are responsible for almost 84% of the repertoire from that category, leaving only 16% of performances to the remaining 41 composers. In the post-1950 category, on the other hand, only 41,68% of the repertoire goes to the 15 most frequently programmed composers, leaving more than 58% of performances for the remaining 99 composers.

	< 1900	**1900-1950**	**> 1950**
Top 5	922 (50,44%)	710 (45,19%)	117 (19,66%)
Top 10	1307 (71,50%)	1096 (69,76%)	191 (32,10%)
Top 15	1533 (83,86%)	1241 (78,99%)	248 (41,68%)
One-time	5 (0,33%)	5 (0,51%)	22 (3,70%)
All	1828 (100%)	1571 (100%)	595 (100%)
	(56 composers)	(66 composers)	(114 composers)

Figure 34: Concentration levels of performances among composers by programming category

A view on the least frequently programmed composers (whose works appear only once in the RCO's programs between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 seasons), is very telling. The orchestra's reliance on one-time composers is extremely low in the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 categories, each having only five one-time entries, accounting for 0,33% and 0,51% of the repertoire in these categories respectively. Additionally, these one-time entries also allow to calculate a percentage of composers that have been programmed only once. In the pre-1900 category, only 9% of composers has been programmed only once (5 out of 56 composers). This number drops to 7,5% in the 1900-1950 category. In the post-1950 category, however, 3,70% (or 22 separate entries) goes to one-time composers, and 19% of composers is programmed only once. If one-time entries in the orchestra's programs would be defined as 'experiment', the experimentation rate is considerably higher in the post-1950 category than in the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 categories respectively.

From Figure 34 can be concluded that the orchestra's reliance on a small set of composers varies strongly according to the categories marking time frames. In the pre-1900 category, the reliance on a narrow list of composers is very high, making the experimentation rate within that category very low. These numbers only slightly diminish in the 1900-1950 category, which still shows a heavy reliance on few composers. The post-1950 category, however, relies much less on a narrow set of composers, not reaching half the concentration levels of the other two categories. Accordingly, experimentation levels in that category are significantly higher.

Figure 35 breaks the data down into separate seasons. From the figure can be read that the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 repertoires dominate performances over the twelve-seasons time span, averaging at 45,77% and 39,33% respectively (cf. Figure 33). Rather strong fluctuations obscure an adequate estimation, but the trendline that was added for the pre-1900 repertoire, shows that the presence of this repertoire diminishes slightly, while the share of 1900-1950 repertoire raises slightly. Seasons 2007-2008 and 2015-2016 are notable outliers, with the pre-1900 repertoire claiming terrain of the 1900-1050 repertoire and peaking twice at 55%. The share of 1900-1950 repertoire, in turn, never drops below 35%. On the long run, both trendlines converge from being around a 10% distance from each other, to a mere 3% mutual distance at an almost equal share of around 42% each. In sharp contrast, the share of post-1950 repertoire averages at 14,90% (cf. Figure 33), with a trendline rising about as

steeply as the 1900-1950 trendline. From Figure 35 can be concluded that the 1900-1950 and post-1950 repertoires are gaining terrain on the pre-1900 repertoire, although the post-1950 repertoire is still heavily underrepresented. The conventional, in other words, still towers over the innovative or experimental in this twelve-seasons time frame.
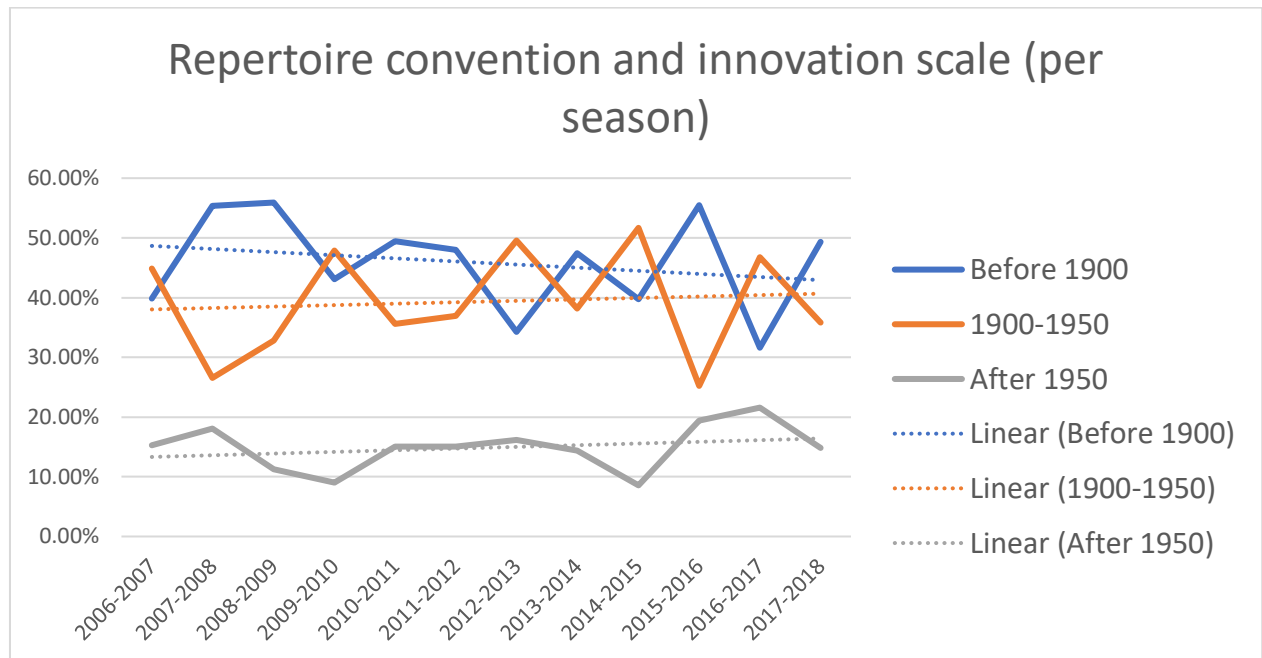

Figure 35: Repertoire convention and innovation scale per season

By means of these data, repertoire trends of the Concertgebouworkest can be demonstrated. Establishing a link between the orchestra's iron repertoire and the musical canon in general remains a somewhat speculative affair, but not necessarily an idle one. In drawing conclusions with regard to canonization, the employed categorizations need to be handled with care. The pre-1900 repertoire does not necessarily consist of canonical composers only, and the post-1950 repertoire does not only consist of non-canonical or even experimental composers.

Staying close to the actual data, top-5 percentages from figure 34, for example, do not explicitly refer to the formation of a musical canon per se, but they do display that these composers account for a very significant proportion of the actual repertoire of this specific orchestra. Still, a strong relation can be established between these performance data and the musical canon. These data are illustrative for a condensation process taking place over time. Concentration levels in each category, however, do illustrate that the reliance on a narrow set of composers strongly differs between the categories. Using the terminology of the above quoted previous study of the RCO's repertoire, one could conclude that the use of 'iron repertoire' is much more salient in the pre-1900 category than in the post-1950 category. In this case, frequency of performance determines this iron repertoire, which is very closely related to the idea of a musical canon. Therefore, experimentation levels, as the concentration

table showed, are higher in the post-1950 category. So, not only is the share of pre-1900 repertoire larger than the other categories' shares, the iron repertoire of that category is also much more firmly established, the concentration table illustrated, than the iron repertoire of the post-1950 category. Therefore, the level of canonization in the latter category can be argued to be lower than the level of canonization in the former category. Remarkable in this particular case, is the fact that neither the share of 1900-1950 repertoire, nor its concentration levels, differ significantly from those of the pre-1900 category. It is striking that within that timeframe, a fixed set of composers is almost as firmly in place as in the pre-1900 category. The RCO's long-established history of having cooperated closely with composers such as Mahler, Strauss and Stravinsky (who each appear not only in that category's top five list, but also appear in the overall top 10 list) can explain this state of affairs. In the post-1950 category, additionally, concentration levels are significantly lower than in the other two categories. Not only is the iron repertoire of the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 repertoires more outspoken, the total share of post-1950 repertoire itself is also very low (14%). The iron repertoire is therefore both established (in concentration levels) and maintained (in performance shares) in the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 repertoires, leaving only a narrow space for both experimentation and repertoire development to occur in the post-1950 category.

On the other hand, Figure 35 clearly visualizes the RCO's efforts to diminish the gap between the more canonized and the less canonized repertoires, or between the conventional and the innovative. Over the years, performance levels of music from the 1900-1950 and post-1950 categories rise significantly. Especially in the post-1950 category, the reliance on a limited number of composers is much lower, and levels of experimentation higher. Taking both of these tendencies into account, the total levels of experimentation and differentiation within the Royal Concertgebouworkest's programming can be concluded to be rising.

Discussion

Mariss Jansons, conductor emeritus of the Royal Concertgebouworkest, once said of his orchestra: "The Concertgebouworkest is like a house. It doesn't fall down if you remove one brick" (Bekaert et al. 2017, 112). Indeed, the orchestra's core values, shared (in theory) by every individual in the organization, have driven the orchestra towards an equilibrium in which the responsibilities and governance of the orchestra's artistic and organizational pillars are distributed among all stakeholders. The (organizational) form of the orchestra and its (artistic) content are very closely intertwined. This model gradually evolved and, judging from the orchestra's persistently high musical quality, has proven sustainable so far. Of course, this system has its boundaries. The RCO, as any orchestra, operates in an environment that pressurizes the organization from various, often opposing sides. Creating the right conditions in which to operate, is a process that encompasses many facets. One of the most crucial tensions in the orchestra's organization, is the pragmatic need for resource acquisition (which

consists, for a very large part, of subsidies) and the artistic mission to remain a highly relevant orchestra on a global scale. As discussed earlier, this results in a two-faced legitimacy struggle.

These tensions converge most visibly in the orchestra's programming policy. The RCO's priority is to retain existing audiences and to attract new ones. Repertoire development is not the orchestra's absolute priority, because it is believed that this development requires a reliable audience base that needs to be generated and nurtured first. The realization of this dual priority to retain existing audiences and attract new ones, occurs through the system of repertoire segmentation into various concert series. This form of narrow-casting, as the orchestra's programmer calls it, caters to the broad audience's wishes in the most ideal way, also because the separation between the series is not dogmatic. Series overlap and season subscriptions can comprise multiple (parts of) series. The difficult balancing exercise of concert programming is, in the case of the Concertgebouworkest, maintained by reconciliating the logic of segmentation and the plural demands of the postmodern audience.

One formula escapes this dynamic to some extent. The successful Essentials series attracts a broad range of audiences who are curious to be introduced to orchestral must-hears. However, two remarks about this series should be added to the discussion. Firstly, the Essentials series is very expensive. Ticket prices are deliberately kept low in order to attract new and young audiences, while the fully manned orchestra is led by a star conductor and often features a demanding musical program. Secondly, orchestra representatives suggest that the most attractive part about Essentials is the formula and the way it is presented, not the program itself. As Essentials' programs strictly feature the classics of the symphonic repertoire, they focus on audience enlargement only, and do not contribute to artistic development per se. Additionally, one orchestra representative remarks that even the Essentials series is becoming harder to sell. The long-term artistic effect of this formula, therefore, remains to be calculated.

With regard to individual concert programs, the sandwich-formula has lost its credibility in favor of what the orchestra calls homeopathic dosage. Only when audiences gain trust in the orchestra's programs, a more daring form of repertoire programming can be considered. Data analysis of the RCO's concert programs reflects this tendency. Firstly, a strong reliance on the musical canon is firmly in place. This can partially be explained by the orchestra's preference to work with a small circle of the worlds' leading conductors, whose prime repertoires often overlap, thus narrowing the scope of available repertoires. More importantly, a considerable segment of the RCO's audience prefers to mainly hear the well-known canonical works, as the average concert hall occupation of 90% for B and D series suggests. The orchestra's long tradition of working with contemporary conductors and composers has resulted in a surprisingly large share of frequently programmed compositions from the 1900-1950 period. The share of post-1950 compositions is very small by comparison, but an upwards curve which reflects the principle of homeopathic dosage, anticipates a shift. Concentration levels of

performances from this period equally show that works from this period are often programmed more than once, which proves that a slow densification or orchestra-specific canonization process is taking place, securing a future repertoire on which the audience can agree.

The broadening formulas of the Concertgebouworkest, among which the Essentials series, can be framed within a larger artistic trajectory, the results of which remain to be calculated. This 'pipeline' trajectory reflects the orchestra's engagement in the process of what Jan Raes calls musical decoding. This process of decoding, or familiarization with various repertoires, is visible in the construction of the series (in which, for example, Essentials can be a stepping stone towards the B series) as well as in individual concert programs in which the principle of homeopathic dosage is in place (making acquaintance with a short unknown work can spark audiences' curiosity to visit the A or H series). Audience attraction is a first step that can be followed, in a consecutive phase, by a more adventurous approach towards concert programming.

4. Splendor

Introduction

In the 1970's, contemporary to the first structural crises within cultural institutions (Flanagan 2012), musicians have repeatedly voiced their wish reconcile creative freedom with the pragmatic logic of arts organizations. In the Netherlands, several groups of musicians advocated a more democratic model of musical practice, in conscious opposition to what they perceived as the creative authoritarianism of established and rigidified institutions such as the Royal Concertgebouworkest. The BEVEM working group (Beweging voor de Vernieuwing van de Muziekpraktijk; transl. 'Movement for the Renewal of Musical Practice'), a musician's movement that set out to explore the innovative potential of musical practice, struggled for the self-determination of performers and composers, and tried to develop a model in which musicians and composers were enabled to manage themselves in a way that interfered with their creative endeavours as little as possible (Adlington 2007). In 1970, BEVEM launched a concept called the 'inclusive concert' which was described as follows:

> "It is intended that a beginning will be made with a new form of concert, in which the exclusivity of the traditional concerts will be overcome. Exclusive is <u>one</u> sort of music, <u>one</u> sort of ensemble, the concert ritual, the sort of space, the rigid programs, the entrance fee, … Therefore this "inclusive concert" will be defined by: collaboration with musicians and ensembles from different sectors of music (classical, pop, jazz, etc.); program assemblage based on the initiative of the participating musicians; informal use of the space; free entry." (Quoted in: Adlington 2007, 553)

The initial concept led to a stimulating confrontation of various types of music and diverse audiences, liberated from the ritualistic courtesies of the concert hall. However, BEVEM's emancipatory ideology was soon hampered by pragmatic issues like contracted labour, and the initial instigators of the movement soon took on aspects of artistic authoritarianism. The attempted renewal of musical practice eventually led to artistic idiosyncrasy of the musicians involved, and the reassertion of the productional asymmetries of traditional musical practice. The wider emancipatory movement of the BEVEM and the renewal of musical practice in the Netherlands was tempered and traditional, subsidized institutions dominate the arena of musical practice to this day.

In a cultural field that largely relies on subsidies, artists depend on institutions to that extent that their creative endeavors are mediated by those institutions (Caves 2000). Therefore, any disruptive change in the institution's ecosystem (in the form of policy measures, austerity, labor conditions, …) will have an impact on the artist's creative options. Aphoristically, one could say that the production side (artist) and the presentation side (the artist's arena) of the

art world are closely connected and depend on each other's fluctuations. The reciprocal nature of this truism, however, holds an often-underestimated potential, as creativity often emerges within the cracks of this principle. While traditional institutions such as the symphony orchestra, the museum and the theater are renegotiating their role in the face of possibly fatal budget cuts, alternative organizations are taking shape outside of the traditional and largely subsidized art institutions. As new creative possibilities emerge, so do new organizational constraints. The question rises what organizational model, if any, provides complete freedom to the artists (in terms of creative production and exposure), while balancing the financial necessities of operating an arts organization.

In the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 and the following austerity measures that took place within the Netherlands' cultural sector, alternative musical ensembles and venues have taken shape. The emergence and advance of new organizational initiatives exemplify artists' ubiquitous urge to develop models that actively explore the possibility to foster their creativity in the most unrestricted form, while also being more adapted to the eclectic demands of the present-day audience and financial challenges of current society. Although the long-term impact and sustainability of these seminal initiatives remains to be demonstrated, an understanding of their novel approach to music production, programming, management and financing might help explaining, on the one hand, why art organizations have generally remained tied to the dominant logic of long-established forms, and on the other hand, how adaptations and variations to the dominant logic occur in the face of mimetic pressures.

In 2015, the city of Amsterdam awarded its annual Amsterdam Prize for the Arts to Splendor Amsterdam, one of these new initiatives born out of an urgent need for sustainable new ways of creating and performing music. Splendor brings together 50 professional musicians (mostly with a classical background, but jazz- and more alternative musicians are also represented), rehearsing and performing in an old bathing house that was transformed into a professionally equipped music hub. As the organization's tagline "Get closer to the music" announces, Splendor profiles itself as a meeting place and workspace for musicians where they can communicate informally with their audience and with each other. Through an in-depth analysis of the Splendor Amsterdam model, the overall potential can be explored of an alternative practice that challenges the classic music industry's dominant logic, including the enablers, drivers and any significant barriers associated with this manner of organizing. Data on the Splendor case have been collected during two on-site visits, as well as in a series of interviews with key representatives: the chairman and co-founder David Dramm, venue manager Norman van Dartel and musician Michael Gieler.

The birth of Splendor

Artistic mission

In 2010, a group of enterprising musicians experienced a lack of performance opportunities in Amsterdam where external factors such as financial concerns, logistics and transportation issues could be minimalized. Most importantly, they shared the urgent wish of having a place for experimentation outside of the institutionalized environments in which they were employed. Composer David Dramm, who was part of this network, explains:

> "For musicians, it often seems easier to organize something big than something small. What we were looking for was a place where we could hang out frequently, and our audience as well. We wanted to create a community feeling where everybody felt at home." (Dramm 2018)

This network of performers, 50 strong, collectively invested in a place where experimentation has no boundaries and where artists and their audiences connect to inspire each other. An old centrally located Amsterdam bathhouse was transformed into a professionally equipped music house, which is operated in its entirety by the artists themselves (among which players of the main Dutch orchestras such as the Concertgebouworkest, Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Radio Orchestras, as well as names from the world of opera, jazz, electronics and ethnic music). The location of Splendor reflects the artistic impetus from which the organization was designed: close to traditional institutions such as the opera house and the Rembrandt studio, but just off the beaten path. In 2013, Splendor Amsterdam opened doors. Since then, the venue unites composers, musicians and stage artists, that came together to form an artist-run cooperative that independently exploits a music venue in which the musicians have complete autonomy. Splendor is a second home for the 50 musicians and their public, but also for a vast number of musicians from the Netherland and abroad, that are welcome to rehearse or perform in the venue.

Utilizing a specific organizational model in which responsibility for all aspects of the organization (from acquiring finances to musical programming) is shared among all members, Splendor is an example in which 'commoning' is an integral part of their business model. Through their organizational decisions, Splendor is able to fully utilize the twofold character of a common good (De Angelis 2017): on the one hand Splendor exemplifies a use value for a plurality (by providing artistic freedom to all connected artists), on the other hand, it requires a plurality claiming and sustaining the ownership of the common good. Together, these two elements form the core values of the Splendor business model: a strive for complete artistic freedom and autonomy, and a collectively shared sense of ownership and responsibility. Through operationalizing these core values, the artists have created a venue in which they are free to practice and perform, while being capable of reevaluating and changing the often

distant relationship between the artists and their audiences. As the deliberately compact mission statement states, Splendor musicians are not guided by the established traditions and unwritten rules of normal concert practice (Splendor n.d.). At Splendor, musicians and audiences come in through the same doors and meet each other afterwards in the same on-site bar. Apart from all kinds of concert settings, open rehearsals, and workshops form the core activities of Splendor, which can take place at any time of the day.

In order to secure the sense of creative autonomy, a very peculiar artistic premise was installed as the foundation of the Splendor concept. As Dramm explains:

> "When we started thinking about the concept, some musicians came to me and inquired whether we should have an idea of an artistic vision; of what Splendor stands for. Eventually, we decided not to do that. If we would find ourselves in a situation where we produce music that you can hear elsewhere, we would have picked the wrong 50 musicians. They idea is precisely *not* to tell them what to do. It works itself out." (Dramm 2018)

Rather than a concert venue or rehearsal space, Splendor profiles itself as a laboratory or workplace, where musical ideas can sprout and grow freely, without the interference of external factors.

Realization

In order to make the Splendor business model financially viable, the organization has developed a financial model that is dependent on different types of income. The city of Amsterdam carried the renovation costs of the building, which they in return rent out to the Splendor organization. However, as a start-up investment, Splendor needed €300.000 for further adaptations to the building and for the purchase and installation of materials. Dramm notes that the process of getting Splendor started, was a demanding undertaking:

> "When we started raising money, we did it out of pure desperation. We were really looking for a space, and the city offered us a space. But then someone else came up with a more profitable idea for the building. So we got a phone call from the city, saying that they needed to have the necessary money in three weeks' time, or we would lose the building altogether. It got us jumpstarted, in a way." (Dramm 2018)

In order to raise the money, musicians used their personal networks. Utilizing the cooperative rationale, the initial capital input came from the 50 musicians, who each invested €1.000 in the form of a corporate bond, giving the organization an instant, one-time capital input of €50.000. The remaining €250.000 was raised through private investors, who in return for

providing capital – in the form of purchasing a ten-year bond – received a private concert by one or some of the musicians at home as dividend. Dramm clarifies:

> "We raised a large portion of our money by selling bonds of 1000 euros each. The interest on these bonds was a private concert by one of our musicians. If you bought four bonds, you could have a string quartet. If, hypothetically, you bought 40, you had an orchestra." (Dramm 2018)

Although raising this amount of money in a very short period of time was burdensome, it proved beneficial to the organization. Firstly, the process itself generated a lot of publicity around the launch of Splendor, which created the necessary momentum to get started. Secondly, by enthusing people who could be interested to fund the organization, the Splendor musicians simultaneously created their first audience base.

Additionally, the Splendor founders came up with the idea of creating an audience through membership, as a regular source of money. Using their networks, the 50 musicians attracted members, who each payed 100 euro for an annual membership which granted them access to 50 concerts every year: one organized by each Splendor musician. In addition, members can enjoy all Splendor activities at a reduced rate. This concept of membership now generates €125.000 every year, before the first concert is even announced. The idea of membership also added to the sense of community among Splendor musicians and members, on which the artist rationale is founded.

The initial Splendor musicians took responsibility with regard to the qualities of the space itself. On the ground floor of the building, the former men's and women's bathing spaces of the original building have been converted into a large and a small concert hall, and a bar was installed centrally. The basement has a rehearsal room, a recording studio and a luthier workplace. Meetings and small-scale concerts can be held in the renovated attic. The specific installation and equipment of the spaces presented some challenges. As each of the 50 musicians had their own priorities with regard to material and spatial setup, every space can be reorganized as one thinks best. There is no stage, and chairs, sound system and lights can be set up according to the specific use.

Organizational model

Managing an initiative like Splendor, which started from first principles, presented the musicians with structural challenges. In designing a sustainable business model, the Splendor organization made specific and unconventional choices in three areas: governance structure, financial structure and distribution of responsibilities.

Firstly, the organizational form of Splendor is that of a foundation, consisting of two parallel layers of governance: the musicians on the one hand, and a facilitating small management team (consisting of all trained musicians) that support daily operations on the other hand. As artistic autonomy is at the core of the project, all artistic decisions are distributed among all musicians, exemplifying a genuine form of shared leadership. The group of musicians display a high degree of diversity, both in terms of instruments as in terms of musical styles. This diversity offers unique opportunities for cross-fertilized artistic innovation through unexpected combinations. Equally importantly, it provides possibilities to fully utilize the venue's capacity and opportunities, as various musicians tend to use the building in different ways, and on different moments of the week (e.g. some concerts are more suited for a Sunday afternoon, while others might be more appropriate for a Friday night). The diversity of musicians is perceived as a vital condition for the organization to run smoothly. As Splendor representatives sketch out, classical musicians tend to be strongly networked within the artistic community, while laptop musicians maintain the technological requirements of the organization. Additionally, the diversity of musicians combined with their connection to established institutions such as large orchestras provides Splendor with a large and diverse audience base.

Secondly, the financial model of Splendor is many-sided. Operational costs are covered by a combination of individual ticket sales for concerts (of which 70% goes to the organizing musician, and 30% to the venue) and income generated by the approximately 1250 Splendor members. Also on the financial side, the Splendor model strongly relies on the musicians' own initiatives. Splendor musicians are therefore encouraged to find ways of bringing in money. On some occasions, when the building's diary allows it, the space can be rented by other organizations that are introduced by Splendor musicians. In March of 2019, for example, the annual St. Patrick's Festival took plays in Splendor's concert halls. One Splendor musician was the brain behind the festival that featured music, dance, literature, cuisine and film. Finally, income through the in-house exploitation of food and beverages goes to the venue.

A third and arguably most important element of the Splendor business model concerns the sharing of ownership and responsibility. Propelled by the aforementioned legitimacy crisis in the classical music field, and its resulting pressure on the subsidizing system on which the field relies, many organizations are increasingly requiring additional tasks and responsibilities from their musicians (e.g. playing commercially popular music to attract new/young audiences, engaging in educational activities, etc.). However, this has been known to lead to friction, as this increase in responsibilities is often not met with a corresponding increase in artistic ownership. Splendor, on the other hand, has devised a system of obligations as well as rights. Through this system, each artist has certain duties towards the organization as a whole, which collectively unlocks possibilities for unrestricted personal artistic endeavors. In return for their commitment to the project, and the initial €1.000 investment, each musician literally received the key to the building. The venue is available to them for 365 days per year, day and night for

any purpose, from rehearsals to performances, to create and explore, to produce and to program in whatever manner they find interesting.

Besides the initial investment, each musician commits himself to give one 'member-concert' per year, in which the Splendor members have free entrance. On average, a Splendor member attends six out of the possible 50 member-concerts yearly. As there is no intervening programmer, and as all musicians have collectively invested financially as well as in terms of time and effort in the project, Splendor is truly a representative of a 'common good': it is owned, produced and sustained by all. Key in making this system work, is that all musicians, through the sense of ownership, understand that the organization as a whole needs to balance artistic vision with pragmatic issues such as availability of time and space, and overall financial viability. As such, Splendor will never interfere in the content of the programming of the individual musicians, but the venue manager does give suggestions on how to maximize the use of the building. For example, it is always allowed to give a concert that will probably only attract a very limited amount of people, but then it might be suggested to plan it on the same evening as another small concert so that they can work that day with just a limited staff for the bar. This distribution of rights and responsibilities, and the appeal to the musicians' flexibility is remarkable, given the fact that the 50 Splendor musicians have never been in one room together. Venue manager Norman van Dartel notes:

> "Musicians invest time, skills and their flexibility, and in exchange they get the key to the building. This system of rights and obligations works very well. In all these years, we have had not one microphone missing." (Van Dartel 2018)

The sense of co-ownership is not limited to the musicians only, as the organization deliberately attempts to induce a sense of co-ownership at the audience (especially the members) as well. The audience's input is vital for the success of the operation, which goes beyond the mere financial aspect that they bring in. Splendor concerts are deliberately organized in order to enhance the artist-audience connection. By cultivating an informal setting during the concerts – which often includes many moments of interaction with the audience – as well as after the concerts where artists and audience meet at the bar for discussion afterwards, a sense of artistic exchange occurs. For example, concerts often have intermediary discussion moments in which the audience can offer suggestions for improvements, after which the same program is repeated taking into account the provided feedback. Such a 'work in progress' approach enables feedback loops between artists and audience that is nearly impossible in the more distant institutionalized classical music settings. As such, Splendor is more than a one-way music venue, but it profiles itself as a peer-to-peer as well as an artist-to-audience meeting and workspace where musicians can freely communicate with their audience and with each other.

Programming policy of Splendor

The primary goal of Splendor is to create an environment with complete artistic independence. As a general rule, Splendor does not make any formal procedure for something unless it is absolutely required. Splendor was meant to be a place free of institutional and artistic boundaries, where anything is possible and equally appreciated. As a result, every Splendor musician makes use of the building in their own way. Splendor musician Michael Gieler explains:

> "For me, Splendor is above all something very pragmatic. It is primarily a place where I can rehearse and where I can occasionally work together with other musicians or composers. For me personally, Splendor is not quintessentially a performance space, although other musicians may well use the building that way." (Gieler 2019)

Co-founder and composer David Dramm makes different use of the building:

> "Me as a composer, I use the space from about 11AM until 2PM, as a working space but also as a recording studio. I can just grab some musicians at the coffee machine to make a trial recording of the things I'm working on." (Dramm 2018)

In terms of musical content, there are no limitations to what a Splendor musician can program, time and space permitting: the classical repertoire and contemporary music are equally welcomed, as well as experimentation with regard to concert presentation and artist-audience relationship.

Programming philosophy

Based on this premise of artistic autonomy, Splendor has made several business model decisions that enables the organization to further exploit their vision. First, Splendor has decided to employ a 'no-programming program' for the venue. Splendor has an open agenda, in which each of the 50 musicians can reserve a slot for any of the three possible performance spaces (housing an audience of 100, 60 or 30 people respectively) in the building on a first-come, first-served basis. The musicians can reserve a place for a rehearsal or concert of themselves, but are also free to program a concert played by outside musicians that they deem interesting to showcase. By lack of a Splendor programmer, all partaking musicians are free to create or perform whichever work of art they want, without having to answer to anyone but themselves. Indeed, every musician is responsible for their own projects, both artistically and financially speaking, as their fees depend on the amount of people that attend the concerts. Based on the same logic, Splendor has deliberately decided not to make a claim for any subsidies, as this choice could push Splendor into a context of institutionalization: subsidies often come with their own set of stipulations toward the organization in terms of

elements such as organizational structures, reporting, expectations, and a certain balance in musicians, concerts, reach, etc. (Stockenstrand and Ander 2014). As such, the autonomy which forms the essence of this endeavor could be reduced drastically.

The artistic output of Splendor is diverse and crosses the entire musical spectrum. Conventional concerts appear alongside experimental projects. For Gieler, the main artistic value of Splendor is precisely the fact that there is no interference whatsoever with regard to content, and that artistic cross-fertilization is not explicitly requested:

> "Every Splendor musician employs the venue as he sees fit, and most of them do not even have the explicit goal of doing something together. The outcome on an artistic level, therefore, is very diverse and lacks any kind of logic. Splendor is primarily a facility: there is space to do things, there are plenty of interesting figures walking around, and from time to time an interesting project comes out. Everything happens by chance, and I would not have it otherwise." (Gieler 2019)

The diversity of Splendor's programs is a valuable asset for the audience. Through its versatility, Splendor wants to cultivate a permanent festival feeling where everyone feels at home but can be surprised as well. Audiences also responded warmly to the small-scale concert setting. As Dramm explains:

> "The audience is excited, because they get to see a singer that normally sings in the Opera House, at 100 euros a ticket. At Splendor, she sings a program that she herself wants to sing, for only 20 euros." (Dramm 2018)

Concert Formats

Consistent with the programming philosophy, Splendor concerts are not presented as a season but are separately announced on the organization's website. The fact that there is no programming policy does not imply that there are no recurring concert formats or series.

A typical Splendor concert is presented by a Splendor musician, who either performs alone or collaborates with fellow musicians from inside or outside of Splendor. In March 2019, for example, a concert entitled 'Paul Zaba's accordion songbook' was organized by a Splendor musician, in this case the composer Luke Deane, who invited two fellow musicians. The concert featured the première of a songbook with music for accordion, voice and violin, newly composed by around 10 composers from around the world. This Splendor concert was the second leg of a bigger project, of which the first project took place in London in 2018. Tickets to this particular concert cost 8 euros for regular audiences, while members pay only 5 euros. Another typical event was the 2019 concert called 'Polyphony and Eccentricity', in which

baroque music was combined with electronics. The first part of the concert was curated by Splendor musician Sarah Jeffery, who plays the recorder in minimal and synth-pop styles. Her program combined songs by the medieval female mystic Hildegard von Bingen with loop station improvisations. The second part of the concert featured BLOCK4, a British recorder quartet (invited by Sarah Jeffery) that combines old repertoire with electronics.

A crucial part of Splendor's concerts are the member concerts. Each Splendor musician is required to organize at least one such concert every year. A 2019 member concert was entitled 'Wave.vs.Pix'. The concert departed from the idea that composers, over time, have always experimented with the affinities between sounds and the images they evoke. Using both music and images from Schulhoff, Griebel, Louis Andriessen, Sam Taylor and Michel van der Aa, Splendor musician Gerard Bouwhuis tried to let the listener decide whether the eye or the ear dominated this particular interdisciplinary experience. Gerard Bouwhuis played the piano and was joined by Splendor violinist Heleen Hulst. This member concert could be attended for free by all 1250 members. Tickets for other visitors could be purchased for 16.50 euros. Another member concert in 2019 focused on core chamber music repertoire by Mendelssohn, Haydn, Chopin and Debussy. This member concert was organized by Michael Gieler, who plays the viola in the Royal Concertgebouworkest. He was joined on stage by promising young talents that he supports through his 'Music Course Foundation'.

The 2019 program also features more traditional concerts like a Beethoven series and a concert dedicated to Rachmaninov, inaugurating the new Steinway grand piano that Splendor bought. It is remarkable that these concerts, that can be more easily be associated with the traditional concert circuit, are in general more expensive (averaging around 20 euros) than less conventional concerts (averaging just under 15 euros). Although no data exist that can confirm or falsify this tendency, it can be suspected that these more conventional concerts attract a different audience, that is used to paying a multiple of this amount in their general concert surroundings. As the musicians are free to ask any ticket price they want, it is plausible that market forces are at work and partially affirm the market tendencies that run outside of the Splendor environment.

Outreach and education

As Splendor is concerned with the future of classical music and music and general, an increasing amount of educational activities are being organized under the name Splendor Kids. At first sight, this somewhat contradicts Splendor's premise of no programming. Although these regular activities put strains on the open diary, their presence can be legitimized through the fact that Splendor is, first and foremost, an organization that needs to think pragmatically. Educational activities are organized during the day, when the venue is the least occupied by Splendor musicians. The activities are not only a regular source of money, but also a source

for the legitimacy of the organization. Finally, all educational activities are organized and guided by Splendor musicians.

The main goal of Splendor's educational activities, is to familiarize children with the diversity of music. The Splendor Kids program inspires children to engage in creative experimentation, which takes place during workshops in singing, improvisation and composition. Another program called 'Future Orchestra' brings together children between 6 and 13 years old in a creative orchestral setting that welcomes all instruments. During school vacations, the orchestra members come together for two days, to improvise and compose new music. The Future Orchestra plays two or three concerts every year, often around a central theme that has emerged during the workshops. Recent examples include programs entitled 'Dirk: A Space Opera', 'Birdcomposition' and 'Halloween Concert'. Other educational projects include choir lessons every Wednesday afternoon, under guidance of a Splendor musician. During workshops sessions, children often visit concerts that are programmed at that time, to get acquainted with various musical instruments and musical styles.

Repertoire development

Because of Splendor's specific *modus operandi,* the output of Splendor often pushes the boundaries of what is artistically conventional. Projects like that often emerge by chance. Norman van Dartel gives the example of Splendor's opening event:

> "We had about 800 members when we opened in September 2013, and only 80 people fitted in the concert hall. We therefore organized ten opening events in one weekend, so all of the members could come in. I wrote down the names of our 50 musicians and put them in a hat. By drawing names, we randomly put together musical ensembles, to play on one of the opening concerts. It was their responsibility to do something. It could be anything. As a result, everything was new, and was created on very short notice." (Van Dartel 2018)

During the Splendor season, musicians are encouraged to work together, especially for their annual member concerts.

Also in non-pragmatic terms, the business model of Splendor has a profound impact on the artistic output. By lack of any programming policy, musicians declare that they start to think differently about their own practice, their work and its mode of presentation. By eliminating the difference between public and private, Splendor musicians try to break down the boundaries between what they are making and the actual experience of it. Informal discussions with the audience and on-demand adaptations of the performed works are examples of this idea of the collective artwork-in-progress. Efforts are made to make new music understandable to audiences, not by lowering musical thresholds but by making the

audiences familiar with new idioms. Splendor's tagline "Get closer to the music" strongly resonates in this idea. As David Dramm explains:

> "A good illustration is Philip Glass' practice in the 70's. He used to organize open rehearsals and immediately share his work-in-progress with the public, over the course of several months. I think a lot of the Splendor musicians are doing things that way: they give sneak previews on a regular basis and create a kind of dialogue between the people that come to the space and the so-called creative output. One of our challenges is actually showing what we are making. One way of doing that is by spreading out the work process and making it accessible to people; like a sort of live-stream, but one that is actually taking place in a living-room setting. By the time you have your première coming up, there is already 500-600 people that have been following the process from up close." (Dramm 2018)

Splendor does not keep record of all the performed concerts. Keeping track of all past and future performances would contradict the very ideas of an open diary and complete programming freedom. All artistic projects taking place in Splendor are independent from any strategy and internal or external policy. It would therefore be negligent to gather performance data and make graphical representations of Splendor's programming trends.

Discussion

The Splendor story has become an enormous success in Amsterdam. In March of 2018, the 1000th concert was performed in Splendor's main hall, kicking off the musical festivities of the organization's 5-year anniversary. In a cultural field characterized by a survival of the fittest, Splendor has managed to stay operational. They key to understanding the success of Splendor, as orchestra representative suggest, lies in the fact that the organization transcends the distinction between artistic and organizational (or aesthetic and pragmatic) factors. In the Splendor business model, the form of the organization and the content that it produces, are closely intertwined. According to co-founder David Dramm, this has everything to do with finding the right scale on which to operate:

> "The quality stems from the facts that we started with top-flight musicians only, and that we committed to producing small-scale stuff. Accordingly, we didn't need a marketing division, because the musicians fill the hall with people they can bring in themselves." (Dramm 2018)

The organization's business model indeed presents a model beyond the traditional combined market and state approach, seemingly avoiding the artistic constraints that are commonly associated with both. Central to Splendor's artistic profile is the open program approach

where repertoire and experiment are equally valued. This no-restriction policy cultivates a feeling of artistic ownership by the musicians that is often lacking in traditional institutions. Importantly, Van Dartel has stressed that the way Splendor works, is not the outcome of any organizational or artistic planning and preferences. The present situation characterized by a heterogeneity of both musicians, concerts and artistic currents, as well as its growing success of Splendor, is claimed to be the accidental outcome of the open structure, and a product of what is considered artistically urgent by the artists themselves. However, Splendor attracts criticism as well, and continues to face limitations and difficulties along the way.

Firstly, Splendor realizes that neighbor organizations in the Amsterdam region might feel that their alternative concert circuit contaminates the music market. Currently, Splendor strictly follows its policy of having a 'no-programming' program: all musicians have complete freedom to plan concerts at the venue as they see fit. In some occasions, Splendor musicians performed a low-threshold try-out of a concert that was programmed in traditional venues such as The Royal Concertgebouw just one day later for up to three times the Splendor ticket price. Although these overlaps are avoided in the form of an informal gentlemen's agreement, the lack of any programming strategy sometimes distorts fair competition.

Secondly, the Splendor committee acknowledges that the organization may become a victim of its own success. The question rises whether the idealized manner of non-programming can remain manageable as pragmatic issues (e.g. economic viability) impose themselves, as pragmatic considerations are sometimes necessary to guarantee the artistic freedom. Even within the current model, there are also some minor restrictions in terms of program feasibility. As a minimum of pragmatic necessities has to be considered (bills have to be paid, staff has to be compensated and the building needs to be maintained), a certain balance has to be struck that maximizes the use of the building. While Van Dartel contends that a learning curve irons out most asymmetries, he equally admits that he sometimes applies a 'soft coaching' to fully exploit the building's possibilities.

> "The goal is not to do as many concerts as possible, but to keep this freedom we need to make it work. We need to make some choices." (Van Dartel 2018)

These choices equally manifest themselves as practical restrictions. For example, only 50 musicians can take part in the Splendor system. An increased number of participating musicians would require a larger building, logistic upgrades, more sophisticated planning tools and all the wage costs associated with these changes. A democratically chosen representative committee of seven Splendor musicians decides on the eligibility of candidates who show interest in joining the Splendor team, when a position becomes vacant. As this selection process is unavoidable, certain criteria have to be met in order to be considered as a Splendor musician. These selection criteria do not consider musical virtuosity – as a high level of excellence is an a priori requirement – but mainly cover the musician's intrinsic motivation,

capability to inspire and complementarity to the existing group. To create and preserve this shared atmosphere of diversity ensures that all musicians are oriented towards a common goal without having an artistically homogeneous voice.

Thus, despite the adage of radical artistic openness, the Splendor model is enclosed by the 50 professional musicians. As Nobel prize winner Elinor Ostrom defined in her first rule of managing commons: a clearly defined boundary (including who has access and who has not) is necessary to sustainably manage the commons (Ostrom 1990). The question arises whether the current organizational model has the potential to upscale beyond this number. As stated, the Splendor project only works through shared responsibility of all members, as it requires all claiming and sustaining the ownership of the common good. Van Dartel: "Everybody is responsible for the building, everybody is an owner. It's not my party, it's from everybody" (Van Dartel 2018). The Splendor representatives agree on the improbability to upscale this model in a manner that the plurality still works as a plurality and feels as one. Upscaling the model would most likely amount to assuming the organizational model of the traditional concert venue, which would position Splendor in direct competition with more muscular players in the field. As such, the artistic independence that is the added value of the Splendor business model, would be compromised.

Thirdly, there are uncertainties over the possibility to duplicate the Splendor model or even deploy it as a new standard model. As the unique possibilities of the Splendor model seem to resonate with many more musicians, requests came to see whether the model could be copied in other cities. Specifically, a funder in Rotterdam has made a venue available and inquired whether Splendor's initial drivers would be willing to duplicate the model there. As the Rotterdam situation is launched from a more top-down approach then the bottom-up initiative that started Splendor Amsterdam, the organization is faced with many questions that can only be answered over time. Questions arise surrounding what organizational and business model elements are opportune to be copied, and what elements need to be adjusted to the particular contextual situation. For example, Dramm stressed the importance of both the musicians and the audience living within biking-distance of the venue.

Finally, similar to the previous point, there is an anxiety both within and without the Splendor ranks, that the organization's business model might become a harmful precedent that can be strategically used by policy administrators to justify the abolition of subsidies. If the Splendor model would be put forward as an exemplary design for self-governance, the model could easily be appropriated by a logic of austerity. In 2015, the city of Amsterdam awarded its annual Amsterdam Prize for the Arts, the most important cultural prize in the city, to Splendor. In the jury report, the artistic and creative profile that Amsterdam cultivates as a city, is explicitly referred to:

"I AMsterdam: that is the motto to promote Amsterdam and to profile the city as an international, dynamic environment (…) and a laboratory for innovation. These qualities can be brought back to the present sub-climate in which creative people find themselves at home. People who not only make beautiful things, but also show what they like and, that way, reflect upon the city and society" (Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst 2015).

Further on, the report emphasizes the exemplary role Splendor plays in the city of Amsterdam:

"Splendor reflects the spirit of our time in the best sense: independent, through all musical genres, professional and cooperative at a high level. (…) The jury hopes that Amsterdam will be woken up by your work, time and again" (Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst 2015).

This calling to the entrepreneurial attitude, formulated as the emblematic spirit of our time, can lead to the perverse result that artists and organizations are now expected to fully maintain themselves. Applied on a larger scale, this would arguably enhance market conformism of creative organizations, undermining the artistically emancipatory movement of the alternative organization. The aforementioned coordination problem between pragmatic necessities of the presentation sphere and artistic aspirations of the production sphere can thus take the form of a vicious cycle: creative solutions to institutional crises may in time lead to the intensification of the very same crisis.

The reality is that most of Splendor's 50 members are established musicians who have stable incomes elsewhere. For example, Splendor's musicians include musicians of the renowned Royal Concertgebouworkest and The Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. The appeal of Splendor is not the financial return, but the fact that it provides musicians with a convenient space, in the material as well as in the non-material sense, to launch their creative endeavors in whichever way they see fit. This artistic rationale of creative freedom is generally weaker in traditional institutions, as a result of organizational inertia. The fact that large arts organizations have larger financial resources principally enables them to engage in artistic experimentation, but the same secure comfort leads them to avoid changes that would potentially affect it negatively (Castañer and Campos 2002; Glynn 2002).

5. London Symphony Orchestra

Introduction

"British musicians are, on the whole, neither optimists nor pessimists, but imperturbable pragmatists" (Morrison 2003, 54). The opening line from Richard Morrison's *Orchestra: The LSO: A Century of Triumphs and Turbulence* epitomizes the relentless fighting spirit found within London orchestras. Over the last century, countless new orchestras have emerged and disappeared in London, as a result of musicians' disagreements over the existing orchestras, or to feed the artistic desires of exceptionally ambitious individuals. Taken as a whole, the London orchestras not only tell a story of opportunism and competition, but also of an unyielding and enviable determination to survive. Today, London houses no less than four self-governing orchestras (London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra), as well as the fully salaried BBC Symphony Orchestra. The imbalanced presence of five professional symphony orchestras in the UK's capital, with only a handful of orchestras in the rest of the country, can be interpreted against the horizon of London as a global capital of culture. The fact that four of the five symphony orchestras are self-governing, and therefore rely on government subsidies and regulations far less than their continental siblings, shows to what extent cultural policy in the UK is intertwined with the use of culture as a resource for economic as well as social development (Oakley 2012). This idea accounts for the orchestras' activity on two very different scales.

Firstly, as the nation's capital in economic as well as in cultural terms, London serves as an example for other regions within the UK, exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit that is not found to such a degree in other UK areas. Likewise, London's history as imperial capital and its continued image as one of the world's foremost cities, bestows on the city a central role within international cultural circuits. The city's symphony orchestras, shaped within the particular economic and cultural context of London, are incarnations of London's ambition to retain this image. The entrepreneurial spirit of London as a world city is reflected in the orchestra's self-governing model. Because the orchestras are responsible for their own financial resources, they are relatively independent from government interference, but all the more dependent on audiences they need to share with competing orchestras. Secondly, each of the London orchestras takes responsibility in the social development of its service area. With small-scale initiatives such as school concerts and workshops for refugees, the orchestras' outreach and education programs penetrate deeply into London's often neglected neighborhoods. Each of the self-governing London orchestras has a charitable status, meaning that a considerable share of their incomes comes from charitable foundations.

The fact that this dense concentration of orchestras in London is maintained by a complex web of subsidies, foundation grants, ticket revenues and private and corporate donorship, has left the London orchestras particularly vulnerable to legitimacy issues, especially in times of economic uncertainty. The London orchestras, therefore, have often been forced to strike a difficult balance between their focus on the local and social on the one hand, and on the global and entrepreneurial on the other hand. Paradoxically, all of these factors have contributed to the presence of no less than five orchestras, making London the most competitive but arguably the most fruitful orchestral center in the world. Cut-throat competition among the orchestras was at it fiercest in the first half of the 19th century, and meanwhile each of the orchestras has stabilized within its own service area and built up a separate audience community within London (Alderman 2019). The vast pool of freelance musicians active in London ensures every orchestra of a relatively stable, and most of all qualitatively stellar musicians base.

London Symphony Orchestra is Europe's oldest and best-documented example of a self-governing orchestra. Since 1982, after several decades of sharing performance spaces with other London orchestras, the LSO performs in the Barbican Center which is located in the cultural and economic heart of London, and has foreign residencies in Paris, Tokyo and New York. In 2017, 70 of the orchestra's London concerts were performed at the Barbican, and 49 in the orchestra's small-scale venue LSO St Luke's. In September 2017, the orchestra welcomed music director Sir Simon Rattle, who returned to his home city after 16 years at the helm of the Berlin Philharmonic. As the most generously funded London orchestra by the Arts Council of England, an adequate barometer for a cultural organization's legitimacy, the LSO can be argued to be the most representative orchestra of its city.

Managed by a board of directors of which a majority is elected from the musicians' own ranks, the LSO has always tried to keep organizational sustainability and artistic pertinence as closely attuned as possible. Since the orchestra's first concert on June 9th, 1904, the LSO has proved the value of its model by tying together a seemingly endless string of 'firsts' and 'mosts': the LSO was the first London orchestra to play silent films, the first one to have a recording contract, and the first one to exploit the educational potential of the internet. The orchestra has earned millions being the most recorded orchestra in the world as well as the world's most streamed orchestra on Spotify, but also found itself on the brink of bankruptcy more than once. London Symphony Orchestra has always worked under strict constraints and has combatted problems which other orchestras only recently face. Overall, the history of the LSO very colorfully demonstrates the advantages and flaws of a self-governing orchestra model.

A brief history of the LSO

The birth of the LSO: competition and pragmatism

When the global orchestra culture started to flourish towards the end of the 19th century, London remained the only major European city without a top-class orchestra. The Queen's Hall Orchestra, the only permanent orchestra in London, monopolized concert life in the city and catered to the needs of a rising middle class (McVeigh 2013). Foreign orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouworkest and Boston Symphony Orchestra performed in the UK's capital frequently, at an artistic level incomparable to that of the Queen's Hall Orchestra. The lack of a stable orchestra formation in London can be ascribed to the so-called deputy system on which the London musical scene relied. All working on a freelance basis, musicians had the habit to cancel any pervious engagement when something more lucrative or prestigious came along (Morrison 2003), which resulted in frequent last-minute replacements of orchestra members by so-called deputies. Keeping this entrepreneurial spirit intact, the London orchestra scene was dominated by insufficiently rehearsed and low-quality performances for a long time. At the start of a morning rehearsal of the Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1904, the orchestra impresario Robert Newman uttered the famous sentence: "Gentlemen, in the future there will be no deputies; good morning" (Morrison 2003, 11). In return for their increased engagements, all of the Queen's Hall Orchestra members would receive a guaranteed wage (Galinsky and Lehman 1995). Upon this organizational turnover, 46 unhappy orchestra members collectively decided to resign and set up their own orchestra; an emancipatory action that required a lot of entrepreneurial courage in hierarchical London (McVeigh 2013). Without any prospect of support from wealthy patrons, let alone governmental support, the 46 musicians took their chances in an entirely free-market economy. They made clever use of an undeniable momentum, in the sense that they correctly anticipated the commercial potential of a society with an expanding middle-class. The new orchestra's first concert on the Thursday afternoon of June 9th, 1904, is in itself an indication of the prosperous and leisured audience that the orchestra hoped to attract.

To realize its goals, a new organizational model imposed itself for the orchestra. On the new orchestra's first meeting on May 19th, 1904, the musicians decided that their orchestra would be a co-operative venture, in which all players would share profits as well as risks, and for which an organizational body would be elected from their own ranks (McVeigh 2013). This musicians board would oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization and invite conductors and soloists. With each of the 46 musicians paying a subscription fee of 15£, the joint stock company 'The London Symphony Orchestra, Limited' was born, which exists to this day. To guarantee a high performance quality, London Symphony Orchestra somewhat revised the deputy system, and put an evenly flexible but more controllable system in place where members could alternate their position in the orchestra with a pool of previously approved deputies (McVeigh 2013). One rehearsal per concert remained the norm. The organization was established "for the purpose of giving symphony and other concerts of high-class music, and of accepting and fulfilling engagements to perform at concerts, recitals, at

homes, and other occasions and functions of every description where their services are desired" (Morrison 2003, 325). Two things are particularly interesting in this rudimentary mission statement. Firstly, the intentionally broad formulation "every description where their services are desired" legitimizes a flexible model that allows their engagement for projects of every size and content. Secondly, the name London Symphony Orchestra is in itself a clever branding strategy. London Symphony Orchestra was the first London-based orchestra that identified with the city itself, not with a particular concert hall, making it the representative London orchestra from the start.

In the cooperative system of London Symphony Orchestra, all profits went directly to the players themselves. The musicians, indeed, were their own management, their own shareholders and their own fundraisers. Because there was no non-playing staff, the orchestra's overhead fee could easily match that of other orchestras, who were often forced to add a 10% management fee to their bill (Morrison 2003). It also meant, however, that the members literally payed for any box-office deficit. The necessity of crude calculations and negotiations left little room for artistic maneuvering. Contrary to the other orchestras that were operative in London (and beyond), the LSO attracted a different conductor for each program. As each of these conductors identified with a particular repertoire, programming decisions were mostly the accidental outcome of financial negotiations. With a few exceptions of programs payed for by individuals, the LSO programs did not include new music, and instead focused on large-scale symphonic works by dead composers (McVeigh 2013). By comparison, the Queen's Hall Orchestra meanwhile worked with Arnold Schoenberg as a regular conductor and offered programs that featured works by then-contemporary composers such as Mahler, Scriabin and Stravinsky. This is a good example of how a particular orchestra model impacts its artistic policy.

Overall, the first few decades of the LSO's existence are marked by a capricious shift between highs and lows. The first true highlight was an international concert tour with Artur Nikisch, who took the LSO across the Atlantic, as the first European orchestra ever. At merely 8 years old, the orchestra thus sent a strong message to the orchestra world, which resulted in the negotiation of a lucrative recording contract upon arrival in London. During the First World War, however, audience numbers of the LSO dropped drastically, putting the orchestra's survival at risk for the first time. After the war, the attraction of notable guest conductors such as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Otto Klemperer and Bruno Walter briefly restored the LSO's financial health. Not long afterwards, the almost simultaneous occurrence of three complications marked another difficult period for the orchestra. Firstly, in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression, the music market in London froze to an unseen low. Secondly, the fully salaried and publicly subsidized BBC Symphony Orchestra that was founded in 1930 provided harsh competition for the financially weaker LSO. Thirdly, the spectacularly ambitious and gifted conductor Sir Thomas Beecham founded the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932, not only recruiting from the LSO ranks but also snitching away important

LSO engagements such as its annual opera production in Covent Garden (Morrison 2003). Ironically, the continued presence of the mercantile deputy system which was the LSO's initial *raison d'être,* thus almost proved fatal for the orchestra.

LSO and Arts Council: highs and lows

A stream of external support emerged at exactly the right time for the LSO. Before World War II, cultural institutions in London led a hand-to-mouth existence, supported by anyone who was willing to pay for it himself. The LSO, for example, survived on box office alone for half a century (Galinsky and Lehman 1995). The dire circumstances of World War II remarkably entailed a silver lining for London Symphony Orchestra. Explicitly supported by the UK government wartime committee called The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, the LSO toured extensively in all parts of Britain during the war, to keep the morale of the country's population high. Unconsciously, the UK government had created a large market for classical music, which needed to be maintained after the war. In 1946, the Arts Council of Great Britain was founded, a body responsible for subsidizing the arts throughout the nation (Wolf 2017).

The impetus of keeping the national morale high, permeated the LSO's programs for many years: British music from then-contemporary composers such as Vaughan Williams, Bax and Britten appeared regularly. The support of the Arts Council also instigated a mentality shift in the orchestra. The habit of rehearsing only once for every concert, or not at all, was only maintained for commercial projects that were not funded by the Arts Council (Wolf 2017). In terms of organizational structure, the LSO became a non-profit-distributing organization, just like its recent rivals, which meant that all incomes were to be applied towards promotion of the artistic mission of the orchestra (Morrison 2003). Bonusses and dividends to orchestra members now belonged to the past. Still, the stable source of incomes pressurized the orchestra to behave safely. The amount of subsidies was sufficient to ensure that subsidized orchestras could easily compete with more commercial organizations, but was deliberately kept low enough to keep the organizations' attention on its box office (Wolf 2017). The well-crafted balance between commercially interesting concerts and more challenging concerts thus remained firmly in place.

The 1960's saw the London Symphony Orchestra reach a point of artistic glory. General manager Ernest Fleischmann had a keen eye for young stars on their way to international prominence, which led to the discovery of the talents of Claudio Abbado, Zubin Mehta and Colin Davis. Fleischmann's most important contribution, however, was the thorough professionalization of the LSO. He enlarged the orchestra's staff, abandoned the LSO's long-established 'no play, no pay' policy and arranged sickness benefits and holiday payments for players (Morrison 2003). Most importantly, Fleischmann turned his attention towards industrial sponsorship, effectuating yet another relatively stable stream of income.

Fleischmann's mingling in artistic affairs, on the other hand, often frustrated players and sometimes led to wrongly anticipated situations. While the orchestra received extra funding for a period of collaboration with living composers such as Copland and Britten, the overall financial statistics were unfavorable. In 1969, Fleischmann programmed a series of concerts featuring repertoire of the Second Viennese School, conducted by Pierre Boulez. The program required twenty-two extra rehearsals and generated a loss of £12.000 (Wolf 2017).

The commercial projects in which the LSO increasingly engaged, provided a strong safety net for these losses. In the 1970's, the orchestra received almost 50% of its revenue from recording engagements, compared to around 16,5% from Arts Council funding (Morrison 2003). Recording contracts brought fame and fortune to the LSO, especially since the arrival of the young conductor André Previn, who was unexperienced but exceptionally comfortable with cameras. After a short-notice recording of the famous *Star Wars* soundtrack, the LSO became the favorite orchestra of film music composer John Williams. Also apart from these recording engagements, Previn initiated a new era for the LSO, making it a truly 20th century orchestra by expanding the repertoire with British composers such as Tippett and Walton, as well as previously overlooked Russian composers such as Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Shostakovich (Morrison 2003).

When Claudio Abbado succeeded Previn as principal conductor in 1979, the now 75-year old London Symphony Orchestra was formally confirmed to become the resident orchestra at the to-be-built Barbican Centre in City of London. When the LSO performed its first concert in the Barbican in March 1982, construction was ten years behind schedule, and cost more than twenty times its original estimate. Worst of all, the acoustics of the concert hall where far below expectations, much to the dislike of Abbado. During the first years of its residency at the Barbican, the LSO was losing £2000 per performance (Morrison 2003). By 1984, the LSO had accumulated a deficit of £500.000, an amount higher than the orchestra's annual Arts Council grant (Galinsky and Lehman 1995).

Around that time, cultural policy in the UK was changing, enabling the LSO to survive on artistically ambiguous terms. Before the 1980's, the Arts Council had remained an arms-length institution that did not structurally interfere with the actual organizations it supported (Wolf 2017). This enabled arts organizations to largely focus on the traditional fine arts and remain indifferent towards more commercial forms of art production. In the early 1980's, the distinction between subsidized and commercial art forms was broken down on policy level, as well as notions of high and low art. A new ethos of reaching out to the young, as well as to ethnic minorities, women and lower-income classes, resulted in an embrace of popular culture by traditional arts institutions (Oakley 2012). Apart from arts institutions, public money was now also invested in commercial enterprises such as recording studios and magazines. With people's cultural consumption now shaped by market forces, subsidies for arts institutions dropped (Wolf 2017), leading the orchestra to intensify its attempts for sponsorship and

private patronage. In that period, musicians' wages decreased, small-scale concerts were minimalized, and popular programs with minimal rehearsals, the backing of pop bands and an endless string of film sessions outnumbered performances of music by classical and romantic composers (Wolf 2017; Morrison 2003).

Recent developments in the LSO

When commercial strategies had averted the financial breakdown of London Symphony Orchestra, former managing director Clive Gillinson reoriented the orchestra's attention towards substantial artistic goals. Initially perceived as a threat to the orchestra's self-governing structure, Gillinson's future-oriented strategies where eventually embraced by the LSO musicians for their artistic merits (Lehman 2000). Towards the end of the 1980's, themed concerts built around the appeal of soloists or conductors allowed the orchestra to explore new repertoires. In 1987, the young Bernstein protégé Michael Tilson Thomas followed Abbado as principal conductor, and introduced the orchestra to modernist Russian repertoires (Morrison 2003). Meanwhile, cultural policy in the UK became increasingly interested in the reciprocal relation between social contexts and arts organizations. The rise of the politics of multiculturalism and inclusivity coincided with the erosion of the indisputable legitimacy of the arts institution (Wolf 2017). Orchestras, therefore, felt obliged to defend their artistic and social purpose according to new principles, and define them in terms of long-term impact. These new principles can easily be deduced from the LSO's mission statement from the early 1990's:

> "The LSO's purpose is to perform, record and promote the appreciation and understanding of and participation in music, through a constantly developing orchestra of the highest international standard and reputation, dedicated to broadening the experience and enhancing the lives of the greatest possible number of people across every area of society. All of the LSO's activities are governed by its equal opportunities policy and an uncompromising commitment to quality, innovation, challenge, variety, new work, education and access." (Galinsky and Lehman 1995, 168)

First and foremost, the new focus on education, outreach and dissemination which permeates this mission statement, crystallized under the name LSO Discovery in 1992. This new educational branch of the LSO aimed at expanding access to, enjoyment of and participation in classical music through projects and concerts in low income areas of Greater London, and by including excluded segments of society such as ethnic minorities and the disabled. On March 27, 2003, the LSO played the opening concert of LSO St Luke's, an unused Baroque church in the northern London area of Shoreditch that was transformed into a fully-equipped music venue for the orchestra's educational work.

Secondly, on a policy level, arts organizations were motivated to highlight their importance to the London economy. Around 2000, the creative industry was the fastest growing sector in London's economy, and a source of one in five new jobs in the city (Oakley 2012). Around that time, arts organizations were primarily supported on account of their ability for economic development. In a way, cultural policies were designed not from the question of what London could do for creative industries, but rather what creative industries could do for London (Oakley 2012). Thus, an entrepreneurial economy was re-established within the field, allying arts organization's potential for creating jobs to instrumental arts policies aimed at serving the needs of the excluded (Oakley 2012). Following these policy trends, the orchestra aimed to equip itself to compete within the market. The LSO's 'Stabilisation Scheme', launched by Gillinson for the 1997-2000 period, was aimed at further widening the access to the LSO and to develop a more durable loyalty from audiences and potential sponsors. From that rationale, the LSO launched its own record label LSO Live in 2000, successfully increasing their number of recordings while also penetrating digital markets. Shortening the supply chain by using in-house resources, the LSO Live label created its own niche, combining qualitative performances with budget prices. By 2007, LSO Live had appeared in the British Phonographic Industry's ten best-selling classical record companies for six consecutive years (Bertolini 2018).

In 2010, when the new conservative-liberal coalition in the UK issued the biggest public spending cuts in decades, central government stressed the potential for private donorship to fill the financial gap (Oakley 2012). When the present managing director Kathryn McDowell launched the 'Moving Music Campaign' between 2012 and 2015, the LSO's largest funding proposal to date, the orchestra aimed to raise £9 million to enhance the LSO's digital visibility and worldwide dissemination. In line with policy trends, the goal was reached through the principle of matched funding, requiring the LSO to raise £6 million itself in order to acquire £3 million of new funding from the Arts Council. One of the achievements of the Moving Music Campaign is the interactive website and application LSO Play that enables users to create their own music with a virtual LSO. This digital portal attracted 85.000 unique visitors and generated 520.000 views between its launch in 2013 and the year 2017 (London Symphony Orchestra 2017). The financial dictates of this new ethos have put an increased emphasis on the orchestra's potential for art dissemination, driving more intrinsically artistic notions of music production and development somewhat to the background.

The LSO Today

London Symphony Orchestra has established a firm global place as a 21st century orchestra. The following years or decades, the orchestra wants to continue pursuing the two parallel tracks outlined above: artistic excellence in performing music is the core of the orchestra's activities, along with making a profound impact on the social fabric of its environment. At the time of writing, the orchestra was anticipating promising events, as well as worrying about potential challenges to the sustainability of the current artistic model of the orchestra.

In September 2017, Sir Simon Rattle conducted his first concert as the new principal conductor of London Symphony Orchestra. A renowned champion of music education and repertoire experimentation, his impact on the orchestra is likely to be different from that of his predecessor Valery Gergiev, who had primarily focused on the standard repertoire. The near future will also see the erection and inauguration of the New Centre for Music in the City of London, with acoustics promised to match those of the world's leading concert halls (Buckingham 2019). This new state-of-the-art center will be the product of a major cooperation between the most prominent musical organizations on London's Culture Mile: the Barbican, the Guildhall School and the LSO. At the time of writing, the imminent Brexit was perceived as a major threat to the LSO's increasingly international mission. However, the continuing discussions and sector-wide uncertainties over the exact effects on cultural life in the UK, have spurred the LSO to follow the events closely, but not to take any specific actions for the time being.

Andra East, head of the LSO Discovery department, summarizes London Symphony Orchestra's current position as an artistic as well as an entrepreneurial organization as follows:

> "The LSO's core mission is to make great music available to the greatest possible number of people. That is the narrative of the orchestra, but also our mission as an organization, in the sense that every aspect of this idea permeates everything we do." (East 2019)

In what follows, it will become clear to what extent the organizational structure of the orchestra is aligned with its artistic mission.

Artistic Mission

In the 2017 annual report of London Symphony Orchestra's activities, the official mission statement of the orchestra is articulated as follows:

> "The principal activities of the Group continue to be a world-class symphony orchestra providing the highest quality musical performances, broadcasts and recordings and the provision of a wide-ranging, inclusive and diverse music community and education program. The LSO is based within the UK and also regularly performs overseas and has a signature sound which emanates from the combined virtuosity of its 88 outstanding musicians sourced from around the world. The LSO aims to be a 21st century orchestra, with a mission to bring the greatest music to the widest possible range of people, engaging the broadest mix of people with the highest quality and most evocative music-making." (London Symphony Orchestra 2017)

As anticipated in the previous paragraphs, this mission statement puts strong emphases on both the performance quality and virtuosity of the orchestra, as well as the idea of inclusivity. The mission statement does not hint at what the orchestra wants to put forward as being 'the greatest music'. Neither the orchestra's repertoire preferences nor the orchestra's stance toward developing the repertoire are explicitly articulated within the mission statement. As will become clear below, this originates in the specific *modus operandi* of the LSO.

Governance structure

A truly interesting and rather unique aspect of London Symphony Orchestra is the fact that it uses a cooperative model, meaning that the orchestra is owned and governed by the musicians themselves. It became clear in the historical outline of the LSO, that this model has endured some adaptations throughout the years. For example, the financial risks are not carried by the individual musicians anymore, and there are no more bonusses when a season has been exceptionally lucrative. The basic principle however, namely the fact that all decisions are made or at least supervised by the musicians themselves, remained unaltered.

Leadership distribution

London Symphony Orchestra Ltd. is governed by a 14-member board of directors. In this board, 6 elected LSO musicians and 3 executive administrators together form a 9-person majority. The elected musicians take responsibility for all internal orchestral affairs, including personnel decisions and artistic planning. The executive administrators consist of, firstly, the managing director, who works on behalf of the board to handle the administrative and strategic side of running the orchestra. The managing director is responsible for government and corporate relations and takes initiative in artistic matters such as programming, touring and recording. Together with the six elected musicians, the managing director forms the Orchestra Committee, which makes day-to-day decisions. Secondly, the board chooses a chairman and a vice-chairman as executive administrators, who must both be playing members (London Symphony Orchestra 2017; Hackman 2002; Lehman 2000). The principal conductor is a member of the board of directors but has no formal role in internal affairs or business strategy. For that reason, he is called the principal conductor and does not carry the more common title of artistic director (with the very recent exception of Sir Simon Rattle). His counselling role, however, is crucial in the process of musical programming, on which will be elaborated below. The remaining 4 positions of non-player members are occupied by external directors from the London business community. This fraction of the orchestra board was installed after the orchestra's financial crisis of the early 1980's. Elected by the orchestra, these board members offer their business expertise in government, community and corporate relations.

The LSO chairman, principal second violinist David Alderman, stresses that the actual role of the board is often very pragmatic:

> "Somebody has to take the decisions about when we start the rehearsals, how to distribute money, which flight we will fly on, and so on." (Alderman 2019)

In this model, streams of authority and commitment go in many directions. As is the case in most organizations, the managing director delegates responsibilities to the company secretary, who in turn delegates to the separate department directors and the administrative staff. But this 'downwards' movement is complemented by a parallel, 'upwards' stream of representation. First of all, as former managing director Gillinson once noted (Hackman 2002), the model contains a very strange leadership ambiguity, in which the head of the organization is in fact hired by its employees. Arguably the two most impactful and powerful positions, those of principal conductor and of managing director, are decided on by the board, the majority of which are playing members. Andra East also points to these parallel streams of involvement:

> "I would never take LSO Discovery in a particular direction without her (the managing director's) involvement. She has overall responsibility over how the LSO is run, and what ambitions we are aiming for. Likewise, I would never make a program without involving the players in it. It's very much a collaborative process." (East 2019)

Even orchestra musicians who are not in the board are heard in the process of decision-making. Apart from regular board-meetings, there are informal orchestra meetings every two weeks, which all non-board members can attend. Because of the high level of informal exchange, LSO musicians feel closely involved (Maitlis 1997). As one musician notes:

> "I do not have the feeling that the orchestra management is very far away. If you experience a problem, you can very easily reach someone who passes it on to the person who can actually do something about it." (Lagasse 2019)

Particularly interesting in this system, is the fact that the musicians themselves have a final say in every aspect of the orchestra's organization. As Andra East remarks:

> "We have players at the very highest level in terms of governance. And the chairman is always a member of the orchestra. There are players who have signed up for various responsibilities: there are members on the finance committee, there are players responsible for the string section, for the education side, for the LSO Live group, and so on. All sections of the orchestra have player involvement." (East 2019)
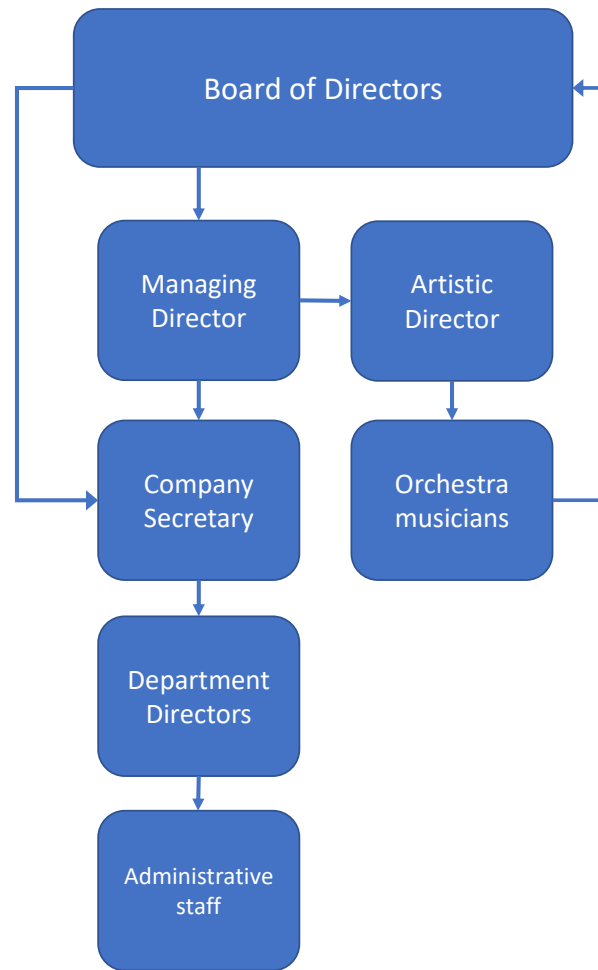
Figure 36: organizational structure of the LSO (Bertolini 2018, 49)

Interestingly, the continuous impact of the players on the way the orchestra is run, thrives more on potential power than actual power. Although employed by the players themselves, the managing director is not solely driven by their instructions. She is elected to make decisions by herself, based on her knowledge and well-connectedness in the business. The self-governed structure provides a high participation opportunity for the players (Maitlis 1997); an element of symbolical power on which musicians agree that it works very well because they feel respected and represented.

LSO membership

The fact that London Symphony Orchestra is a self-governing organization has a profound impact on the way its musicians are engaged in the orchestra. After successfully finishing a trial-period of two years, every new orchestra member formally acquires shares from the orchestra, for a symbolical amount, thereby effectively making him or her a member and shareholder of London Symphony Orchestra Ltd. From that point onwards, each and every LSO member is eligible for a position in the orchestra board. Every musician works on a freelance basis and chooses their annual percentage of employment. The rule is that for each

program, the orchestra must consist of the exact same players, meaning that if a musician wants to take a day off, he is not allowed to play any concert that features this program, which may well be repeated several times throughout a season (Lagasse 2019). Accordingly, there are no salaries for the players: musicians are payed for each concert, rehearsal and recording they appear in. The sum of these separate engagements is payed at the end of each month. Since a few years, there is also a financial compensation for holiday periods (Delafonteyne 2019). This system allows every musician to also play in other orchestras and ensembles, or to combine an orchestra engagement with a teaching job; a practice typical for London and encouraged by the orchestra. A fulltime job with the LSO means that a musician can engage in about 88% of the orchestra's activities (Lagasse 2019). The projects of LSO Discovery are not part of that percentage, except for the Discovery-programs included in the LSO's regular concert season. The LSO administration is very economical with the use of non-LSO members, or so-called extras, making sure that the orchestra's ranks are filled with official LSO members first.

Funding and incomes

As all the London orchestras have charitable status, London Symphony Orchestra's funding model consists of a mixture of public subsidies, sponsorship and ticket sales. Public subsidies come from two sources. The principal channel for government funding of arts is Arts Council of England. This national body distributes public money from the government and the National Lottery to art organizations, aimed at developing and improving the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts (Broughton 2001). Their funding methods consist of annual grants to arts organizations as well as the funding of separate project proposals. Apart from an annual grant from the Arts Council, the LSO receives annual grants from the Corporation of London, a local governmental authority responsible for the support of activities within City of London (Broughton 2001). Corporation of London also manages the Barbican Centre, where the LSO is the resident orchestra. In return for a direct annual subsidy, the LSO performs a certain number of concerts in the Barbican.

The underlying graphs represent incomes and expenditures of the LSO throughout recent seasons. 'Income from grants and donations' includes subsidies from both Arts Council and Corporation of London. 'Activities' includes all LSO actions that fall under its mission statement, and cover all concerts, workshops, courses and recording sessions.
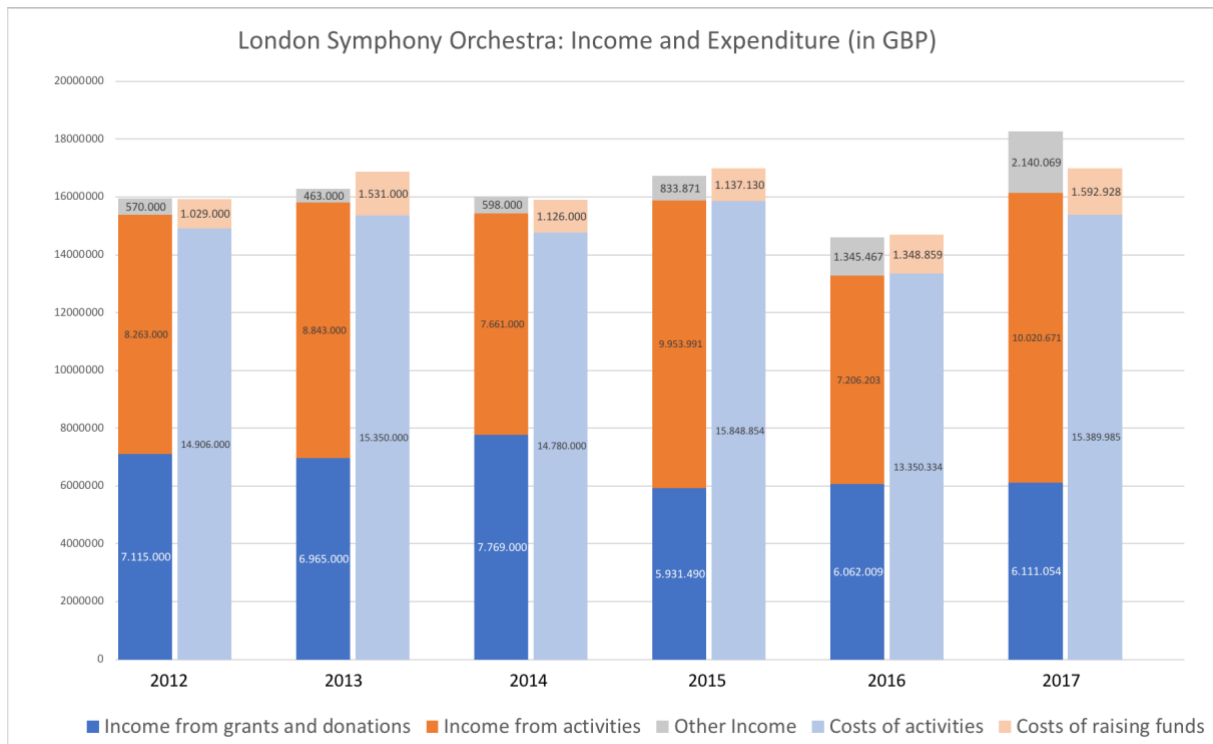
Figure 37: Income and expenditure of the LSO (in GBP)

Programming policy of the LSO

London is an exceptionally interesting arena for musical programming. The versatility of the London audience gives orchestras a certain freedom to present things in different ways than one might do in more provincial regions. Representatives of London Symphony Orchestra agree that there is an absence of established music traditions in London (as compared to Vienna or Berlin), which can serve to the orchestra's advantage and disadvantage. On the one hand, it allows for considerable programming freedom, but on the other hand, it increases the need for the orchestra to carve out an artistic niche and to present itself in a way that makes sense to an audience. The additional complexity of having five full-time professional symphony orchestras in the same city, puts musical programming, in the words of managing director Kathryn McDowell, "at the heart of any London orchestra's operations" (McDowell 2019).

Programming philosophy

London Symphony Orchestra has a reputation of being the 21st-century orchestra *par excellence*, with its cutting-edge digital strategies and its expansive education and outreach platforms. Also in terms of repertoire, the LSO aspires to be among the most adventurous orchestras (Lagasse 2019). Chairman David Alderman stresses that the LSO, above all, wants to avoid becoming like an archaic museum, with a board of directors acting as its curators:

"We don't want to be symphony orchestras playing dead music; taking dead objects out of their cases, show them to you and then put them back." (Alderman 2019)

Therefore, the underlying philosophy of the LSO's programming policy, is the idea that music is timeless and must not be pinned down to a specific time period (Alderman 2019). At the heart of the LSO's programming policy, accordingly, lies the idea of creativity and imagination. The title of the 2019-2020 season, "Always Moving. Look back, leap forwards" is a nice paraphrase of the basic idea of creatively combining tradition and experimentation. The orchestra is confident that audiences will remain true to the orchestra if there is a balance between concerts that attract a lot of audiences and concerts that feature unexpected and new things (Alderman 2019). The orchestra committee, consisting of the managing director, artistic director and playing members of the orchestra, is responsible for striking this artistic balance, as well as making sure that this balance does not endanger the operational sustainability of the organization. The strategies to achieve an appropriate balance will be outlined below.

Factors impacting programming

In the LSO's programming policy, there are various factors at play which are sometimes partially beyond the reach of the orchestra committee. Representatives of the orchestra agree on three such factors: the impact of the conductor, the impact of the peers, and the orchestra model itself.

The impact of conductors is enormous in London Symphony Orchestra. Although the principal conductor has not carried the more authoritative title of music director up to the appointment of Simon Rattle, the orchestra's programs are mostly designed according to the specialties of the conductor. This impact of the conductor on programming decisions is the immediate result of the high international stature of the LSO and its resulting drawing power. The orchestra attracts the best conductors and soloists, who have their own specialties which cannot be ignored. "You don't tell Trifonov what to play", remarks one musician (Lagasse 2019). Music director Simon Rattle, as well as principal guest conductors François-Xavier Roth and Gianandrea Noseda, each have their specialisms that automatically affect the overall artistic trajectory of the LSO (East 2019). On the other hand, the conductor is invited by the board, and therefore by the musicians of the LSO, indirectly giving the musicians considerable influence in musical programming. Chairman Alderman describes this system as a two-way process of facilitation:

"What we, the musicians, typically do when we elect a conductor, is to allow the conductor to have a vision. We fight for their freedom to do unusual repertoire. So we don't technically direct decisions with regard to the repertoire, but we create the conditions under which the repertoire can be chosen. The reason that the LSO attracts

so many good conductors, is precisely because of our openness towards the conductor's vision." (Alderman 2019)

According to musicians, the fact that the conductor is chosen by the very people he has to work with, also benefits the artistic atmosphere. This combination makes sure that there is a close fit between the conductors' specialisms and the orchestra's wishes. For example, the orchestra exhibits an enormous trust in its new music director Simon Rattle. His drawing power is immense, which gives a lot of freedom with regard to musical programming. Rattle is free to devise adventurous programs without having to worry that audiences will react badly. Unexpected combinations of pieces, or rarely performed musical works, thus reach an enormous audience. Alderman summarizes:

> "Any program that he does is stimulating. Audiences may not always like it, but they know that any program will be carefully thought about. It would be impossible to fall asleep and have no opinion at all. It will not always be a warm bath, but it will always be a culturally enriching or challenging experience." (Alderman 2019)

A second factor that influences repertoire decision making in London Symphony Orchestra, is its position between four other orchestras in London, which are all in the same high-quality peer group. To alleviate the risk of having overlapping musical programs in the same city, there is a system in place which the orchestras call the 'clash-diary'. The people who are responsible for programming in the various orchestras, are in contact with each other and propose their programs. Together, they look where there might be clashes in programs and collectively look for a solution. Andra East describes the process as follows:

> "Obviously, everyone is protecting their own interests. But as with anything in a process of negotiation, you pick your battles and you give something away in order to keep something you really wanted. In the end, it's the conversation that is important." (East 2019)

Thirdly, the LSO's cooperative model raises questions about repertoire preferences of the orchestra related to its organizational model. Interestingly, and contrary to intuition, there is no sign that the LSO has to worry about the impact of their programs on ticket sales: concert hall occupancy averages around 90% throughout the season, regardless of repertoire (Alderman 2019). Even with the certainty of well-occupied concert halls, the self-governing orchestra has to think about efficiency in time-management and rehearsals. London Symphony Orchestra maintains a tradition of rehearsing only once or twice for a series of concerts. In some cases, like recordings, there is no rehearsal at all. Musicians of the LSO explain that the level of sight-reading in London orchestras is extraordinarily high. Therefore, both interviewed musicians find it highly unlikely that London Symphony Orchestra would avoid any repertoire because of limited rehearsal time (Lagasse 2019; Delafonteyne 2019).

According to the LSO chairman, the fact that an orchestra such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra plays a larger share of contemporary music, has less to do with the fact that it is a salaried orchestra than with its artistic task which explicitly requires them to play more adventurous repertoire. The co-operative model of the LSO, finally, implies that each orchestra member has a say in musical programming. As stipulated above, this democratic system of representation is more about the potential influence of any member than their actual influence: unless they want to know beforehand, musicians just sit down and play what appears on their music stand. Considering these elements, it can be concluded that the organizational model of the LSO does not seem to affect repertoire possibilities.

Repertoire diversification: LSO Discovery

London Symphony Orchestra's platform LSO Discovery places education and outreach at the very heart of the orchestra. Reaching over 60.000 people every year with an average of three activities every day, ranging from workshops to hospital concerts, it is recognized as one of the world's leading music education programs. LSO Discovery involves LSO players as mentors, leaders and performers in projects that are offered free or at minimal cost to participants as well as audiences (London Symphony Orchestra 2015). Although these projects mostly take place in the LSO's separate venue at LSO St Luke's, participants of LSO Discovery are regularly involved in the orchestra's highest profile events, such as the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony and the annual outdoor concerts at Trafalgar Square.

The projects of LSO Discovery require a lot of engagement from the LSO members. Although working with LSO Discovery is not mandatory for LSO members, about 90% of the orchestra's musicians is involved in Discovery's projects in some way. Some lead sessions with young children or workshops on the conservatoire level, others work with composers or are involved in experimental music sessions (East 2019). Musicians are booked by availability and according to their own specialties. Andra East emphasizes the importance of the involvement of LSO members themselves:

> "Of course, in some cases it's just extra money; that's the cynic in me. But most of the time, our musicians genuinely enjoy the connection with the community. They see it as their social responsibility to not only sit on stage in the Barbican every night. When a school group we worked with, comes to visit the full orchestra, and they recognize some players on stage, musicians are not ordinary faces anymore, they become people." (East 2019)

Core values of LSO Discovery

The official narrative of the LSO's mission statement, supported by interview data, indicates that LSO Discovery is carried by two core values: disintegrating any barriers to classical music,

and developing the performers of the future. The former core value is perceived by orchestra representatives as the organization's social responsibility. Andra East, head of LSO Discovery, explains that the program aims to offer musical experiences to people who have not necessarily had contact with classical music. Discovery's programs are trying to disintegrate all barriers, whether they are financial, logistical, geographical or educational in nature. Responding to demographic shifts in the UK, Discovery wants to make sure that every individual, no matter what age, ability or background can be a part of the LSO's music (East 2019). This core value is an instantiation of the LSO's broader mission to make great music available to the widest possible range of people (Lehman 2000). Experimenting with concert presentation is a crucial part of LSO Discovery's philosophy. Whether it is by putting a speaker on stage telling the audience what to expect, involving the audience itself, or by using visual aids, LSO Discovery wants to give audiences the tools they need to understand what is happening on stage. In order to lower the threshold to classical music, Discovery's participants and audiences are invited into a space like St Luke's, that is smaller than the Barbican and comfortable to them. The flexibility of this space allows it to be adapted to the needs of every activity. Next to being part of the responsibility of the orchestra to answer to urgent social calls, these low-threshold activities also nurture the LSO's audiences of the future. Andra East explains:

> "We do observe that people develop a continued engagement with the LSO through the Discovery program. For example, I have had adult members of the LSO Community Choir, who had no experience in music before, attending the LSO's concerts. There is a certain progression of people. I think it is a reasonable interpretation that Discovery is sort of a portal." (East 2019)

The second core value of LSO Discovery is an extension of this idea of development. The program offers support and training for emerging young instrumentalists, composers and conductors, with the aim of developing the performers of the future. The Arts Council of England has appointed to the LSO a 'sector leadership role', which means that the orchestra receives public funds to be invested in a new generation of performers. A selection of young performers has the LSO's members and facilities to their disposal, to experiment with all available abilities and resources to curate their own musical events. Some of these events are implemented into the LSO's season program. In the words of East:

> "That is a commitment made by the orchestra: the LSO wants to support people who are curating the new music of tomorrow." (East 2019)

Summarizing, LSO Discovery fosters the breadth of the LSO's mission to bring music to diverse audiences, where access to classical music is of equal priority as artistic excellence.

Activities

Being specific embodiments of the core values, LSO Discovery's activities can be divided into two categories, which sometimes overlap. Firstly, so-called 'First Access' projects respond to the idea of social responsibility, and include a children's hospital program, concerts in schools, LSO Discovery choirs for local 8- to 18-year-olds, and interactive storytelling sessions for under-5's and their families (London Symphony Orchestra 2015). As an extension, the 'Lifelong Learning' projects involve frequent pre-concert talks, as well as the LSO Community Choir, an unauditioned choir of more than 100 local residents that gives concerts alongside the more experienced LSO choral groups.

Secondly, and relating to the second core value, the 'Next Generation of Musicians' program aims at supporting a new generation of extraordinary musicians. 'LSO On Track' enables young musicians to perform on stage side by side with LSO musicians, and frequent LSO Academies provide summer training for outstanding 14- to 24-year-olds (London Symphony Orchestra 2015). Each year, six composers are given the chance to have their music workshopped by the orchestra. Following these workshops, two composers are commissioned to write a piece that is performed in the LSO's main concert season at the Barbican. Finally, LSO Discovery organizes the prestigious Donatella Flick LSO Conducting Competition, which attracts and supports European conductors under the age of 35. Past winners include François-Xavier Roth, presently guest-conductor of the LSO, and Elim Chan, chief conductor of Antwerp Symphony Orchestra from the 2019-2020 season onwards.

One aspect of LSO Discovery, namely its focus on digital dissemination, goes across all activities. Apart from streaming several events of LSO Discovery annually, there is a close collaboration with the LSO Live department. The digital education platform LSO Play is a result of this collaboration. Every 12 to 18 months, a new piece of repertoire is recorded and added to the LSO Play portal, which is used by school-aged children around the UK.

Programming policy of LSO Discovery

LSO Discovery uses the repertoire of the LSO's concert season as a starting-point for their projects. Using the orchestra's repertoire as a basis, participants' own creative potential is addressed to engage with the original material. As is the case with the musicians of the LSO themselves being engaged in Discovery's projects, this repertoire connection with the regular concert season is of paramount importance. In the words of Andra East:

> "Suppose that a child in a workshop has created her own variation on the opening melody of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune.* When she comes into the concert hall, and she hears the actual flute solo, she will recognize it, which makes her engagement much closer and more immediate." (East 2019)

The choice of which specific pieces are to be used for Discovery's projects, depends on various factors, most of them logistical. For example, the selection of concerts to be streamed online or via LSO Play, depends on the stage setting. Experimental concerts in the Barbican are often unsuitable for streaming, because the hall lacks sufficient camera positions. In general, pieces that are thought to be appealing to a large audience, are given priority over more unconventional ones.

As a matter of principle, LSO Discovery's projects start from the LSO's concert programs, but there is also a reverse influence. All efforts are made to involve LSO Discovery's activities as closely as possible in the LSO's regular concert scene, and to not see the education and outreach program as an isolated department. Therefore, LSO Discovery is often called the experimental laboratory of the orchestra, and some of its activities have an impact on the full orchestra's operations. For example, LSO Discovery plays a pioneering role in streaming events. St Luke's is an ideal venue to experiment with camera settings and recording formats. After taking the time to develop it on a small scale, these pilot projects are then transferred to the full orchestra that mostly operates in the larger Barbican hall. Secondly, and more artistically speaking, Simon Rattle increasingly commissions from LSO Discovery's pool of composers. After getting closely involved in the network of composers, Rattle selects a composer whom he commissions to write a new piece for the widely attended open-air concert at Trafalgar Square.

Development formulas

One major task of the LSO and of LSO Discovery in particular, is to secure the future of classical music. This means that, firstly, the orchestra wants to make a profound impact by rethinking concert presentations and by supplying the tools for a proper understanding of classical music that has already been written. Secondly, however, LSO Discovery's elaborate composer's workshops and commissioning schemes also support the development of the orchestral repertoire itself. In light of this ambition, it is crucial that LSO Discovery transcends a mere isolated function within the organization and is not degraded to a separate platform to house the more idealistic notions of orchestra work. The example of commissions for the Trafalgar Square concert has been given already. A second example can be found in the way the season brochures are conceived. The brochure presents all of LSO's separate events in the same overview, regardless whether it is part of the Barbican season or LSO Discovery (London Symphony Orchestra 2019). This reflects the ambition to closely involve the more unconventional LSO Discovery projects in the LSO's regular concert season. Accordingly, there is no separation of audiences and the LSO, as an integral organization, speaks out to the same audiences for every kind of concert. Season subscriptions, likewise, are bundled per theme, each of which covers many musical styles ranging from conventional to experimental (London Symphony Orchestra 2019).

However, it is important to note that apart from the composer's programs, there are no specific development programs in LSO Discovery devoted to the appreciation of new or unknown music. Since Discovery is dependent on the LSO's programs, and the LSO's programs are largely designed by its conductors, the true power for repertoire expansion lies with the conductors. With the appointment of Simon Rattle, the LSO board has made clear that repertoire development belongs to its core mission. For example, Rattle has opened each of his LSO seasons with a program devoted entirely to British and unfrequently performed music. In 2019, the season opening features a world premiere by the promising female composer Emily Howard, the violin concerto of Colin Matthews, and William Walton's first symphony.

Representatives of the LSO report that the London audience is, in general, responsive to new music. The lack of any fixed musical tradition certainly plays a role, as well as the enormous attraction of conductors such as Rattle. The basic strategy behind repertoire development formulas is, as suggested before, balancing tradition and imagination. One musician describes the process as follows:

> "It's like learning someone to eat a new vegetable: you surround it with larger portions of something they are sure to like, so they have a satisfied feeling." (Lagasse 2019)

The audience is often presented with an unfamiliar work in the beginning of a concert, while their attention is still sharp. The combination of familiar and unfamiliar works is carefully crafted. As another musician explains:

> "Simon Rattle is unusually good at making programs where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. There will be unexpected combinations of pieces, like Charles Ives' *The unanswered Question* going directly into another work without stopping. Very simple things can often completely change the dynamic of a concert." (Alderman 2019)

However, musicians emphasize that these combinations should not be forced marriages. In most cases, the unusual combination of works is not chosen randomly. One strategy that is in place to make sense of unusual combinations, is working with themes within separate concerts or even spanning the whole season. The 2019-2020 season, for example, presents a considerable amount of non-canonical works, often clustered around overarching themes that are not restricted to a certain time period or musical style. Taglines such as 'Look back, leap forwards' and themes such as 'Roots and Origins' offer a thematic framework that legitimizes the inclusion of the adventurous into the conventional. In the 'Roots and Origins' concert series, for example, Simon Rattle draws season-spanning links between the origins of the Western musical canon (Beethoven) and those composers who were inspired by this canon and actively fertilized it with other influences (Bartók and Grainger). Very popular works are thus paired with newer and more adventurous works, within one coherent theme. As

remarked before, the various season subscription options are largely designed along the lines of these themes. The internal architecture of separate concert programs exhibits the same dramaturgical sensitivity. In three separate concerts, Rattle explores the aesthetic affinities between two composers, Beethoven and Berg, that embody either extreme of the romantic period.

Andra East remarks that this thematic approach also allows LSO Discovery to engage with the LSO's concert repertoire more freely:

> "Some of the vocal music programmed next year is quite tricky, and not really appropriate for audience participation. The thematic approach gives us a broader scope while making sure we are still connected to what the orchestra does. For example, the orchestra is performing Tippett this season, and we are instead working with more accessible music by Bach, because that's where Tippett's style came from." (East 2019)

Finally, it was noted by LSO musicians and management alike that from a marketing perspective, it is easier to sell concerts that combine stylistically different works under one overarching theme (East 2019; Alderman 2019). Thus, the thematic approach shows how certain ideas, deduced from the orchestra's core values, permeate every aspect of the organization, to the orchestra's benefit.

Programming trends

The database of London Symphony Orchestra's concerts allows for a deeper investigation of recent trends in their programming. The retrieved dataset contains all LSO concerts between the 2007-2008 and 2017-2018 seasons, in the UK as well as abroad. Projects of LSO Discovery have been included in the dataset only when they were presented within the LSO's regular concert season. The dataset includes one separate entry for every time a work is performed. Inspired by an analytic method proposed by Gilmore (1993) and adopted by Wolf (2017) as well, composers have been listed in three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. Composers listed as 'anonymous', 'traditional' or 'various' have been removed from the set. The three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to both orchestra musicians and audiences. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertoire, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, often making their styles

little known to orchestras and their audiences. In case of any doubt whether a composer was predominantly active in one period or the other, a judgment was made according to the specific composer's style. For example, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland and Shostakovich were categorized in the 1900-1950 period because of their aesthetic affinity with composers of that period. Not every category spans an equally proportioned timeframe, which does not facilitate drawing categorical conclusions. Therefore, the underlying data focus more on relative motions such as repertoire evolutions throughout the analyzed seasons, and concentration or density levels within each category.

Figure 38 sketches an overall picture of repertoire division in the LSO's concert programs, visualized according to the three proposed timeframes. The timeframes are remarkably similarly represented: 35,08% of the repertoire can be categorized in the pre-1900 group, the 1900-1950 category accounts for a slightly larger share of 36,66%, which leaves a fair 28,26% for the post-1950 category.
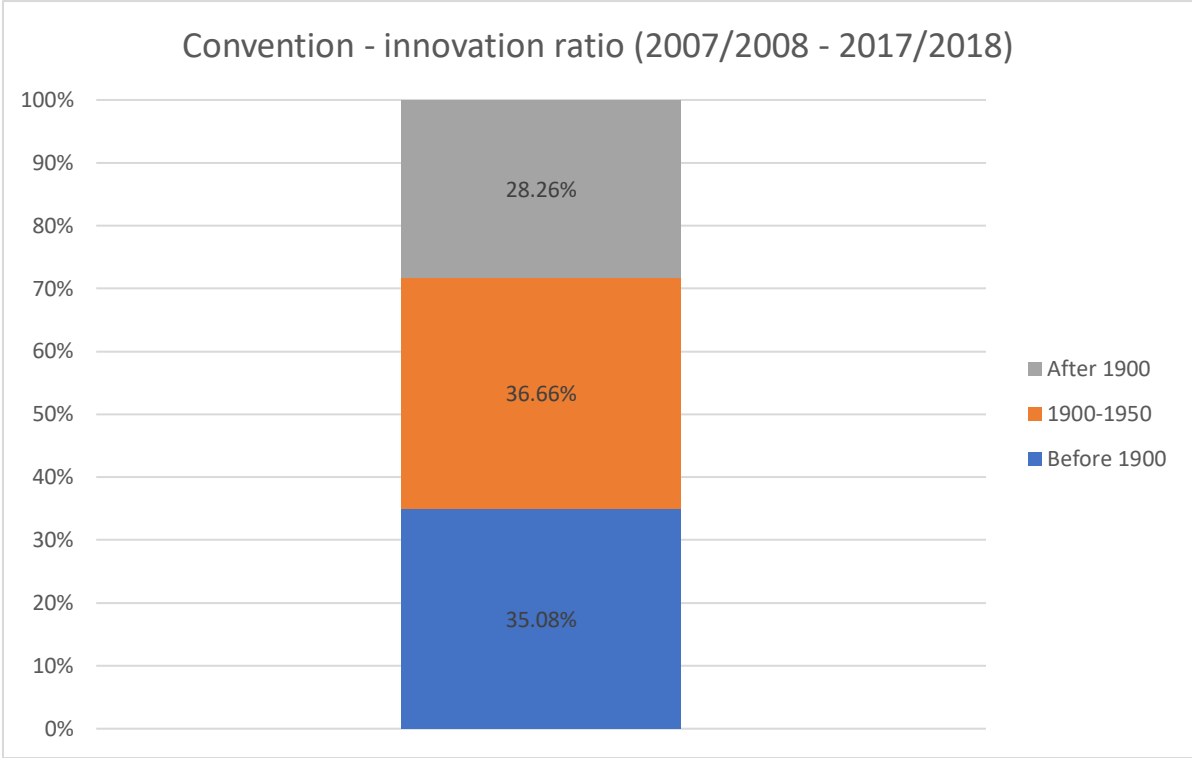

Figure 38: repertoire division of the LSO's concert programs

A closer look at the actual composers that appear in the dataset, a top-10 of most frequently performed composers can be deduced, enabling to determine the 'iron repertoire' of London Symphony Orchestra. To that end, every performance of a certain work is counted separately, so that the numbers proportionally reflect the actual presence of each composer. The top-10, in descending order of frequency, consists of: Prokofiev, Beethoven, Rachel Leach, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Brahms, John Williams, Mahler and Elgar. Of these ten composers, 4 belong in the pre-1900 category, 4 in the 1900-1950 category, and 2 in the post-1900 category,

which roughly corresponds with the overall repertoire division. It may be interesting to note that 3 of these 10 composers (Leach, Williams and Elgar) are British. Together, these 10 composers account for 34,28% of the LSO's repertoire between the 2007-2008 and 2017-2018 seasons. The remaining two-thirds of the repertoire is divided among the other 432 composers. The two names that appear in the most recent category are not surprising. Film music composer John Williams wrote several of his scores for the LSO in particular, and Rachel Leach is LSO Discovery's in-house composer and arranger. With the most frequently performed composers proportionally distributed over the three categories, which are in turn equally proportioned among themselves, it makes sense to explore the dataset in more detail, in order to establish to what extent this egalitarian trend is maintained in depth.

Figure 39 contains the concentration rates of each separate category, enabling to quantify the orchestra's reliance on narrow sets of composers within each category. Significant about this table is, first of all, that concentration levels do no vary strongly between the three categories. This means that for each category, the orchestra's reliance on small sets of composers is almost equally high. Some of these numbers deserve a more in-depth analysis. For example, the top-five composers for the pre-1900 category (Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Brahms and Mendelssohn) account for 46,11% of the repertoire within that category. In the 1900-1950 category, the top-five composers (Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Mahler, Elgar and Shostakovich) account for a slightly lower percentage of 42,40%, whereas the post-1950 category reaches 38,10% for its top-five composers (Leach, Williams, Rissmann, Anderson and Bernstein). This stepwise decrease enables to launch a hypothesis with regard to processes of densification or canonization. These numbers suggest that the density of a certain repertoire gradually decreases over progressive time periods: the more recent the programming category, the less that category relies on a narrow set of composers. In other words: the more recent the repertoire, the less the repertoire is canonized. However, care must be taken with this hypothesis, as it is not entirely corroborated by the numbers in the top-10 and top-15 density levels. Surprisingly, these density levels go slightly up from the pre-1900 to the 1900-1950 categories, before steeply falling in the post-1950 category. Despite this nuance, the trendlines of the top-10 and top-15 density levels support the hypothesis.

	< 1900	1900-1950	> 1950
Top 5	1121 (46,11%)	1077 (42,40%)	746 (38,10%)
Top 10	1563 (64,29%)	1664 (65,51%)	980 (50,05%)
Top 15	1866 (76,76%)	2048 (80,63%)	1097 (56,03%)
One-time	15 (0,62%)	21 (0,83%)	106 (5,41%)
All	2431 (100%)	2540 (100%)	1958 (100%)
	(71 composers)	(76 composers)	(285 composers)

Figure 39: Concentration levels of performances among composers by programming category

Overall, figure 39 shows that concentration levels in the three categories are rather high, meaning that the orchestra relies on a dense set of composers to a fairly great extent. If, on the other side of the spectrum, one-time entries in the orchestra's programs would be defined as 'experiments', the resulting experimentation rates are particularly interesting. The most eye-catching number in figure 39 is the total number of composers in the post-1950 category, with 285 composers listed. The other two categories contain only 71 and 76 composers respectively, or roughly a quarter of that number. Of these 285 composers in the post-1950 category, 106 were programmed only once, leaving 179 composers who were programmed more than once in this least conventional category. One-time composers in the post-1950 category account for 5,41% of the repertoire in that category, whereas the other two categories reach only a fraction of that percentage, with 0,62% and 0,83% each. This alternative viewpoint from the bottom of the density levels, or the experimentation side, allows for another two significant observations with regard to canonization processes. Firstly, one could conclude from these observations that the pre-1900 and 1900-1950 repertoires have been canonized to a far greater extent. In that respect, it is also telling that the top-15 composers of said categories account for three-quarters to four-fifths of their repertoires respectively, compared to only 56,03% in the post-1950 category. Conveniently, the table shows that in the pre-1900 category, the top-15 accounts for 76,76% of the repertoire, and the bottom-15 for a mere 0,62%. Secondly, within the LSO's programs, efforts can be distinguished to achieve some continuity within this experimentation. No less than 179 composers from the post-1950 category have been programmed more than once between the 2007-2008 and 2017-2018 seasons. The experimentation rates, therefore, support the above hypothesis that a gradual process of condensation can be read from these concert programs.

Figure 40 breaks the data used in figure 38 down into separate seasons, between 2007-2008 and 2017-2018. As with figure 38, this graph shows that neither programming category dominates the LSO's performances. Although all three curves fluctuate rather strongly, two additional observations can be made from this particular graph. Firstly, looking at the added trendlines, it is clearly visible that the shares of music from the pre-1900 and post-1900 repertoires have both risen over the course of these seasons, at the expense of the 1900-1950 category. The reasons behind these trends can be manifold and could not be retrieved from interview data or documents. From these same trendlines, secondly, can be deduced that the egalitarian spread of the orchestra's repertoire, outlined above, is the outcome of a gradual process that is visualized in figure 40. It is highly likely, therefore, that the convention and innovation ratio from figure 38 is the result of a conscious programming strategy.
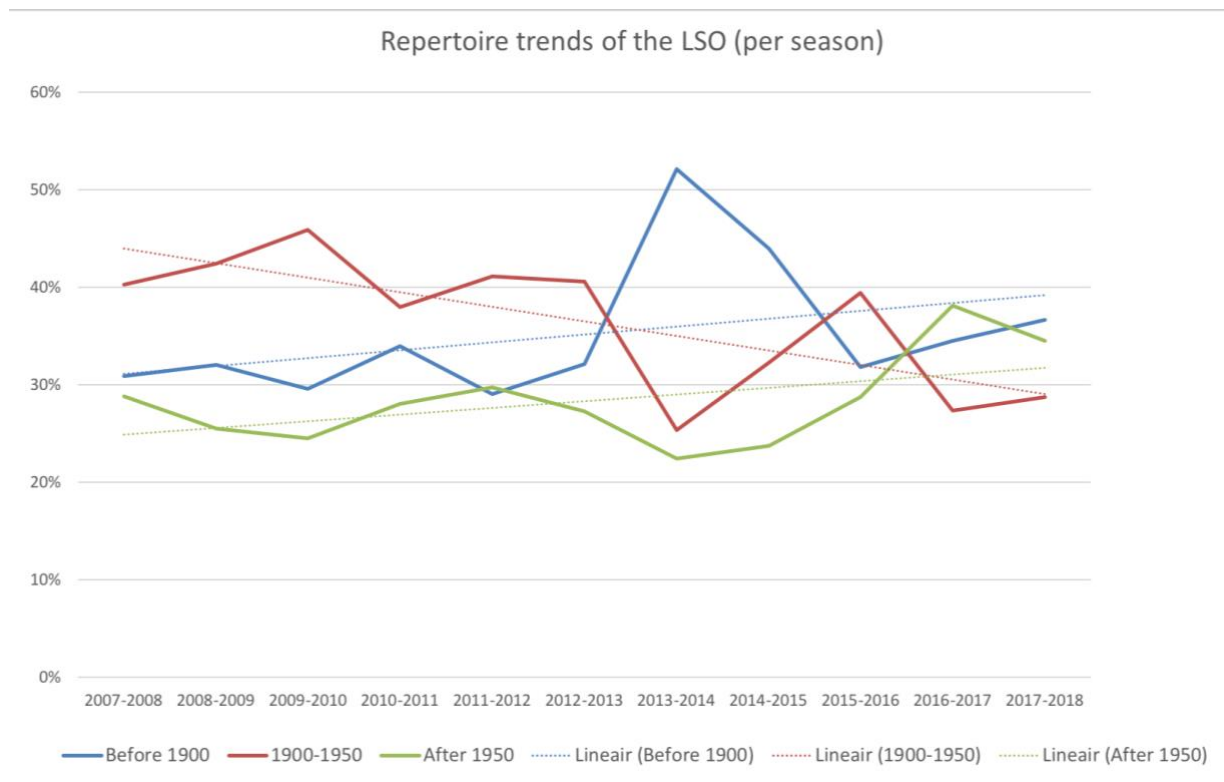
Figure 40: Repertoire trends of the LSO

In this quantitative analysis of the LSO's programming trends, the activities of LSO Discovery cannot be ignored. This department is perceived as the experimental laboratory of the orchestra and wants to contribute to securing the future of classical music. Figure 41 shows the repertoire trends of LSO Discovery between the 2007-2008 and 2017-2018 seasons. The dataset is limited to Discovery's projects that were an integral part of the LSO's regular concert season and were presented and advertised as such. Contrary to what one might expect from the most adventurous department of the organization, this graph looks remarkably similar to the one in figure 40. As illustrated by the trendlines, the 1900-1950 repertoire falls rather sharply, a shift that is complemented by a rise in post-1950 music, with the pre-1900 share remaining constant. Andra East, head of LSO Discovery, explains the similarity between both graphs as follows:

> "The reason that they are so similar goes back to Discovery being responsive to the orchestra's programming. And behind that, of course, is the conductor. People like Rattle, Noseda and Roth have their specialisms that will affect what we (LSO Discovery) are doing, and going further back, Gergiev would have had a different specialism." (East 2019)

East also explains that the steep rise of post-1950 repertoire in figure 41 can be ascribed to Simon Rattle, who is increasingly commissioning from LSO Discovery's pool of composers.
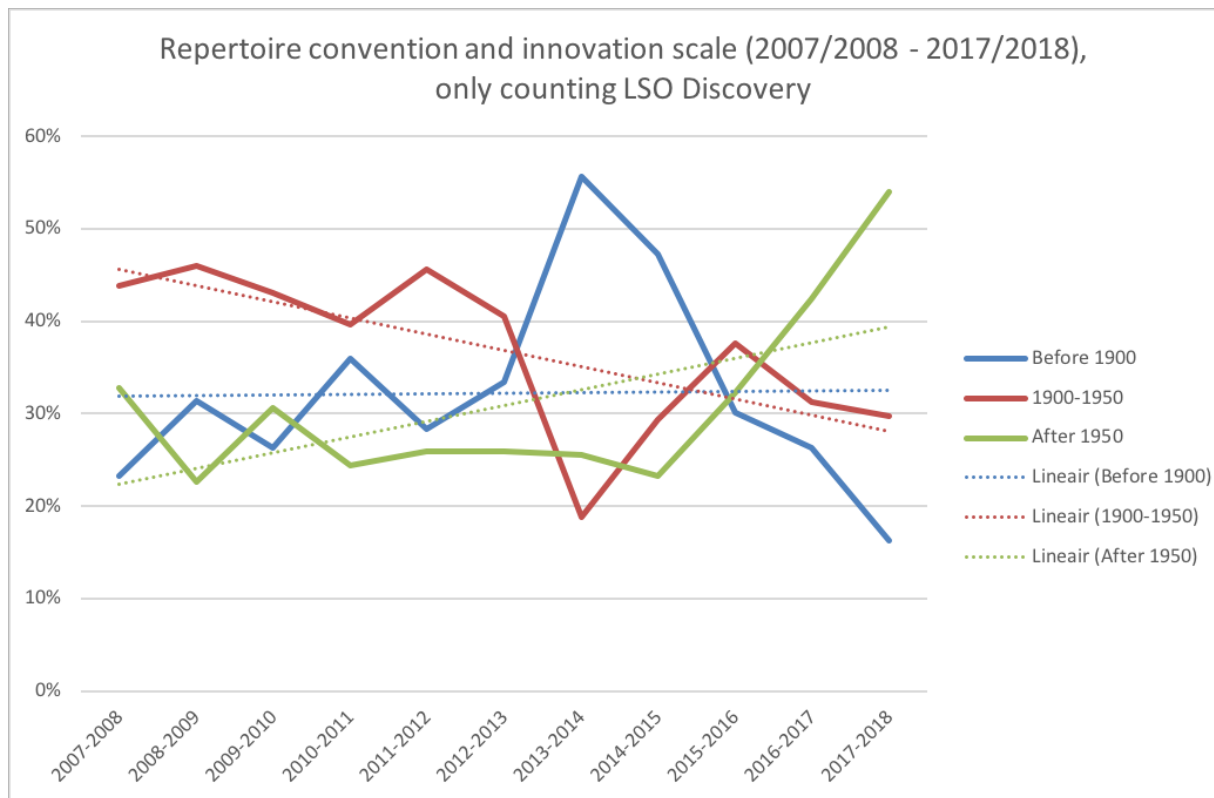
Figure 41: Repertoire trends of LSO Discovery

By means of these data, specific repertoire trends of London Symphony Orchestra can be demonstrated. Establishing a link between one particular orchestra's 'iron repertoire' and the musical canon in more general terms remains a somewhat speculative affair, but not necessarily an idle one. In drawing conclusions with regard to canonization, the employed categorizations need to be handled with care. Firstly, the pre-1900 repertoire does not necessarily consist of canonical composers only, and the post-1950 repertoire does not only consist of non-canonical or even experimental composers. Concentration levels, secondly, do not explicitly refer to the formation of a musical canon per se, but they do display that certain composers account for a very significant proportion of the actual repertoire of this specific orchestra. Still, a strong relation can be established between these performance data and the musical canon. These data are illustrative for a condensation process taking place over time.

Therefore, staying close to the actual data at hand, it may be useful to insist on the most important observations again. Firstly, the graphs illustrate that the repertoire shares of London Symphony Orchestra are rather equally distributed over the three proposed categories, which is the result of a gradual process spanning several seasons. Secondly, concentration levels in the post-1950 category tell an interesting story. On the one hand, these levels do not differ strongly from the concentration levels in the other two categories. On the other hand, there is a considerable number of composers in that category that has been programmed several times, without reaching the top-15 level. This means that, while

experimentation is very high in that category, these experiments often lead to the repeated programming of the composer or the work in question. Both observations support the hypothesis that within orchestral programming, there is a condensation process at work, the intensity of which differs from timeframe to timeframe. This condensation process seems to have been largely completed in the pre-1900 category, while it is still very much ongoing in the post-1950 category.

Discussion

At first sight, the city of London seems like an extremely fertile artistic environment, where orchestras are doing very well despite their oversupply. In 2017, a survey was published by the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) on key statistics for the UK orchestra sector in 2016. These statistics show that in 2016, the number of orchestra concerts in the UK has increased with 7% compared to 2013, and that concert attendance has risen by 3% in that same period (Association of British Orchestras 2016). However, as the same report continues, these successes cover a harsh financial reality. Audience increases, for example, are realized thanks to initiatives such as discounted ticketing and free concerts. With this information added to the equation, it becomes clear that bigger audiences have not brought in more money. On the contrary, orchestras have suffered a total income drop of 5% between 2013 and 2016. It is important to interpret all data and conclusions of the above analyses against this backdrop.

The model of London Symphony Orchestra seems exceptionally well-equipped to accommodate to this situation. If one compares the mission statements of London Symphony Orchestra throughout its existence, a panoptic evolution becomes visible. An on-demand and commercially driven orchestra without any delineated artistic vision became a solid 21st-century orchestra with a clear identity that is supported by two pillars: artistic excellence and social responsibility. These two pillars are most visibly embodied in the LSO's expansive outreach and education program, LSO Discovery. Increasing worries over the long-term sustainability of the orchestra has placed musical programming, rather than commercial motivations, at the heart of the LSO's operations. The above analyses lead to some significant observations, the essence of which will be critically assessed in the following paragraphs.

First of all, the organizational model of the self-governing London Symphony Orchestra, does not seem to limit the repertoire possibilities of the orchestra. No indications have been found that its financial strategy forces the orchestra to program according to the demands of the market. There is no link between programming decisions and box office revenue, for reasons that have been discussed. While it is true that rehearsal time is kept to a minimum, it does not affect the choices of repertoire because the level of sight-reading and in-advance preparation is unusually high.

Although the self-governing model of the LSO does not *limit* the orchestra's programming autonomy, it does *affect* the actual programs. The orchestra's long-established tradition of exclusively working with guest conductors is an inheritance of the self-governing principle, in which the musicians take full initiative in the orchestra's artistic trajectory. On the other hand, and almost contradictory, the orchestra board only very rarely interferes with the conductor's choice of repertoire. The supreme quality of the orchestra attracts the world's foremost conductors, who each bring their own specialties. This is arguably the reason why the LSO does not include any repertoire preferences or priorities in any of its mission statements. The orchestra's repertoire is the accidental outcome of conductor's preferences. One of the most noticeable effects of this lack of any strict repertoire policy, is the fact that LSO Discovery, the orchestra's laboratory, is equally dependent on conductors' choices. For reasons stipulated above, LSO Discovery takes the concert repertoire of the LSO as a starting-point for its creative endeavors. Although LSO Discovery can engage with this material in many creative ways and has all the resources to do so, it is unable to play a significant role in repertoire development or in the appreciation of adventurous repertoires, unless it is brought in by the conductors. As a result, LSO Discovery is forced to move between the lines of the repertoire proposed by the conductors.

Yet, the key to understanding London Symphony Orchestra in depth, as an art organization with a future-oriented vision, lies precisely in its conductor policy. Throughout the last decade in particular, the orchestra has made a decisive step in pursuing a more coherent musical vision through its conductors. With art policies in the UK putting more emphasis on the social responsibility of symphony orchestras since the 1990's, the more idealistic notions of musical programming have been largely transported to LSO Discovery's social projects, much to the benefit of the orchestra's legitimacy. However, the LSO's regular concert season simultaneously developed an artistic sensibility in its own right. An increasing number of conductors has attached itself to the orchestra, each of whom is granted a space to pursue an artistic vision in the guise of thematic concert series, aimed at enhancing the accessibility of the orchestra's concerts. Sir Simon Rattle, who received the title of music director, puts his stamp on the artistic trajectory of the orchestra by means of concert- and season-spanning themes. Both principal guest conductors Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth have developed comparable series. The artistic trajectory of the LSO, however entangled with specific conductors, is in fact supported by a very subtle circular system. The musicians board carefully elects every conductor, who in turn has an impact on the trajectory of these same musicians.

Finally, it has become clear that the narrow space for repertoire experimentation in the LSO's concert seasons is used efficiently. True to its mission to make classical music available to a wide audience, development strategies mostly focus on concert presentation. Whenever an experimental composition is programmed, efforts are made to make this music accessible by

incorporating it into a coherent story. Clever combinations with familiar works are aimed at deciphering musical idioms that can in themselves sound incomprehensible or hermetic. This way, the LSO is not at all an artistically sterile orchestra, but a future-oriented orchestra with a musicians-driven vision it is very much able to pursue.

6. Aurora Orchestra

Introduction

The city of London has a reputation of being one of the most fruitful but also competitive musical environments in the world. The city supports no less than five full-time professional symphony orchestras, with each one competing for its own share of a demanding yet admittedly large concert audience. Active since 2005 and growing in prominence each year, Aurora Orchestra aspires to complement the activities of these five orchestras, by rethinking the orchestra model in both artistic and organizational terms. Starting from the observation that the boundaries of art genres and styles have become ever more fluent, the orchestra wants to be an artistic beacon for the 21st-century orchestra. Collaborating across genres, performing in spaces previously unfamiliar to the 'classical' orchestra, and experimenting with new repertoires as well as with concert presentation, form the artistic DNA of Aurora Orchestra. The orchestra rose to prominence during the 2014 BBC Proms, as the first orchestra to ever perform an entire symphony from memory. Constantly calibrating the artistic ambitions and the required organizational conditions, Aurora seeks to develop an adequate model for a truly 21-century orchestra. In May 2018, the orchestra's artistic entrepreneurship has been awarded with the Classical:NEXT Innovation Award.

Today, Aurora Orchestra plays over 80 performances annually in the UK as well as abroad, the majority of which is led by co-founder Nicholas Collon. Every year, the orchestra reaches 40.000 spectators in the UK and abroad. In London itself, Aurora Orchestra has two flagship series: one at Kings Place, the recently completed arts hub near King's Cross station where the orchestra has been resident orchestra since 2010, and one at Southbank Centre, London's most dense arts complex where Aurora has been Associate Orchestra since 2016. In 2019, Aurora Orchestra will return to the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall for the ninth consecutive season, with a staged and memorized performance of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*. Impressed by their artistic contributions, the Arts Council of England has decided to bring Aurora into the National Portfolio in 2011, resulting in an annual grant of £60.000. The support of the Arts Council, which has been renewed up until 2022, not only enabled Aurora Orchestra to artistically sharpen its activities, it also serves as a barometer of the legitimacy of the orchestra within its service area. In the 2017-2018 season, the orchestra has passed the £1.000.000 mark in annual turnover, a symbolic achievement no other UK orchestra founded within the past quarter-decade has accomplished (Aurora Orchestra 2018a).

By means of a thorough study of literature sources (such as newspaper articles and opinion pieces), an overview of financial reports and policy documents, regular concert attendance, as well as in-depth interviews with key representatives of the organization, a profile will be

sketched of an orchestra willing to survive on its own terms and successful in developing an organizational model to do so. This profile reveals, however, the difficulty of striking the right balance between artistic conception and pragmatic feasibility.

The history of Aurora Orchestra

The history of Aurora Orchestra starts like a romantic short story: on a certain night in 2004, during a discussion over a kitchen table, a group of college friends boldly decided to start a chamber orchestra in London. The original idea was to start from first principles, without any structural masterplan. The two protagonists, conductors Nicholas Collon and Robin Ticciati, had built a network of players around them with whom they had been performing in youth orchestras around the UK. Being music students looking for opportunities to play, the initial orchestra members had a lot of freedom and were willing to work on a *pro bono* basis to keep the costs of their new orchestra very low. In April 2005, Aurora Orchestra gave its very first concert at LSO St Luke's, for an audience of largely familiar faces. The program, featuring music by Schoenberg, Hindemith, Wagner and Debussy, presented a series of musical highlights for chamber orchestra. Initially, the orchestra benefited from a lot of publicity around the launch of Aurora Orchestra, as the international career of co-founder Robin Ticciati was taking a high flight.

After grasping the momentum and enjoying an initial blaze of glory, Aurora Orchestra's members needed to find a way to make the orchestra sustainable. Soon, Robin Ticciati's career took him elsewhere, while Nicholas Collon decided to stay in London to build up Aurora. The early phase of Aurora's existence, between 2005 and 2009, was characterized by a long and hard process of trying to get the new orchestra recognized within London's musical scene, with the orchestra management thinking increasingly systematically about what such an orchestra was going to be in the long term. In 2006, the provisional management team, consisting of Nicholas Collon and his wife Jane Mitchell (currently creative director and principal flutist at Aurora Orchestra), was able to set up a residency at the Royal Academy in London. The repertoire of Aurora covered both temporal extremes of the spectrum: contemporary music with a sinfonietta-style line-up appeared as frequently as programs with baroque music. To avoid too much programming overlap with existing orchestras, Aurora avoided playing classical and, particularly, romantic repertoire. In this early period, a steady stream of four or five concerts per year kept the orchestra alive, while the management team scanned the horizon for platforms for Aurora to grow on and mature as an orchestra.

The year 2009 proved to be a crucial year in the orchestra's development, as several opportunities constructively coalesced. Firstly, Aurora Orchestra had made a connection with Kings Place, a multi-purpose artistic venue in the King's Cross area that was being physically and artistically constructed at that time. Conversations resulted in a residency for Aurora

Orchestra at Kings Place, providing the orchestra with office as well as performance spaces from 2010 onwards. Secondly, the orchestra became associated orchestra in London Symphony Orchestra's educational venue LSO St Luke's, where Aurora filled the gaps in the LSO's artistic program. Finally, Aurora received its first amount of private funding in 2009, specifically for the orchestra's new series at LSO St Luke's. This new financial current allowed Aurora Orchestra to develop both the artistic and the administrative side of their organization. From the administrative side, the orchestra was able to engage a full-time managing director, John Harte, who had been working gratuitously for Aurora for several years. This new investment of time and energy catalyzed more strategic conversations over the orchestra's future. From the artistic side, consequently, specific choices were made. It had been clear from the very start that it would be very hard to receive regular funding from the Arts Council of England, with the London area already saturated. Therefore, the orchestra's management team started looking for a strategically interesting niche that would be appealing to funders as well as to audiences. In 2009, Aurora orchestra received its first project funding from the Arts Council of England. From 2012 onwards, the orchestra came into the National Portfolio, meaning that Aurora was considered for the 2012-2015 structural funding round. Despite an unfavorable climate for the arts around that time, Aurora Orchestra successfully applied for structural funding. In 2016, their yearly funding has been guaranteed until 2022.

Against this backdrop, a rather pragmatic programming policy was adopted. As a young orchestra growing up in troubled financial times, Aurora Orchestra had the advantage to anticipate some of the structural problems that more established orchestras faced. While looking for a distinctive voice between London's many orchestras and music ensembles, Aurora Orchestra was given an opportunity by a foundation that wanted to fill the orchestra's new LSO St Luke's series with cross-art form collaborations. Between 2010 and 2016, this idea resulted in the successful series called New Moves, featuring a wide range of collaborations between Aurora Orchestra and capoeira-dancers, plasticine artists and circus performers. Around that time, cross-art collaborations were rarely seen within orchestral series, and other funders responded warmly to the idea. Interestingly, working with other art forms was not something that the Aurora team had come to as a long-held ambition. Rather, the pragmatic opportunity that arose to distinguish the orchestra from existing ensembles, later became Aurora's *raison d'être* (Harte 2019). From that point onwards, artistic experimentation largely took place on the level of concert presentation. However, next to being a great source of ideas and artistic conversations, working with external partners presented challenges as well: the logistical burdens of such projects, along with the requirement to design every project from scratch, did not allow for more than five projects per year. In 2016, the New Moves series was transported to the Southbank Centre, where Aurora Orchestra became associated orchestra. While collaborations with external artists were abandoned, the theatrical idea of cross-art and cross-genre collaborations from the New Moves series still permeates in the replacing Orchestral Theatre series at the Southbank Centre.

The orchestra's pragmatic approach towards programming also initiated a second signature concept of Aurora, namely playing from memory. In 2014, Aurora Orchestra was offered a late-night timeslot at the BBC Proms. Not wanting to come across as a letdown compared to the other large-scale orchestras and impressive programs, Aurora Orchestra wanted to try something new. The orchestras conductor Nicholas Collon had been playing with the idea of performing an entire symphony from memory, since he was convinced it would benefit the group's confidence in performing and homogeneity of sound. Thanks to the size of the project, Aurora was able to budget additional rehearsal time as well as memorizing fees. In August 2014, the orchestra performed Mozart's 40th symphony entirely from memory during the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. As far as the orchestra could see, they were the first ones to ever perform symphonies from memory, which resulted in attractive marketing opportunities and warm reactions from the press (Bratby 2017). Apart from that, the orchestra realized that rehearsing and performing from memory required a much deeper understanding of the musical work, as every musician needs to be very conscious of all other musicians' parts as well. Interestingly, playing from memory connected very well to the theatrical approach towards musical programming, which was at the heart of Aurora's series at LSO St Luke's, and later at the Orchestral Theatre series at the Southbank Centre.

Aurora Orchestra today

Although Aurora Orchestra was launched without any structural business plan and gradually took shape through pragmatic choices, it is now a solid orchestra with a clearly delineated artistic mission. The importance of having a clear mission cannot be overestimated in a city such as London, where various orchestras constantly have to fight to gain support from funding bodies such as the Arts Council.

Mission statement and core values

Chief executive John Harte notes that Aurora Orchestra's philosophy is now much more rooted in the strength of the orchestra itself, and no longer stems from a pragmatic balancing exercise with other orchestras in the area. Aurora Orchestra's 2017 mission statement goes as follows:

> "Aurora aspires to be the world's most creative orchestra, combining the very highest quality of performance with an exceptional breadth of artistic horizons, a passion for adventure, and a trailblazing approach to concert presentation. (…) At all levels of the organization it seeks to cultivate a culture of creativity, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial approach to artistic risk and opportunity." (Aurora Orchestra 2018b, 4)

From this mission statement, three of the orchestra's artistic emphases can be deduced: high quality of performance, adventurousness and innovative concert presentation. Additionally, a culture of artistic and organizational entrepreneurship is mentioned, highlighting that organizational and artistic conditions are interpreted to be fundamentally intertwined.

Following the renewed Arts Council commitment for the 2018-2022 period, a new business plan was constructed, including a slightly revised mission statement:

> "Aurora creates vibrant musical adventures that share a passion for orchestral music with the broadest possible audience. We produce vivid and intensely powerful musical experiences combining the very highest performance quality with creative presentation and an exceptional breadth of artistic horizons. We harness the extraordinary versatility of the chamber orchestra to make orchestral music speak in powerful new ways for first-time listeners and lifelong classical devotees alike." (Aurora Orchestra 2018a)

In this altered mission statement, the same core values can be identified. However, additional emphasis is put on the accessibility of Aurora's concerts, "for the broadest possible audience"; this new value answers to issues of outreach and education, which are high on the Arts Council's agenda. Most interestingly, Aurora very explicitly declares that the orchestra's model (in its versatile chamber orchestra setting) is put to use in this process of making music understandable to a broad audience.

Apart from this mission statement, Aurora has also captured the spirit of the orchestra in four of the organization's aims, resulting in four values that roughly correspond with the core values identified above.

AIM	VALUE
To achieve world-class artistic standards across our entire artistic output, driven by an organization which operates to the same levels of excellence	Aim high
To ensure music and musicians are always at the heart of our work, and to be able to say no to projects where our creative voice is not central	Music first
To grow a large, diverse and deeply-engaged audience for our work	Music for all
To nurture the sense of Aurora as a 'special' musical community based on a shared enjoyment of music-making, in which audiences, staff and players can all share	Have fun

(Aurora Orchestra 2018a)

While these aims and values are essentially just a more blocked-out version of the descriptive mission statement, they do bring some new aspects to the fore. Firstly, it becomes clear that there is a limit to Aurora's entrepreneurial approach to music making. In the above, the orchestra commits to not chasing lower-quality performance opportunities in which their creative voice is not central. Secondly, the orchestra allows for no barriers between its musicians, management and audience, as all are part of the same musical community looking for joyful musical experiences. This aspect is underpinned by the informal attitude of musicians: after concerts, Aurora musicians can be seen to shake hands, kiss and laugh while still on stage. When the venue allows it, musicians, staff members and audience share drinks at the bar. In a similar vein, Aurora Orchestra links good working conditions to the increased value of artistic output.

Organizational model

Aurora Orchestra is a private company limited by guarantee with charitable status, governed by 9 board members at the time of writing. These 9 board members convene four times per year and have responsibilities in one or two of the following areas: fundraising, strategy and risk, finance, and communication and digital. Board meetings are attended by chief executive John Harte (who also acts as secretary to the board), principal conductor Nicholas Collon, creative director Jane Mitchell, one player representative and a number of guest attendees invited *ad hoc*. The main task of the board is to oversee and evaluate the decisions and actions of the orchestra's management team (Aurora Orchestra 2018a).

The management team itself has evolved from a small and multi-deployable group into a robust team. Chief Executive John Harte is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organization, managing staff and establishing relationships in order to develop the orchestra's overall strategy. Creative Director Jane Mitchell holds responsibility over the orchestra's artistic trajectory and programming, along with Principal Conductor Nicholas Collon. Together, these three core functions form the Artistic Planning Committee, in which the overall artistic trajectory is determined. Additional management functions include a Director of Development and Strategic Planning, a Projects Director, Creative Marketing Manager, Concerts Manager, Finance Manager, Planning Advisor and freelance staff providing occasional support (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). In the underlying graphical representation, the governance structure of Aurora Orchestra is visualized, with blue posts referring to current roles and orange posts indicating anticipated roles.
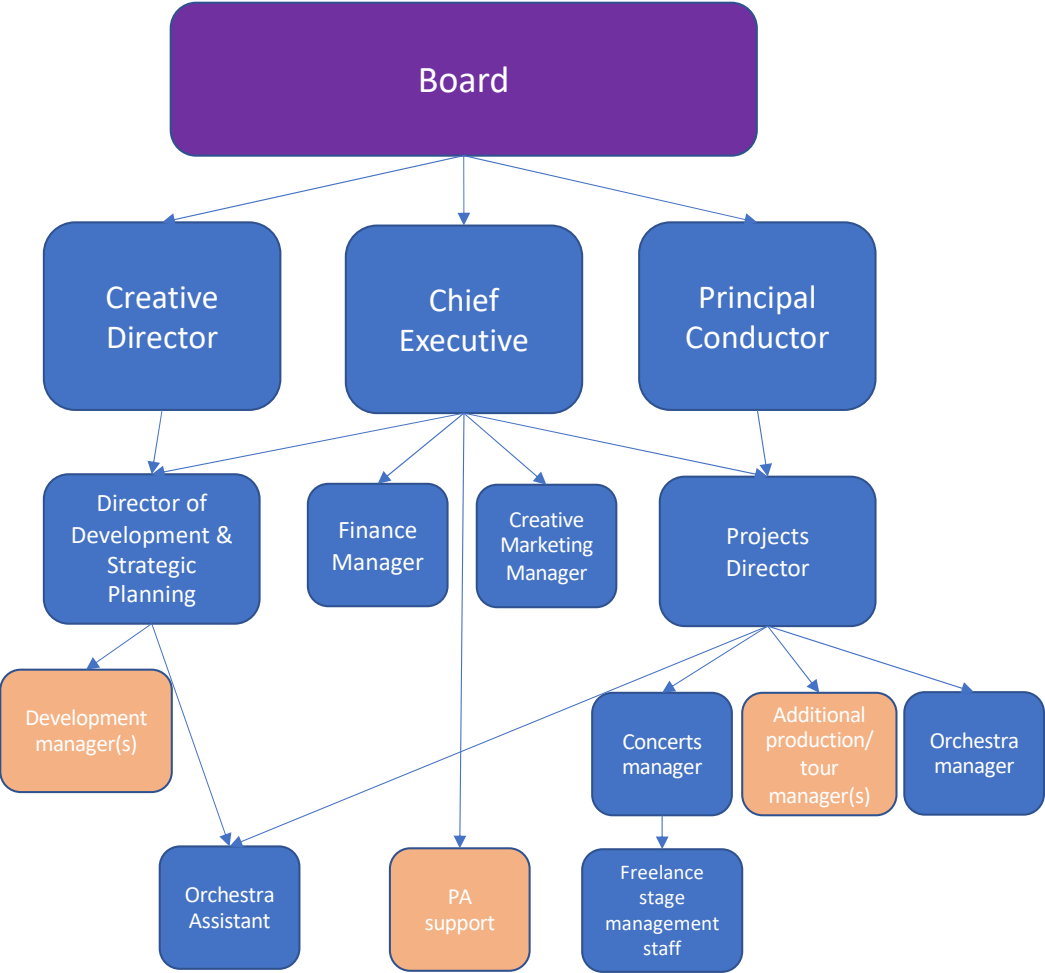

Figure 42: governance structure of Aurora Orchestra (Aurora Orchestra 2018a)

As can be read from this diagram, Aurora is governed by a rather classical hierarchical structure, with a clear division of tasks.

All Aurora musicians are freelancers, while all staff is salaried. In the frequently occurring case of unusual performance concepts in which various orchestra line-ups are used, players who engage in multiple line-ups are remunerated accordingly. Although Aurora Orchestra works with principal players who form a core group, musicians themselves note that there is no expectation from their side as to the frequency of their engagements in Aurora's projects. The seventeen principal players have an expectation that there will be projects coming up, but the orchestra does not guarantee a fixed number of projects. Likewise, the orchestra does not expect every principal player to perform a certain number of concerts every year. One musician points to the advantage of this system:

> "Nobody solely relies on Aurora for their earnings. (...) The big upside is that everybody who is engaged in a certain project, really wants to be there." (Ford 2019)

Although their singular voices are heard, Aurora musicians do not have a profound impact on artistic decisions. There are many opportunities for informal conversations between musicians and management but in the end, it is the core team that develops the artistic trajectory.

Because of the flexible and modular system, there is some fluctuation in the orchestra's membership. On average, there are about 70% principal players in each concert, complemented by musicians from a wide pool of fairly regular players. For key positions in the orchestra, auditions are organized as well as a trial period of two years. In other cases, the principal player usually brings people in. Harte notes that it is not hard for Aurora to recruit good players, although the orchestra is not necessarily paying the top end:

> "Over the years, you build up quite a large pool of players who like the idea of Aurora and who are willing to work the way we want to work. There are probably about 30 or 40 string players we work with regularly. They don't mind being told to rehearse a theatrical aspect like moving in and out of installations, they are willing to memorize and feel passionately about Aurora's distinctive approach." (Harte 2019)

He continues that this system of continuous replacements does not negatively affect the orchestra as a whole:

> "The alchemy is just like with a football squat: it's still the Hotspurs, although it is not necessarily the same ones playing. In the case of Aurora concerts, it is always recognizably our sound." (Harte 2019)

Financial model

Aurora's rapid growth was partly the result of its initial pragmatic approach towards concert invitations. According to Aurora's most recent business plan, this has sometimes resulted in the orchestra favoring rapid income streams and commercially interesting projects over artistically valuable yet commercially risky ones (Aurora Orchestra 2018a, 13). As this pragmatic approach has come to entail risks for the integrity of the orchestra, Aurora has made a gradual shift towards income generation based on its own artistic identity. This shift has had some negative effects on the financial situation of the orchestra but is expected to benefit the orchestra in the long run. This anticipation was recently endorsed by the renewed Arts Council funding for the 2018-2022 period. The overall income in the 2017-2018 season has reached the £1 million mark for the first time in the orchestra's history.

In its current form, Aurora Orchestra financially relies on an elaborate income mix. Importantly, Aurora does not receive direct box office incomes. Contracts with venues and promoters are negotiated on the basis of an overhead fee, sometimes scaled accordingly to net box office income (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). Therefore, Aurora Orchestra relies on various grants to a large extent. Many of these grants are awarded to the orchestra's creative learning programs specifically, including the educational 'Far, Far Away' series and the idea of development through ticket discounts. The organizational model of Aurora allows for a very efficient use of these financial resources. John Harte explains:

> "The advantage is that we see everything as being part of the same program. If a funder is funding the immersed workshop (in which children take place between orchestra musicians; AH), it is perfectly reasonable to use that money to cover some of the rehearsal and memorizing cost for the symphony, because you cannot deliver the workshop without the rehearsals." (Harte 2019)

The underlying table contains income and expenditure levels of Aurora Orchestra between 2010 and 2018, based on all available sources. 'Income from grants and donations' includes grants from the Arts Council of England as well as all other grants. 'Activities' refers to earned income, meaning every income that comes from concert appearances, workshops and all other projects the orchestra engages in. The numbers highlighted in green are referred to by the orchestra management as 'governance costs', which are slightly different from 'costs of raising funds'. They represent a fixed percentage of the total expenditure, rather than the actual costs (Harte 2019).
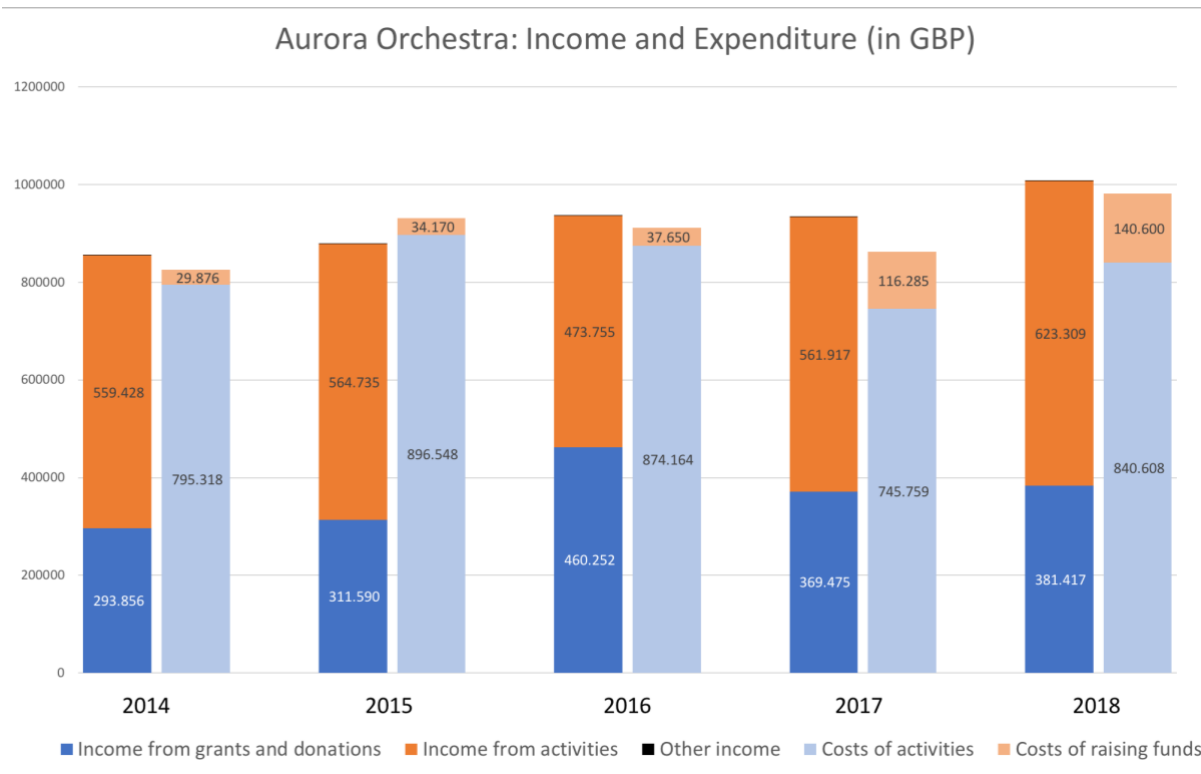
Figure 43: Total income and expenditure rates of Aurora Orchestra (in GBP)

Looking at income from activities, it becomes clear that Aurora has adapted its strategy with regard to balancing commercial and artistic projects. The curve reaches a low in 2016 before exhibiting an upwards motion again, as anticipated by the orchestra.

Figure 44 contains Arts Council grants awarded to Aurora Orchestra. With the Arts Council as the preeminent funding body for the arts in England, it makes sense to interpret this graph as a benchmark for the overall legitimacy of the organization. During the transitional period around the 2015-2016 season, income from grants and donations went up sharply, allowing the orchestra to develop its artistical strategy independently from earned income.
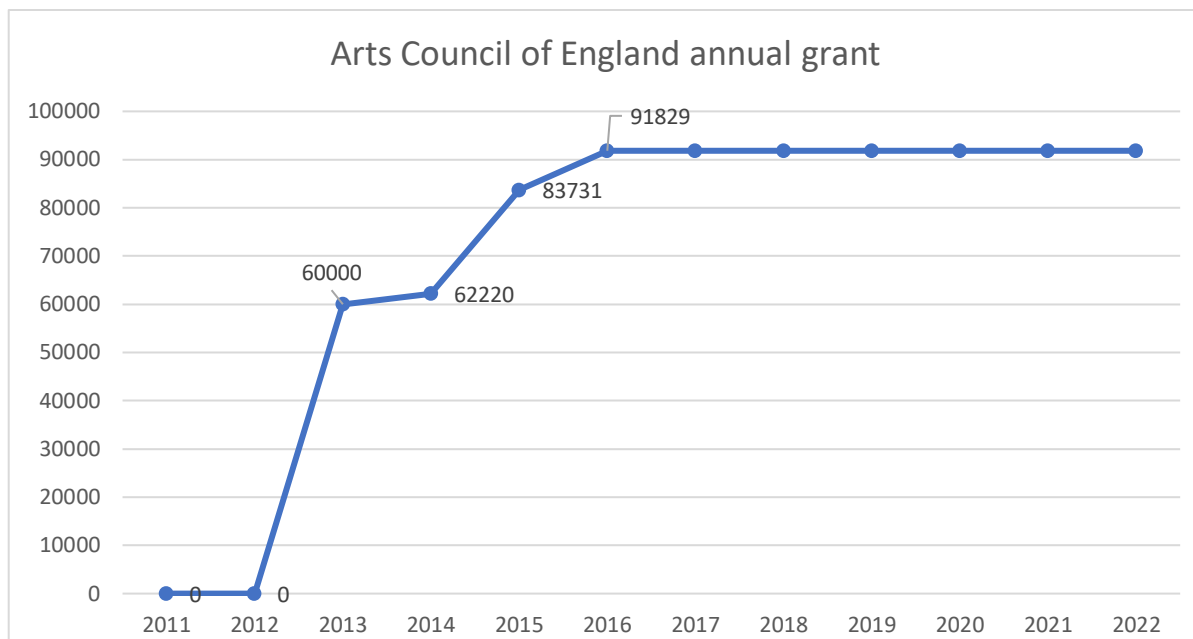
Figure 44: Arts Council grants for Aurora Orchestra (Aurora Orchestra 2018b)

In other words, the short downwards inclination of income from activities does not imply that Aurora Orchestra refrains from engaging in commercial projects. It means, more likely, that the orchestra has developed its artistic identity with the long-term prospect of increased income through pursuing its artistic core values.

Programming policy of Aurora Orchestra

Aurora Orchestra has an intentionally broad repertoire. During the orchestra's early years of development, the classical and romantic repertoire was avoided to the benefit of contemporary and baroque music. This strategic consideration resulted in a musicians' base who was familiar with a broad range of repertoires, which Harte now considers to be one of the main strengths of Aurora. Meanwhile, all repertoires are considered for programming, but not without Aurora's distinctive approach. Aurora Orchestra is particularly well-known for its creative programming and original approach to concert presentation. Performing symphonies from memory attracts international attention, as well as their educational programs.

The orchestra's program of activities is supported by three primary pillars. Firstly, the Orchestral Theatre series at Southbank Centre can be interpreted as the most representatively programmed series of Aurora. Secondly, the performance program at Kings Place spans the whole repertoire and covers the majority of Aurora's activities. Finally, educational and participatory programs, which will be referred to as broadening formulas, are a third pillar on which Aurora Orchestra leans.

Programming philosophy

Artistic director and programmer Jane Mitchell emphasizes that all of Aurora's programs have a strong audience focus. Conscious about having to sell all programs on a program-to-program basis, each program is conceived with marketing perspectives in mind. "If we lose our ability to sell programs, we alienate ourselves" (Mitchell 2019), Mitchell explains. Chief executive John Harte points to the advantage of having a conductor and a musician making the main programming decisions. Because they are involved in the orchestra as closely as possible, they can judge very well what an audience may or may not like. At the same time, this audience focus is not perceived as a restriction to the orchestra's creativity and autonomy. In the words of Harte:

> "I think audiences have always been at the heart of what we do. We never shied away from the idea of being commercial, in the sense that I think it's a marker of audience appeal and impact. We have never seen a hard and fast distinction between a purely artistic program on the one hand and commercial audience-driven projects on the other hand. In our view, they interlink; the sweet spot where they join up is what we are aiming for." (Harte 2019)

Factors impacting programming

Despite the audience focus, Aurora's representatives agree that the orchestra delivers its best and most successful products when programs are conceived starting from the orchestra's own capacities and artistic values. External factors, however, are always at play. Adhering to a relatively small and highly flexible orchestra model comes with one major advantage and one major disadvantage with regard to programming.

Firstly, Harte refers to making compromises with venues as a complicated give-and-take process. In the early years of Aurora Orchestra, opportunities to play in new venues have resulted in compromises with regard to soloists and programs. International touring, in particular, has long been an exercise in weighing pros and cons, also from the financial side. In the early years, Aurora Orchestra has sometimes lost up to £10.000 to be able to play in certain foreign venues. Harte clarifies that these decisions are very important from a strategic perspective, because playing in prestigious venues increases player's motivation and gives more value to the project. In recent years, however, the orchestra management has become more confident in proposing Aurora's programs as they are, without making any alterations. Mitchell explains:

> "In London, we can program almost without compromises, and we do find that venues are trusting us in our ideas and being adventurous. I would even say that some

programmers book us because of our new things and because of our programming conversations. But we don't have all the power yet." (Mitchell 2019)

Secondly, the flexibility of Aurora's model allows for an enormous amount of programming freedom. Because the orchestra's musicians do not have any expectations as to how much they will play, Aurora can experiment with various orchestra settings, often combining repertoire for the whole orchestra with music for small ensembles or even solo pieces. As one musician explains:

> "Programming decisions in big orchestras have to be much more pragmatic. A programmer cannot decide that the orchestra will only play Mozart for a whole season, because the brass players would have no income." (Campbell 2019)

This flexibility with regard to scales of instrumentation is an indispensable asset for Aurora Orchestra's thematic approach to concerts.

Development formulas

Aurora Orchestra fosters the ambition to develop and revitalize the orchestral scene by means of innovative concert presentations. Although the Orchestral Theatre series at Southbank Centre does not cover the majority of Aurora's concerts, the projects that are housed in that series are the most representative of the orchestra's core values.

Being named Associate Orchestra at Southbank Centre marks an important transition in Aurora Orchestra's history. The cross-arts collaborations that had been the orchestra's core business in several other venues for years, began to put heavy strains on the orchestra in terms of logistics and creative time investment. Working with outside artists' input often forced the orchestra to accommodate to their priorities. In Jane Mitchell's words: "It does feel like in cross-arts collaborations, the music is what's lost first" (Mitchell 2019).

While the Southbank Centre concert series, aptly named Orchestral Theatre, allows Aurora Orchestra to program more freely, the orchestra has kept its theatrical approach to concert presentation which gave the series its name. Starting from Aurora's own artistic philosophy, music is now the starting point for the creative programs which often cross several art forms. In order to do so, Aurora Orchestra works with a network of artists (designers, directors, stage artists, etc.) who work with the orchestra on a regular basis, which allows for more continuity between the Orchestral Theatre projects and ensures an upwards learning curve. Aurora management agrees that this new approach enables a more authentic orchestral experience than setting up a series of random collaborations with different people.

The concept of orchestral theatre originates in the idea that audience enlargement and artistic experimentation are not necessarily conflicting ideas. In Aurora's view, adventurous programming can help enable a better understanding of music that can otherwise come across as hard to understand. The basic idea that underlies the concept of orchestral theatre is working with an abstract theme which, in Harte's words, "ties repertoire together in an interesting way but also leaves enough space to do whatever you want to do" (Harte 2019). One of the main premises underlying this idea, is that musical genres are not fundamentally distinct. Aurora's programs are intentionally curated eclectically, across all musical genres. Canonical works from the orchestra repertoire appear alongside works that are commissioned by the orchestra itself, alongside unfamiliar 20th century music and pop songs. A representative example of this thematic approach is the 2019 concert entitled *Music of the Spheres,* which was part of the Orchestral Theatre series at Southbank Centre. Using Plato's theory about the harmonious sound that celestial bodies produce as a framework, Aurora Orchestra combined a memorized performance of Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony with the newly commissioned work *Journey* by Max Richter (performed in the dark), which is characterized by a continuously upward musical motion. Beethoven's *Molto Adagio* from his 8th string quartet, which is said to have been written under the light of stars, appeared alongside Thomas Adès' violin concerto *Concentric paths.* David Bowie's *Is there life on Mars?* was added as an encore. Elements of stage design, animation and audio made this varied program into a coherent orchestral exploration of the mysticism of space.

Artistic director and programmer Jane Mitchell argues that this thematic approach can not only be justified artistically, it also offers marketing perspectives and carefully targets audiences that are less familiar with certain musical styles. Because the combination of styles is presented in an internally coherent concert format, audiences' curiosity is triggered in ways they do not necessarily experience within the more conventional and more segregated concert circuits (Mitchell 2019). Another example of the wide-ranging success of this eclectic formula is the 2017 concert entitled *In the Alps.* A memorized performance of Brahms' first symphony, featuring the famous 'alphorn theme', was paired with Richard Ayres' *No 42: In the Alps,* a staged work combining a symphonically challenging score with elements of theatre and film. Ayres' work tells the story of a young girl on a mountain-top, who learns to sing with the help of the mountain animals around her. She falls in love with a boy who plays the trumpet in the distant valley far below. To this program, the cheerful song *The lonely Goatherd* from the musical *The Sound of Music* was added as an encore. The production toured extensively, next to being broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Meanwhile, two of Aurora's signature programs, *Road Trip* and *Insomnia,* were recorded for Warner Classics, with *Road Trip* awarded with the prestigious ECHO Klassik in 2015.

Broadening formulas

One of the core values of Aurora Orchestra includes sharing orchestral music with a broad range of audiences. While this idea is already strongly represented in the orchestra's theatrical concepts, Aurora also engages in more specific educational activities. The orchestra's Learning and Participation pillar encompasses all work produced for young audiences as well as for community settings beyond the concert hall, such as schools and hospitals (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). From this approach, two series have materialized.

Aurora Orchestra's *Far, Far Away* series is a storytelling program which is similar to the orchestral theatre. The basic idea is about bringing music to life in an interesting and vivid way, be it on a smaller scale. At Kings Place as well as in alternative venues such as schools and nurseries, musical stories featuring three-player arrangements from well-known classical pieces are presented to young children between 0 and 4 years old and their families. In a 2017 program entitled *Debussy and the Snow Elephant,* preludes by Debussy are used as a soundtrack to help Jimbo the shy snow elephant learn how to dance. Other programs include music by Chopin, Tchaikovsky and Mozart, but also more challenging composers such as Bartók and Britten. The *Far, Far Away* series is Aurora's most popular series, with every show consistently sold-out in every venue (Harte 2019).

Another and more recent series is the *Immersed* workshop, in which young audiences are invited to take place among Aurora's musicians and experience memorized performances from within the orchestra. In the near future, Aurora Orchestra hopes to be able to open the series up to children with special educational needs. In order to do so, Aurora management applies for additional funding for the creative learning programs specifically. As mentioned before, this also allows the orchestra to further develop its flagship series, the content of which is often generated and tested in the smaller-scale educational programs.

Performance series

Aurora Orchestra's concert series as Resident Orchestra at Kings Place allows the orchestra to focus more explicitly on the orchestra as a musical group. The Kings Place series is not only aimed at attracting a more conventional concert audience but is also meant to increase the quality of the orchestra's creative work and musical progression (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). The series offers opportunities to work on the core repertoire with renowned international soloists, thus broadening the scope of activities for Aurora. John Harte considers the Kings Place series as a vital part of the Orchestra's creative work:

> "People sometimes ask why we do not solely focus on the Orchestral Theatre projects and collaborations, but I think we need both to grow as an orchestra. We are very much trying to be recognizable as an orchestra, and that requires musical standards.

There are things you need to do as a group to meet those standards, and that includes playing together regularly. Kings Place gives us a lovely opportunity to do that." (Harte 2019)

Since the beginning of Aurora's designation as Resident Orchestra from 2016 onwards, the orchestra has worked on a five-year project called 'Mozart's Piano', comprising the complete cycle of 27 piano concertos of Mozart. Again, this project started off as a pragmatic opportunity: Kings Place gave a considerable grant to support this project, which covers about half of the costs of the project. Although it means being tied to one long-term idea for five consecutive years, this series of concertos allows the orchestra to pair these works with other repertoire. For example, Mozart's 12th piano concerto has been combined with works by Hindemith, Glass, Chopin and Nancarrow. On another occasion, Mozart's double piano concerto has been paired with the original and seldom programmed four-hand version of Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite.* Thus, Mozart's piano concertos offer an accessible and marketing-friendly framework for repertoire experimentation. Harte concludes:

"In a way, Kings Place is the musical engine-room that makes the experimental Southbank projects possible." (Harte 2019)

Despite being a more conventional concert series than the Orchestral Theatre series, the Kings Place series equally cherishes the idea of a dramaturgical unity of each separate program.

Programming trends

Aurora Orchestra's concert programs allow for a more in-depth analysis of the orchestra's programming trends. For the underlying graphs, a database was constructed by collecting all concert information provided on the organization's website. All of Aurora's concerts and workshops between the 2010-2011 and 2018-2019 seasons have been included in the database. The 2010 mark was intentionally set, because the orchestra has received structural funding from that year onwards. Therefore, it is the year in which the orchestra assumed its current organizational form and promoted concerts on a regular basis. The dataset includes one separate entry for every time a work was performed. Inspired by an analytic method proposed by Gilmore (Gilmore 1993) and employed by Wolf (2017), composers have been listed in three programming categories: those who actively composed before 1900, those who composed between 1900 and 1950, and composers who were active after 1950. Composers listed as 'anonymous', 'traditional' or 'various' have been removed from the set. The three programming categories can be roughly characterized by their relative positions on a 'convention-innovation' scale (Gilmore 1993). At the conventional extreme, works of composers who wrote prior to 1900 tend to be highly familiar to both orchestra musicians and audiences. In the middle, works composed from 1900-1950 are, in general, both less

conventional and more innovative than pre-1900 repertoire, and therefore tend to be only moderately familiar to orchestras and their audiences. Finally, works composed from 1950 onwards tend to be radically unconventional, often making their styles little known to orchestras and their audiences. In case of any doubt whether a composer was predominantly active in one period or the other, a judgment was made according to the specific composer's style. For example, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland and Shostakovich were categorized in the 1900-1950 period because of their aesthetic affinity with composers of that period. Not every category spans an equally proportioned timeframe, which does not facilitate drawing categorical conclusions. Therefore, the underlying data focus more on relative motions such as repertoire evolutions throughout the analyzed seasons, and concentration or density levels within each category.

Figure 45 represents the overall repertoire division in Aurora Orchestra's concert programs, illustrated by means of the three proposed categories. The graph shows that the different repertoire shares are distributed rather unequally. Covering 48,83% of Aurora's repertoire, the pre-1900 category dominates the orchestra's concert programs. Roughly the other half of the repertoire is evenly shared among the 1900-1950 and post-1950 categories, who cover 25,24% and 25,93% respectively.
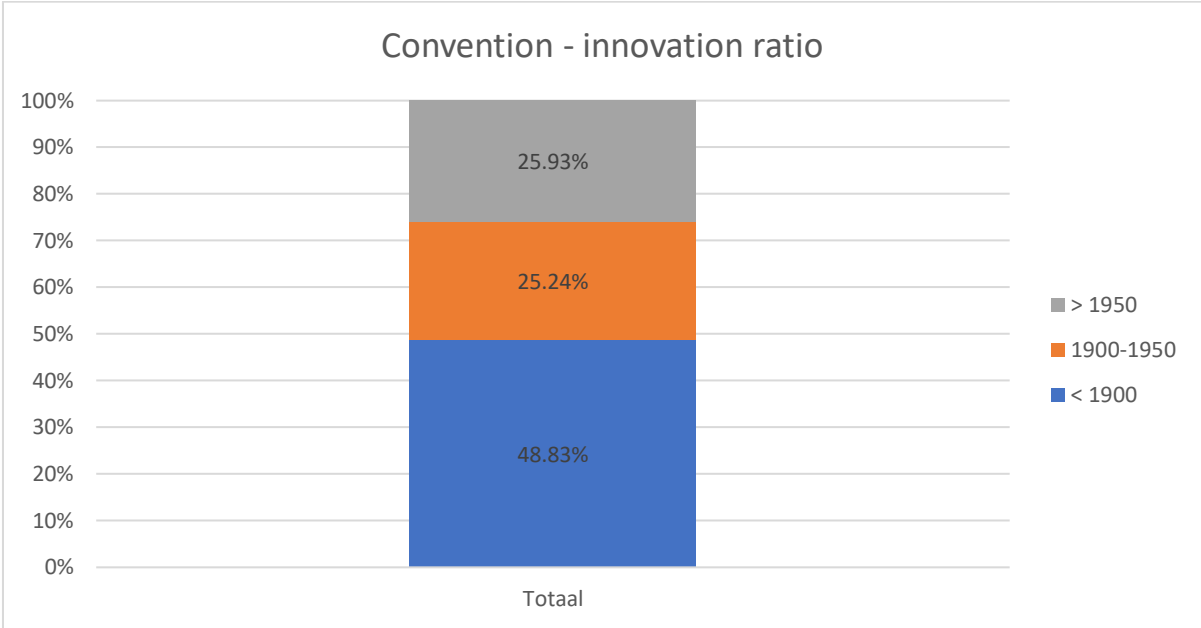

Figure 45: convention-innovation ratio of Aurora Orchestra, between the 2010-2011 and 2018-2019 seasons

Looking more closely at the composers who appear on Aurora's programs, a top-10 of most frequently performed composers can be deduced, enabling to define the 'iron repertoire' of Aurora Orchestra. To that end, every performance of a certain work is counted separately, so that the numbers proportionally reflect the actual presence of each composer. The top-10, in

descending order of frequency, consists of: Mozart, Britten, Beethoven, Bach, Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Ravel, Debussy, Mahler and Brahms. Particularly interesting is the overwhelming dominance of Mozart, whose music accounts for 16,55% of Aurora's performances. With only 5,79%, Britten follows at a remote distance. The dominance of Mozart is, at least partially, accounted for by the fact that four of the included seasons have featured Aurora Orchestra's cycle of Mozart's piano concertos at Kings Place. Of these top-10 composers, 6 belong in the pre-1900 category, 4 in the 1900-1950 category, and none in the post-1950 category. Together, these 10 composers account for 45,93% of Aurora Orchestra's repertoire between the 2010-2011 and 2018-2019 seasons. The remaining 54,07% of performances is divided among the remaining 157 composers. Only 18 of the total number of 167 composers reach a minimum of 1% performance time each. Among these 18 composers, 7 are categorized in the pre-1900 group, 9 in the 1900-1950 category, and 2 in the post-1950 category. These numbers do not adequately reflect the repertoire divisions visualized in figure 45, which means that a more in-depth approach to these proportions is necessary. The numbers suggest that the orchestra's reliance on frequently programmed composers varies strongly between the three categories. Therefore, it seems useful to analyze these concentration levels in more detail.

Figure 46 contains the concentration levels of each separate category, enabling to quantify the orchestra's reliance on narrow sets of composers within each category. Again, there is an interesting friction between the overall repertoire division visualized in figure 45 and the concentration rates in figure 46. As anticipated, figure 46 shows that density levels vary rather strongly between the three proposed categories. The top-5 composers cover exactly two-thirds of the repertoire from the pre-1900 category (66,67%), compared to about half of the 1900-1950 category (53,01%) and only a little over one-fifth of the post-1950 category (22,34%). At its peak point, the 15 most frequently programmed composers from the pre-1900 category, account for 88,89% of the repertoire in that category. In combination with the divisions outlined in figure 45, this leads to some significant observations. The most obvious observation is that, in general, concentration levels go in a downwards direction over the progressive categories or time periods. The most conventional category covers almost half of the performances of the orchestra (cf. figure 45) and relies very strongly on a narrow set of composers (cf. figure 46). This makes Aurora Orchestra very reliant on the traditional musical canon. This observation is corroborated by the number of composers that appear in each category. The most represented, pre-1900 category, counts 39 composers, while the least represented, post-1950 category, counts 86 composers. In other words: the more recent the repertoire, the less it relies on a fixed set of composers. The top-5, top-10 and top-15 concentration rates each follow that general trendline.

	< 1900	1900-1950	> 1950
Top 5	236 (66,67%)	97 (53,01%)	42 (22,34%)
Top 10	289 (81,64%)	130 (71,04%)	69 (36,70%)
Top 15	315 (88,89%)	148 (80,87%)	87 (46,28%)
One-time	14 (3,95%)	19 (10,38%)	49 (26,06%)
All	354 (100%)	183 (100%)	188 (100%)
	(39 composers)	(42 composers)	(86 composers)

Figure 46: Concentration levels of performances among composers, by programming category

Yet, there is another side to this coin, where additional observations can be made. If composers who have been programmed only once, are considered 'experiments', the resulting experimentation rates are particularly interesting. While the experimentation rate in the pre-1900 category is low with 3,95% of the total repertoire of that category, it more than doubles in the 1900-1950 category (10,38%), and more than doubles again to 26,06% in the post-1900 category. Moreover, the post-1950 category is by far the only category in which experiments outnumber the amount of performances of top-5 composers. Not only do these numbers illustrate that experimentation levels in Aurora Orchestra's programs are high (at least in the admittedly least represented post-1950 category), these numbers also support the above hypothesis that canonization is a gradual process of condensation that can be read over time. While Aurora Orchestra relies on what can be called the musical canon to a great extent, the orchestra also strongly engages in repertoire experimentation. The 1900-1950 category that represents the middle of the repertoire spectrum, shows numbers that fall in between those of the other categories, thereby corroborating the hypothesis that canonization can be read from a gradually occurring process of condensation.

Figure 47 breaks the numbers from figure 45 down into separate concert seasons, spanning the 2010-2011 to 2018-2019 seasons. Again, it tells a story somewhat different from figure 45. The most striking element in figure 47 is the curved line representing the pre-1900 repertoire. In the 2010-2011 season, Aurora Orchestra relied on this repertoire for 80,77%, leaving only 15,23% and 3,85% for the other two categories, which is completely out of line with the general trendline. Around 2014, the three categories roughly share the repertoire almost evenly, before parting ways again. John Harte explains that the variations in these curves have less to do with periods or repertoire than with scale of instrumentation. In the earlier years of Aurora, the orchestra tended to perform more works with a smaller line-up, covering the backbone of the orchestral ensemble repertoire. The downwards curve of the pre-1900 repertoire can be explained through the limited amount of repertoire that is available for that line-up, as well as through the increasing confidence of Aurora's experimental approaches such as the Orchestral Theatre concept. The upwards motion of the pre-1900 curve, and the complementary downwards motion of the less conventional categories, is the result of two fairly new emphases of Aurora Orchestra. Firstly, the Mozart cycle at Kings Place, and secondly, Aurora's increasingly popular signature concept of

memorized performances, which can more practically be realized with canonical symphonies such as those of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. Overall, the most recent trends include a rise in pre-1900 as well as post-1950 repertoires, and a slight decrease in 1900-1950 repertoire, both of which can be explained from the above context.
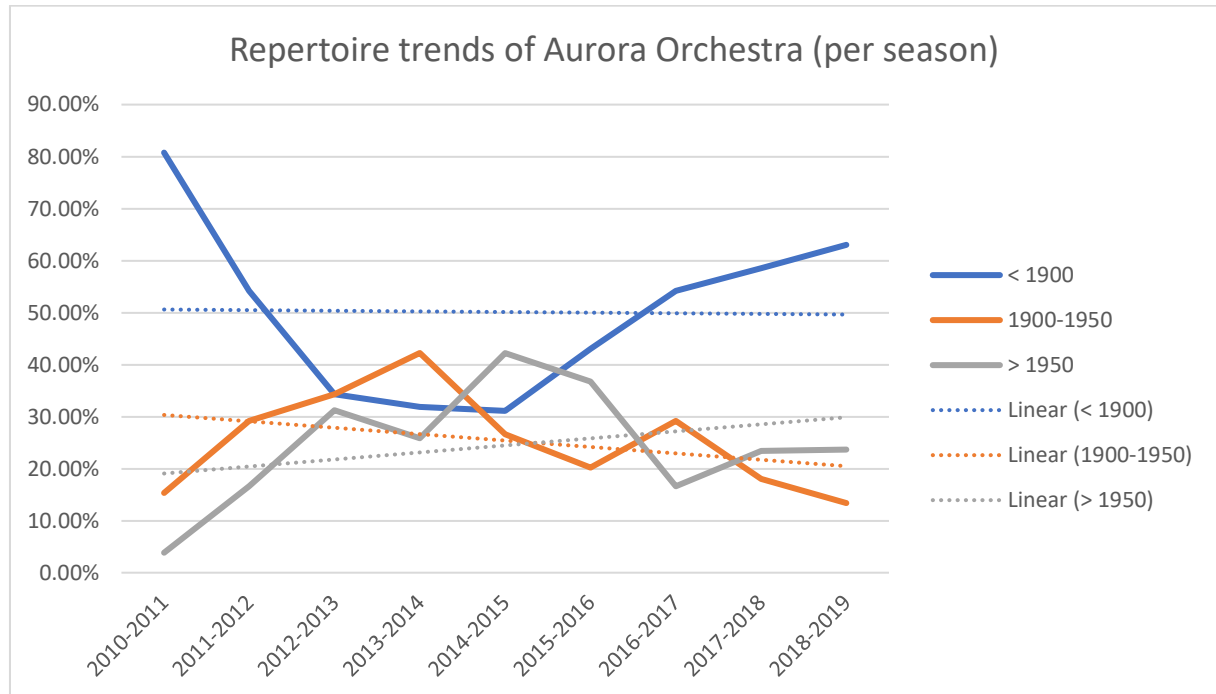

Figure 47: Repertoire trends of Aurora Orchestra

This quantitative analysis of Aurora Orchestra's programming trends adds a new dimension to the overall analysis of the orchestra's actions. It tells a remarkably ambiguous story which cannot be understood without the proper background information. Most importantly, these numbers show that Aurora Orchestra, despite its core values of artistic adventure, relies on the traditional repertoire to a surprisingly large extent. Not only does the pre-1900 repertoire dominate the orchestra's programs, the orchestra's reliance on a fixed set of regularly appearing composers is very strong in that category. Interpreted against the backdrop of the Orchestral Theatre concept, this does not imply that Aurora's concerts can be categorized under the denominator 'conventional'. Indeed, concentration levels of the separate categories show that experimentation levels are very high, especially in the post-1950 category. The fact that there is not one post-1950 composer in the orchestra's top-10 list, adds credibility to both observations. Looking at specific concert programs, the narrative behind this ambiguous story becomes clear. Throughout various programs, the same canonical works reappear (often performed from memory), while being paired with different works in different programs. This way, canonical works can be argued to draw in the audiences, while simultaneously forming the backbone for further repertoire exploration.

By means of these data, specific repertoire trends of Aurora Orchestra can be demonstrated. Establishing a link between one particular orchestra's 'iron repertoire' and the musical canon

in more general terms remains a somewhat speculative affair, but not necessarily an idle one. In drawing conclusions with regard to canonization, the employed categorizations need to be handled with care. Firstly, the pre-1900 repertoire does not necessarily consist of canonical composers only, and the post-1950 repertoire does not only consist of non-canonical or even experimental composers. Concentration levels, secondly, do not explicitly refer to the formation of a musical canon per se, but they do display that certain composers account for a very significant proportion of the actual repertoire of this specific orchestra. Still, a strong relation can be established between these performance data and the musical canon, as these data are illustrative for a condensation process taking place over time.

Discussion

The rapid growth of Aurora Orchestra brings to the surface an interesting interaction between the pragmatic and the aesthetic. Starting from first principles, the orchestra has developed itself through opportunities obtained from a range of external partners, allowing the organization to mature into a creative workplace with an increasingly distinctive artistic voice. Having, in a first phase, prioritized short-term income generation over long-term artistic development, the orchestra has gradually become aware of the risks of constantly having to adapt to an external environment. Opportunities occurring by chance soon evolved into Aurora's signature concepts such as memorized performances and orchestral theatre, which allowed the orchestra to conquer a certain niche within the London area. The Arts Council support that the orchestra has obtained through occupying that niche, permitted the orchestra to further develop these ideas without having to prioritize the pragmatic over the aesthetic.

In its current form, the Aurora Orchestra model seems to have required all properties for a sustainable orchestra. The key to Aurora Orchestra's sustainability is the flexibility of its model. The fact that the orchestra works on a project basis is perceived as a necessary condition to attract players to go along the artistic journey of the orchestra. Demanding artistic concepts such as orchestral theatre or workshop settings can only be realized when the orchestra's players do not financially rely on Aurora Orchestra alone and are therefore motivated to fully engage in each specific project. A second interesting feature of Aurora's model with regard to its sustainability, is the idea that the orchestra's different activities serve each other's purposes. The performance series at Kings Place is indispensable for the orchestra, because it allows the musicians to play together regularly and mature as an orchestra group. Performing from memory, for example, requires a level of trust and familiarity among musicians, which can only be realized with help of these regular performance settings. Likewise, the education program has often proved to be a seedbed for the experimental orchestral theatre projects, which can conveniently be tried out on a smaller scale. This cross-fertilization between small-scale and large-scale projects is not only

artistically viable, it also allows the orchestra to budget creative time as well as rehearsal time for its financially challenging experimental concerts.

A recent survey, conducted by the orchestra itself, revealed that Aurora "attracts a significantly more demographically diverse audience than is usual for classical music", with 40% of their audience base being under the age of 55 (UK average: 16%), and 16% under the age of 34 (UK average: 4%) (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). However, orchestra representatives are well aware of the risks of becoming too complacent with a guaranteed Arts Council funding. In interviews and documents, five potential problems arise with regard to the sustainability of the Aurora Orchestra model.

The first and biggest challenge is the financial sustainability of Aurora Orchestra, specifically related to issues with regard to scaling up. Receiving structural funds from the Arts Council, for example, puts additional pressure on the organization. On the one hand, funding allows the orchestra to develop more autonomously from market pressures, but on the other hand, overhead bills go upwards because of increased administrative salaries. John Harte explains the dynamics at work:

> "Our overhead bill used to be under £10.000 a year for administrative salaries. Now it reaches £28.000 a year, pushing on £30.000. That has an interesting effect on the orchestra: because you have a lot of salaries to pay, you don't have the same flexibility to reduce activity for a period or spend a year rethinking stuff. It means that you constantly have to challenge yourself to try and keep hold of the things that make the orchestra special, like the flexibility we had in the early years." (Harte 2019)

Harte adds that it will be difficult to go up from the £90.000 annual Arts Council grant without changing the programming policy of the orchestra. In short, ensuring that organizational conduct matches artistic ambition, is one challenge that takes central stage during what the orchestra perceives as 'growing pains' (Aurora Orchestra 2018a, 5).

A second problem also relates to scaling up the orchestra. The concern in this case, as opposed to the previous problem, is mainly an artistic one. As the orchestra management is well aware, to upscale Aurora Orchestra would imply compromising the flexibility that is critical to the organization. Filling up the diary to maximum capacity would place Aurora Orchestra among bigger and more rigid players in the field, which would make competition unfair not only because of financial inequalities, but also because Aurora would lose its competitive advantage. Therefore, Aurora representatives highlight the importance of only engaging in artistic projects which are "signature Aurora" (Campbell 2019), and not committing to projects which are commercially interesting or that fill in the diary. John Harte explains:

"We would never aim to become a full-time orchestra, whether salaried or freelance, even if there would be a financial opportunity. We would never get the right team of players for every project. Likewise, a franchise model where we would license our own programs to other orchestras would not be attractive. The whole point is about the connection between us as a group and the product we are delivering. If you are saying that any orchestra can play what we play, it immediately devalues the specialty of the project." (Harte 2019)

The scale of the orchestra is perceived to be intrinsically linked with its artistic value.

Thirdly, comparable problems can be formulated with regard to the duplication of the Aurora Orchestra model. Aurora management already experiences equally positioned orchestras as a threat to its sustainability, because the orchestra's market share is at risk of being usurped. It is crucial for the sustainability of the Aurora Orchestra model that it retains its position as an orchestra that complements the actions of its larger siblings. If the dominant logic of competitive isomorphism (from which larger orchestras can be argued to suffer and to which Aurora Orchestra is responding) were to affect the Aurora Orchestra model, chasing its artistic core values would become an idle pursuit.

Fourthly, uncertainties about the imminent Brexit have an impact on the orchestra to some extent already. Problems are identified on two domains: orchestra membership and touring practicalities. Aurora Orchestra is fairly confident, however, that the musicians' group will not become more insular because the orchestra is experienced in bringing players in without European passports. Potential touring issues mostly relate to short concert trips to neighboring countries, which are likely to become less convenient and more expensive. With the actual damage of a Brexit remaining to be calculated, programming conversations with European partners go on as planned.

Finally, there is an increasing number of ensembles developing artistic positions that look like Aurora's. For example, performing from memory has created a hype among newly emerging orchestras who are in the process of branding themselves. Likewise, Aurora's signature concept of orchestral theatre emerges in other orchestras and ensembles, who are sometimes able to realize comparable work with lower overheads. On the one hand, as a recently performed SWOT analysis of Aurora suggests, it shows the effectiveness of Aurora's artistic approach (Aurora Orchestra 2018a). On the other hand, increased competition can put additional strains on Aurora, forcing the orchestra to continuously recalibrate its artistic identity to its competitors.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Het symfonisch orkest is altijd een gezaghebbend cultureel medium geweest. Als een symbool van de voornamelijk Westerse cultuur lijkt het orkest geopolitieke grenzen te markeren én te overschrijden. Op 26 februari 2008 speelde het New York Philharmonic een concert in Pyongyang, dat met een staande ovatie werd onthaald door een communistisch publiek dat nochtans de gewoonte had aangekweekt om elk Westers cultuurproduct met argwaan te bejegenen. Zes weken na de val van de Muur dirigeerde Leonard Bernstein een orkest samengesteld uit Oost- en West-Duitse muzikanten, in een *on-site* concert met Beethovens *Negende Symfonie.* Voor deze uitzonderlijke gelegenheid werd Schillers tekst van de afsluitende hymne door Bernstein gewijzigd van *Ode an die Freude* naar *Ode an die Freiheit.* Het NASA-team dat verantwoordelijk was voor de Voyager-missie in 1977, nam de zogenaamde Golden Record mee aan boord, bestaande uit de meest representatieve geluiden van de aarde, waaronder Beethovens *Vijfde Symfonie* en Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps.* In de loop van zijn kleurrijke geschiedenis heeft het symfonisch orkest een reeks vaste structuren en rituelen ontwikkeld, en een repertoire van muziekwerken die vaak worden gerekend tot de belangrijkste prestaties van de menselijke beschaving. Dankzij dit veronderstelde representatieve potentieel wordt de geschiedenis van het symfonisch orkest vaak verteld als een heroïsche geschiedenis van superlatieven. De culturele betekenis van een orkest en zijn repertoire reikt dan ook veel verder dan de muziek zelf.

De afgelopen decennia kregen symfonische orkesten in binnen- en buitenland echter bijzonder zware klappen te verduren. Zo zagen ze hun subsidies drastisch inkrimpen, hun publiek vergrijzen en uitdunnen, en wordt hun cultureel belang door de globaliserende maatschappij steeds meer in vraag gesteld. Hoewel de internationale orkestcultuur sterk in beweging is, kampt het symfonisch orkest al vele decennia met iets wat op een existentiële crisis lijkt. Orkesten staan immers steeds meer onder druk in een maatschappij die de 'waarde' van een symfonisch orkest en hun repertoire niet meer als evident beschouwt. Deze bijdrage peilt naar de historische wortels van wat vaak de 'orkestencrisis' wordt genoemd, in een poging de vele facetten ervan te begrijpen onder een coherente theorie. Daarbij worden theorie en empirie aan elkaar gekoppeld, in het verlengde van het centrale argument dat esthetiek en pragmatiek twee dialectische krachten zijn die een culturele spanning opleveren waarbinnen een orkest zich voortbeweegt.

De geschiedenis van het symfonisch orkest illustreert dat het orkest de uitzonderlijke kwaliteit bezit om zich aan te passen aan veranderingen in zijn omgeving. Ondanks de orkestencrisis waar al vele decennia gewag van wordt gemaakt, zijn er evenveel aanwijzingen dat het symfonisch orkest gezonder is dan ooit: wereldwijd presteren orkesten op hun hoogste niveau, subsidies zijn nog steeds eerder regel dan uitzondering, en jeugd-, diversiteits- en inclusiviteitsorkesten zijn in opmars. Het empirische feit dat het symfonisch orkest nog steeds

in leven is, impliceert echter niet dat zijn huidige conditie vanuit elk oogpunt als gezond of duurzaam te benoemen valt. De verscheidenheid aan schijnbaar tegengestelde alternatieven voor de kernactiviteiten van het orkest, evenals de voorwaarden voor het voortbestaan van de instelling, hebben veel organisaties voor een existentieel dilemma geplaatst: is de taak van het orkest beperkt tot louter behoud van cultureel erfgoed, of moet een orkest eerder een actief en productief forum zijn voor civiele discussie? Moet het orkest zich richten op het vergroten van het publiek om meer inkomsten te garanderen, of is de volledige autonomie en isolatie van een orkest de enige manier om de integriteit van muziek te waarborgen? En vooral: sluiten deze opties elkaar uit?

Dit structurele dilemma nodigt uit om de orkestencrisis te interpreteren als een legitimiteitscrisis. Een orkest bevindt zich in een cultureel veld dat bepaalde normen stipuleert, en de legitimiteit van het orkest is een functie van de mate waarin het zich kan inbedden in die normen. Doorheen de geschiedenis zijn er erg uiteenlopende narratieven ontwikkeld om de plaats van het orkest en zijn repertoire te legitimeren binnen de maatschappij. Als er inderdaad sprake is van een orkestencrisis, kan die daarom enkel worden begrepen tegen de achtergrond van een veelzijdige discussie die de verschillende en vaak strijdige dimensies van het orkest doorkruist. Deze bijdrage stelt zich tot doel de verhoudingen te onderzoeken tussen esthetische en pragmatische dimensies in de zoektocht naar legitimiteit van het orkest, en om vervolgens te laten zien hoe deze dialectiek gestalte krijgt in het repertoire van het orkest, de plek waar de twee dimensies het meest tastbaar samenkomen.

Om deze dynamiek ten gronde te onderzoeken, is er behoefte aan een tweedimensionaal onderzoek, dat theoretische (of esthetische) en organisatorische (of pragmatische) dimensies veronderstelt als fundamenteel met elkaar verweven. De programmatie van een symfonisch orkest is waar beide dynamieken effectief samenkomen. Het symfonisch orkest fungeert daarom als onderzoeksarena, terwijl de muzikale canon de lens biedt om het probleem te observeren. De onderzoeksvraag die aan dit bifocale onderzoek ten grondslag ligt, kan als volgt worden geformuleerd: hoe verhoudt het repertoire van symfonische orkesten zich tot hun perspectief op duurzaamheid? In lijn met de centrale these wordt duurzaamheid begrepen als de capaciteit om zowel organisatorisch als artistiek legitiem te blijven. De focus op de muzikale canon maakt zowel een synchrone als een diachrone benadering mogelijk. Synchroon, in de zin dat pragmatische en esthetische dimensies samenkomen in het concept van de muzikale canon. Diachroon, in die zin dat het concept van de muzikale canon de mogelijkheid biedt om in drie opeenvolgende onderzoeksstadia het verleden, het heden en de toekomst van het concept te verkennen, en het vervolgens te verbinden aan de veranderende historische narratieven van het symfonisch orkest.

Historisch onderzoek toont hoe de muziek zich gedurende de 19^e eeuw emancipeerde als zelfstandige kunstvorm en hoe bepaalde muzikale werken vervolgens een haast sacrale plaats

kregen toebedeeld in een muzikale canon die esthetisch superieur werd geacht. De Amerikaanse muziekfilosofe Lydia Goehr noemde deze canon 'het Imaginaire Museum van Muzikale Werken', en definieerde het als een mentale ruimte waarbinnen bepaalde werken op een coherente manier worden georganiseerd. In haar analyse focuste Goehr zich voornamelijk op het fenomeen van een muzikaal werk: eens opgenomen in het Imaginaire Museum, neemt het muzikale werk een normatieve functie op, door zijn esthetische autoriteit op andere werken af te stralen. Goehr definieerde dit 'werkconcept' als een regulatief concept: regulatieve concepten bepalen, stabiliseren en ordenen de structuur van praktijken door een algemeen inzicht te verschaffen waaraan de specifieke individuele gevallen kunnen worden getoetst. Bovenstaand historisch overzicht van de muzikale canon rechtvaardigt een analoge beweging die de muzikale canon eveneens begrijpt als een regulatief concept. Naarmate een groeiend aantal muzikale werken in de canon werd opgenomen, manifesteerde het Imaginaire Museum zich zélf, na hetzelfde sacraliseringsproces dat ook het werk had verzelfstandigd, eveneens als een coherente esthetische richtlijn. Met deze beweging blijft de aandacht niet langer gevestigd op de inhoud van de canon (de individuele werken in het Imaginaire Museum) maar op het concept van de canon (het Imaginaire Museum zelf, dat de individuele werken hun onderlinge samenhang verleent).

De muzikale canon functioneert als een regulatief concept: de muzikale canon kan inderdaad worden begrepen als een denkbeeldige constructie die uit de muziekpraktijk voortkomt en tegelijkertijd haar idealen aan diezelfde muziekpraktijk oplegt. De muzikale canon is een verzameling gezaghebbende werken waaruit, in zijn totaliteit, een verzameling normen kan worden afgeleid die als een maatstaf andere werken valideert. Om de ware impact van dit regulatieve concept te begrijpen, is een verdere ontologische ontleding ervan wenselijk. In haar analyse van regulatieve concepten maakt Goehr een onderscheid tussen open concepten en gesloten concepten. Een open concept, enerzijds, kan inhoudelijke veranderingen ondergaan zonder de integriteit van de collectie als geheel te compromitteren. De ontstaansgeschiedenis van de muzikale canon, althans in zijn vroege vorm, vertoont dit voortdurende ontwikkelingsproces: wanneer een bepaald muzikaal werk op een significante manier kan worden verbonden met de muzikale werken in de canon, kan het werk in de collectie worden opgenomen, en past de verzameling zich aan zonder zijn integriteit te verliezen. Het gesloten concept, anderzijds, is eveneens een mobiel en historisch begrip (anders zou een geschiedenis van de canon contradictorisch zijn), maar stipuleert veel strengere toetredingsvoorwaarden. Werken die willen toetreden tot de collectie moeten categorisch voldoen aan de randvoorwaarden van het gesloten concept, en moeten dus de kenmerken van de collectie strikt overnemen. Aangezien het gesloten concept een versteende uitkomst is en geen dynamisch ontwikkelingsproces meer cultiveert, stevent het onvermijdelijk af op uniformiteit.

Zo komt een interessante hypothese naar voren over hoe en waarom bepaalde muzikale werken een prominentere plaats kregen toebedeeld dan andere, en wat daarvan het resultaat

is. Verschillende socio-pragmatische factoren hebben geleid tot de verstarring van de muzikale canon, en Goehr wees op de intrinsieke normatieve, en daarom gradueel stagnerende dynamiek van een verzameling muzikale werken. Een verklaring voor de normatieve dimensie van de muzikale canon ligt met andere woorden in zijn afhankelijkheid van een historisch gegroeid narratief dat bepaalde werken verenigt in muzikale (esthetische) en historische (pragmatische) termen. Deze hypothese ligt in het verlengde van Goehrs theorie rond het werkconcept. Goehr stelt dat muziek in de vroege 19^e eeuw geleidelijk loskwam van haar concrete uitvoeringspraktijk. Muziek nam met andere woorden een andere vorm aan onder de categorie 'werk', en in die nieuwe conceptuele verpakking kon ze de collectie vormen van het Imaginaire Museum. Aldaar vervult muziek een nieuwe functie als 'werk'. Bovenstaande analyse voegt een volgende stap toe: de verzameling individuele werken in het Imaginaire Museum dankt zijn coherentie aan een historisch gegroeid narratief, waardoor de verzameling werken een nieuwe functie vervult als een 'canon'.

Het feit dat een bepaald imaginair narratief de totstandkoming en de normatieve impact van de canon bepaalt, biedt echter ook mogelijkheden om aan bovenstaande negatief-dialectische dynamiek te ontsnappen. De historische analyse toont aan dat het narratief traceerbaar en dus contingent is; het is niet intrinsiek aan de muzikale werken die het verbindt, aangezien het een denkbeeldige constructie is om achteraf de inhoud ervan te begrijpen. Tim Rutherford-Johnson suggereert daarom dat een canon "een noodzakelijk kwaad is om de wereld te begrijpen". Dit citaat introduceert de centrale claim die in het verlengde van de hypothese kan worden gemaakt: door zijn narratieve potentieel is de muzikale canon zowel een probleem als een oplossing met betrekking tot de duurzaamheid en ontwikkeling van klassieke muziek en haar uitvoerende instanties.

Het empirische luik van dit onderzoek gaat na hoe het narratieve potentieel van de canon de orkestpraktijk van vandaag doorkruist. Aldus is dit luik gericht op het bepalen onder welke mogelijkheidsvoorwaarden het open canon-concept opnieuw kan worden geoperationaliseerd binnen een praktijk. Niet alleen traditionele symfonische orkesten zijn in deze studie opgenomen, maar ook verschillende kleinere organisaties die hun organisatorisch model hebben ontworpen in vol bewustzijn van de legitimiteitscrisis, en die kernwaarden uitdragen die ingaan tegen de dominante logica. Voor elk van deze organisaties onderzoekt de onderliggende empirische studie hoe specifieke acties, tactieken en strategieën zich vertalen naar hun programmatiebeleid en hoe deze acties verband houden met de legitimiteit van de organisaties binnen het veld.

Het empirische onderzoek stelt zich eveneens tot doel om dieper in te gaan op de regulatieve mechanismen van de canon en te onderzoeken of het narratieve karakter ervan kan worden geoperationaliseerd als een motor voor vernieuwing. Een van de doelen van de case studies is inderdaad het identificeren van specifieke programmatiestrategieën die een evenwicht bewaren tussen avontuurlijke omgang met het repertoire en publieksaantrekking. Vrij recent

opkomende en erg succesvolle formules die door zowel de representatieve als de alternatieve orkesten worden gebruikt om deze pragmatische en esthetische factoren te verzoenen, zijn thematische concerten. In de thematische formule verschijnen canonieke werken naast minder evidente werken die op een coherente manier met het bekende werk kunnen worden verbonden, alsof het programma een samenhangend verhaal vertelt. Op die manier wordt als het ware een strikt muzikale dramaturgie toegepast op instrumentale concerten, wat als hulpmiddel wordt ingezet voor het begrijpen en ontcijferen van minder bekende muziek. De canonieke werken fungeren daarbij als referentiehorizon voor de niet-canonieke werken. Wat dat betreft, zijn de alternatieve orkesten in het voordeel, omdat hun modulaire vorm het toelaat om erg diverse werken te koppelen die om verschillende bezettingen vragen, en omdat hun publiek doorgaans meer openstaat voor dergelijke formules.

Enigszins verrassend wordt in deze studie vastgesteld dat hoewel ze worden aangedreven door kernwaarden die afwijken van de dominante logica, alternatieve orkesten vaak niet bij machte zijn om deze kernwaarden te vertalen naar een daadwerkelijke praktijk. De waargenomen velddynamieken die daarvoor verantwoordelijk zijn, resoneren sterk met het begrijpen van de muzikale canon als een regulatief concept. Het regulatieve karakter van de muzikale canon ligt in het feit dat het, terwijl het voortkomt uit door de muziekpraktijk, tegelijkertijd deze muziekpraktijk definieert en stuurt. Het empirische onderzoek heeft inderdaad aangetoond dat het concept van een muzikale canon niet alleen de motivatie en legitimatie verschaft om de werken te programmeren die geassocieerd worden met de canon (in lijn met de dominante logica), maar dat de praktijk ook het idee van een canon nodig heeft om op een zinvolle manier die werken te programmeren die expliciet niet geassocieerd worden met de canon. Het is immers het narratieve aspect van de canon dat de werken van een zinvolle thematische 'dramaturgie' voorziet.

Daarnaast bevestigen de case studies ook enkele andere hypotheses met betrekking tot canoniseringsprocessen. Uit de repertoireanalyses van de orkesten kan duidelijk worden afgelezen dat canonisering een verdichtingsproces is dat zich met afnemende intensiteit ontvouwt over progressieve tijdsperiodes: hoe recenter het repertoire, hoe minder het is gecanoniseerd. De thematische concertformule, die steunt op het idee van een narratief, ontleent zijn doeltreffendheid aan een overeenkomstige eigenschap van de muzikale canon. Eerder werd betoogd dat de muzikale canon niet alleen een verzameling muziekwerken is, maar ook een framework dat afzonderlijke werken verenigt onder een narratief dat de betekenis bepaalt van het individuele werk met betrekking tot de collectie als geheel. Op dit punt kan het proces van canonisering worden bevestigd als de langzame vorming van een narratief. Het geleidelijke condensatieproces bevestigt dat dit narratief achteraf wordt geconstrueerd, pas wanneer de betekenis van een werk kan worden vastgesteld in relatie tot een eerder werk, of wanneer de betekenis van het eerdere werk doordringt in het latere werk. Uit deze studie kan daarom worden afgeleid dat de ontwikkeling van de muzikale canon wordt bepaald door twee inerte krachten: ten eerste de institutionele dynamieken die de

organisatorische eigenheid van kunstorganisaties (zoals orkesten) bepalen, en ten tweede het esthetische selectieproces dat zich manifesteert in het muzikale repertoire zelf, bij gratie van het autoritaire narratief van de muzikale canon.

Deze centrale idee dat de muzikale canon via haar regulatieve werking een narratieve betekenishorizon verleent aan de individuele werken die eronder vallen, impliceert dat de betekenis van een muzikaal werk afhankelijk is van een combinatie tussen wat het werk op zichzelf is en wat het wordt als onderdeel van een historische context. Elk muzikaal werk (breed gedefinieerd als elke muzikale uiting die vooraf reflectief was gepland) bevat een betekenis op zich, in de zin dat het logische samenhang vertoont. Tegelijkertijd is het werk ingebed in een historisch systeem en ontleent het dus zijn betekenis aan iets wat buiten zichzelf ligt. In vele opzichten sluit deze gedachte aan bij een poststructuralistische opvatting van muziek, waarin de omringende context constitutief wordt geacht voor de betekenis van het werk zelf. Een muziekwerk ontleent zijn betekenis meer bepaald aan een causale keten waarin het werk zijn oorsprong heeft; een keten die door narratologische interpretatie is gesmeed in het Imaginaire Museum.

Het Imaginaire Museum van Muzikale Werken (nog steeds de mentale ruimte die dient als metafoor voor de muzikale canon) is de plaats waar de narratieven vorm krijgen, en is dus een mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde voor de toekenning van betekenissen aan de werken. Het Museum suggereert immers een narratologische weergave van de geschiedenis, terwijl het in feite niets méér huisvest dan een disparate verzameling objecten. Net zoals de uitvoerder aanwijzingen vindt in de partituur om zijn interpretatieve plot te creëren, bouwen de curatoren van het Imaginaire Museum (programmatoren, leraars, luisteraars, en iedereen die zich in het Museum ophoudt), aan de plot van het narratief door aanwijzingen te vinden in het repertoire. Op die manier valt het curatorschap opnieuw in handen van een levende praktijk, en gaat het Museum niet langer gebukt onder de imaginaire autoriteit van zijn eigen gestagneerde collectie.