Paradigms, Perspectives and Participation: Reconceptualising

Amateur Orchestras as Unique Socio-Musical Communities of Practice

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by

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Dedication

To my wife, Katharine Schell Arrowsmith; your love, patience and support have been endless throughout this process, and I am forever grateful.

To my children, Elizabeth London Arrowsmith and Douglas Walter Arrowsmith; you have both been so wonderful while daddy has been busy.

I hope that, one day, you all have the opportunity to share your music with the world.

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Abstract

Using Ezra Schabas' (1966) report on Ontario community orchestras as a catalyst for inquiry, this dissertation examines the nature of amateur orchestras, arguing that they may be reconceptualised as unique, socio-musical communities of practice through an exploration of several factors which influence their health and sustainability. These include: aspects of amateur musical engagement; the relationship between amateur musicians and the various professional actors found in the amateur context; the importance of ensemble-based music education as a crucible for the development of individual artistry, life-long musical learning, and a socio-musical skill set which will encourage and enhance future orchestral participation; the adoption of new, creative and collaborative practices as pathways to improved socio-musical awareness and artistic freedom; and an approach to public engagement which celebrates diversity, embraces cultural democracy, and fosters community cohesion among players and the public. These concepts are explored against the backdrop of two contrasting paradigms of practice: the traditional symphony orchestra and Community Music. This comparison suggests a new paradigm for amateur orchestras, embodying the characteristics of amateurism, socio-musical cohesion, and community engagement, which can properly be described as "community orchestras."

Key words: amateur, community, community of practice, Community Music, engagement, orchestra

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INTRODUCTION

The Schabas Report

In 1966, Ezra Schabas produced a report unlike any other in Canada up to that point. Schabas, a well-respected music educator from the University of Toronto, was commissioned by the Ontario Arts Council to undertake a province-wide study of amateur symphony orchestras in Ontario. It was the first comprehensive review of the state of affairs of orchestras anywhere in the country, and its outlook was, in a word, dire. The report sounded warnings about the poor state of orchestral playing in many localities around the province, asserting at the time that "the orchestral music heard in more than a few Ontario communities does little more than pay token respect to music or the community it serves" (Schabas, 1966, p. 9), and that "it is patently obvious that drastic steps must be taken if there is to be any substantial improvement in community orchestras in the next twenty-five years" (p. 11).[1] Schabas's ground-breaking and timely publication made numerous observations and recommendations to ensure the sustainability and success of amateur orchestras, many of which may seem eerily familiar to anyone observing the discourse surrounding the fate of orchestras (amateur or otherwise)—indeed, the fate of classical music—in our time.

Schabas outlined several issues which he believed impacted the success and sustainability of amateur orchestras, including the lack of skilled and dedicated amateur musicians,[2] the poor quality of music education in schools and conservatories,[3] the need for conductors who are both musically skilled and socially aware,[4] and the ways in which amateur orchestras interact with their local communities.[5] He highlighted the need to "treat the community musician with professional courtesy" (p. 60), as well as the importance of recruiting dedicated and capable individuals at the level of organizational leadership.[6] Finally, Schabas also strongly advised that amateur orchestras undertake serious self-reflection in order to determine their identities, advising that orchestras take "a hard look at what they are doing with music" (p. 6) and consider the question of "how far do they want to go with the orchestra" (p. 9).[7]

Despite his initial criticism, Schabas (1966) optimistically concluded that if Ontario society was serious about improving the state of its amateur orchestras, then it should:

. . . boldly embark on new and carefully planned projects which would accelerate growth remarkably. It would cost fantastic amounts. We might make mistakes along the way. But the results in twenty-five to fifty years would be infinitely more satisfying (p. 76).

Half a century later, there is much evidence that progress has been made in terms of the proliferation and musical quality of amateur orchestras in Ontario, as Schabas had hoped. However, it is by no means obvious that the issues of decades ago have reached any satisfactory resolutions; significant tensions and challenges must be addressed in order for the sustainability and relevance of amateur orchestras in the current cultural climate to be assured. This thesis is, in part, a response to those challenges, the results of which I observe first-hand as someone who has been deeply and, at times, frustratingly involved with amateur orchestras for much of my life.

Growing Up in the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra

Schabas's (1966) portrayal of the state of music in my hometown of Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, was less than flattering. He describes the area as "a vast musical slum" (p. 51), in which classical music was all but non-existent, to say nothing of a standard of orchestral performance. Fortunately, my experience as a young string player growing up in Sudbury in the 1980's and 90's did not reflect Schabas's depressing portrayal. My recollections are of a city with much to offer aspiring classical musicians: expert teachers, a well-supported local music festival, chamber music opportunities, and a local orchestra which was of a reasonably high standard and was friendly, sociable and most importantly, enjoyable. In fact, at the time of Schabas's report many local musicians had already laid the groundwork for what, in my time, would become one of Canada's most successful orchestras, in terms of its staying power and audience support.[8]

Despite its isolation from more populated regions of Ontario, opportunities for ensemble participation were plentiful compared to other cities of its size. I advanced through a system of junior, then senior youth orchestras and, at the age of fourteen, I was invited by my teacher to join the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, of which he was also the conductor. Thus, I embarked on my "adult" orchestral career.

It was an extraordinary experience to be exposed to full-scale orchestral works, immersed in the sound of the dozens of my friends, colleagues and mentors, at an age when it would have had the greatest impact on my development. I and several other students in our teacher's studio had been afforded an opportunity that few teenagers had elsewhere, even compared to a larger city where less attention might have been paid to us. I gained an early understanding of the forces of the orchestra, the need for cohesion and unity. In addition, I was exposed to an entirely new social dynamic, in which the relationships and interactions were mediated through the performance and mutual enjoyment of orchestral playing.

I value this time for the wholly immersive, social and musical learning experience it was. Now, more than two decades after my first experiences with the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, my work with that ensemble has come full circle. I am the associate conductor and I sit on the board of directors, privileged positions which offer me new insights into the practices, behaviours and relationships between the many individuals who contribute to the success of the organization, as well as into the many challenges which the orchestra now faces.

Schabas and the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra

Schabas's prescient comments describe, in my view, the challenges faced by the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra today. His warnings about the decline in factors such as amateur musicianship and school music, in turn leading to a rise of professional participation in amateur orchestra affairs, are issues which have become familiar to me through my interactions with the ensemble and the wider

community. For instance, the slow but steady decline in local membership in the orchestra has been a

concern for several years, with no effective strategy currently in place to address the issue. This loss of

local talent has meant the orchestra has had to hire increasing numbers of freelance professional

players, some from a considerable distance, in order to meet the basic instrumental requirements for

most of the standard repertoire. This, of course, places considerable strain on an already overtaxed

budget.

Compounding this fact, there are relatively few new local musicians joining the ensemble every

year. While the reasons for this may be wide-ranging, there is little doubt that the reduction of school

music activities in the local school authority has reduced the interest in further ensemble playing among

students.[9] And while the orchestra does engage in a range of outreach activities in local schools and

elsewhere, there is no evidence that these programs are leading to increased interest in joining the

ensemble.[10]

But of equal concern is the loss of a sense of ownership, the culture of camaraderie, and the

feeling of belonging among local amateur players, some of whom have contributed to the ensemble for

decades. For a group which, when I was young, boisterously celebrated each concert with a post-

performance outing, this is particularly disheartening.

Community Music

The challenges described here are not musical, though the music may indeed suffer as a result;

instead, I would characterize these issues as socio-musical in nature. I propose that within this socio-

musical context, it is advantageous to examine these issues from a Community Music perspective.

A cursory search of literary sources dealing with amateur orchestras led me to the field of

Community Music. In it, I discovered a new way of exploring the relationship amateur musicians have

with their music, with each other and with society. Community Music also offers many viewpoints which

prompt discussion of the socio-musical issues at the core of many of my own orchestra's challenges.

Since beginning this research, I have adopted many of Community Music's practices and ideals in my own professional practice with the goal of fostering meaningful creative and engaging experiences for my students and my community.

Community Music is a movement which is self-reflective, constantly examining—at times struggling with—its own identity and role within cultural and political landscapes. In stark contrast, amateur orchestras exhibit a sort of innocent contentment with their existence as part of a cultural and musical tradition which is widely seen as unchanging and absolutely certain about its provenance and significance. This dichotomy invites examination and debate.

Catalysts for Research

The Schabas Report provides a unique historical perspective on amateur orchestras and his recommendations serve as a catalyst for further exploration and debate. However, it is necessary to establish some current context in order to understand the nature of the challenges these ensembles now face. For instance, amateur orchestras in Ontario are referred to as "community orchestras" (Ontario Arts Council, 2015), a description which reflects the fact that these orchestras are comprised of amateur players, as well as any number of professional musicians. Community orchestras also tend to emulate the behaviours of professional orchestras, including the provision of educational programming and the adoption of professional administration. This reality has prompted me to examine the socio-musical tensions which influence the ability of these ensembles to meet the needs of their players and the communities they serve.

Yet the term "community" as it is applied to amateur orchestras does not adequately represent the socio-musical nature of these ensembles, suggesting the need to re-examine the word in reference to amateur orchestras. [11] I will, therefore, refrain from its use, instead using the more commonly understood term "amateur orchestra."

Further, amateur orchestras also exhibit characteristics that are associated with Community Music practice. This paradox invites an exploration of the socio-musical processes inherent to these ensembles, requiring their reconceptualization as different from substrata of the professional orchestral tradition.

My contention is that the field of Community Music offers an enticing and appropriate framework for reimagining amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice. An examination of the tensions between the Western classical orchestral tradition and the current practices of amateur orchestras suggests that key concepts from the field of Community Music practice enable the development of a new paradigm which resolves many of these tensions, and results in a more successful and sustainable model. These newly imagined "community orchestras" will meet the socio-musical needs of their members, while upholding the Community Music principles of participatory engagement and cultural democracy.

The Research Questions

My research addresses various aspects of amateur orchestra practice using the following questions to frame my inquiry:

1. What is unique about amateur orchestras?

    a. What is the impact of the designation "amateur" in the orchestral context and how accurate is it as a label for musicians who volunteer their time and talents to their local community orchestra?

    b. What are the meanings of the word "community" as applied to amateur orchestras and as understood within Community Music practice?

    c. What meaning do amateur orchestral musicians ascribe to their participation in orchestral playing and how do they perceive their orchestras' role in their communities?

These questions require an examination and interpretation of the concepts of amateurism, community, and Community Music as they relate to amateur orchestras.

2. What factors contribute to viable and sustainable amateur orchestras?

    a. What are the internal tensions evident in the interpersonal relationship between professional and amateur musicians in amateur orchestras, and how do these tensions impact the socio-musical environment within the ensemble?

    b. What is the relationship between ensemble participation and music education in schools, and how can new approaches to ensemble learning promote improved artistry and lifelong participation in amateur orchestras among students?

    c. What can be learned from the phenomenon of El Sistema, which is primarily predicated on the concept of music as a form of social intervention?

    d. What is the nature of the relationship between amateur orchestras and the communities they serve, and to what extent are communities responsible for the sustainability and success of amateur orchestras?

These issues are examined through an exploration of commonly employed approaches to conservatoire training, music education in schools, and public engagement, and the ways in which these practices may be influenced by new perspectives and practices.

3. How can the concepts and best practices of the field of Community Music be applied to amateur orchestras in order to better understand their socio-musical dynamics and support them for the future?

    a. To what extent is Community Music a compatible framework for examining amateur orchestras?

    b. What are the possible lessons or limitations suggested by such an examination?

c.   In what ways might Community Music practices or attitudes be disruptive to, or

expose tensions in, traditional amateur orchestras?

Throughout this thesis, reference will be made to aspects of traditional symphony orchestras

and Community Music. These two constructs represent paradigms of practice, a comparison of which

will highlight both the opportunities and the tensions to be explored in the context of amateur

orchestras.

4.   What possible solutions may be offered through new approaches to music education

and audience engagement which might widen the pathways to participation in amateur

orchestral playing?

a.   Are there alternatives to the traditional models of ensemble playing, music

education or community engagement often employed by amateur orchestras?

b.   What might amateur orchestras learn from these non-traditional approaches?

This discussion will further explore the opportunities afforded by a Community Music approach

to amateur orchestral engagement.

These research questions, along with my own reflections, observations, and experiences with

numerous amateur orchestras, guide an exploration of the issues, perspectives and tensions presented

in the following chapters.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 contains a critical review of the literature focusing on key issues which include: the

nature of amateur orchestras, concepts of professionalism and amateurism, concepts and practices of

Community Music, ensemble-based music education and the El Sistema movement, societal

engagement, innovations in musical practice, and communities of practice. The review highlights a lack

of academic research into the nature of amateur orchestras and the factors which influence their

sustainability. Therefore, my research is positioned at the nexus where these concepts and practices converge.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodological approach used for designing, conducting and analysing the research.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the research results, including a rationale for the process by which the research themes were derived and linked to the thesis, and a representation of the research data. The two paradigms of traditional classical music and Community Music are introduced and discussed as frameworks for exploring the arguments and issues in subsequent chapter.

Chapter 4 examines the nature of amateur orchestral participation within the framework of traditional symphony orchestras and Community Music practice. The concepts of amateurism, "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992), and community are explored in the context of amateur orchestras, highlighting the degree to which they are unique in the cultural landscape of communities.

Chapter 5 explores the relationship between amateur and professional orchestral musicians, the latter of whom are increasingly prominent in the amateur context. Drawing on responses of players from both sides of the amateur/professional dyad, the nature of the interactions, tensions, and misconceptions which arise from the interactions between amateur and professional players and conductors is examined. The nature of artistic leadership is also explored. The adoption of attitudes and practices associated with Community Music facilitation is discussed as an avenue for the development of a new behavioural paradigm which enables the cultivation of positive socio-musical experiences for all participants and further distinguishes amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Chapter 6 expands on the discussion from the previous chapter, examining the influence conservatoire training has on the attitudes and behaviours of professional orchestral players and conductors. The ways in which Community Music-related concepts such as community/creative capital

and human-compatible learning may be adopted in the tertiary music curriculum is explored, as is the role of experiential learning which takes place beyond the conservatoire environment.

Chapter 7 discusses the impact of music education as delivered in school ensembles on the sustainability of amateur orchestras. The tension between traditional educational models and Community Music is explored, as are the ways in which the Community Music values of individual artistry and life-long learning may be addressed in educational activities, in order to foster the desire among participants to continue to take part in orchestral playing into adulthood.

Chapter 8 explores the use of non-traditional musical practices as ways forward for music education, including the practices of score realisation and directed improvisation. The "Third Way" of collaborative ensemble performance, as described by Peter Wiegold, is examined as a pathway for the development of greater creative confidence and competence, with the goal of fostering a life-long desire to participate in ensemble playing among participants.

Chapter 9 presents a critique of the El Sistema movement with specific focus on three pilot projects in the United Kingdom. The El Sistema phenomenon is compared with aspects of Community Music practice, in order to determine the extent to which the two paradigms diverge or align. This examination affords the opportunity to derive lessons for amateur orchestras which may influence their development as socio-musical communities of practice.

Chapter 10 examines the role that amateur orchestras play in helping to support diversity and social cohesion in the communities they serve. This issue is explored through the key Community Music concept of cultural democracy, as well as through the related topics of diversity and authentic audience engagement. Participatory engagement is explored as a generator of social capital, which fosters community cohesion and establishes amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical ensembles that play a vital role in community life.

Chapter 11 argues that since amateur orchestras are engines of social capital, it is incumbent on society, including all levels of government and private enterprise, to support these unique communities of practice through the investment of human and financial resources.

Chapter 12 presents a synthesis of the concepts, arguments and discussions from the preceding chapters, demonstrating that a reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice which may be described as "community orchestras" is appropriate. A manifesto outlining the steps necessary to ensure the success of this transformation is put forward.

The conclusion reflects on the writing of this thesis and my own journey as a researcher and musician. The legacy of the Schabas report is discussed, with final thoughts on the future of amateur orchestras reserved for Ezra Schabas himself.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The Schabas Report (1966) suggests that amateur orchestras should "embark on new and carefully planned projects which would accelerate growth" (p.76). This introduction outlines the lines of inquiry pursued and arguments made in the body of the thesis which lead to the development of a new paradigm for amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice. These arguments are presented through an examination of academic literature, consultation with amateur orchestra stakeholders, and reflections on personal experiences, within a framework which references the existing paradigms of traditional symphony orchestras and the field of Community Music. The new paradigm suggests innovative ways in which the reimagined "community orchestras" can act as engines of socio-musical growth for participants, audiences, and communities.

Notes

1. What is understood as an amateur orchestra in Great Britain is commonly known in Canada as a "community orchestra" (Ontario Arts Council, 2015).

2. The report examines the issue of amateur engagement and retention, and discusses the practice of hiring professional musicians to support and enhance orchestral rehearsals and concerts. He notes that "[o]btaining good players locally or by sporadic importing is the very heart of the problem in the community orchestra" (Schabas, 1966, p. 5), suggesting that while most cities have done their best to "unearth" talented local players, "peculiar local conditions" have resulted in players declining to participate (p.5).

3. Schabas's report is highly critical of music education at all levels. For instance, he notes the dearth of specialist music teachers in rural schools, saying:

   > Music teaching in schools is sporadic, fragmentary, and lacks continuity from grade to grade. Even if school music were done consistently well throughout the Province (but this is impossible now because there are not enough qualified teachers) it would only serve as a catalyst for potential musicians (p. 10).

   > He comments on the responsibility of music education "to help the pupil to realize his

   musical potential, to guide him along the road towards musical maturity" (p. 11), and notes that the quality of private musical instruction in many areas is poor, which "may account for the paucity of local players in the orchestra" (p. 24).

4. Schabas is especially critical of the training of conductors and highlights the difficult road ahead for anyone aspiring to lead an amateur orchestra, saying:

   > If the conductor is the ultimate key to the success of the orchestra, then he has to work at it. It means not just the obvious: choosing programmes, finding players, learning his

scores thoroughly, acting in accordance with Board policy. It goes further, i.e. being

aware of his deficiencies and doing something about them! (p. 60).

5. Schabas suggests activities designed to engage the public, such as "an annual symphony week"

(p. 67) featuring a wide range of events which appeal to diverse segments of the community.

6. Schabas notes the valuable role women may play in the everyday activities of orchestras, going

so far as to proclaim, "one is let to feel that an orchestra might be better off if it let the women

be the board of directors!" (p. 60). Thankfully much progress has been made in this regard, in

that women now play leadership roles for a great number of orchestral organizations. Betty

Webster and Catherine Carlton, former and current directors of Orchestras Canada,

respectively, are both fine examples. This simply illustrates the prevailing attitudes of the era.

7. He goes so far as to suggest that some orchestras may be ready to make the transition to fully

professional ensembles, while others ought to scale back their activities to suit their size and

abilities.

8. The work of early pioneers such as founding conductor Emil First, Eric Woodward, and the

subsequent dedicated work of Dr. Metro Kozak, is chronicled in part on the orchestra's website.

(The Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, 2015). In addition, contributions from local music educators

"who were simultaneously instructors in the Cambrian College and Laurentian University music

programs" (Wallace, 1996, p. 264) helped to turn the orchestra into the local arts leader it is

today, reaching record attendance levels (The Media Co-op, 2014).

9. As of September 2015 the only remaining strings program at the local high school level was

suspended.

10. The SSO does run a Conservatory of Music through which individual string instruction is

available; however, very few of its students go on to participate in the orchestra on a regular

basis.

11. The Ontario Arts Council (2014) defines community orchestras as follows:

> There is paid professional artistic leadership (conductor and core players / section leads) with a significant amateur membership, where the latter may receive no remuneration and/or semi-professional players (including extras) may receive a service fee or honorarium. There may be paid administrative personnel or volunteer management support.

This approach to defining the community orchestra is common, though it all but ignores the "community" aspect of these ensembles, except perhaps in the strictly locational sense.

CHAPTER ONE: POSITIONING THE RESEARCH: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH RATIONALE

. . . research on community orchestras is very thin and more contributions need to be made.

(Carol Shansky, 2010, p.7).

This dissertation investigates ways in which the adoption of the practices and attitudes of

Community Music makes possible a new paradigm for amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical

communities of practice. Yet even at this initial stage, the tension within this approach becomes

apparent. On one hand, there is a paucity of work which specifically examines amateur orchestras as an

area of academic inquiry; on the other hand, the field of Community Music may be examined from any

number of scholarly perspectives, including communal music-making, music education, social justice,

individual artistry, public engagement, and non-traditional musical practice. My review of literary

sources was, therefore, wide ranging in scope but also selective (Cooper, 1988) in order to remain

focused on the most relevant aspects of the numerous areas of academic interest as they surfaced

during the course of my research. This approach is affirmed by Dick, who notes that it is acceptable "to

access relevant literature *as it becomes relevant.*" (Dick, 2005, cited in Probert, 2006, p.6, original

emphasis)

For ease of navigation and the purposes of critical discussion, the most salient sources are

presented thematically, beginning with a review of the literature pertaining to aspects of amateur

orchestral engagement, followed by an overview of material describing Community Music practice in its

various forms. Next is an examination of literature which discusses music education from the

standpoints of ensemble-based learning, followed by a review of sources discussing innovative

approaches to musical practice. This is then followed by an examination of literature pertaining to the

phenomenon of El Sistema. Next, sources which discuss participatory engagement and the benefits of

public engagement to society are examined. The chapter concludes with a review of the most prominent

sources pertaining to communities of practice, the culmination point of this thesis.

The Nature of Amateur Orchestras

As suggested in the opening of this chapter, academic writing focussing specifically on amateur symphony orchestras is lacking when compared to the rich body of academic research examining other amateur musical activities, such as folk music, community choirs or community concert bands.[1] Moreover, publications which feature scholarly work relating to orchestras, amateur or otherwise, are equally sparse[2] and scattered across numerous academic journals. Finally, there is currently little published writing which distinguishes amateur orchestras from professional orchestras, at least from organizational or musical viewpoints. The goal of this literature review is, in part, to establish the scholarly basis for linking the concepts of professional and amateur orchestral musicianship with the practices of Community Music, an as yet underutilized framework for the examination of amateur orchestral participation.

Spitzer and Zaslaw (2004), for instance, have authored one of the definitive historical accounts of the development of the symphony orchestra into its current recognizable form, including an acknowledgement of the contributions of amateur orchestras and musicians to the growth of a professional orchestral culture. While their work addressed amateur orchestras only in brief and in general historic terms, the writings of Neale (1967) and Hill (2013) offer more recent and directly relevant accounts. These retrospective works shed light on the conception, growth and experiences of two still-active amateur orchestras in Ontario. However, they are significant beyond their individual historic value, in that they have proven to be rare examples of published biographies of specific ensembles.[3]

By contrast, several sources address the organizational aspects of amateur orchestras. For instance, a report from the Standing Conference of County Music Committees (The National Council of Social Service Incorporated, 1951) reviewed the history and importance of amateur orchestras in England and suggested means by which governing or educational authorities might contribute to their

success. Similarly, Holmes (1951), Thompson (1952) and Van Horne (1979) have each authored books

which offer advice and insight into the formation, cultivation and regulation of amateur orchestras.

However, while these volumes are historically interesting and useful as "how-to" guides for prospective

amateur orchestra organizers, none offer a sense that amateur orchestras represent anything other

than replicas of professional ensembles, requiring merely a slight adjustment in tone and expectation

from the conductor. Interestingly, Thompson (1952) departs from the others in her final chapter,

drawing greater attention to the "obligations for cultural leadership" (p.112) inherited by amateur

orchestras, and suggesting their importance within a wider cultural landscape, calling them "the very

warp and woof of the basic fabric of their respective communities" (p.112). This assertion suggested the

need for further reading into the topics of participatory engagement and social cohesion—both

characteristic elements of Community Music practice, as discussed below.

It is noteworthy that Thompson's (1952) comments were made over sixty years ago, yet it is

only within recent decades that the responsibility of cultural leadership within amateur orchestras has

been more widely acknowledged. For instance, The Association of Canadian Orchestras (1984), Wall and

Mitchell (1987), The Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras (1994) and Babineau (1998) have all

outlined the community activities of various Canadian orchestras. However, these publications do not

make distinctions between the amateur, semi–professional or professional orchestras on which they

focus in terms of their community work. And while Wall and Mitchell frame their research findings

within an academic context, the remainder of the examples included above act more as resource guides

for orchestras rather than as critical or comparative analyses.

Again, an emphasis on the utilitarian function of amateur orchestras seems to pervade the

literature to this point, examining, for instance, their role as cultural ambassadors, enhancers of music

education or providers of entertainment (either for members of the audience or for the players

themselves). This tendency leaves space for further contributions which provide critical review, which

question the suitability of the amateur orchestra to act within these contexts, or which suggest the

application of new frameworks which are better-suited for examining the socio-musical factors at play

within amateur orchestras.

Concepts of Amateur and Professional Identity

A common area of investigation relative to amateur orchestras is that of the creation and

validation of the amateur musical identity. Again, some background reading of literature which

describes amateur musicianship in various forms proved useful in creating an initial image of the

amateur. Shera's (1939) history of amateurism in classical music was both thorough and insightful, while

Robinson (1985) took an autobiographical approach in offering a historical perspective on the subject.

Yet there are numerous other publications which offer a more critical analysis of the amateur musical

identity through an ethnographic or ethnomusicological lens.

Ruth Finnegan's *The Hidden Musicians: Music Making in an English Town* (2007), for example,

has served as a blueprint for numerous subsequent ethnographic investigations into the motivations

and self-perceptions of amateur musicians. Not only does she describe a local musical landscape which

is vibrant and varied, but her study also sheds light on the tensions, practices and beliefs which exist

within the amateur music world. She includes practitioners of orchestral music in her study, validating

the Western classical tradition as an integral part of the local musical mosaic. While acknowledging that

tradition of elite players, teachers and composers, she points out that "[t]he classical ideal- misleading

though it can be- is nevertheless of great relevance for the local scene" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 45) in that it

provides a framework which serves as "one justification and measure for the many local orchestras,

choirs and instrumental ensembles" (p.46) operating locally. In addition, Finnegan's affirmation of the

role of the participant-observer within an ethnographic methodology was of particular interest to me,

given my position as player, conductor and board member within my own amateur orchestra.

Along similar lines, Wilby's (2013) examination of amateur folk music as intersubjective discourse provided an ethnomusicological perspective on the fostering of social bonds and affirmations of personal identities through participants' engagement in folk music clubs.[4] Indeed, there are numerous examples from scholarly literature which discuss the formation of musical identities through participatory musical engagement;[5] however, only a few of these deal with the orchestral context, leaving space in the academic landscape for further contributions from this perspective.

Shansky's (2010) study examined the motivations of musicians in a local amateur orchestra, the findings of which suggested implications for music education and life-long musical learning in non-formal environments.[6] In addition, her study found very little motivational difference between amateur and professional musicians, in that a love of music-making was foremost among their reasons for participating. Similarly, Park's (1995) examination of the motivations of adult participants in amateur orchestras through the Durkheimian lens of social organization suggested that there are several defined yet interrelated identities among amateur orchestral musicians. Park's study concluded with the pessimistic prediction that amateur orchestras may no longer be sustainable in their current form due to several factors including the failure of these various amateur identities to successfully coexist.

Burland (2004), by contrast, examined the differences between amateur and professional musicians' identities, suggesting that while amateur players derive satisfaction from their musical engagement they are not as reliant on it for personal fulfilment as professional musicians, for whom orchestral engagement is of more immediate importance to their identities.[7]

My aim in including the subject of musician identity in this review is not necessarily to add a radically new perspective to the existing research in this area, as such is not the ultimate goal of my work; there is, I would suggest, general agreement on the motivational factors which influence amateurs and professionals to participate in ensemble playing and which constitute their musical identities.[8] Instead, my goal is to further exploit these findings within the context of my work, which

asserts that amateur orchestral musicians possess a strong sense of their musical self. The notion of a positive musical self-concept invites a further examination of amateur orchestral musicianship through a Community Music lens.

Amateur and Professional Identity: Serious Leisure

An inseparable component of the amateur identity is the notion that amateur musicians participate in their music-making as a form of leisure rather than as full-time employment. Historical perspectives on music as a leisure activity vary in scope and focus; two sources consulted for this research were Birchard and Co. (1926) and Leonhard (1952), both of which discussed the organization and cultivation of musical activities for amateur participants. Leonhard in particular discussed ensemble playing as a recreational activity. As with other historical sources examined in this literature review, the tone of these sources is utilitarian rather than discursive.

However, as Stebbins (1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1992, 2007) has shown, leisure activities may be categorized in different ways, from "dabblers" (Stebbins, 1977, p. 590) to "paraprofessionals" (Ibid, p. 592) to "hobbyists" (Ibid., p. 593), each with their own characteristics in terms of their level of proficiency or engagement within a complex system which connects professionals, amateurs and the public. Stebbins had made numerous references to orchestral musicians in his work, aligning them on this spectrum with the notion of "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992), a concept which I will discuss in due course as it relates to my own research findings. Tomlinson (1993) takes the concept further, suggesting an upgrade to the term "committed leisure," though Stebbins is critical of this characterization, calling it "too narrow to serve as a descriptor" (Stebbins, 2006, p. 7) of the spectrum of amateurism. I would, however, suggest that it is appropriate to retain the concept of commitment as a trait of amateur orchestral players, since the amateur players who took part in my own research displayed evidence of high levels of commitment to their orchestral involvement.

Drawing on Stebbins' work, Juniu, Tedrick and Boyd (1996) investigated the perceptions held by professional and amateur musicians and determined that there was not necessarily a clear delineation between what they considered to be work or leisure in relation to their participation in orchestral playing. By contrast, Miller (2008) approached the relationship between work and leisure in classical music from a historical perspective, questioning contemporary perceptions of the value of musical labour if the work put into performing were the focus of attention rather than the current paradigm which extols the appearance of effortless performance. Both of these perspectives are relevant in the context of establishing amateur orchestral musicians as dedicated and engaged participants in their orchestras.

Community Music

Several prominent authors from the field of Community Music were consulted in an effort to effectively orient my research, including Bowman (2009), Joss (2010), Higgins (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2012), Leglar and Smith (2010), McKay and Higham (2011), Mullen (2002, 2008), Silverman (2005), Veblen (2004, 2005), Veblen and Olsson (2002) and Veblen, Messenger, Silverman and Elliott (2013), all of whom offered historical and global perspectives on Community Music practice.

Higgins (2013), Silverman (2005), Veblen (2004) and other prominent authors from the Community Music field have acknowledged amateur orchestras as part of the complex tapestry of Community Music activities; however, with most of the attention being focused on projects related to music in social justice, traditional folk or world music, music therapy,[9] or informal modes of music education, it is easy for the amateur orchestra to become lost within this very broad and diverse spectrum of activity. I believe, therefore, that the application of Community Music as a framework for discussing the subject of amateur orchestras breaks new scholarly ground.

However, situating amateur orchestras within this framework is not without challenges. For instance, most Community Music activities are workshop-based, aiming to foster individual creativity in

a multi-instrument, multi-skill level environment. Stevens (2007), Moser and McKay (2005) and Cahill (1998) have all authored handbooks for Community Music workshop organizers which are clearly not intended for ensembles that are orchestral in scope or organization. Notwithstanding such organizational tensions, there appears to be universal agreement that Community Music, while constituting a new approach to musical learning and interaction, continues to be a growing and diversifying movement with impacts on numerous related fields, most notably that of music education. Further, the consensus in the literature is that Community Music may be seen as an umbrella term describing any number of musical activities which are "local, personal, political, multifaceted, and, above all, fluid" (Veblen, 2013, p. 1).

Community Music Concepts and Practices: Music Education

Even though there is general agreement on the principles of practice within Community Music, tension exists over their applications. The role of Community Music within music education, for instance, is not universally accepted. Cole (2011) questioned the value of the relationship between the two fields, characterizing it as "a marriage of convenience," the benefits and complexities of which are not clear. Mullen (2002) went further, suggesting that the teaching/learning paradigm as it is commonly understood is an inappropriate characterization of Community Music work, saying, "community music while not anti-learning may well be anti-teaching" (p. 84), implying that Community Music practices do not fit with common teaching models.

However, these views seem to be in the minority, with most observers agreeing on the potential synergies between the two practices. Koopman (2007), for instance, characterized the art of teaching as "a polymorphous activity" (p. 155), the goal of which is to stimulate learning, making it an ideal subject for the application of Community Music practices, whereas Veblen *et al.* (2013) suggest that Community Music "includes teaching and learning dimensions" (p. 1). Moreover, the potential roles for Community Music within music education have been highlighted by Bowman (2009), Carruthers (2005), Elliott

(1995), Leglar and Smith (2010), Shiobara (2011), Silverman (2005), Veblen (2005), and many others. My

work, therefore, will examine this relationship and its possible implications for amateur orchestras.

Community Music Concepts and Practices: Social Justice

Further, several authors make the connection between music education and societal

improvement—another concept prominent within the Community Music ethos. Allsup and Shieh (2012),

Frierson-Campbell (2007), Jones (2010), Jorgensen (1996, 2007) and Silverman (2009), for instance, have

all asserted the role music education should have in imparting a sense of social awareness or social

justice to young musicians.[10]

Community Music Concepts and Practices: Musicking

That participation in musical activities can positively influence societal growth was explored by

Turino (2008) and, most notably, by Christopher Small (1977, 1998), who may be considered one of the

pre-eminent figures in the discussion of participatory music-making as a social bonding experience and

whose exploration of the concept of "musicking"—itself an integral concept in this thesis—remains an

influential idea in the fields of music education and ethnomusicology. Ramnarine (2011) narrowed the

discussion, focusing on the positive impact participation in orchestral playing has in fostering social

cohesion.

Community Music Concepts and Practices: Life-Long Learning

What is clear from the literature is that the concept of life-long musical learning is a cornerstone

of Community Music practice. Don Coffman (2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2006) is one of the most prolific

authors in this regard; his work has examined the benefits derived from amateur music participation, as

well as the perceptions of participants. In addition, writings by Aspin (2000), Carr (2006), Dabback

(2003), Field (2001), Mantie (2009), Pitts (2007), and Veblen and Waldron (2009) were also consulted.

While Aspin (2000) and Field (2001) both addressed the issue of life-long learning from a general

perspective, asserting its value in both educative and quality-of-life contexts, the other authors included here discussed the topic within various musical contexts.[11]

What these authors have in common is their acknowledgement that adult amateur arts activities constitute a form of life-long learning, achieved through participatory engagement in wind bands, choirs, etc.; however, there is little offered from a point of view which specifically refers to amateur orchestras. Further, a cursory internet search reveals that, while there are orchestras which address the issue of life-long learning in their outreach programming, these activities tend to be in the form of classroom-style lectures rather than participatory events.[12] Given the minimal consideration given by orchestras themselves to life-long learning from a participatory standpoint, examining this phenomenon from a Community Music perspective seems appropriate.

Music Education

As suggested above, the application of a Community Music framework to a reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique communities of practice invites an examination of select aspects of music education which impact the sustainability and success of amateur orchestras. These include individual artistry, group music making and the belief that music has the potential to improve the social condition of both the individual and the community.

Elliott (1995, 2003) provided new insights on the structure, delivery and goals for music education, with the inclusion of a Community Music perspective. Green (2007), by contrast, examined informal and non-classical modes of musical learning, suggesting that music education can adopt the practices of popular musicians as regular aspects of the curriculum. Both authors describe innovative approaches to music education which focus on fostering individual artistry and creative confidence, concepts I will explore in terms of their prominence in the preparation of young musicians for possible future orchestral engagement.

Approaches to Music Education: Ensemble Learning

The specific role played by ensembles in music education was also examined. Gordon (1919) provided an early perspective on the role school ensembles may play in the fostering of wider participation in orchestral playing, as well as a guide to establishing and sustaining school orchestras.[13] However, of greater interest were the investigations into the cultures which exist within school ensembles. Morrison (2001), for instance, argued that school ensembles represent "real musical cultures" (p. 24), which are distinct, worthy of cultivation and which offer opportunities for innovative practice within the school music curriculum. In addition, Morrison found that students felt a sense of collective ownership over their ensembles, a view supported by Leong (2010), whose study of after-school string orchestras also examined the fostering of group ownerships and the strengthening of social bonds among participants. Further, Morrison (2001) and Leong's (2010) findings suggest a link between positive socio-musical experiences in school ensemble participation and future participation in ensemble playing as adults, a concept I will discuss in greater detail as it relates to amateur orchestra sustainability.

The impact of socio-musical interactions between members on the cultivation of a musical culture within ensembles was also addressed by Hebert (2012), who discussed the concept of mentorship as a learning model in Japanese wind bands. His study found that a mentorship model in which more experienced members took responsibility for the musical and social acclimatization of new members helped not only to strengthen the social bonds with the group but served to create a culture of musical excellence. Similarly, Mullen (2005) described the way that mentorship "[reaches] beyond individuals to nurture the potential of groups and communities" (p. 2), while Carozza (2011) discussed the personal and professional benefits to both mentor and mentee. This invites an examination of the ways in which mentorship as portrayed in the literature corresponds with concepts such as Community Music facilitation, and how such a comparison impacts amateur orchestral practice.

Innovative Practice

The concept of practice is relevant in this context, particularly in terms of the developing

individual artistry and creative confidence. Innovations in this regard have been explored by Wiegold

(2001, 2004, 2015),whose work in score realisation and directed improvisation addresses critical issues

related to the expansion of individual artistry, artistic ownership and shared creative responsibility.[14]

Improvisation as a mode of music education has also been examined by Small (1977), Addison

(1988), Burnard (2000), Deliège and Wiggins (2006), Koopman (2007), Solis and Nettl (2009), and Wright

and Panagiotis (2010). The unanimous view presented by these authors is that musical improvisation is

an effective means of unlocking the creative potential of students, while validating their individual

musical contributions. Fostering individual confidence in the learner, both musical and personal, has also

been espoused by authors such as Peard (2012), Rickard, Appelman, James, Murphey, Gill, and Bambrick

(2013) and Ward-Steinman (2006).

El Sistema

The subject of amateur orchestral musicianship as viewed through a Community Music lens

inevitably leads to an examination of the El Sistema phenomenon as an example of ensemble-based,

socio-musical education; however, a review of the literature examining El Sistema reveals a mixture of

opinion on its value as an educational model. Tunstall (2012), for instance, was overwhelmingly positive

in her assessment of El Sistema and its ability to change the lives of its participants, while the Scottish

Government's evaluation of Big Noise (2011), as well as evaluations for In Harmony Liverpool (Burns &

Bewick, 2012) and In Harmony Lambeth (Lewis, Demie and Rogers, 2011) offered distinctively

favourable reviews, though with little acknowledgement of any critique or dissenting views.[15] Lui (2012)

and Uy (2012) were more measured in their respective evaluations of El Sistema. Lui, while supportive of

the movement's ideals and general practices, acknowledged the arguments which point out the

lingering influence of cultural imperialism within the practice, citing the still-Eurocentric approach to

programming. Uy, by contrast, identified one of the challenges of collective artistic participation, noting that a balance must be struck between the desire both to build an effective "orchestral machine" and to "[create] a vibrant community" (p.18).

Other authors are far more critical. Allan (2010), Borchert (2012) and Wilson (2013), for instance, all express their concern over the overtly colonial approach taken by organizers of Big Noise and In Harmony, the El Sistema-inspired programs currently established in the United Kingdom. Wilson in particular raises the issue of whether the artistic value of such programming is at odds with its established social goals. Furedi (2010) examined the question of whether El Sistema programming could even be effective in the British context, responding to the writing of East (2010), who raises similar concerns.

Community Engagement

As noted in the literature examined earlier in this chapter, a relationship exists between orchestras and the communities in which they are active, which has a particular emphasis on community engagement. So, too, this is a prominent theme in the academic work pertaining to Community Music. This suggests the need to examine some of the principles which underpin the notion of public engagement as identified by the literature, including cultural democracy, participation and stakeholder support.

Community Engagement: Cultural Democracy

Adams and Goldbard (1995) have suggested that cultural democracy may be illustrated by the relationship between three interrelated elements: cultural co-existence, participation and democratic control. Holden (2008, 2010) affirmed the role of societal institutions in preserving and providing the conditions under which cultural democracy may flourish, while Ivey (2008) suggested that access to cultural heritage is a right of the citizenry.

There is also material from various publically funded arts councils which describe policies or viewpoints on the subject of cultural democracy. For example, the Canada Council for the Arts (2010) asserted the value of investment in "democratic art forms" and local arts engagement, while Arts Council England (2011) has published a *Strategic Framework for the Arts* in which they spell out their plan to support and extend opportunities for arts engagement to a wider segment of the public. These sources are useful in providing some perspective on public policy regarding arts and culture and the importance placed on the concept of cultural democracy by the jurisdictions in which I conducted my research.

Community Engagement: Authentic Participation

The role that participatory engagement plays in a democratic arts landscape was emphasized by Brown (2008), Brown and Novack-Leonard (2011a, 2011b) and Petri (2013), who have described a spectrum of engagement, encompassing numerous activities which may provide members of the public opportunities to access and interact with arts and culture. It is certainly true that many amateur orchestras attempt to provide such opportunities to their audiences; however, authors such as Midgette (2011) and Kennicott (2013) have warned that such efforts may be fruitless, as evidenced by the continued decline in traditional audience numbers.

Other authors such as Cohen (1988), Prentice (2001) and Rentschler and Radbourne (2008) point out that audiences will be more loyal and engaged if they are provided "authentic" participatory experiences. As Wilby (2013) points out, such opportunities allow participants to experience a sense of "self-actualization" (Wilby, 2013) through their engagement, on a more meaningful level than just that of passive observer. Turino (2008) also examines the role of participatory engagement in society, suggesting that the value of such events may be defined by the number of participants involved.

Community Engagement: Social Capital and Cohesive Communities

The notion that participatory musical engagement is beneficial not just to individuals but to the wider community has been discussed by Jones (2010), while Putnam (1993) has shown that participation in arts activities can spur greater involvement in community affairs. This suggests that arts organizations such as amateur orchestras may be viewed as generators of "social capital," which Putnam (1993), Fukuyama (1999) and others have described as the positive social bond between members of a community, while O'Sullivan (2009) has examined the generation of social capital from the perspective of audiences in attendance at symphony orchestra concerts.

The notion that amateur orchestras contribute to greater community cohesion suggests that it would be in society's interest to encourage investment in such activities. Practices in public and corporate sponsorship of arts activities have been discussed by Carroll and Shabana (2010), Gregg, Kelly, Sullivan and Woolstencroft (2015), and Stern (2015), the latter suggesting that corporate support for the arts and culture sector is gaining momentum at the local or community level. This view suggests that amateur orchestras may be seen as suitable partners for investment on the part of potential sponsors, an idea which will be addressed later in this dissertation.

Communities of Practice

This thesis explores the possibility of reimagining amateur orchestras as unique "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1999). While Etienne Wenger (1998, 1999, 2000), remains the most prolific author on the subject of communities of practice, the subject has also been examined by Brown and Duguid (1991) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), in the context or organizational behaviour. Lave and Wenger (1991) approach communities of practice as environments for "situated learning," a paradigm I believe also applies to participation in amateur orchestras.

Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner (2015) have defined communities of practice as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they

interact regularly" (n. p.). Practitioners within communities of practice may be distinguished by their

mutual engagement in a "shared domain of interest" as well as their desire to "engage in joint activities

and discussions, help each other, and share information" (Wenger-Trayner, 2015, n.p.).

This concept has been explored in a professional orchestral context by Smilde (2008), who

investigated the developmental pathways of professional musicians through a biographical study of four

individuals. In addition, Countryman (2009) investigated the possibility of creating communities of

practice within high school ensembles. While both of these studies focus on education and musical

learning within ensemble contexts, neither explicitly discusses amateur musicianship, leaving room for

further contributions in this regard.

Summary

My critical review of the literature has shown that while there is a sizeable body of research

which examines the various individual aspects of amateur musicianship, Community Music practice,

ensemble-based music education or orchestral public engagement, there lacks a perspective which

places these elements within an amateur orchestra context or examines their combined influence on

amateur orchestra sustainability. Further, it is surprising that the amateur orchestra has, to a large

extent, been ignored as a source for more in-depth and meaningful academic research within

Community Music practice, given the wide acknowledgement of its positioning within that sphere.[16]

Finally, there are very few authors who directly address the subject of amateur orchestras. Some offer

practical guidance for would-be orchestra organizers while others provide more academic viewpoints,

largely focusing on individual motivation and player identity. Yet there remain significant gaps in

understanding to be filled and further contributions from a wider variety of perspectives are needed.

Notes

1. *The Journal of Band Research*, for instance, has been in publication for over sixty years and is a

   leading source for scholarly articles covering all aspects of band performance (The American

   Bandmaster's Association, 2015). Other examples of scholarly and pedagogical journals

   dedicated to bands include *Canadian Winds* (Canadian Band Association, 2015), and the *ACB*

   Journal (Association of Concert Bands in America, 2015). By contrast, Orchestras Canada offers

   an online newsletter (Orchestras Canada, n.d.), while *Symphony Magazine* (League of American

   Orchestras, 2015), features articles which are almost exclusively dedicated to the activities of

   professional symphony orchestras. An exhaustive internet search revealed little which related to

   amateur orchestral performance within this publication.

2. *Harmony*, for example, was a journal published by the Symphony Orchestra Institute from 1995

   to 2003. Archives from the publication are presently available at www.polyphonic.org

   (Polyphonic: The Orchestra Musician's Forum, 2015).

3. While such histories exist in various forms on the websites of many existing amateur orchestras,

   full-length published works which include archival material and first-hand accounts are

   extremely uncommon.

4. Wilby (2013) draws on Finnegan's work and represents a further validation of the participant-

   observer role in ethnomusicological research, as I will discuss in the methodology.

5. Carr (2006), Cavitt (2005), Coffman (2002a, 2002b, 2006), Creech et al. (2008), Mantie (2009),

   Silverman (2005) and Olson (2005) have all addressed the subject of the amateur musical

   identity in their works, though none have done so within a strictly orchestral context. This is a

   crucial difference which presents an opportunity for a greater focus on amateur orchestras

   within the research landscape.

6. There is no doubt that this knowledge is valuable; indeed, the work of Shansky (2010), Burland (2004) and Park (1995), for instance, provided early guidance for the formulation of my own approach to investigating amateur orchestra participation in this regard.

7. Bennett (2008), Bennett and Hannan (2008), Brown (2009), Burland (2004), Carruthers (2008, 2012), The Gulbenkian Foundation (1978), Johnsson and Hager (2008), Kang (2012) and MacDonald (1979) have all commented on the professional musician's role within the classical music landscape and the current trend towards redefining that role to include a broader skill set.

8. The only variance among authors is in the degree to which socialization appears as a prime motivating factor for participation in amateur music. Shansky's findings, for instance, were that social inclusion was of secondary importance compared to music-making for her research subjects; however, research by Arrowsmith (2014), Coffman (2002b), Olson (2005) and many others indicates that musical engagement and socialization are of equal importance to many participants.

9. See the work of Pavlicevic and Ansdell (2004) for an overview of the increasingly prominent role Community Music plays in the field of music therapy.

10. The debate over whether music education should reflect a social agenda is addressed from a historical perspective by Woodford (2012), who describes the concerns as follows:

    This of course is a political goal. It thus seems strange that proponents of social justice in music education often emphasize musical diversity and inclusivity while neglecting to explicitly teach students how music and music education relate to politics and other forms of experience. This should be a cause for concern . . . (p.85)

11. Coffman (2002b, 2006) and Mantie (2009), for instance, focus on wind bands as vehicles for continuing music education while Carr (2005) and Dabback (2003) address this subject from a

social cohesion and Community Music perspective. Veblen and Waldron (2009), by contrast, explore the value of informal musical practice in fostering life-long learning.

12. Orchestras Canada advertised two opportunities for 'life-long learning' on their website (Orchestras Canada, 2014); one from the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra and one from the Victoria Symphony Orchestra. Both of these activities were "music appreciation" lectures offered in partnership with a local university rather than opportunities for participatory learning through playing. In light of the widely-accepted participatory context described by the authors included here, the marketing of these events seems somewhat misleading.

13. Interestingly, Gordon's book was the earliest source I could find which made a direct link between school ensemble playing and amateur orchestra participation.

14. I have had the pleasure of working with Peter Wiegold in several contexts and witnessed these effects first hand, including among members of my own semi-improvised ensemble, whose reflections on the topic have been included in this research.

15. Understandable, perhaps, given the strong desire on the part of all stakeholders to maintain a positive impression of these programs in the hopes of retaining funding and boosting enrolment.

16. This is not to discount the excellent research pertaining to community bands, choirs and other non-classical or traditional folk idioms that continues to evolve. As I have already suggested, the trend in Community Music is to work in modalities which are not conducive to typical orchestral practice or to focus on groups which are somehow disadvantaged or socially isolated. One might be hard-pressed to describe the typical amateur orchestra participant as disadvantaged; nevertheless, I assert their value as subjects worthy of study within a Community Music framework.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Culture is the method by which we learn the ways of interpreting the world. (Nettl, 2010, p.6)

The previous chapter reviewed academic sources which have, predominantly, adopted qualitative models for research into amateur musical engagement. Using these examples for guidance, this chapter will outline the methods used in my own research, which include the collection and analysis of responses to questionnaires by amateur orchestra participants and observations from a participant perspective.

Research Approaches

Qualitative Research into Amateur Orchestras

As a model for investigating the socio-musical nature of amateur orchestras, qualitative research is ideal, in that it offers a diversity of methods, frameworks and worldviews (Creswell, 2003) which enable the researcher to illuminate and explore the complex social systems in place in amateur musical contexts. Wilby (2013), for instance, asserts the value of situated qualitative research in allowing the researcher to "gain insight into the experience and practice of amateur musicians making music together in a social situation" (p. 68), while Glynn (2000) describes its effectiveness in "investigating sensitive matters, such as conflict" (p. 288). In light of these assertions, a qualitative approach seems appropriate given the tensions which I have suggested currently pervade the socio-musical environment of many amateur orchestras.

Further, qualitative research offers a flexibility that "encourages qualitative researchers to be innovative" (Silverman, 2012, p. 6), working in ways that are best suited to individual situations. Since my research includes numerous ensembles—each unique in their own way—from different towns and cities in two countries, a process which enables individual research participants to share their own unique experiences along flexible timelines is appealing. Further, my overview of the data collection

phase will illustrate the need for flexibility and innovation in disseminating and retrieving research

materials from the musicians who participated in my research.

Finally, as noted by ethnomusicologists such as Finnegan (2007), Wilby (2013), and Thompson

(2014), positioned observation from a participant perspective is an integral part of many qualitative

research models, though, as I will discuss, such participation gives rise to issues of researcher bias. Stake

(2005) has described qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world

[which] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p. 3). As a

professional violist, I was often a welcome addition to the orchestras with whom I sought to conduct

research, making such positioned observation from a participant's perspective more easily achieved.

Additionally, as an ensemble leader myself, I have privileged access to musicians who could potentially

participate in my research, further complicating the issue of the relationship between researcher and

research subject. I will, therefore, include an examination of my own experiences from these various

perspectives in the arguments to come.

Conducting the Research: Questionnaires

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires which were designed, disseminated to

amateur orchestral players, and retrieved between the fall of 2011 and the summer of 2014, concurrent

with the initial review of the academic literature presented in the previous chapter. Fifteen amateur

orchestras from the United Kingdom and ten amateur orchestras from Ontario participated in the

research, varying in size and operating in both urban and rural localities. Returned surveys were grouped

geographically, with the Ontario respondents constituting a sample size of n=73 and the respondents

from the United Kingdom constituting a sample size of n=157. The questionnaires were distributed

either in person at rehearsals or electronically through the participant organizations' contact lists, with

the permission of their respective administrators or players' committees.

As often as possible, the surveys were distributed at random so that the results could be "generalized to the larger population" (Kelley, Clark, Brown and Sitzia, 2003, p. 264) comprising the ensemble membership. As a method for collecting data, this process resembles that of the "postal questionnaire" (ibid., p. 262), in that research participants were chosen at random from the population being studied and invited to return the survey either at the end of rehearsal, after the performance, or through regular mail within a certain period of time.[1] As Kelley, Clark, Brown, and Sitzia (2003) explain, "[p]ostal questionnaires are usually received 'cold,' without any previous contact between researcher and respondent" (p. 262). Similarly, my own research questionnaires were distributed at rehearsals to players whom I was meeting for the first time and who, in many cases, had no prior knowledge of my purpose for attending their rehearsals or participating in their performances.

Guided by advice and oversight from my academic advisor, the survey questions were designed to gain insight into the experiences and perspectives of amateur orchestral musicians with regard to what I perceive to be the common characteristics of amateur orchestras—particularly as I understand them in Ontario—including: the presence of amateur musicians, the presence of professional musicians and conductors, the participation of volunteer players in the governance and operations of their ensembles, and the frequent undertaking of community engagement activities. The majority of questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to elaborate as they wished, though there were instances of closed questions or questions for which the responses would be limited (for example, "Did you join this ensemble because of its proximity to you?").

Conducting the Research: Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted as a distinct part of the research process, though as Kelley *et al.* (2003) point out, "[a]structured interview is like a questionnaire that is administered face-to-face with the respondent" (p. 263), suggesting that interviews are an appropriate and complementary approach to the use of postal questionnaires. The interviews took place between

the fall of 2011 and the summer of 2014, and included 28 individuals who were key figures within each

participating ensemble, such as conductors, executive directors or committee members. Interviews

were conducted in person and recorded for later transcription.

A small degree of latitude was allowed in the interview process. For instance, if a participant

offered an unclear or partial answer to a question then the subject may have been asked to elaborate or

a follow-up question may have been included. In some instances, the interviews took on a somewhat

conversational quality, allowing the interview subject and me to explore tangential topics. In other

cases, interview subjects kept their answers strictly to the point, not straying into other areas which may

have revealed interesting insights.

Hammersley (2005) points out this tendency towards inconsistency in the interview process. He

notes the critical view that the perspective of the interviewee is too contextual or speculative to be

taken as factual, or that what is being relayed may in some way deviate from actual events, suggesting

that interviews are somewhat unreliable as a means of data collection. He goes on to say, however, that

criticism of the interview process "amounted simply to warnings about the limits to what could be

inferred from such data" (p. 1), rather than an outright rejection of the format, suggesting instead, "that

interviews must be combined with other methods" (p.1), as I have done in this research.

Conducting the Research: Participant Observation

In addition to the afore-mentioned approaches, my own observations—much of which were

from a participant's perspective—of orchestral rehearsals, concerts, and educational activities have

supplemented the research for this thesis. The validity of the participant-researcher in a musical context

is espoused by Thompson (2014), calling it "the very substance of ethnomusicological fieldwork" (P.

821), while Greco (2014) notes that participant-observation methodology is common in

ethnomusicology" (p. 13). Campbell (2003) describes "performance-participant activity" as one of the

"hallmarks of research in ethnomusicology" (p. 22), This view is echoed by Baily (2008), who notes that

"participation leads to improved opportunities for observation . . . It also gives direct entry into the performance event, a central issue for study in ethnomusicology" (p. 126). Hood (1960) asserts the need to be fluent in the idiom being studied, an approach he terms "bi-musicality." Baily (2008) suggests that this musical fluency offers "potential social advantages for the researcher" (p. 125), in that research subjects may ascribe a certain identity to the participant-researcher which may be "useful in early orientation" (ibid.).

A participant-observer model for qualitative research allows the researcher to connect with amateur orchestral musicians, join them in their rehearsals and performances and thus share their experiences. Lester (1999) points out the value of this approach in phenomenological research, explaining that "[t]he establishment of a good level of rapport and empathy is critical to gaining depth of information, particularly where investigating issues where the participant has a strong personal stake" (p. 2). Further, Cohen (1993) suggests the validity of this approach in ethnographic work, asserting that "[b]asic to the conduct of research . . . is the development of relationships 'in the field'" (p.124).

However, there remains controversy over the value of this method as an objective form of data collection. Shuker (2002), for instance, points out the possibility that current ethnographic research may be inadequate in creating rich results, saying, "ethnography involves extensive and intimate involvement . . . but much contemporary ethnography is limited to forms of participant observation" (p. 113). Wilby acknowledges Shuker's concern over the so-called "snap shot" (Wilby, 2013, p. 69) approach, suggesting that "the appeal of ethnography . . . is counter-balanced by concerns that the resulting descriptions may be inconclusive or, indeed, purely anecdotal" (p. 70). In addition, Wall (2003) suggests that positioned research is "not entirely free of the possibility of prejudgement" (p. 183). He reminds us that:

> It is easy for us to make interpretations solely from our own position, rather than attempt to
> understand the cultural meanings given to activities by the participants. It is not that our own
> position is unimportant, rather we need to recognise that it is just that: a position; and one of no

more importance for understanding than that of the participants involved in the cultural

practices we are seeking to comprehend (pp.183–4).

The noted ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (1964) is harshest in his assessment of embedded

ethnographic research into musical activities, asserting that "[m]any would surely deny that

investigation of one's own culture is ethnomusicology at all" (p. 70), and going on to claim that the

notion of "comparing other cultures and style's with one's own, and the principle that one can be more

objective about other cultures than one's own, are important fundamentals of our field" (p.70).

Creswell (2007) also warns of the potential for the researcher to "go native" (p. 72) and thus risk

compromising the study or losing objectivity within it. This was certainly a concern as I not only routinely

participate in the musical activities being studied but also have a priori knowledge of the "musical

worlds" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 32) of performance and music education being explored. This was

compounded by the fact that due to the constraints placed on me by my demanding musical, academic

and family responsibilities I was able only to participate in this research on what could be described as a

"part-time" basis.

Again, Finnegan's perspective was invaluable in helping to reconcile this imbalance. In her

words, "the well-known issue of how far one should or should not 'become a native' looks rather

different, if still pressing, in one's own community" (p. 343). Further, her reflections on the level of

engagement in field work were equally reassuring:

The problems were both intensified and diminished by the further fact that during most of the

research I was only participating and observing on a part-time basis, for I consistently had other

academic and personal responsibilities which consumed much of my time. Such part-time

commitment to 'the field' will doubtless make many anthropologists shudder. In a way I do too,

but would also comment that I *was* living in the locality ('the field') for over a decade and that if

I had waited to be wholly 'free' in the way one is in fieldwork away from home, the study would

never have been done at all (p. 344).

It should be noted that not all fieldwork for this thesis was conducted exclusively in my home

town of Sudbury, though it could be argued that as one who routinely travels to perform with orchestras

as a professional free-lance violist, the entire province of Ontario might be considered my "locality."

However, the precedent set by Finnegan (2007), whose circumstances closely mirror my own, presents

an authoritative viewpoint that provides some degree of resolution to the issue. This is supported by

Burnim (1985), whose experience from an ethnomusicological perspective was that "mutually shared

identity proved to be an asset in many ways, particularly in gaining full cooperation" (p. 438), and who

further asserts that insider perspectives of the kind being described above are now seen to command

"scholarly respect and authority" (p. 433). Mehra (2002) goes further, suggesting that the researcher

"can't separate himself or herself from the topic/people he or she is studying, it is in the interaction

between the researcher and researched that the knowledge is created" (n.p.).

Conducting the Research: Case Studies

The use of case studies provides the opportunity to create "a detailed description" (Creswell,

2007, p. 74) of specific examples or issues, "which a case or cases are selected to illustrate" (p. 76), may

have arisen throughout the research process, in order to "generate and stimulate discussion" (Abrahms

and Head, 2005, p. ix). While it could be argued that each of the orchestras studied in this research

constitute a specific case worthy of scrutiny, the intent in including as many ensembles as possible in the

data set was to establish a "critical mass" of organizations and survey respondents from which to draw

emergent themes and to establish a comparison. Rather, the case study format was reserved for

examples which were "of very special interest" (Stake, 1995, p. xi), in order to "understand [their]

activity within important circumstances" (p. xii). In this sense, the case study "provides a base to

understand other issues" (Suryani, 2008, p. 118), and "tries to investigate whether there are similarities

or differences among the cases' characteristics to get better understanding of particular interests" (p. 119), as suggested by Stake (2005) in his description of instrumental and collective case studies .

Case studies for the purposes of this research included semi-structured interviews which took on the form of "The Long Interview" (McCracken, 1988, cited by Carr, 2006, p. 5), allowing the research participants the freedom to answer the interview questions with as little or as much information as they wished, with as little interference from the interviewer as possible. Interviews were supplemented with notes based on observation and available documentation, "collecting whatever data are available" (www.yorku.ca, N.D., p. 2) to help formulate a complete picture of the subject being studied.

There is disagreement about whether the case study acts merely as a research tool for ethnographers (Stake, 2005; Parthasarathy, 2014) or whether it constitutes a qualitative methodology unto itself (Creswell, 2003; Suryani, 2008). For the purposes of this research, case studies were intended as a means of examining "secondary" (Suryani, 2008, p. 118) issues arising from the exploration of factors which affect the viability and sustainability of amateur orchestras in our communities and helped to "support [those] other interests" (p. 119).

Conducting the Research: Grounded Theory

While the commonly employed methods for qualitative analysis each offer unique advantages and opportunities for exploring the world of amateur orchestras, a grounded theory approach was selected as the means by which the responses from amateur player participants would be analysed, though as I will discuss shortly, the desire to apply a Community Music framework to the analysis meant deviating to a degree from standard grounded theory practices. Grounded theory is an appropriate means of exploring the responses of amateur orchestral player participants, in part because the intended mode of data collection through voluntary questionnaires allowed for the possibility of emergent themes which could generate a theoretical model (Creswell, 2007) and because it provides, by way of direct account, a means of exploring "the social actions and interactions of humans, their shared

symbols and thus understandings of each other" (Probert, 2006, p. 5), the latter being of particular

importance given the communal underpinnings of collective musical participation described by Finnegan

(2007), Higgins (2012), Small (1977; 1998) and many others.

The responses from player participants were reviewed and analysed with reference to the

specific characteristics of amateur orchestras I have identified above through a process of open, axial

and selective coding (see Figures 1–3). The subsequent emergent themes are described in detail in the

next chapter, while individual responses which are representative of those themes are included

throughout this dissertation.

Conducting the Research: Grounded Theory and Community Music

It is necessary to make a note regarding the proposed use of Community Music as a possible

framework for discussing the themes which emerge from the research. As noted earlier, a Grounded

Theory approach implies that the framework for discussion is assembled from the research itself, rather

than through the application of a theoretical framework which is "off the shelf." However, my desire to

examine the responses of amateur orchestral musicians from a Community Music perspective is at odds

with a traditional Grounded Theory approach. I would suggest, though, that while I plan to use principles

of Community Music practice as a framework for examining the research, Community Music itself does

not yet constitute an accepted theoretical model for analysis, and that the theory which emerges from

the discussions to come is itself unique.

The critical issues related to Community Music which inform the analysis of research responses

include the concepts of hospitality, cultural democracy, participatory engagement and music education.

I propose to examine my research with reference to these perspectives.

Summary

This chapter reviews the methodological approaches used in the development and collection of

research material for this dissertation. A qualitative method was considered most appropriate for

research into amateur orchestras, wherein the distribution of postal questionnaires, face-to-face

interviews, observations from the field, and case studies were vehicles for data collection. In particular,

the position of the researcher is considered, in that my role as a professional musician and conductor is

a significant factor affecting the issue of researcher bias. This conflict is examined from an

ethnomusicological perspective.

The use of Grounded Theory as a method for analysis is introduced, as well as the potential for

aspects of Community Music practice to act as a framework for discussion. While the use of a pre-

existing theoretical model conflicts with traditional views on Grounded Theory, I suggest that

Community Music does not constitute such a model. Instead, the emergent themes to be examined

provide the basis for a theory on amateur orchestral engagement which is informed by Community

Music practice.

Notes

1. Because response rates for voluntary questionnaires tends to be very low—approximately

   20%—it is desirable to obtain a large sample "to ensure that the demographic profile of survey

   respondents reflects that of the survey population," and "to provide a sufficiently large data set

   for analysis" (Kelley et al, 2003, p. 262). This return rate was sought and, for the most part,

   achieved for each ensemble.

CHAPTER THREE: THEMES AND FRAMEWORKS

. . . music is more than just the body of sounds or a concept, but also an experience bearing and

communication issues of socio-cultural significance to the community that practices it (Akuno,

2000, p. 3).

The collected responses to research questions from amateur orchestral musicians, professional

musicians, and the content from interviews conducted with key figures within several amateur

orchestras constitute a rich source of information. My intention in this chapter is to highlight the

overarching themes which emerge from an examination of the data, in order to determine the nature of

amateur orchestras through the formulation of a theoretical perspective which captures the social and

musical aspects of participation in these ensembles.

In addition, the attitudes and activities associated with traditional orchestral practice and

Community Music practice will be outlined, inviting an exploration of how aspects of each are exhibited

in amateur orchestras and the extent to which they successfully coexist in that context. The forthcoming

chapters of this dissertation constitute such an exploration.

Presenting the Research: Identifying Themes, Displaying Data

The following section provides a rationale for the theoretical grounding of the research,

highlights the main themes which emerge from the data analysis, and presents the data for review.

Through the coding process described in the Methodology of this thesis, it became possible to

identify several overarching themes in the responses of research participants. These were: amateur

identity, socio-musical relationships, and community engagement. These thematic areas of inquiry are

themselves informed by the subthemes of musical engagement, social engagement, dedication,

disempowerment, elitism, respect, access, participation and social cohesion. Collectively, these concepts

suggest a view of amateur orchestras as not just presenters of orchestral repertoire, but environments

in which social and musical interactions are of equal impact. The theory which guides my research,

therefore, is that amateur orchestras may be conceptualised as unique communities of practice.

The research findings are illuminated by a presentation of the data, which is organised into a

series of figures describing the responses which emerge in relation to research questions and displaying

the sample size (see appendix). References to each figure are found in the relevant locations throughout

the text.

Contrasting Paradigms: Traditional Orchestras and Community Music

An examination of the research themes is enabled by a comparison of two paradigms which

influenced the direction of my inquiry: that of the traditional symphony orchestra and that of

Community Music. Identifying key aspects of each of these paradigms will help to establish a framework

for discussion through which the nature of amateur orchestras can be better understood.

Traditional Orchestral Paradigm: Selectivity, Hierarchy and the Canon

Amateur orchestras are part of a tradition of symphonic performance which I would suggest is

identifiable though a number of defining characteristics: admittance through a process which is highly

selective, musical oversight through a hierarchical and dictatorial leadership model, and the

presentation of repertoire which is commonly associated with a particular cultural and historical

provenance. Further, these characteristics are perpetuated by an increasingly market-driven philosophy

which can often dictate artistic programming, financial decision-making and even hiring practices. These

are factors which permeate not just professional orchestras, but also many amateur orchestras,

particularly in Ontario.

The first of these characteristics, admission through a highly selective vetting process, is a

universal trait of orchestras—professional and amateur—which dates back to the earliest origins of

formal ensemble performance. Spitzer and Zaslaw (2004), for instance, describe the admission

requirements for Sammartini's *Accademia Filarmonica* in 1758, noting that "to join the Academy,

dilettante instrumentalists had to play an audition—evidently more than a pro forma exercise" (p. 168).

The rationale for maintaining such a restrictive practice is evident: performance of orchestral repertoire

requires a minimum degree of instrumental ability among participants. Moreover, by ensuring that the

musicians are able to perform at a high standard, the overall quality of the product is assured. This is

significant when viewed in terms of the increasing commodification of the orchestral concert experience

which has taken place since the nineteenth century. [1]

Yet, while auditions often thought to guarantee a certain level of ability, the modern process of

orchestral auditions is as much reviled as it is lauded. Levine (1997), for instance, notes the lingering

influence of internal politics on what is understood to be a system free of such interference (p. 148–

149), while Woods (2012) states his view that the audition process "constricts the musical development

of aspiring orchestra musicians" (n.p.) by forcing them to focus on an extremely narrow aspect of

musical performance, and favours "the people who are best at playing an audition, but not always those

who are the best at playing in orchestras" (ibid.). These concerns raise further questions about the

efficacy of the audition process as it exists in traditional orchestral models, including those adopted by

amateur orchestras.

The second characteristic I have identified as characterising traditional orchestral practice is the

presence of a music director/conductor as the head of an inherently hierarchical organisation. Spitzer

and Zalsaw (2004) note the role of conductors in establishing conformity in ensembles, saying "in the

orchestra, as in politics, harmony is achieved by the imposition of external authority" (p. 512). Having

some musicians designated as principal players also helps to maintain unity and uniformity within

sections and enables the transmission of instruction from the conductor to the rank and file, a system

which mirrors hierarchical power structures in numerous contexts.

This power structure succeeds in an orchestral context because of the tacit agreement among

players to submit to the artistic leadership of their conductor, thus giving up the initiative to express the

individual creativity which they have, in many cases, spent a life-time developing. Johan Beer described

this condition as early as 1719, observing:

> musical subjugation resembles neither civic duty nor slavery. People obey not of their own free
>
> will but out of deference to authority . . . [Musicians] must give this obedience to their leader
>
> [der Majestro] during the time that he is leading, even though they are an aristocracy in other
>
> respects (Spitzer and Zaslaw, 2004, p. 512).

Yet overtones of panopticism[2] are strong in the traditional orchestral model, and the power

relationship between musicians and conductors remains deeply imbalanced. Given the voluntary nature

of amateur orchestral participation, these realities present potential challenges for amateur orchestras.

The final distinguishing characteristic of traditional orchestras relates to the commonly

acknowledged place of the "classical canon" in orchestral performance. While it is certainly true that

contemporary compositions are frequently featured on orchestral programmes, large-scale orchestral

works of Western art music from the late eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries remain the

mainstay of orchestral performances. Maintaining this narrow programming practice is, to a certain

extent, a market-driven activity; as Small (1977) notes, audiences have attained a degree of familiarity

with the repertoire and sense of aesthetic discrimination "which keep interest in our well-worn classics

alive for the musical cognoscenti of our culture" (p. 177).

Yet Small (1977) also warns that"[w]e should not [] allow the brilliance of the western musical

tradition to blind us to its limitations and even areas of downright impoverishment" (p. 1). The musical

idioms of other diverse traditions or cultures are often neglected in favour of the orchestral canon,

perpetuating the musical elitism for which symphony orchestras have so often been criticised. This

exclusionary practice has implications for amateur orchestras in ever-diversifying communities.

The Community Music Paradigm: Hospitality, Creativity and Cultural Democracy

The field of Community Music represents a collection of beliefs, practices and attitudes which sharply contrast with those presented above. In fact, is has been said that Community Music emerged as a practice in part as a reaction to the elitism associated with the kind of "high art" which orchestras represent (Higgins, 2012).[3] As such, Community Music is enticing as a foil in the examination of traditional orchestral practice and amateur orchestras.

The focus of discussion will be on three key concepts of Community Music: hospitality and the welcoming of all participants; creative music-making; and cultural democracy.[4] The first of these themes, hospitality, reflects the belief by Community Music practitioners in the importance of extending an "unconditional welcome" (Higgins, 2008) to all participants. This belief is underpinned by Levinas' (1969) claim that individuals have an ethical obligation to "the Other," by extending an unconditional welcome to those who may reside "outside" the established community. In this sense, the welcome is viewed as "an ethical action . . . a relation of infinite responsibility to the other person, a humanism of the other according to which being-for-the-other takes precedence over being-for-itself" (Higgins, 2008, p. 392). The unconditional welcome is "intrinsic" to Community Music, in that it "refutes the closure inherent within notions of the 'gated' community," (Higgins, 2008, p.393) and rejects "restrictive perimeters that are tightly controlled" (Higgins, 2008, p. 393). In a musical context, this ethical imperative takes the form of access to participatory music-making opportunities, such as those which take place in Community Music workshops.[5]

Yet while aspiring to unconditional hospitality is laudable, it is also "impossible" (Higgins, 2008, p. 393), because of the practical and physical limitations which give structure to any event. This is particularly true in the case of amateur orchestras, for which the extension of unconditional hospitality would be a challenging proposition for a number of reasons, not least of these being the inherent limitation of the need for instrumental ability among participants. Yerichuk (2014), for instance, points

out "the tension between a fully inclusive ideal and a set of practices historically shaped by its

relationship to the discipline of music education" (p. 143), the latter placing its own constraints on the

practice. Thus, the realisation of Levinas' (1969) ideal of "infinite responsibility" to the Other is likely not

achievable in an orchestral context.

Another characteristic of Community Music is the value placed on fostering creative agency

among participants. Practitioners of Community Music "seek to foster confidence in participants'

creativity" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5) by "providing opportunities to develop everyone's creative potential"

(Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186) which place "emphasis on personal expression" (Olson, 2005, p. 59) in

musical activities. These opportunities for personal creative expression are primarily offered through

creative workshops, "involving skilled music leaders, who facilitate group music-making experiences in

environments that do not have set curricula" (Higgins, 2012, p. 4). The concept of facilitation is critical in

Community Music; its significance is examined in Chapter Five.

Yet the pursuit of personally enlightening musical experiences, individually or in group settings,

is often linked to Community Music's socially inclusive agenda, raising the question: "Is excellence

sacrificed if everyone engages in music activity?" (Grant, 2003, n.p.). While proponents of Community

Music are quick to assert the importance of artistic quality in their work (Moser & McKay, 2005; Higgins,

2012), there is little scholarly evidence to illustrate the evaluation methods which would confirm these

assertions. Further, the pursuit of inclusive frameworks, as suggested above, necessitates activities to

which all participants—novice or advanced—can contribute, regardless of ability, potentially

compromising artistic quality. From an amateur orchestra perspective, this possibility is distinct and

significant.

The other characteristic associated with Community Music is the respect for cultural democracy,

itself a concept which encompasses notions of diversity and equalization of opportunity (Higgins, 2008).

Higgins (2012) describes Community Music as "an expression of cultural democracy," whose

practitioners are concerned with "making and creating musical opportunities for a wide range of people

from many cultural groups" (p.7). Cultural democracy implies granting participants an equal voice in

artistic processes, embracing a variety of artistic traditions and vernaculars, and making musical

opportunities accessible to disadvantaged or socially marginalised groups, the latter being of particular

importance within Community Music discourse (Silverman, 2005; Higgins, 2008; Veblen, *et. al*, 2013).

Yet the strong emphasis on the importance of Community Music's social agenda is problematic,

in part because of the tendency for practitioners and scholars from the field to "position community

music as a democratic space simply by virtue of its existence . . . overlooking systemic barriers that

might question whether specific spaces function democratically" (Yerichuk, 2014, p. 143). Further,

advocates for Community Music often resort to rhetoric which portrays their activities "as always and

only good" (Yerichuk, 2014 p. 143), in that despite maintaining a strong ethos of self-evaluation, there is

little criticism of Community Music's own activities in relation to the social issues it addresses. Without

asking such critical questions, there arises the "very real danger that community music is re-inscribing

social relations rather than resisting them" (Yerichuk, 2014, p. 147), defeating its own attempts to

realise cultural democracy within its practice.

Contrasting Paradigms in the Research

Clearly, there are challenges associated with the comparison of aspects of the two divergent

practices of traditional symphony orchestras and Community Music, and this thesis does not set out to

resolve or propose solutions to all of them, nor is it my intention to uphold either concept as a paragon

of practice. Rather, the juxtaposition of these concepts opens a pathway to greater understanding of the

nature of amateur orchestras. Moreover, these perspectives contribute to the analysis of the themes

which have emerged from my research, enabling the reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as

unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Summary

This chapter describes the themes which emerge from a Grounded Theory analysis of the research data. These themes may be broadly categorised into three concepts: socio-musical engagement, participatory engagement, and community engagement. The secondary themes which interlink and intersect these concepts are also examined, with the supporting data displayed for clarity.

Further, the two contrasting entities of traditional symphony orchestras and Community Music are introduced, along with a brief description and critique of the critical characteristics which define them. It is the synthesis of the research results with aspects of these two fields of practice, as explored in the upcoming chapters, which enables the reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Figures

Figure 1: Example of a data node from open coding

Figure 2: Example of a data node from axial coding
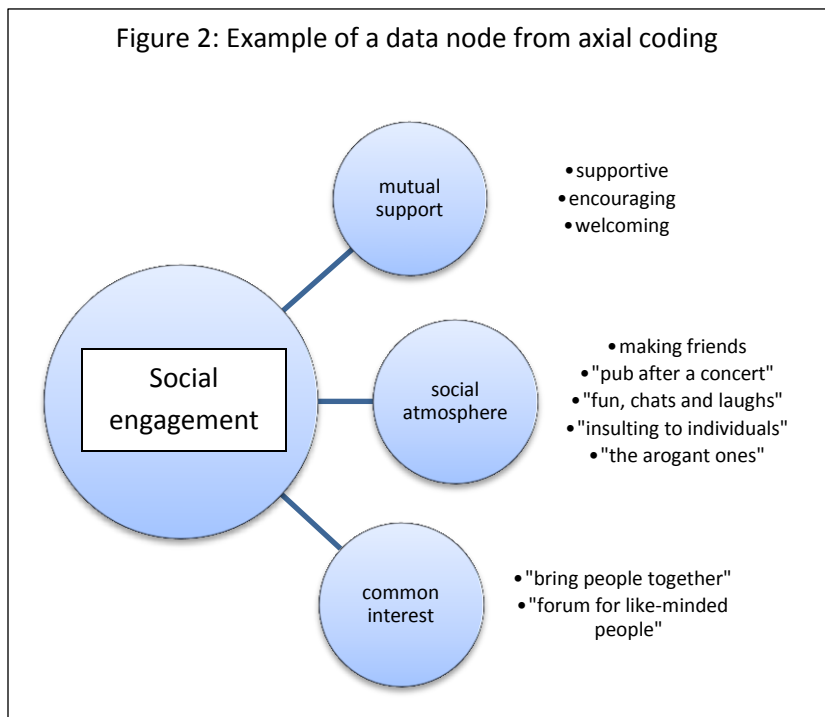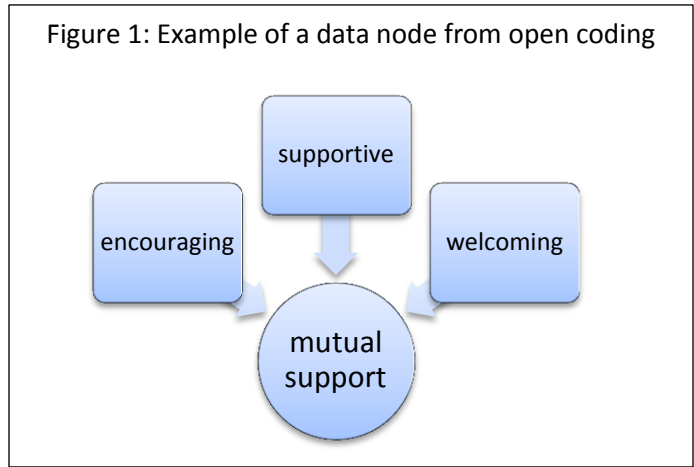
Figure 3: Example of a data node from selective coding

Social enagagement

Amateur identity

Musical engagement

Dedication
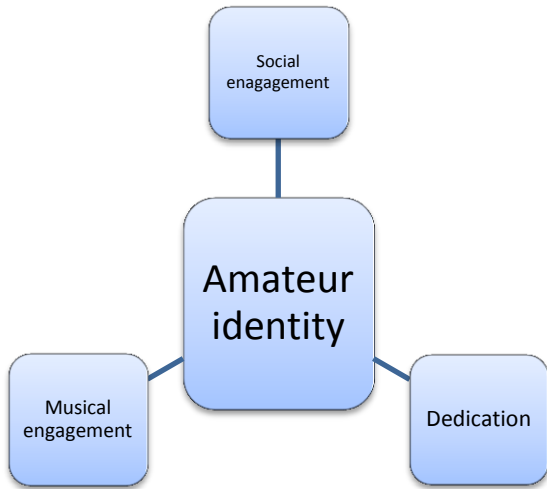
Figure 4: Thematic relationships to theory

Amateur identity

Socio-musical community of practice

Socio-musical relationships

Community engagement
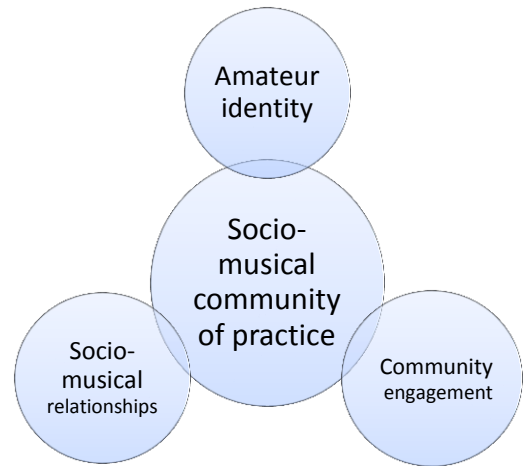
Figure 5: Amateur identity

Musical engagement

- "love of music"
- "play for love- not money"
- "I love music and love rehearsing it"

Amateur identity

Dedication

- "professional approach"
- "my attitude... is professional"
- "If I miss a concert I am gutted!"

Social engagement

- Mutual support
- Social atmosphere
- Common interest
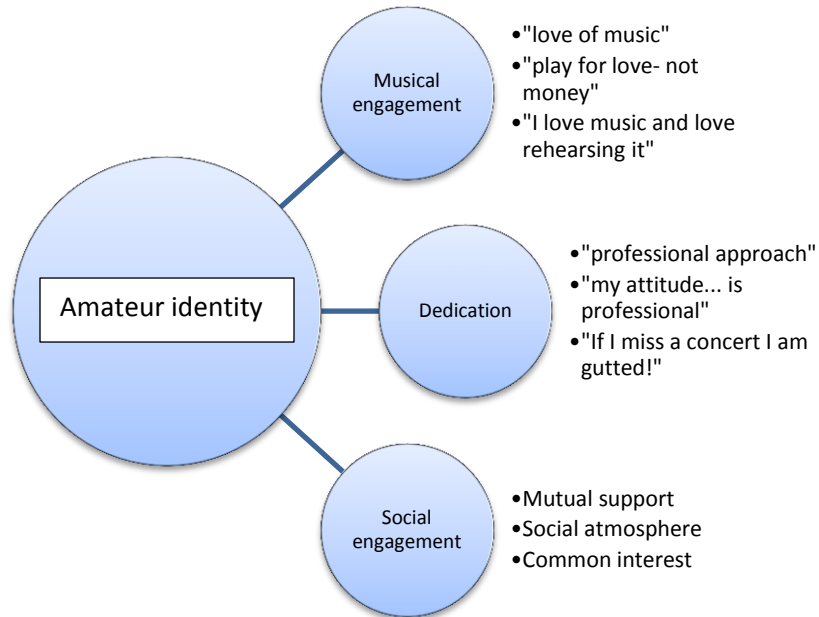
Figure 6: Respondents' reactions to the term "amateur"

Do you describe yourself as an amateur musician?

- Yes= 200
- No= 31

What problems, if any, do you have with that term?

- 140 respondents overall were comfortable with the term "amateur," with 6 specifically indicating that it reflected their love of playing
- 22 respondents overall were not comfortable with the term "amateur," with 17 indicating that they felt it suggested a poor standard
- 29 respondents overall described themselves instead as professional, semi-professional, or former professional musicians

Figure 7: Rehearsal vs. concert priority

Rehearals over concerts: 51

Concerts over rehearsals: 18

Note: There were 48 respondents overall who prioritised concerts and rehearsals evenly

Figure 8: Prioritising social aspect of participation

Players for whom social aspect was of high importance: 118

- 46 respondents overall specifically indicated that the social aspect of participation was not important to them

Players for whom social aspect was of secondary importance: 62

- 41 respondents overall specifically indicated that music-making was of higher importance

Figure 9: The spirit of hospitality in player responses

"What do you think this orchestra does best?"

- The theme of "hospitality" was most prominent in responses from research participants (65 overall)

"What makes rehearsals enjoyable?"

- "Good people" (19 overall) and "positive atmosphere" (17 overall) were among the top eight responses

Figure 10: Orchestras governed by players' committee

Research orchetras in the UK goverened by players' committee: 14

- The exception, The London College of Music Orchestra, is administered through the institution, though community player input and assistance is solicited

Research orchestras in Ontario goverened by players' commitee: 6

- The other orchestras are goverened by boards of directors who do not perform with the orchestra, though player representatives are present on these bodies

Figure 11a: Hiring practices of amateur orchestras in the United Kingdom

Orchestras that employ professional occasional musicians: 12

- Of these, three employ a full-time concert master

Orchestras that employ a professional conductor: 11

- One orchestra—the Cobweb Orchestra—reported that they did not hire professional musicians beyond occasional guest solosists. Instead, Cobweb occasionally pays for tutors from the Northern Sinfonia to offer coachings for the members

Figure 11b: Hiring practices of amateur orchestras in Ontario

Orchestras that employ professional occasional musicians: 8

- Of these, 5 orchestras employ a full-time concert master and 4 orchestras employ a full-time core of string players

Orchestras that employ a professional conductor: 9

- 2 orchestras reported that they did not hire professional musicians, though an honorarium was provided for the conductor

Figure 12: Amateur attitudes towards employment of professional occasional musicians

Research respondents indicating they agreed with the practice: 140

•29 respondents overall agreed but with reservations as to the extent of the practice

Research respondents indicating they did not agree with the practice: 34

Figure 13a: Player satisfaction in ensemble affairs

Player participation in programming	•86 overall indicated none/not enough
Player participation in operations	•63 overall indicated none/not enough
Repertoire selection	•35 overall indicated dissatisfaction
Policy/communiaction re. players	•37 overall indicated dissatisfaction

Figure 13b: Player satisfaction in ensemble affairs

| Player participation in programming | •62 overall indicated satisfactory involvement |

Figure 14: Player dissatisfaction with conductor behaviour

Players who expressed dissatisfaction with their conductor: 73

•Of these:
  •33 respondents overall indicated that they felt only somewhat or not at all respected by their conductor
  •23 respondents overall described behaviours from their conductors which made rehearsals unenjoyable
•A further 12 respondents overall indicated that they would like to see a change in artistic leadership

Players who indicated that they felt only somewhat or not at all valued: 44

Figure 15: Player attitudes toward repertoire selection

Players who indicated dissatisfaction with repertoire practices: 53

•See Figure s 13a and 13b for player involvement in programming

Figure 16: Player attitudes towards amateur/professional engagement

Professional attitudes towards amateurs:

•Of the 7 professional musicians who responded to research questions, 5 characterised their relationship with their amateur peers in mostly positive terms. Frequently used words include "comraderie" and "relaxed."

•2 characterised their relationship in mostly negative terms, using words like "commitment" and "arrogant."

Amateur attitudes towards professionals:

•See Figures 11a and 11b; of the respondents who agreed with the practice of employing professionals, 15 specifically indicated that their relationship was positive. Frequently used words include "inspire," "enjoy," and "generous."

Figure 17: Instrumental education of amateur players

Players who received private instrumental tuition:	•UK= 84 •ON= 25
Players who received instrumental tuition through school provision:	•UK= 15 •ON= 2
Players who received no formal instrumental training:	•UK= 5 •ON= 3

Note: 60 respondents overall did not specify the nature of their instrumental training, while 20 respondents overall indicated that they had pursued their musical studies through university, with many of these achieving a university qualification.

Figure 18: Sources of encouragement for amateur players

Players with school ensemble experience:	• 113 overall
Encouragement from family, friends, colleagues:	• 59 overall
Encouragement from teachers:	• 24 overall

Figure 19: Desire for educational engagement

What services would you like to see offered by your orchestra?

• 52 respondents ovreall indicated they would like to see their orchestra undertake some form of educational or youth-focused programming

Figure 20: Player attitudes on participation

Why are community orchestras important?

• The most frequent response from research participants was the provision of a participatory outlet for like-minded people (108 overall)

Figure 21: Player committee prominence

Players who acknowledged the work of their player commities: 124

• UK= 95 • ON= 19

Figure 22: Participation fees

Players who indicaed they paid fees to participate:

• UK= 146
• ON= 47

Figure 23: Community importance for amateur orchestras

Why are community orchestras important?

•The second most frequent response from research participants was the provision of inexpensive and enjoyable live orchestra concerts to the community (58 overall)

•The third most frequent response referred to enhancement of local culture (40 overall)

•The fourth most frequent response referred to "community building" and social inclusion (30 overall)

•The fifth most frequent response referred to "bringing people together" (27 overall)

Figure 24: Public funding for participant amateur orchestras

Research orchestras in the UK receiving government funding: 0

•The London College of Music Orchestra is funded in part through its institution

Research orchestras in Ontario receiving government funding: 8

•Usually in the form of grants from the Ontario Arts Council or local municipal councils

Notes

1. As Dineen (2011) notes:

   > Beethoven, in his middle period, freed himself from such constraints, made
   >
   > development rather than thematic identification the focal point of his work. Thus
   >
   > musical works with their self-contained narratives lent themselves to commodification,
   >
   > and the participating listener became instead a spectator and a consumer (p. 94).

2. See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1975.

3. Higgins (2012) notes, "[a]s a political manifestation, community musicians have challenged the

   dominant position of 'high' art and its cultural implications such as elitism" (p. 183).

4. Higgins (2012) suggests that the characteristics of Community Music may be "expressed through

   the themes of hospitality, the workshop, facilitation, friendship, and cultural democracy" (p.

   175).

5. Higgins (2008) describes the welcome as "the ethical claim for the workshop-as-event," a "face-

   to-face social encounter that cannot be reduced to simple comprehension" (p.392) in which

   participant and activity leader experience musical explorations together.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEFINING THE UNIQUE TERRITORY OF AMATEUR ORCHESTRAS

. . . although involvement in the amateur performing arts is a minority pursuit, for those

involved it is undertaken with a considerable degree of commitment (Pitts, 2007, p.33).

While several characteristics distinguish the practices of traditional symphony orchestras and

Community Music, both of which strongly influence amateur orchestras, these ensembles possess

additional defining characteristics, most notably that they are comprised primarily of amateur

musicians. In this chapter, therefore, I propose to establish, by a juxtaposition of the practices of both

groups, and by an examination of the concept of amateurism, that amateur orchestras inhabit a unique

territory.

The Unique Territory of Amateur Orchestras: Amateurism, Serious Leisure, Community

Amateur orchestras are distinguished from their professional counterparts by the participation

of orchestral musicians who are primarily described as amateurs. It is important, therefore, to examine

the nature of identity associated with amateur orchestral participation. An examination of the concept

of amateurism, "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992), and community brings into focus the complexities of

such participation, and suggests the need to re-examine how these ensembles are understood in the

general discourse surrounding orchestral practice.

Identity and Amateurism: An Elusive Concept

The common connotations associated with the term "amateur musician," include: having a love

for playing music; participating on a voluntary basis for the purposes of personal fulfilment; and placing

less value on the quality of the final product than would professional musicians. These understandings

are evidenced in the responses from research participants (see Figure 5). For instance, one respondent

answered, "it's hard to stop amateurs making music, and they do it because they enjoy playing and love

music" (personal communication, June 23, 2012), while another stated, "I am an amateur and play

because of enjoyment and the challenge" (personal communication, March 23, 2013). One added, "I am

a rank amateur—but also an amateur in that I practice and play for love—not money" (personal

communication, December 8, 2012), while another pointed out that "[t]he term [amateur] may imply

that the quality is lower, which is not necessarily the point" (personal communication, May 4, 2013). Yet,

despite these commonly held assumptions, an accurate description of the amateur musician is

"surprisingly elusive" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 12), in that the nuances inherent in the figure of the performer

are not captured by typical depictions of the term.[1]

Finnegan (2007) suggests that the difference between amateur and professional musician is that

professionals earns their livelihood "by working full time in some musical role, in contrast to the

'amateur', who does it 'for love' and whose source of livelihood lies elsewhere" (p. 12). However,

Finnegan (2007), cited in Wilby (2013), goes on to point out that such distinctions become increasingly

unclear when put into practice, saying:

> Some [complications] lie in the ambiguities in the concept of 'earning one's living', others in
>
> differing interpretations about what is meant by working in 'music', and others again—perhaps
>
> the most powerful of all—in the emotive overtones of the term 'professional' as used by the
>
> participants themselves (p. 69).

It is clear, therefore, that there is not a narrow definition of what it means to earn a livelihood in

the field of music, but rather a spectrum of activity which could be considered professional music. For

instance, a musician may teach full-time at a university but also play occasional wedding engagements.

Such as musician would certainly make the majority of his or her income with the former but may still

include any compensation from the latter as part of their livelihood.[2] Does this indicate that the

musician in question has two jobs or do they both fall under the category of working musician? This

question elucidates Dawn Bennett's (2008) claim that "the term musician is in fact an umbrella term for

the profession" (p. 101). While such distinctions may seem trivial from a non-musician's standpoint, they

contribute to the ambiguity surrounding the issues of professionalism and amateurism as perceived by musicians—issues which have a significant impact on amateur orchestras.[3]

The other suggestion by Wilby (2013) stemming from Finnegan's (2007) work is that the word "professional" is a loaded term, the connotations of which may vary depending on the participants who describes themselves as such (p.74). Consider, for instance, another hypothetical example of a self-taught musician with no formal training on an instrument, who earns a living through performances at various functions or events. This musician would probably self-identify as professional because they are "essentially dependent upon the practice of music for their livelihood" (Rink, 2001, p. 56). However, this designation clashes with the accepted norms of the wider music profession (particularly the Western classical tradition) which emphasizes training with a master teacher and possession of a degree or other formal recognition as requirements for professional status.

Further, Carol Shansky (2010), citing Juniu, Tedrick and Boyd (1996), argues that "amateurs are as devoted as professionals, but don't make a living by playing music" (p. 3). This acknowledges the high value amateur players place on their participation in musical performance while at the same time suggests that there is a spectrum of ability associated with amateur musicianship, extending to a level on par with professionals. This is illustrated by the responses of several research participants (see Figure 6), many of whom expressed dissatisfaction with the term's implications, saying, "I do not like the term because it suggests that you cannot play very well" (personal communication, November 13, 2012), or, "[t]he only problem is that the word sometimes is taken to denote 'not very good!'" (personal communication, May 5, 2012) and, "I do not like the implication that I may be not so good as a professional!" (personal communication, April 21, 2012). One respondent added "others either assume I'm a professional or ask why I didn't go professional; all very flattering" (personal communication, March 10, 2012), while another pointed out, "it suggests a lower calibre of playing than professional when really it is a lifestyle or career choice" (personal communication, October 5, 2013). These

responses reveal a firm belief on the part of players that their abilities are not adequately reflected by

typical conceptions of amateurism in music.

Stebbins (1993) accounts for these ambiguities by situating the amateur within a sociological

context, as part of a "professional-amateur-public system of functionally interdependent relationships"

(p. 23), implying a degree of co-dependence and fluidity in the amateur/professional dyad. The elusive

nature of the concept of amateurism has a significant impact on the functioning of amateur orchestras.

A noted authority on the topic of amateur engagement, Stebbins' theories will come into focus later in

this chapter.

Identity, Amateurism and Professionalism: Conflicting Perceptions

While Stebbins places amateurism and professionalism along the same spectrum of activity,

Finnegan (2007) alerts us to the fact that the elitist attitudes—real or perceived—associated with

professionalism may contribute to schisms within local musical contexts, saying:

> From one viewpoint, it connotes high-standard or serious performance as against 'mere
>
> amateur playing', and from another, outsiders coming in from elsewhere to take prestige or fees
>
> from local players, or entertainers who try to charge more than those paying them would like.
>
> Thus the emotional claim—or accusation—of being either 'amateur' or 'professional' can
>
> become a political statement rather than an indicator of economic status (p.16).

That both terms, "amateur" and "professional," can be viewed as derogatory, demonstrates

fundamental misunderstandings which, as the next chapter will explore, can lead to tensions within the

context of amateur orchestras.

On the other hand, despite ascribing high value to their participation in ensemble playing,

amateur musicians may also downplay their own skills as performers, with statements like "'But I am not

really a musician,' because of the broader system of value that holds professionalism as the standard"

(Turino, 2008, p. 25), further adding to the variety of opinions about the defining characteristics of

amateurism and professionalism. It is, therefore, more realistic to view amateur orchestral players as

part of a "complex continuum with many different possible variations," with a realization that "even the

same people could be placed at different points along this line in different contexts of different stages of

their lives" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 14). Wilby (2013) also acknowledges the "considerable variance in the

degree of knowledge held by amateur musicians on the codes, conventions and structures of different

musical forms," in that "some are seasoned and experienced performers, others are still learning" (p.

65).

Wilby (2013) further highlights these tensions, describing the "potential conflict between two

priorities" (p. 142), those being the leisurely desires of amateur participants, and the desires of the

professional which are "more closely attuned to discourses of commercialism and promotion, to

entertain a paying audience, to provide 'value for money', in essence to commodify the experience" (p.

142–143). This represents an epistemological gulf between amateurs and professionals the impact of

which on amateur orchestras will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

Identity and Amateurism: Serious Leisure

In addition to a love of orchestral music, amateur musicians participate in orchestral playing as a

form of recreation; therefore, the goal of preparing and performing concerts may not necessarily be

shared by their professional counterparts. And while amateur musicians experience the same sense of

"aesthetic satisfaction" (Palmer, 2008, p.204) as professionals through the process of preparing and

presenting repertoire, the process itself may be a more significant factor in the motivations for

amateurs.[4] For many players, concerts and rehearsals are inseparable components of that process;

however, a sizeable number of research respondents indicated that they prioritized rehearsals over

concerts in the scheme of their participation (see Figure 7). That these musicians would forego the

concert experience in favour of rehearsals indicates a strong sense of dedication to their avocation and

suggests that amateur orchestral participation is a form of "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992).[5]

Common interpretations of the word "leisure" suggest that it can only exist in relation to its opposite, work, and that one must be given license (from the Latin root *licere*, or "to be permitted") from one's daily work to indulge in leisure. Yet Stebbins (1992) points out that leisure is often more than a trivial indulgence; that it is, in fact, "vital to human well being" (p.2). Stebbins distinguishes two kinds of leisure: the first is casual in nature, characterized by social interaction and self-gratification (i.e. fun). This desire for casual leisure engagement is represented in the responses of research participants; one, for instance, replied, "I don't mind being an amateur—we have more fun!" (personal communication, November 26, 2011), while another said simply, "I just enjoy playing" (personal communication, December 8, 2012).

The second of Stebbins' (1992) kinds of leisure, serious leisure, is characterized by:

[a] significant effort to acquire knowledge and skill, perseverance, career elements (i.e. developmental phases), the development of a subculture identity (ethos), obtaining durable benefits, and a resulting strong identification with the activity (p. 6–7).

This viewpoint, too, is echoed in the responses of research participants. One stated, "[s]ome people take amateur to denote a lesser quality or commitment, whereas I use it to mean volunteer, hobbyist or unpaid" (personal communication, January 20, 2013), while another answered, "[m]usic can be the most important thing to you even if not your day job" (personal communication, November 26, 2011). Another respondent indicated that while not a professional performer, "[m]y attitude to performance is professional!" (personal communication, March 25, 2012).

As these responses reveal, amateur players are engaged in recreational activities which not only enable them to experience enjoyment and personal fulfilment, but which also requires significant personal investment—echoing Pitts' emphasis on "commitment" in the opening quotation of this chapter. Further, these responses illustrate that participation in amateur orchestras requires the development of particular skills and knowledge which are characteristic of serious leisure. This is

affirmed by Coffman's (2006) research into the motivations for adult participants in amateur bands, in

that "[i]nvolvement in a community band, with its schedule of rehearsals and hierarchical organization,

illustrates the difference between [casual and serious] leisure" (p. 37).[6]

Identity and Amateurism: Community

The concept of community is also fundamental to the understanding of amateur orchestral

identity. In the introduction to this thesis, I noted the tendency towards use of the term "community

orchestra" in reference to amateur orchestras in Ontario, yet the application of the term "community"

in that context may seem redundant or confusing, in part because the orchestra itself represents a

community of sorts—a collection of like-minded individuals pursuing a common musical goal—but also

because of the perceived association with a particular group, either in geographical or cultural terms.

Shansky (2010), for instance, notes that the view of the orchestra "as both a community in itself as well

as a part of the community at large was addressed in articles by Palisca (1976), Silverman (2005), Olson

(2005) and Coffman (2002a)" (p. 2), suggesting varying views on the concept of community and its

different meanings depending on context or perspective.[7]

The concept of community evokes meanings well beyond its commonly understood definitions.

Tönnies (2001), in his early exploration of the relationship between *gemeinschaft* (community) and

gesellschaft (society), suggests that the concept of community—that which has been replaced by the

concept of society in the pursuit of modernity—is characterized by a "[r]eciprocal binding sentiment . . .

what we shall call *mutual understanding* or consensus" (p. 32). It is this understanding which acts as "the

special social force and fellow feeling that holds people together as members of a whole (p.32). Bauman

(2001) interprets this to mean "an understanding shared by all its members" (p. 11).

Gusfield (1975), in contrast, distinguishes between two uses of the word "community." The first,

"'the territorial,' refers to community "in a context of location, physical territory, geographical

continuity" (p. xv). The second, "the relational", concerns itself with "the quality or character of human

relationships, without reference to location" (p. xvi). Gusfield (1975) acknowledges, however, that these

two usages are not mutually exclusive, asserting that much of the research focusing on the territorial

has stemmed from an interest in the relational. This interrelationship is evident in the responses of

research participants in more rural locales; one Ontario respondent, for instance, said, "I live in a remote

community with few dedicated musicians . . . but it's big enough to gather a group of like-minded

musicians together" (personal communication, December 8, 2012), an acknowledgement that the

isolation of their community led, in part, to players coming together in the orchestra context. A

respondent from rural England, by contrast, noted that amateur orchestras "offer opportunities of

playing to young players close to their homes—there are many problems getting to events in rural areas

and for opportunities for youngsters" (personal communication, March 25, 2012), furthering the belief

in the importance of intergenerational engagement at a local level. The same respondent went on to

assert that the presence of a local orchestra was "a matter of pride for the community" further

reinforcing the link between territorial and relational communities (personal communication, March 28,

2012).

Similarly, another respondent commented on the "expanding" (Block, 2008, p. 9) sense of

community fostered by the presence of an amateur orchestra within their town, saying:

> [i]t is good to perform in a place where you already belong, because you live there. The
>
> audience members like to spot people that they know and feel a greater involvement as a result.
>
> There is not a lot of live music in our area. . . . People need to experience that near to their
>
> homes (personal communication, March 28, 2012).

This comment brings to mind the image of Tu Wei-Ming's (1985) "constantly expanding

concentric circles" (p. 133) of social interaction, in that the sense of community being created in the

orchestral context radiates outward to encompass the wider physical community.[8]

Further, building on Gusfield's (1975) "relational" concept of community, McMillan and Chavis (1986) offer their definition:

Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (p.9).

Bauman (2011) furthers this concept, suggesting that a community is a "safe space" in which "we can count on each other's good will" (p. 2). He goes on to inquire rhetorically, "[w]ho would not wish to live among friendly and well-wishing people whom one could trust and on whose words and deeds one could rely?" (p.2). In addition, Bauman (2011) accepts Tönnies'(2001) initial view of community as a medium for "'common understanding' 'coming naturally' as the feature which sets the community apart from the world of bitter quarrels, cut-throat competition, horse-trading and log-rolling" (p. 10), but adds to it Rosenburg's (cited in Bauman, 2011) metaphor of "the 'warm circle' . . . to grasp the same kind of naïve immersion in human togetherness"(p.10). In this sense, community comes to represent a collective which values personal and communal safety (physical and emotional), and which fosters mutual respect and growth—characteristics which, I argue, help to define the unique territory of amateur orchestras.

That a sense of community is firmly linked to social interaction and human bonding is significant from a musical standpoint. Small's (1998) concept of "musicking" offers the clearest illustration of the connection between musical participation and social interaction, celebrating as it does the contributions and enjoyment of all participants while acknowledging the human need to share such enjoyment with one's peers. Small (1977) also emphasizes the aspects of mutual understanding found in Bauman's concept of community, saying:

A situation in which all individuals can be relied on, without force of rules, to contribute freely to

the common good can probably be realized, musically no less than socially, only among small

groups of people who know, understand, and respect one another (p. 180).

While Small's assertion refers to smaller groups of improvising musicians, the sentiment is no

less relevant to amateur orchestras; it is reflected in the responses from numerous research participants

who emphasize the importance of socialisation (see Figure 8). One player said, for instance, "[s]ocial

aspects are very important and players develop friendships with like-minded, similar standard players"

(personal communication, February 25, 2012), while another recounted, "[h]ad the same desk partner

for 10 years until he retired and that was a lovely partnership" (personal communication, February 25,

2012). Yet another respondent commented on the importance of the solidarity experienced in the group

saying "I love being part of the viola section and we are quite a tight knit group—possibly because we

have to bear the inevitable viola teasing!" (personal communication, March 3, 2012).

These responses illustrate the ways in which amateur orchestral players establish and

strengthen a sense of community within their ensembles. Jorgensen (2007) describes this process,

asserting that "[t]he belief . . . one is interdependent with others for comfort, personal affirmation,

intellectual stimulation . . . friendships and love . . . contributes to one's sense of personal identity and

corporate cohesion" (p. 238). Jorgensen (1996) adds that the fact that communities "can undertake

corporate actions in a unified way empowers individual participants to accomplish more than they might

otherwise be capable of alone" (p. 85). This epitomizes the experience of playing in an orchestra.

Further, McMillan and Chavis (1986) list four elements which exemplify membership in a

community. These are: emotional safety; a sense of belonging and identification; personal investment;

and a system of common symbols. The first, emotional safety, may be viewed as part of the "broader

notion of *security*" (p. 10), fostered by the establishment of barriers such as membership criteria which

"provide the structure and security that protect group intimacy" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.10). The

authors note that this sense of security need not be limited to the emotional sense, in that membership

in certain collectives also provides physical or financial security. The second element, a sense of

belonging and identification, is characterized by a "feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the

group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the

group" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.10). The authors stress the role of identification, in that it is

represented by a sense of ownership, i.e., "That is my group."

These elements are important in a study of amateur orchestras because identification and

association with a particular musical style or the music of a particular cultural group is an especially

strong sentiment among amateur musicians (Elliott, 1995, cited in Veblen, 2005). Finnegan (2007)

illuminates this through her sharing of the personal stories of the amateur musicians in her study. Frith

(1996) reinforces Finnegan's message, adding, "[i]t was in their musical activities that her city dwellers

found their most convincing narratives" (p. 125).

Group association and identification is supported by one's level of personal investment, the

third element which McMillan and Chavis (1986) link to community membership. The authors contend

that if one has worked towards membership (i.e. through an audition process, for example) then

membership will provide one with a feeling of having earned one's place within the group which, in turn,

will make membership "more meaningful and valuable" (p.10). Finally, the reliance on a common

system of symbols plays a key role in maintaining group boundaries. McMillan and Chavis (1986) cite

White, who "defined a symbol as 'a thing the value or meaning of which is bestowed upon it by those

who use it' (p. 22)" (p. 10). The collective assignation of value by community members to a particular

item, activity or belief helps to solidify the bond within that community. For members of an ensemble,

such as an amateur orchestra for example, this could include placing collective value on the repertoire,

on the performance, or simply on the act of playing itself.

The influence of concepts such as amateurism (itself a fluid and multi-contextual construct), serious leisure and community, distinguishes amateur orchestras from professional ensembles.

The Unique Territory of Amateur Orchestras: Tensions, Coexistence, Community

I have suggested that amateur orchestras display the qualities of both traditional professional orchestras and Community Music ensembles, though even a cursory overview of these qualities reveals that they do not necessarily align within an amateur context. Yet the tensions which arise from blending aspects of traditional orchestral and Community Music practices are as much a part of the unique nature of amateur orchestras as the elements discussed earlier, inviting a brief examination of the degree to which these characteristics coexist within amateur orchestras.

The Unique Territory: Practices

The juxtaposition of aspects of traditional orchestras and Community Music in an amateur orchestra context is problematic, since these characteristics do not naturally align. For instance, amateur orchestras display aspects of hospitality (see Figure 9) yet many amateur orchestras adhere to a process of admission which is selective and, for some, poses a barrier to access.[9] In addition, amateur orchestras are often administered by democratically chosen player committees (see Figure 10); however, the traditional hierarchical structure with the music director as the sole artistic decision maker limits this democratic approach. These examples represent the tensions which, I argue, are inherent to amateur orchestras, inviting exploration and critique which will form the basis for the chapters to come.

While many amateur orchestras may struggle to achieve equilibrium between the competing priorities of traditional orchestral practice and Community Music ideals, there are ensembles which exemplify good practice in this regard. As illustrated below, the Cobweb Orchestra is an example of an amateur orchestra which exhibits amateurism, casual and serious leisure, and community as they have been defined here.

Case Study: The Cobweb Orchestra

The Cobweb Orchestra, an exclusively amateur ensemble from northern England which is unique in that unlike other amateur orchestras, it does not perform concerts in the traditional sense. Instead, Cobweb illustrates the fundamental motivation common to participants in amateur orchestras – those being the engagement in serious leisure and the fulfilment of their desire to take part in a "musicking" (Small, 1998) activity.

Typical Cobweb rehearsals are structured in the form of reading retreat weekends, in which the ensemble reads through repertoire, rehearses passages and works on musical detail. The culmination of the players' work is the "play through," at which there may be a few friends or family in observance but which occurs principally for the benefit of the players, so that they can experience a sense of satisfaction and pride at the end of the rehearsal process. In this way, Cobweb provides an environment in which players are encouraged to apply their skills and knowledge in the pursuit of their serious leisure.[10]

Andy Jackson, Cobweb's music director, stresses the importance of enjoyment and satisfaction with the process of learning and playing together over producing a final product: "All our players aspire to do the best that they can . . . There's an incredibly strong community spirit within our orchestra" (personal communication, May 5, 2012). That sense of enjoyment and the community spirit garnered through participating in the ensemble is asserted by the players as well. One research respondent, for instance, stated "Cobwebs is like a family and we have received help and support in times of illness and warmth and congratulations in time of celebrations. Hope we give it too" (personal communication, May 5, 2012). Another described their orchestra as "a wonderful organization for people who enjoy playing" (personal communication, May 5, 2012), while another expressed their joy in "[e]xperiencing the fun and excitement of live music and music making" (personal communication, May 5, 2012).

One respondent pointed to the positive effects of receiving encouragement from their peers, saying:

This orchestra is best at encouraging people who would otherwise not have the chance to play

classical music. And once playing, it encourages people to play as well as they can" (personal

communication, May 5, 2012).

In this way, Cobweb creates a welcoming atmosphere while enabling participants to engage in

serious leisure through communal enjoyment and mutual support.

Jackson also points out that the desire to experience communal enjoyment of music-making is

also intergenerational, saying, "[w]e've had some twelve-year-old children—and they can't even play!—

just enjoy themselves! And we didn't turn them away" [11](personal communication, May 5, 2012). The

open acceptance of all members is an essential characteristic of the Cobweb community, further

demonstrating aspects of hospitality in the amateur context.

The Unique Territory: Socio-Musical Community

The Cobweb Orchestra provides a means for amateur players to establish communal bonds with

other players in an environment that is distinct from others (such as orchestras which promote the

production of concerts rather than enjoyment of playing the repertoire). The link between individual

engagement in leisure activities and the establishment of communal relationships has been neatly

summarized by Tomlinson (1993) who says:

Voluntary groups in leisure, often involving high levels of commitment to distinct cultural forms,

can be read as a manifestation of the urge for intimate and collective relationships and the

assertion of (sometimes expert) status in a threatening, unknown and sometimes impersonal

world" (p. 7).

Further, Tomlinson (1993) refers to such organizations as "cultures of commitment," and draws

on Tönnies' notions of "community" and "society" suggesting that "[f]orms of voluntary association in

leisure could certainly be conceptualised as a Gemeinschaft response to a Gesellschaft context" (p.7).

Jackson notes a growing and broader interest in the sort of leisure-oriented ensemble playing which

Cobweb has innovated, saying, "our biggest success is that we've managed to become a sort of national advocate for this way of making music" (personal communication, May 5, 2012).

The fact that Cobweb's approach is becoming increasingly popular speaks to the desire among many amateur orchestral musicians to engage more fully in their avocation—serious or casual—and the important role such engagement plays in the establishment of a sense of community, both within and beyond the ensemble. However, the Cobweb example also illustrates the uniqueness of amateur orchestras as environments in which the traditional practices of symphony orchestras are counter-balanced by the attitudes and behaviours of Community Music, as revealed through the complex and interrelated concepts which comprise amateur orchestral identity. In this way, the reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice is facilitated.

Summary

This chapter has examined the characteristics which define amateur orchestras as unique actors within the musical landscape, arguing that the influence of concepts such as amateurism, serious leisure and community distinguish amateur orchestras from their professional counterparts. It is noted that traditional conceptualisations of amateurism fail to capture the broad spectrum of ability possessed by many amateur musicians. Further, amateur orchestras foster a sense of community among players, enhancing the socio-musical experience.

In addition, while there are tensions evident between the competing practices of traditional symphony orchestras and practices that are seen to represent Community Music, amateur orchestras also exhibit the ability to balance these two practices, as illustrated by the Cobweb Orchestra. As an example of an exclusively amateur ensemble which values participation and socio-musical well-being in a traditional orchestral context, Cobweb demonstrates the potential for a reimagining of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Notes

1. The image of the amateur orchestra is often much-maligned. Shansky (2010) quotes

    Barrymore, for instance, who summarizes a popular view of these ensembles in his 2002

    piece for the Wall Street Journal:

    > Amateur orchestra' usually conjures up images of George Booth's New Yorker
    >
    > cartoons: a motley band of duffers out of tune and out of time—"OK, Hattie,
    >
    > Beethoven's Fifth and floor it!" (Shansky, p. 9).
    >
    > While this may be the reality for some amateur ensembles it is certainly not

    universal. On the contrary, many amateur orchestras play with a considerable degree of skill

    and understanding of the music they perform.

2. This is the case in my orchestra, the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, in which there are

    several players for whom orchestral performance is not their primary source of income. For

    instance, the principle trombonist is a music professor at the local university, while one of

    the bassists is also a local high school band director. The principal trumpet player is my

    colleague at Cambrian College School of Music, and I myself play as a violist with the

    orchestra on a volunteer basis.

3. Salmen (1983) points out that such perceptions and categorizations have persisted for

    centuries, telling us that "[b]etween the connoisseur and the professional musician, wholly

    dependent on playing for his living, there were several intermediate categories in the

    Middle Ages" (p. 15). These historic distinctions had the effect then, as they do today, of

    adding to the tensions inherent in the balance between "non-professional musicians whose

    ancestry could be traced back to earliest times and professional musicians already

    possessed of a degree of professional class consciousness" (p. 4).

4. As Miller (2008) points out, the rewards of hard work in the learning of music "are very

   personal rewards. They are rooted in the process rather than the products of making music"

   (p. 438), while Elliott (1995) suggests that "[m]ost musicers and listeners find the actions of

   musicing and listening rewarding in themselves" (p. 109). These assertions are reflected in

   the responses of research participants, with response such as, "[I prefer] rehearsals. Too

   much stress at concerts to really enjoy them" (personal communication, December 11,

   2011), and, "I learn and enjoy more in rehearsal" (personal communication, May 5, 2012),

   and, "rehearsals are paramount . . . concerts are simply venues where you showcase all the

   music you spent so much time polishing" (personal communication, May 31, 2015).

5. The value of music as leisure activity has long been acknowledged. For instance, a 1926

   report entitled *Community Music: A Practical Guide for the Conduct of Community Music

   Activities* asserts that "[n]o single means of using leisure time has greater possibilities than

   music" (Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1926, p.12). It is interesting to

   note the use of the term "community music" in this context and though the report predates

   the field of Community Music as it is recognized today, the suggestions made in the

   document strongly resemble current practices in Community Music, such as the

   organization of workshops and the use of music as a learning tool in multiple contexts.

   Similarly, Leonhard remarks that "[m]usic is almost without peer as a medium for

   recreation. Its appeal is so wide and its possibilities so infinite that its recreational

   potentialities can never be exhausted" (Leonhard, 1952, p. 4).

6. Coffman (2006) notes, musical leisure activities such as bands have the potential to act as a

   vehicle for life-long musical learning and engagement, ensuring that participants will

   experience the benefits of "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992) over the long term.

7. Conventional views of the word "community" in reference to amateur orchestras tend to focus on their amateur status. For instance, Veblen *et. al* (2013) offer this definition, found in an MENC report dating from 1958:

> The community orchestra is comprised largely of non-professional musicians who play primarily because of an avocational interest in music. Usually the orchestra must depend on the local community to supply the musicians and to provide financial support. Most of these orchestras rehearse only one evening a week and give their concerts on Sundays or in the evenings (p. 21–22).

8. As Wei-Ming (1985) points out:

> It would be misleading to conclude that the Confucian "self" broadens horizontally only to establish meaningful social relations. The concentric circles that define the self in terms of family, community, country, and the world are undoubtedly social groups, but, in the Confucian perspective, they are also realms of selfhood that symbolize the authentic human possibility for "ethicoreligious growth" (p. 57–58).

> While the Confucian approach is spiritual in nature, Svendson and Svendson (2009)

note that "these circles may be drawn up differently depending on time and context" (p.

113).

9. Seven respondents specifically point to an audition process as having deterred them from joining other ensembles.

10. In order to maximize accessibility, Cobweb rehearses in different towns around northeastern England throughout the year. This allows players who may not wish to drive over distance or who are limited in their ability to travel to share in the experiences of their fellow players. This is a point of pride for members of the Cobweb community; as Jackson

states, "there is only one core value that people believe is absolutely central to what we do:

it's the fact that we're open access" (personal communication, May 5, 2012).

11. The orchestra's inception corresponds with the meaning of the term "leisure" in the truest

sense. Jackson founded the orchestra initially as part of an audience engagement program

for the Northern Sinfonia in the late 1990s. That organization gave him a "blank slate"

(personal communication, May 5, 2012) with which he felt free to explore Cobweb as a new

concept for amateur engagement. From there the orchestra became an organisation unto

itself, as Jackson explains:

> I just basically knew that there were a lot of players out there who hadn't played [for
>
> many years] because there wasn't an orchestra that they could join. And so I decided to
>
> just have a go at it. The first week . . . an orchestra turned up, just like that! (personal
>
> communication, May 5, 2012).

In other words, Jackson was given license to form the ensemble, and from there the

ensemble gives license for its participants to 'dust the cobwebs off the instrument' and

engage in their pursuit of communal music-making.

CHAPTER FIVE: BEHAVIOURAL PARADIGMS: AMATEURS, PROFESSIONALS AND SOCIO-MUSICAL

INTERACTION IN AMATEUR ORCHESTRAS

*significant portions of this chapter have been adapted from two previous papers: A Good Gig:

Community Music at the Intersection of Amateur and Professional Practice in Community Orchestras

(Arrowsmith, unpublished paper, 2014) presented at the ISME Community Music Activities Commission

conference in Salvador, Brazil, July, 2014; and, Paradox, Paradigms and Participation: Widening the

Pathways to Participation in Amateur Orchestras, published in the *International Journal of Social,

Political, and Community Agendas in the Arts*, Volume 8, Issue 3–4, December 2014, pp. 13–22.

> Be a good partner and try to avoid mannerisms and habits which irritate the person with whom
>
> you are sharing a desk (MacDonald, 1979, p. 42).
>
> The conductor assumes a great responsibility when he takes over the direction of an amateur
>
> orchestra, a responsibility which goes deeper and reaches further than is apparent on the
>
> surface (Holmes, 1951, p. 5).

My research reflects the commonly accepted reality that amateur orchestras are becoming

environments of frequent interaction between amateur and professional orchestral musicians and

conductors (see Figure 11), as well as the extent to which this interaction leads to tension within

amateur ensembles, with consequences ranging from interpersonal conflict to dissatisfaction and

disengagement on the part of amateur players. This chapter examines the ways in which adopting the

attitudes and approaches associated with Community Music influences the traditional behavioural

paradigms of professional players and conductors who work with amateur orchestras, and whether such

approaches are effective in distinguishing amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of

practice.

Tensions at the Intersection of Amateur and Professional Practice in Amateur Orchestras

The proportion of professional orchestral musicians being employed by amateur orchestras has increased dramatically over the past decades[1] and while my research suggests that there is generally broad acceptance of this practice (see Figure 12), this reality also gives rise to critical issues.[2] Some of these tensions are found in the relationships between amateur and professional players, while some are unique to the relationships between amateur players and the professional conductors who lead them.

Evidence of the tensions between amateur and professional players is reflected in the comments of some amateur orchestral musicians who responded to research questions. One research participant, for instance, indicated that the policy of hiring professionals "tends to be a very touchy subject" (personal communication, January 20, 2013), reflecting concern over its impact on the satisfaction and enjoyment of the regular members of the ensemble, while another alluded to the difficulty in navigating the amateur/professional dyad discussed in the previous chapter, saying:

This is a careful balancing act and one that needs open discussion to try and make the amateur to professional boundary work. There is no clear single distinction between amateur and professional that works in the amateur orchestra context (personal communication, June 23, 2012).

Another respondent expressed concern over the impact of increased professionalization on the long-term financial sustainability of their orchestra, asking:

[w]here's the money coming from? Perhaps many works would not be possible without imports. I am grateful for the opportunity to do them but the definition of 'community orchestra' needs to be modified and the board needs a hot shot fundraiser (personal communication, October 5, 2013).

These concerns highlight the potential tensions which arise from negative interactions between amateur and professional musicians in an amateur orchestral context.

Tension: Disempowerment and Disengagement

The theme of disempowerment was prominent in the responses of research participants, particularly in orchestras for which there was a significant professional presence (see Figure 13a). One respondent questioned the process of selecting which musicians would be given the opportunity to participate, saying, "many capable local people are overlooked . . . How are [the volunteers] deemed 'good enough' to perform?" (personal communication, November 13, 2012), suggesting a lack of transparency in admission standards. Another respondent commented on the fact that repertoire was not being selected with the ensemble in mind, saying, "the last concert I was in there were as many imports as community players. No I don't agree with the practice. There's enough great music that community players can manage" (personal communication, October 5, 2013), while another answered, "I don't think the players have any involvement in the operation of the ensemble" (personal communication, November 13, 2012). These responses indicate a sense of disempowerment, in that the musicians no longer feel as though they have a voice in how their ensembles are run.

One respondent expressed the belief that the orchestra in which they play "relies too heavily [on professionals] to the point that the audience is deceived; no-one seems to realise that the personnel changes from concert to concert" (personal communication, October 5, 2013). This, arguably, implies that the effects of disempowerment are being extended beyond the community of players and into the wider community, in that by deceiving the audience, however unintentionally, the organisation downgrades the importance of the public as stakeholders in the orchestra's activities success and sustainability.

Similarly, players experienced feelings of disengagement. Some indicated that they no longer felt motivated to contribute their best efforts to the ensemble, with one respondent noting that because of the practice of hiring professional players for performances in their ensemble, "regular orchestra members are relegated to second parts and therefore sight read at the concerts . . . there is

no incentive whatsoever to work at a part" (personal communication, July 7, 2012), while another expressed fears over creating divisions within the ranks of the ensemble, saying, "[i]t creates 2 tiers and does not acknowledge the good [local] wind players" (personal communication, May 31, 2014), leading to a further sense of detachment and devaluation. This is corroborated by the response from another respondent, who noted that the sharp increase in hiring professional "has led to not accepting the skill level of the local performer; this has caused some local performers to leave the orchestra" (personal communication, November 13, 2012). Amateur players who feel disengaged and disempowered as the result of their contributions being disregarded by their professional counterparts eventually leads to dissatisfaction and eventual desertion, with predictable long-term consequences for the ensemble.

Tension: Mutual Understanding and Respect

Further tensions arise from a lack of mutual understanding and respect for the contributions of either amateur or professional players to their orchestras, in part due to the epistemological gulf which exists between them. As discussed in the previous chapter, the identity associated with amateur orchestral participation differs from that of professional orchestral engagement. Amateur musicians develop an identity in which music "becomes primarily a source of immense pleasure" which "still contributes in part to the identity of the 'amateur musician'" but it is "not so fundamental to their sense of self and well-being" (Buland, 2004, p.102). By contrast, professional musicians' "psychological and emotional well-being [is] centred around their musical engagement" (Buland, 2004, p. 101). In other words, professional musicians have developed "a strong 'professional musician' identity" (Buland, 2004, p. 102), which enables them to cope with the stresses and challenges of professional life.

These contrasting identities can also contribute to interpersonal strife within amateur orchestras, in that professionals may disregard or downplay the contributions of their non-professional colleagues because of the perception that they are merely dilettantes or practitioners who do not place the same value on quality as they do. This perception was expressed by the professional musicians who

contributed to my research, one of whom expressed frustration with a perceived "[lack of] commitment

of amateur musicians" (personal communication, June 14, 2014) while another remarked that amateurs

may often complain about repeatedly having to make changes in their parts, saying:

> Amateur musicians do not always understand the need for these necessary changes to serve the
>
> music, and that it is fairly common in professional orchestras. So when they eye-roll, huff and
>
> puff, groan and moan or otherwise act unprofessionally about the decision, it is a challenge to
>
> not let it 'get to you' or take it personally (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

> This response echoes the findings of Stebbins (1992), who remarks that in the areas of "art and

entertainment, where amateur-professional interaction is closest, there is an obvious tendency for the

professionals to ignore the amateurs' criticism" (p. 40).

> On the other hand, amateurs may also misperceive the reasons that professionals to undertake

freelance orchestral careers, as suggested by this response from one amateur orchestral player:

> I believe that an amateur musician displays a higher 'calling' in that firstly his motivation is often
>
> more altruistic, and secondly he is less likely to prostitute his talent on the altar of public opinion
>
> (personal communication, May 31, 2014).

> This implies that some amateurs characterize the motivations of professionals as purely related

to financial self-interest, or are dismissive of the personal value ascribed by professionals to their craft.

Stebbins (1992), however, points out that for many professionals, particularly in public-oriented sectors

such as the performing arts, "professional work [. . .] is so engaging that it becomes an end in itself,

erasing the lines between work and leisure" (p. 44). In other words, professional musicians experience

enjoyment and meaning through their performances, just as amateurs do. This contention is supported

by the research of Juniu *et al*. (1996) who found that "musicians' experiences during performance

cannot be defined strictly as pure leisure or pure work" (p. 3). Robinson (2000), reminding us of the sage

observations of Erich Leinsdorf, asserts that the love of music remains at the heart of even the most

jaded professional, inviting us to "scratch just below the crusty surface of this old player to discover a

17-year-old still passionately in love with serious music" (p.3).

An additional complicating factor placing strain on the interaction between amateur and

professional musicians is the assumption by amateur orchestra managers or committees that the

professionals they hire are of a superior standard, when this may not be the case. For instance, one

respondent commented that "[s]ometimes people who are paid are not as good as the volunteers,

causing tension" (personal communication, November 13, 2012), while another exclaimed, "some of

them are barely warm bodies and don't deserve to be on stage, let alone paid!" (personal

communication, September 29, 2012).

These comments bring into sharp relief the possible pitfalls for amateur orchestras which fail to

take into account the implications of the ambiguity inherent in the interaction between amateurs and

professionals. Further, by downplaying the value of their participation in amateur orchestral

performance or disavowing the contributions made by either faction, amateur and professional

orchestral musicians risk alienating each other to a point where reconciliation may be difficult.

Amateur Orchestras and Their Conductors: Traditions, Tensions and Contradictions

The tensions between amateurs and professionals are further exacerbated by the paradoxical

relationship that exists between many amateur orchestras and their conductors. These tensions are

evidenced in the disconnect which often exists between conductors and amateur players, challenges

related to programming, and the inherent contradictions in the music director's traditional role.

Traditions and Tensions: Conductor/Player Disconnect

The "conductor of stereotype" is often cast as "an autocratic figure who doesn't care if his

musicians are happy or not" (Midgette, 2009, n.p.), who "had absolute control over the lives of their

musicians in human, social and economic terms, and they consistently abused it" (Schuller, 1987, p.

187), overseeing an inherently hierarchical organization from a position of great power and authority.[3]

While this generalisation is undoubtedly unfair to the many music directors who strive to promote

positive and productive rehearsals, the "top-down conductors/ directors tradition" (Higgins, 2012, p.

148) remains very much the standard in the orchestral industry.

My research suggests that there exists a socio-musical disconnect between amateur players and

their conductors, leaving many musicians feeling as though their contributions are not valued by their

directors (see Figure 14). One respondent, for instance, expressed her dismay at the distant relationship

she felt with her conductor, saying, "I have been called by my first name only 3 or 4 times in as many

years" (personal communication, April 21, 2012), while another replied, "I don't think he [the conductor]

values me" (personal communication, October 5, 2013). Other respondents describe a feeling of

dismissiveness towards their participation, with one respondent answering, "I don't think my

contribution is appreciated" (personal communication, October 5, 2013), and another saying,

"[s]ometimes I feel respected by the conductor, but mostly I feel taken for granted" (personal

communication, November 13th, 2012).

Another symptom of this disconnect is evident in the lack of understanding on the part of some

conductors that their players may require greater clarity in communication, without resorting to jargon

or complicated metaphors. The frustration experienced when this does not occur is best captured by

one respondent who lamented that she could not always hear or understand the directions coming from

the conductor, complaining about the "repetitive use of phrases like 'You see what I mean', when I

never do" (personal communication, November 13, 2012), while another said, "[the conductor] forgets

that an orchestra brings together musicians with so many skills and talents and such varied musical

training" (personal communication, June 23, 2012), suggesting a lack of understanding of the diverse

backgrounds of the musicians.

These responses suggest that professionally trained conductors who work with amateur

orchestras may be relying on modes of communication which, while acceptable in a traditional

professional orchestral context, are not sensitive to the diverse needs of the players in an amateur

orchestra.

Traditions and Tensions: Programming

Another tension arising from the application of a traditional approach to orchestral leadership

relates to responsibility for concert programming. An amateur orchestra "looks to its conductor to

increase its enjoyment and experience by raising its standard of playing through the skilful choice of

music from the great 'routine' works" (Standing Council, 1951, p. 52), and while there is no question

that conductors who have had the benefit of training and experience are skilled in the task of

programming concerts, they must weigh their own programming ambitions against the desires and

limitations of the group. As my research shows, many amateur orchestral players are conscious of the

tensions which result when conductors program music which does not take the skills of the players into

consideration (see Figure 15). One respondent, for instance, said:

> [p]laying together is a major problem in our group and he [conductor] needs to spend time in
>
> developing this skill instead of choosing music too difficult for the majority of players (personal
>
> communication, March 23, 2013).

Another respondent replied, "many times the players simply are overwhelmed by the technical

aspects and the conductor relies on imported, more skilful players to cover up the inadequacies"

(personal communication, October 5, 2013). The latter revelation suggests that conductors are at risk of

fostering feelings of inadequacy among players—to say nothing of the added expense involved in hiring

extra players—if they do not take into account the abilities of the players.

Other tensions arise when conductors of amateur ensembles program repertoire without

consideration for the players' musical needs or desires, in addition to their musical abilities. One

respondent, for instance, expressed their view of this approach, saying:

Although the director has sole responsibility for music selection, the players have a strong

indirect influence on the music. This occurs by clearly not investing the effort needed to play a

piece well when a player does not like a piece of music (personal communication, January 20,

2013).

Other respondents describe instances in which player input was solicited but not taken

seriously. One respondent said of their orchestra's programming process, "[t]here is a program

committee but having participated on it for two seasons I think it was no more than a rubber stamp"

(personal communication, October 5, 2013). Another expressed their sense of disappointment:

I served on the programming committee but it was more or less a rubber stamp. I do the

programming notes and my wife helped immensely with the library (she has resigned). Neither

of us feels appreciated (personal communication, October 5, 2013).

These responses indicate the desire for a more collaborative approach to concert programming

which takes into account the musical preferences of the players and the democratic nature of amateur

orchestras.[4] This sentiment is perhaps best summarized by the response of one amateur musician, who

said:

Amateur musicians and amateur music groups are there voluntarily and people are involved

because they want to. I feel that professionals who work with amateur groups should hold and

express this value too (personal communication, June 23, 2012).

Tradition and Tension: Contradictions in the Conductor's Role

Tensions exist between the aspects of traditional musical directorship described earlier which

reinforce the view of the conductor as the sole decision maker in artistic matter, and the inherently

democratic and, at times, unpredictable nature of amateur orchestras. While there are valid reasons for

this concentration of power, it places the person of the conductor in a paradoxical position, in that "the

Music Director, although still in charge of artistic decisions, is an employee managing his/her superiors"

(Korn, 2015, n. p.).

This reality is noted by many conductors who took part in my research,[5] one of whom described

the technical challenges involved in conducting amateur groups, saying:

There's a real big range; inevitably that range is much wider than with a professional orchestra.

You have to work on different levels. You've got to think about the needs of the different skill

levels—some people need you to down the tempo to make sure they can play the notes

(personal communication, December 11, 2011).

Another conductor expressed the need to adjust expectations in working with amateur players,

commenting, "[y]ou have to be terribly patient with an amateur orchestra . . . If it's not a perfect result

then it's not a perfect result" (personal communication, May 30, 2012).

One conductor expressed frustration with the fluctuations in his orchestra's membership,

saying:

The difficulty is that none of these orchestras are static; particularly in London there's a real

transient population . . . tonight, we've got a guy coming—and he's an army guy, he's going out

to Afghanistan in three months. He wanted to look up an orchestra doing a concert within that

period and then he's off . . . we get students who come through, then disappear, so it's quite a

transient nature (personal communication, Dec 11, 2011).

These conductors of amateur orchestras describe such experiences with obvious trepidation,

resignation, and frustration, accepting the need to readjust their role to meet the needs of amateur

orchestras with some reluctance.

The Nature of Musical Leadership: Conductors, Facilitation and Implications for Amateur Orchestras

I propose to examine how the practice of Community Music facilitation enables a reimagining of aspects of the role of conductors in the context of amateur orchestras, the attitudes and behaviours of which suggest new ways of conceptualising the responsibilities associated with conductors. These responsibilities include repertoire selection and advocacy, but also prompt an exploration of larger issues related to the nature artistic leadership and creative control. This has implications for amateur orchestras and the ways in which conductors engage with them, and their communities.

Artistic Leadership: Who Owns the Piece?

Traditional perspectives on artistic leadership perpetuate images of the conductor-as-genius, heading organisations that are inherently hierarchical and value conformity. Yet the introduction of aspects of Community Music facilitation to the position of the conductor in an amateur orchestral context calls into question the nature of the conductor's role and disrupts the traditionally accepted norms associated with artistic leadership.[6] Higgins (2008), for instance, describes the role of the facilitator as being "designed to advance cultural and musical diversity and creativity" (p. 327), concepts which juxtapose the desire for uniformity and control in the traditional orchestral context.

Further, the issues of power and control over the creative process relate to the themes of disempowerment and the devaluation of amateur participants described earlier in this chapter. Guzman (2008), for instance, notes that "the role of power issues shaping meaning and trust is usually overlooked, including the group leader's preferences to negotiate particular meanings to the detriment of others" (p. 200). In other words, the mutually respectful and trusting relationship between leader and group members is put at risk by the aspirations of the one in power. Facilitators, by contrast, are aware of the power dynamic at play within the workshop environment, and strive to establish democratic and egalitarian terms in that context. Higgins states:

As a practical happening, the workshop presents itself as a democratic event, namely that the

power is not vested in a single individual (the workshop leader), but lies with everybody

(Higgins, 2008, p. 333).

The notion that creative power is shared between director and participant has been explored by

Peter Wiegold (2015), who questions "the realities of the leader's own stance" (p. 282) in artistic

processes and considers "the notion that different personalities, skills, experience, different 'actors' may

simultaneously contribute to a communally evolving passage" (p. 223). This stems from a desire to

"[f]ind a practice that . . . explored creative leadership and its relation to team-work" (Wiegold, p. 261)

in order to enable greater freedom in musical expression among players.

Much of Wiegold's work takes place in a format which affords opportunities for creative

expression within a semi-structured compositional framework—a practice which will be explored at

length later in this thesis. What is crucial about this process, and of greatest immediate relevance in

regards to artistic leadership, is that the commonly adopted divisions between performer and conductor

are missing. He describes this view, advising:

> [t]hat we should address the divides that existed in our art—such as those between composer
>
> and performer, artist and community, conductor and orchestra, 'high art' and 'low art', student
>
> and professional, score and improvisation, genre and genre. We must challenge these
>
> boundaries for moral, social and political reasons, but also for artistic reasons: there would be a
>
> new vitality and a new creativity in a future when those boundaries began to ease (p. 226).

From a Community Music perspective, these observations are significant. As Block (2008) asserts:

> The leadership task—indeed the task of every citizen—is to bring the gifts of those on the
>
> margin into the center . . . This is a core quality of a hospitable community, whose work is to
>
> bring into play the gifts of all its members (p. 139).

This reflects the view of "visceral and human 'autonomy' as a key to working with, and valuing, the other musicians and musics in a room" (Wiegold, 2015, p. 229) and an awareness that facilitation in a musical context requires "managing people as well as music" (Wiegold, 2015, p. 272). In this way, artistic leadership becomes less about control and more about seeking ways to "[p]erhaps not divide, but connect" (Wiegold, 2015, p. 225) diverse participants through shared musical experiences.

This approach has implications for amateur orchestras, in that it would fundamentally change the nature of the conductor's role, as well as the relationship between conductors and players.

Implications for Amateur Orchestra Conductors: Facilitation and Repertoire?

I have described a context in which conductors exert significant control over the creative process, including that of repertoire choice, and it becomes immediately apparent the application of facilitation practices to amateur orchestral leadership is problematic. For instance, unlike the situation in many Community Music workshops, amateur orchestras rehearse and perform repertoire in which there is little room for radical individual interpretation or improvisation on the part of the performer, meaning that, in a practical sense, connecting diverse players through performance mediums which allow for deviations from written notation is not achievable in the ways described above. This raises the question of whether a facilitation approach to repertoire selection can be solved in a meaningful and sustainable way.

On a superficial level, sharing the responsibility of concert programming with amateur players would satisfy the socio-musical needs of some participants (see Figure 13b). One research respondent, for instance, expressed satisfaction with the inclusive programming practices, saying:

A year or two ago we were all given the chance to put on a list what music we wanted to play. Never have I known this before and I was very impressed and quickly added my big favourites to the list. We have already played many of them. I am in seventh heaven! (personal communication, February 25, 2012).

Another responded that he felt free to voice objections to programming decisions, saying, "[t]he director does almost all of that, but offers a chance to dispute the concert programing if intense detestation occurs" (personal communication, May 4, 2013).

On one hand, inviting contributions from amateur orchestral players in concert programming enables participation in "both the process and products of music making" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5) and enfranchises participants through "inclusive frameworks for involvement in arts work" (Moser and McKay, 2005, p. 187), important aspects of Community Music facilitation. On the other hand, the reality is that the repertoire widely performed by amateur orchestras severely restricts the application of Community Music facilitation techniques in this context, in that the opportunities for individual expression and creative exploration are lacking. This represents a limitation inherent in the traditional model of orchestral performance practice which I propose to examine within the context of participatory engagement, discussed in Chapter Ten.

Implications for Amateur Orchestra Conductors: Facilitation in the Community

Another challenge stemming from a discussion of the nature of musical leadership in an amateur context relates to the conductor's place in the wider community. The traditional image of conductors casts them as "far removed from the day-to-day operations of their orchestras" (Orleans, 1997, p. 63) and leaving "almost everything else that's not part of the core subscription series" (Sandow, 2011, n. p.) to their subordinates, reinforcing the boundaries between players, conductors and, ultimately, communities, described earlier (Wiegold, p. 226). Here, again, aspects of Community Music facilitation offer insights into the nature of the conductor's role in the community.

Facilitators are cognizant of "the need to understand the importance of the political, social, cultural and economic context within which they are working" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186–187). They "move in and between many diverse settings" (Higgins & Bartleet, 2012, p. 495) and seek to "maintain a strong connection to the social and cultural reality of the world they live in" (Ibid., p. 504). In so doing,

they become adept at working in ways "that reflect and enrich the cultural life of the community, the

locality, and the individual participants" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). The belief expressed here, I would argue, is

that in addition to being responsible for the socio-musical well-being of participants in the workshop

setting, that Community Music facilitators are equally preoccupied with the cultural well-being of their

communities.

Interestingly, this belief is not dissimilar to viewpoints regarding the best practices of conductors

who connect with their communities. Just as facilitators possess a sense of the cultural needs of their

localities and seek to work within those parameters, conductors are called upon to develop an "[a]bility

to assess the environment in which the orchestra performs and understand the implications of that

environment for the orchestra's goals and objectives" (League of American Orchestras 1997). Arthur

Lubow (2003) characterizes this responsibility as follows:

> When not on the box, the music director is the administrator and personnel manager of a large
>
> business. The American music director is now a carnival barker, attracting passers-by into the
>
> show. He is a fund-raiser, spokesman and civic leader (p. 2).

My research suggests that conductors who have adopted an advocacy role which mirrors that of

Community Music facilitation have a more refined awareness of their place within the local cultural

landscape,[7] taking the view that music directorship beyond the podium begins by being accessible and,

above all, visible, within the community. As one conductor explained, "[w]hen I walk down the street I

see people all the time, I go into businesses . . . they know me . . . that's really important" (personal

communication, April 19, 2013). Another emphasized the impact of his position in promoting his

ensemble locally, saying:

> I absolutely do think that my position plays a big role in audience development and
>
> maintenance . . . understanding who my audience is—which is part of living in the community,

right?—is key. My sense is that a lot of folks do indeed come out and support the orchestra because there is that [relationship] (personal communication, December 8, 2012).

Other conductors speak of the need to recognize that their orchestras make up part of a larger community network. For instance, one pointed out, "[t]o some degree, your orchestra is made up of people from that community . . . I think engaging those people, having those relationships is important" (personal communication, July 3, 2012), while another commented on the role of the orchestra within "the cultural life of the place you're in, the place benefitting from what you're doing, your cultural activity." The same conductor added, "[y]ou've got to connect with the community or the community won't connect with you" (personal communication, May 30, 2012).

Kappellmeister for the Town

In large centres, which may be fortunate enough to include sufficient artistic infrastructure or in which there may be a strong tradition of supporting the arts in schools and elsewhere, conductors can act as spokespersons for the arts in their cities seeking to maintain their importance and keeping arts issues on the public agenda. Additionally, conductors may take on the role of statesmen, acting as cultural ambassadors for their cities and helping to foster productive relationships between their orchestras and various stakeholders. While these roles may also be necessary in smaller or isolated communities, more practical concerns may require the conductor's attention, such as a lack of quality musical instruction in schools or a shortage of private music teachers, necessitating the need for the conductor to act as "a kind of 'Kappellmeister' to the town to play, teach and organize its musical life" (Schabas, 1966, p. 22), as exemplified below.

Case Study: The Deep River Symphony Orchestra

Peter Morris is the music director of the Deep River Symphony Orchestra, a post he has held since the 1990's. Deep River, Ontario, is a community of just over 4,000 inhabitants whose main employer is the Chalk River Nuclear Research Facility, resulting in a population which is generally highly educated and

diverse who are willing to support or participate in classical music events. This support has allowed

Morris to build relationships with local public schools, bringing singing, instrumental instruction and

other musical activities into the classroom. In addition to his work with the orchestra, Morris conducts

the local choir, offers private lessons on various string instruments, and often directs local musical

theatre productions. He also directs the local summer music festival. The fact that he is directly involved

with so many local arts activities enables him to promote partnerships which benefit the orchestra. In his

words, "I think it's extremely intelligent to form partnerships when you can with existing arts

organizations. You're benefiting both organizations," (personal communication, May 4, 2013) However,

Morris points out that such partnerships need to be "artistically valid" in order to be effective generators

of public interest and support. Morris believes strongly in a high level of involvement "because we believe

that music is important, and music is for everyone… there's something here for all of us" (personal

communication, May 4, 2013). Thanks, in part, to his dedication and commitment to quality, Deep River

has become a cultural centre in an isolated, rural part of the province.

This example illustrates the ways in which conductors of amateur orchestras can act "as community arts leaders who represent the orchestra as advocates, ambassadors, and teachers in their community" (Allen, 2011, p. 8)[8] presenting a "compelling view of the impact an orchestra can have on its community" through innovative "programming, education, outreach, and other activities" (LOAO, 1997). Moreover, conductors can utilize the weight of their knowledge and experience, as well as their public status, to sway decision makers and stakeholders in helping to formulate sound policies which support and encourage artistic growth. Thus, conductors must also have an "[a]wareness of political processes and the development of public policy" (LOAO, 1997), just as Community Music facilitators are concerned with "the political, social, cultural and economic context within which they are working" (Moser and McKay, 2005, p. 186–187). As McPhee (2002) suggests, "it's much more important to your orchestra for

your music director to head the United Way campaign in your town than to be guest conducting around

the world" (p. 30).[9]

Behavioural Paradigms: Professionals, Facilitators, Mentors

What the discussions and examples thus far have illustrated is that an approach which reflects

aspects of Community Music facilitation enables a new behavioural paradigm for professional musicians

and conductors who work with amateur orchestras. This paradigm emphasises the value of positive

interpersonal relationships and suggests a model for amateur and professional interaction based on the

concept of mentorship.

Facilitation and Interpersonal Relationships

The theme of positive engagement between amateurs and professionals was prominent in the

responses of research participants (see Figure 16). Yet important as such relationships are, positive

social interactions represent only a small aspect of the shift in behavioural paradigms suggested by the

adoption of Community Music facilitation techniques as I have described them. Further, conductors or

other professional musicians who dote on their amateur peers risk sending the wrong message to

players who may be in need of technical improvement.

Instead, facilitation implies the need for a balanced approach to socio-musical interaction

between professional and amateur musicians. Evidence that such an approach leads to the desired

musical improvements is found in the responses of research participants. One respondent answered,

"[the conductor] appears to use a lot of psychology in how he works rehearsals but in a good way – you

don't feel manipulated" (personal communication, February 25, 2012), while another answered, "[h]e

[the conductor] makes us listen, telling us what to listen for. It must have some effect on the

performance because we are more engaged" (personal communication, November 26, 2011).[10]

Improved socio-musical outcomes are seen as valuable results by professional musicians, too, as

suggested by their responses to research questions. One survey respondent, for instance, noted:

There are usually community players who are really passionate about making music and are

extremely excited about it. I think it is wonderful and I very much enjoy just having fun with

others that [appreciate] music (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

Another respondent expressed her satisfaction with the rapport developed with her peers and

the positive effects this relationship has on the atmosphere in her ensemble, saying:

I enjoy bonding with musicians in my section, and being an approachable section-leader. I know

that shaming does not bring the best out of musicians, or anyone. I know how to talk to

community musicians in a way that is non-patronizing, gets the point across, and helps them

play better without negativity, and without trying to big myself up. All of this contributes to my

enjoyment in the community environment (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

These responses reflect a view of musical professionalism which includes "becoming part of a

community that shares practical and holistic experiences, about learning how to work *with* rather that

against or *in comparison* to others" (Johnsson & Hager, 2008, p. 529, emphasis in the original). Wiegold

(2015) describes this approach as "insightful but non-judgemental" (p. 270), and goes on to say:

Ideally, you speak from yourself—*what I heard was . . .* rather than from a closed judgement—*It*

was . . . What one wants to achieve is a level of 'critical friend' honesty, and a sense that

everyone is responsible for the development, *emergence* even, of the others (ibid.).

Facilitation, Mentorship and a Culture of Musical Achievement

In light of the above discussion, it could be argued that the role of the Community Music

facilitator may be defined as a form of musical mentorship, since both facilitator and participant are

engaged in a mutually respectful and socially equitable learning dyad. Through a mentoring approach,

professional orchestral musicians who regularly engage with amateur players become active

participants in the establishment of a culture of musical achievement, to the benefit of all stakeholders.

The notion of mentorship offers an educational model for socio-musical interaction between professional and amateur orchestral players that is firmly rooted in Community Music practice. Mentorship may be described as "an educational process focused on teaching and learning within dyads, groups, and cultures" (Mullen, 2005, p. 1), though it is also understood that the role of mentors extends beyond their individual relationships, in that they "nurture the potential of groups and communities to actively engage in new and exciting forms of teaching and learning integral to socialization, liberation, partnership, curriculum and instruction" (Mullen, 2005, p. 2). Further, Carozza (2011), points out that the relationship between mentor and mentee "is a reciprocal relationship which is both professional and personal" (p. 103), implying the need for social, as well as vocational, understanding and exchange.

Carozza (2011) also asserts that teaching through mentorship "involves a deep understanding of self" which can only be achieved through a self-reflective process "in which personal belief systems and values are explored" (p.9.),[11] a view consistent with the "actively reflective practice" (Higgins, 2012, p. 128) advocated by practitioners of Community Music, while Mullen (2005) adds that mentors have the ability "to facilitate desirable goals, positive change, and human possibility through such well-established ideas as lifelong learning" (p. 5), the latter being an integral aspect of Community Music practice.

Moreover, a mentorship paradigm modelled on Community Music practice is one which "encourages and nurtures a rapport with fellow human beings" (Higgins, 2008, p. 330–331) and takes into account "the impact [music making] has on those who participate" (Higgins, 2012 p. 4). There is an acknowledgement of the "differing backgrounds, musical abilities, and inter-generational experiences for the benefit of our local communities and our own self-growth" (Silverman, 2005, p 12) and "recognition that participants' social and personal growth are as important as their musical growth" (Veblen, 2005 p. 311). In this way, mentorship mirrors Community Music facilitation, in that it "enables

participants' creative energy to flow, develop and grow, [offers] reassurance, clarity, direction,

encouragement, guidance, or shaping, [and] necessitates trust in the ability of others" (Higgins, 2012, p.

148).

In a musical context, the value of mentorship has been observed by Locke and Locke (2012)

whose study using composers as mentors for children's music education showed that music mentors

roles may be "multi-faceted," requiring the mentor to assume "a range of pedagogical and composition

roles" (p. 19). They also observed that the mentor in their study "was also at pains to ensure that he did

not disempower the pupils in his guiding role" (p.20). In light of the earlier discussion pertaining to the

theme of disempowerment expressed in the responses of research respondents, the latter observation

is highly significant from a Community Music point of view.

When this relationship works well, there is a more positive impression among amateur

musicians of the value and role of the professionals with whom they work. For instance, one respondent

indicated that "good leadership is very helpful within the sections" (personal communication, May 31,

2014), while others answered, "[a]dditional support from pros is always welcome—we learn far more by

playing along side them" (personal communication, November, 13, 2012), or, "[a]dditional players

benefit us in many ways, especially by their experience" (personal communication, March 25, 2012).

Another respondent stated, "I think it is important that they form a stable and committed core with a

feeling of ownership and belonging to the orchestra" (personal communication, November 30, 2011),

suggesting that the degree to which professionals feel responsible to their amateur peers is an

important factor in establishing a successful mentorship dyad.

A reconceptualization of the role of the orchestral professional from that of leader to that of

mentor enables the development of a culture within amateur orchestras which values the socio-musical

relationships of the members and fosters a mutual desire to support each one's musical progress,

enabling a form of "collective learning and social interaction [in order to] *nurture a culture of musical*

achievement" (Hebert, 2012, p. 251, emphasis in the original). In this way, the socio-musical satisfaction and musical progress of all participants is assured and the reimagining of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice is further enabled.

Summary

This chapter has examined how the adoption of attitudes and behaviours from Community Music practice enables a positive and productive relationship between amateur orchestral musicians and the increasing number of professional players and conductors who work with them. As my research has revealed, there are tensions permeating this environment which include feelings of disempowerment and disengagement among amateur players, a gap in understanding and respect between amateur and professional musicians, and a disconnect between professional conductors and their amateur charges. It is argued that these tensions are relieved by adopting the practices and attitudes of Community Music facilitators.

Yet this approach entails a reconceptualization of the conductor's role, calling into question the nature of musical leadership in an ensemble context and suggesting behavioural paradigms which, while well-meaning, fail to achieve the fullest potential implied by a facilitation model. Instead, these behavioural paradigms suggest the cultivation of positive interpersonal relationships through a mentoring approach, the benefits of which enable the establishment of a culture of musical achievement within amateur orchestras, thus furthering the argument for reimagining amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Notes

1. I have observed a steep decline in amateur membership of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra in the past decade. For example, where once there were three local flute players who volunteered with the orchestra, there is now only one. The number of volunteer string players has also dropped by half in that time.

2. The practice of hiring professional musicians in order to supplement or enhance the ranks of amateur orchestras is wide-spread. MacDonald (1979) refers to this practice as "professional stiffening" (p. 41), while the term "ringer" is often used in Ontario to identify a professional who has been hired to play in an amateur context.

3. Foucault's (1977) concept of the panopticon is strongly felt here. According to Brunin-Ernst (2012), "[p]anopticism describes power relations which manifest themselves as supervision, control and correction" (p. 8). Parallels with traditional conceptions of the conductor's role are obvious.

4. The Standing Conference of County Music Committees offered this amusing advice to conductors of amateur orchestral musicians in 1951:

   > Let him, however, remember two things; that he is dealing with adults, and often cultured ones in their own particular line, and that these adults, out for an evening's strenuous enjoyment, are far more eager to storm Valhalla than to remain on the nethermost step to Parnassus (Standing Conference, 1951, p. 50).

5. It is interesting to note that the 14 conductors who were interviewed for this research all indicated the need to adopt a collaborative approach to their responsibilities; however, there was mixed opinion on the extent to which they should relinquish control over decisions pertaining to programming, with 4 conductors indicating that they did not feel the need to open programming up to consultation.

6. Debate about the nature of leadership has continued since antiquity. Indeed, Plato's Allegory of the Cave (Takala, 1998), which emphasizes the need for education and personal reflection before one is able to assume a leadership role, may be appropriate in describing the preparatory work, or as Eugene Ormandy puts it, "Personal Study" (Ormany, cited in Green, 2003, i), a conductor must do before they are able to "emerge" into their careers.

7. All 14 conductors who were interviewed asserted the value of being visible in their communities; as one conductor described somewhat facetiously, being "an up-standing citizen" (personal communication, February 25, 2012)

8. For instance, Victor Sawa, music director of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra in Ontario, offers regular "Maestro Talks" (Sudbury Symphony Orchestra,) at the main library branch as part of the symphony's outreach program, in collaboration with the city.

9. While the advantages of residency or proximity to one's orchestra may seem obvious, Catherine Carleton, director of Orchestras Canada, points out that in many small communities there may simply not be enough work to sustain a conductor's livelihood, saying:

> What would they do all day? There are questions around volume of work available . . . I think it would be lovely, but the actual amount available to them—how high is it? (personal communication, 23 August, 2011).

> Further, the trend in Canada, the United Kingdom and elsewhere is that conductors

tend not to reside in the same communities as the amateur orchestras with whom they work. These realities pose a challenge to amateur orchestras who may expect their music directors to undertake the volume of activity described here.

10. Interestingly, the level of trust and mutual respect felt by players in amateur orchestras has an impact on their perceptions of the conductor's skill. For instance, one respondent proclaimed, "[o]ur conductor is the best I've ever played under! He has huge respect for every player and in

turn the orchestra has great respect for him" (personal communication, November 26, 2011).

Another said of the same music director, "Yes—he is the best conductor we have had in 15

years!" (personal communication, November 26, 2011).

11. Hogan (2002) characterises the facilitator as a "self-reflective, process-person" (p. 57), while

Brown (2009) asserts the value of self-reflection for artists, calling it:

> a vehicle whereby they can articulate the thinking skills that go beyond the mere
>
> knowledge-based and practice-based curriculum, and thus articulate the skills that will
>
> enable them to become lifelong learners in the performing arts (p. 379).

CHAPTER SIX: CONSERVATOIRE TO COMMUNITY: PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND COMMUNITY MUSIC

The greatest satisfaction one can have from working in art comes from the opportunity to help

others develop the talent which has been given them (Holmes, 1951, p. 8).

The previous chapter argued for the adoption of a new behavioural paradigm among

professional musicians and conductors which reflects the qualities of Community Music facilitation and

mentorship, in order to ensure positive and effective socio-musical interactions with their amateur

peers. Yet as my research suggests, the attitudes and behaviours associated with professional

musicianship, which are a source of tension within amateur orchestras, are developed prior to

engagement in the amateur context, notably in the conservatoire environment. In this chapter,

therefore, I propose to examine how attitudes and approaches associated with Community Music

practice may be applied to conservatoire training for future professional musicians, in order to achieve

the mentorship paradigm I have described.

Traditions in the Conservatoire: Practices and Perceptions

The practices commonly associated with traditional post-secondary music institutions are,

ostensibly, intended to focus the education of the future professional on the musical skills necessary to

succeed in highly competitive, performance-based careers within a relatively narrow range of activities.

However, such a career is precarious, so the reality for most conservatoire graduates is that much of

their income will be earned through freelance work in ensembles which, as with amateur orchestras, are

quite different from the experiences gained in the conservatoire ensemble. This suggests the need to

examine how the characteristics associated with traditional conservatoire training—including a

restrictive learning model, the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, and a lack of

practical experience outside the conservatoire walls—affects the relationship professionals have with

their amateur peers.

Conservatoire Practices: Restrictive Learning

The traditional conservatoire environment is structured so that students experience a "rather restricted sort of campus life" (MacDonald, 1979, p. 15), focusing on the development of their craft to the exclusion of most other activity. Musomeci (2008) describes the strict musical parameters of this environment, which include "rigid knowledge structures restricted to a historically and stylistically limited range of music" (p. 161) and which demonstrates a "strong bias" (p. 161) towards score-based, technical performance and adherence to a particular cultural tradition which deifies the music and its composers.

Kang (2012) notes that this narrow approach has influenced curriculum design in the conservatoire, observing that "the focus of these institutions had been on developing students' performance skills, and consequently, the curriculum was comprised primarily of performance-related classes" (p. 14) focusing on traditional approaches, leaving very little room for the exploration of alternative forms of practice or the cultivation of wider views. It is unsurprising, then, to find that curricular elements which might otherwise assist in preparing future professionals for the realities of employment in amateur orchestras are overlooked. This is evidenced in the responses of several professional orchestral musicians who participated in my research. One respondent, for instance, reflected that her education "was not geared toward working with amateur musicians" and that she wished for "advice on how to guide amateur musicians, deal with different personalities and offer constructive criticism without offending" (professional communication, June 14, 2014). Another respondent stated emphatically:

> I don't think any conservatory or university training adequately prepare anyone for working at all, and not to mention with amateur musicians . . . I also don't think that the conservatories and/or universities taught the word "respect" enough, but rather a so-called "hierarchy" is

established in many students' perception so it makes it harder for some graduates to work with

amateur musicians (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

Another professional also suggested that pre-service training for orchestral musicians should

include a greater focus on interpersonal skills, saying:

I often wish there was a university program out there for little Mozart-to-be's entitled "How not

to be a Douchebag in the Real World." I know of many musicians who could benefit from this

course, and it would serve them greatly in both the professional and professional-playing-in-an-

amateur-group world (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

These responses coincide with Bennet's (2008) observation that "[o]rchestral musicians . . .

report an initial lack of the skills required to manage orchestral and other roles" (p. 47) and suggest the

need for conservatoire curriculum to be "broadened significantly beyond what most schools of music

now teach" (Carruthers, 2008a, p. 128), in order to better prepare future professionals for possible

employment with amateur orchestras.

Conservatoire Practices: Transmission of Attitudes

Perceptions of amateur musicianship held by professionals are developed early on in the

training process and often reflect the attitudes of conservatory instructors, aligning somewhat with

Baily's (2001) observation that "the way a musician teaches is likely to reflect the way that the person

learned in the first place" (p. 94), a revelation with implications for music education in a broader sense,

as I will discuss in the next chapter. While the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student

in a conservatoire environment is meant to ensure the replication of particular practices and attitudes

related to performance, these attitudes are often dismissive of the contributions of other musics or

musicians, notably amateur musicians. Musomeci (2008) describes this process as a "somewhat

draconian instructional method mainly based upon a strongly normative social interaction" (p. 161),

whereas Small (1977) describes a process by which music students are reduced to a product to be consumed upon graduation (p. 193).

This attitude is reflected in the responses of professional orchestral musicians who responded to research questions. One respondent, for instance, recounts a conversation between herself and her teacher, saying:

I had a teacher (who is an amazing player and amazing person) who gave me a little lecture about how I shouldn't waste my time with community orchestras because it takes away my time practising and also, my playing will go down if I play with amateur musicians long enough (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

She went on to suggest that this attitude is passed down from teacher to student due to the desire on the student's part to emulate the teacher's success, saying that:

[M]ost students aspire to become something like their teacher, usually a soloist, or someone very well established, who sometimes might never have been in touch with musicians outside of the professional world, therefore the student takes in all of that. This is why we encounter a lot of young people who can't handle themselves around and working in community orchestras. They fear the association (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

One respondent noted that the experience of playing with an amateur orchestra can often be tainted by the negative behaviour of professional colleagues, saying:

The unenjoyable part is actually not so much about the quality of the orchestra being lower than professional orchestras, but it is usually the attitudes of other professional musicians (players and/or conductors) that they are "lowering" themselves or just didn't want to be there and be associated with the group (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

In other words, future professionals are wary of being associated with musicians they perceive to be of a lower standard, thus endangering the quality of their product. It is unsurprising to find that

tensions arise when these players enter into the amateur environment, as negative preconceptions about the amateur players with whom they work will have already been formed. Stebbins (1992), citing Marsh (1972), suggests that combatting this tendency is paramount, stating, "[i]t is time to recognize that amateurs are not necessarily novices" (p. 43), and as one research respondent indicated, "it's a shift in the attitude that is much needed . . . this cannot be taught, but it can be shown by more faculty members" (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

Conservatoire Practices: Disconnected Learning

This highly focussed, top-down learning model results in a kind of musical isolation, in that while conservatoire students have opportunities to perform with their peers within the music school environment, very few opportunities for musical learning outside of the conservatoire walls exist as part of the curriculum.[1] Small (1977) is highly critical of the practice of secluding musicians as part of their musical training, arguing:

> To take children away from day-to-day contact with the infinite variability of the human race and place them within an educational monoculture where their only contact is with contemporaries of similar background and interests is to deprive them of an essential dimension of the experience of growing up—a price far too high to pay for additional musical expertise (p. 195).

Small's comments draw attention to a paradox in logic: that conservatoires better prepare students for the "real world" by limiting their exposure to it.

The lack of extra-mural practical experience means that a significant adjustment is required when musicians migrate from the safety of the conservatoire to the reality of working in amateur orchestras. As one research respondent observed:

> For me the greatest challenge is to let go of my expectations/ambitions as a high-level professional musician. It can be disorienting to move from a fully-professional full-time

orchestra to an amateur group, and it's important to realize that the means and even the goals

of the group are quite different and so one has to adopt a different attitude, while still striving

for excellence (personal communication, June 14, 2014)

Another respondent replied: "I believe that my life has prepared me to work with amateur

musicians" (personal communication, June 14, 2014), implying that situational learning beyond the

professional environment is necessary to successfully navigate the amateur orchestral context.

Yet there is little confidence that the conservatoire in its current form is able to deliver the kinds

of experiences being described here. As Johnsson & Hager (2008) point out, "[t]he issue is to what

extent could this kind of learning occur within contexts of educational preparation, i.e. could music

schools realistically provide this kind of experience?" (p. 533).

New Approaches to Conservatoire Training: Community Music, Creative/Community Capital and

Human-Compatible Learning

The above discussion suggests that a new approach to pre-professional training at the

conservatoire level is needed, one in which orchestral engagement is "taken off its rather rarified

pedestal and made to work in the market place" (Renshaw, 1985, p. 17), which "dispel[s] the notion that

the 'best' music is written and performed by professionals" (Carruthers, 2008b, p. 42), and which

recognizes "the dynamic nature of the profession and the difficulty in ascribing a single notion of

identity to practising professionals" (Johnsson & Hager, 2008, p. 530).This curricular shift is achievable

through the introduction of concepts which are closely aligned with the best practices of Community

Music, such as creative/community capital and human-compatible learning.

A New Conservatoire Curriculum

There is common agreement on some of the steps that can be taken to introduce new concepts

and practices to the conservatoire curriculum, with the goal of preparing students for future amateur

engagement. For example, music schools may assist in the development of a "portfolio career" (Bennett,

2008; Burt-Perkins, 2008), giving students a broad set of generic skills which "typically include communications, teamwork and critical thinking, aspects that transcend subject-oriented disciplinary skills" (Johnsson & Hager, 2008, p. 527). Brown (2008) concurs, suggesting the need for post-secondary music institutions to provide "learning strategies for tertiary students that also enable them to acquire generic attributes pertaining to knowledge skills, thinking skills, practical skills and personal skills and attributes" (p.134), to ensure that graduates are, as Barkl (2008) suggests "adequately equipped with communication and pedagogical as well as musical skills and other competencies" (p. 26).

Carruthers (2008a),however, warns that with the increase in interdisciplinary studies comes the potential for "curricular crowding" (p. 131), noting the effects of including "world musics, non-classical genres, improvisation and so on," as post-secondary institutions "strive to produce not only 'better', but also employable, musicians" (p.133). He states:

> Ironically, while acknowledging that students must be prepared to undertake and manage portfolio careers, many schools of music are revising extant programmes and introducing new ones to address very specific career streams" (p 133).

Instead, Carruthers (2008a) advocates for an approach which views "teaching music as a means to inculcate students with desirable personal attributes, social skills and cultural values" (p. 129), suggesting that by shifting the focus "from marketable skills to life skills" (p. 132) musicians may actually be of more value to the wider community, in that they become purveyors of creative/community capital.

The Conservatoire and Creative/Community Capital

The concept of "creative/community capital" (Carruthers, 2008b) differs from that of human or social capital (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1999; Adler & Kwong, 2000) in that the connections formed through creative collaborations not only benefit the individuals involved but also have meaningful impacts on the wider community. Thus, the concept of community capital reflects the Community Music

belief that the activities that musicians undertake should "reflect and enrich the cultural life of the

community, the locality, and the individual participants" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). Further, practitioners of

Community Music display a firm belief "in the value of creativity in social and community development,"

as well as respect for "the political, social, cultural and economic context within which they are working"

(Moser and McKay, 2005, p. 186–187). These viewpoints are relevant from a conservatoire perspective,

in that the reification of the traditional public performance paradigm occurs at the tertiary level, as the

responses from research participants have illustrated.

Carruthers (2008b) distinguishes community capital from other forms of capital, saying, "[a]s

human capital develops, other capital may accrue along the way. Nonetheless, it often flows in only one

direction; reciprocity, which is an important component of creative/community capital, is absent" (p.

41). He offers the following example to illustrate how traditional approaches to performance in the

marketplace fail to meet the creative/community capital standard, saying:

> A professional musician who gives a fine concert has the satisfaction of a job well done. The
>
> audience is pleased, and the manager and concert presenter have achieved their objectives.
>
> Human capital and social capital have been exploited to achieve desired outcomes. From the
>
> standpoint of creative/community capital little of significance has occurred. A number of
>
> individuals have benefited, but there is no evidence that the community as a whole is any richer
>
> for it (Carruthers, 2008b, p.42).

Carruthers (2008b) further suggests that this traditional, commodified paradigm is reinforced at

the tertiary level and argues that institutions which receive government funding ought to reinforce a

sense of responsibility and reciprocity among their students, saying, "[i]f taxpayers underwrite their

education, they have a right to expect something more than concerts performed for people that can

afford them, in lavish halls that receive public subsidies" (p. 43). In addition, he fears that "by not

addressing creative/community capital, schools of music are abdicating a central responsibility: to

prepare musicians to contribute responsibly and responsively to society" (Carruthers, 2008b, p. 39).

Instead, Carruthers advocates for an approach to tertiary music education which fosters

understanding of the need for "creative/community capital" (2008b) in the music profession, and which

views "teaching music as a means to inculcate students with desirable personal attributes, social skills

and cultural values" (2008a, p. 129), suggesting that by shifting the focus "from marketable skills to life

skills" (p. 132), future professional musicians may actually be of greater valuable to the wider

community. This includes the cultivation of a "living curriculum" consistent with "developing an early

appreciation for lifelong learning" (Bath *et al*., 2004 cited in Johnsson & Hagar, 2008), the importance of

which is also emphasized and understood by practitioners of Community Music, who are by their nature

"committed to life-long musical learning" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5).

The Conservatoire and Human-Compatible Learning

A curriculum which espouses the accrual of creative/community capital as a goal of the music

profession will necessarily require conservatoire students to develop the "[p]ersonal qualities necessary

for responding to different contexts—e.g. flexibility, spontaneity, openness, sincerity, integrity, humour,

inter-personal sensitivity, empathy" (Renshaw, 1985, p. 18); what might otherwise be described as a

"human-compatible" (Thurman, 2000) education.

Drawing on the work of Thurman, Musomeci (2008) explains that a "human-compatible

education [is one] in which learning situations start from the belief that every person has vast neuro-

psycho-biological capacities for development and learning," (p. 159) in which "feeling, affective,

emotional and value-emotive states are foundationally interwoven with all cognition" (Musomeci, 2008,

p. 191). But a human-compatible education also takes into account the human need for social

interaction and acknowledges the benefit of group learning (Welch & Adams, 2003, p. 4) as well a

recognition that "[t]here is also an *emotional* aspect to being a learner in music" (Welch & Adams, 2003,

p. 4). This belief aligns closely with the Community Music approach to music education, proponents of

which see musical learning as "part of the basic moulding of the human being" (Vuataz, 1990, p. 381),

who "seek to foster confidence in participants' creativity" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5), and for which "ensuring

that all learners come to understand their place within a growing community, value differences as well

as similarities, feel connected to others" (Jorgensen, 1996, p. 91) is of equal importance to technical

improvement. In this way, a human-compatible music education fosters in pre-professional musicians

the kinds of values and attitudes common to Community Music workers, as Vuataz (1990) suggests:

> [I]f professional training—even studying an instrument for those amateurs who reach the
>
> required level—is not cut off from everything else, but supported by in-depth artistic and
>
> historic cultural background work;—musical education will then help to provide the community
>
> with individuals ready to serve not only as musicians but also in daily life and the functioning of
>
> its services (381).

Conservatoire Students in the Community

Schools of music must provide "guided opportunities to make context-sensitive judgements in

practice" (Johnsson & Hager, 2008, p.534); however, "such experiences are difficult for educational

institutions *by themselves* to provide" (Ibid). This implies the need for institutions to seek partnerships

with local amateur ensembles in order to enable experiential learning opportunities in which the

concepts of community capital and human-compatible education may be inculcated. This requires

making room in the curriculum for students to engage in "contextualized learning" which creates "new

structures of collaboration between higher education and industry" (Johnsson & Hager, 2008, p. 527),

and "developing partnerships with the arts industry to ensure the relevance of training provided"

(Renshaw, 2002; cited in Barkl 2008, p. 31).

The Performance and Communication Skills Department as the Guildhall School of Music and

Drama was a pioneering step towards addressing this curricular shortfall. Begun in the mid-1980's, the

program sought "to train a new kind of musician" (Moore, cited in Wiegold & Kenyon, 2015, p. 70) who

possessed the skills of a "performer/composer/ communicator who might be equally at home in the

concert hall or opera house and in a school, a community hall or a prison" (ibid.). Wiegold (Wiegold &

Kenyon, 2015), who was instrumental in the early development of this program, recounts that the intent

was "to break down the boundaries between classical musicians and their audiences" (p. 232) and bring

the music of the conservatoire into the community. Wiegold was equally as interested in discovering "a

methodology that enabled authentic crossovers of genre, skill, educational background" which

"embraced communal learning methods" (p. 233) in order to develop "a total practitioner" (p. 232) with

the skills to navigate various artistic, cultural and community contexts.

As Gregory, cited in Wiegold & Kenyon (2015) remarks, participating in this program allowed

him to "bring together and understand the many seemingly unconnected, even conflicting, paths" (p.

207) of his musical career. He notes that "[e]xtended collaborative exploration, both on and away from

instruments, was a critical part of the process" (p. 207) and the "depth and intensity of the aural, cyclical

approach" (p. 207) forced him to refocus his energies and re-evaluate his place in the traditional

classical landscape.

The Guildhall initiative is an example of conservatoire education which "draws together

collaborative learning as a shared process in the education of professional musicians, the development

of teaching practices and in institutional development in higher music education "(Gaunt & Westerlund,

2013, n.p.). And while the Professional and Communication Skills program no longer exists, it serves as a

blue print for other academic frameworks in which community based and communal learning is a core

component.[2] Other avenues for community engagement might also include partnerships between

tertiary institutions and local amateur orchestras.[3] In this way, conservatoires ensure that their students

are receiving a more authentic educational experience while at the same time fostering a sense that:

becoming a professional means learning not only about performing your instrument, joining the

orchestra, being in a job or at work, but also about living a shared world with others where

worthy dreams are at stake (p. 532).

In this way, conservatoires prepare their graduates for the realities of working with amateur

orchestras, ensuring that these future professionals are well-equipped both musically and socially to

contribute to the socio-musical environments that exist in the amateur context.

Summary

This chapter has examined the role that conservatoire education plays in the cultivation of

certain attitudes and behaviours among professional orchestral players which may contribute to the

tensions described in the previous chapter. The restrictive, hierarchical and isolated environment in

which professional training occurs is described as unconducive to preparing students for potential work

in amateur orchestras later in their careers. It is argued that altering the traditional conservatoire

curriculum by including course components which focus on concepts associated with Community Music

practice—notably creative/community capital and human-compatible learning—will enable a shift in

perception among future professionals regarding their relationships with amateur orchestral players.

Further, conservatoires are encouraged to provide opportunities for ensemble learning which

take place outside the school environment, including performance opportunities with amateur

orchestras. In this way, students gain insight into the ensembles with which they will inevitably working

when they move into the next phase of their careers and will be better prepared for the realities of

socio-musical engagement in the amateur context.

Notes

1. A survey of post-secondary music programs in Ontario reveals that only two institutions offer courses of study which specifically focus on community engagement through music performance or education: The Graduate Diploma in Community Music Leadership at Western University (Western University, 2016), and the Master of Arts in Community Music at Wilfred Laurier University (Wilfred Laurier University, 2016). It is interesting to note that both of these are graduate programs, and that no parallel option exists for undergraduates.

2. Examples include the various course offerings related to Community Music at York University in England (University of York, 2016), and Guildhall Connect at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Renshaw, 2005).

3. A partnership between Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, and the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra enables string majors from the school's music program to participate in the ensemble as part of their academic course load.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ENSEMBLE EDUCATION: SCHOOLS, ORCHESTRAS AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING FOR THE

AMATEUR MUSICIAN

Orchestras have long realized that the survival of classical or 'serious' music depended on the interest of new generations of young people who would, in some cases, become musicians themselves (Walter Pitman, in Babineau, 1998, p. 1).

Music education plays a role in the success and sustainability of amateur orchestras, in that while the amateur participants have generally not gone through the rigorous formal conservatoire training which their professional counterparts have, they have, for the most part, experienced an instrumental education of some kind (see Figure 17). This reality also further distinguishes amateur orchestras as unique ensembles within the musical landscape. Yet, there is considerable doubt as to the effectiveness of music education as it is commonly delivered in enabling or encouraging future instrumental ensemble participation. This chapter argues for a new approach to ensemble-based music education which focusses on individual creativity and a life-long approach to ensemble learning, applying concepts and practices from the field of Community Music. In so doing, it becomes possible to imagine a more plentiful source of amateur musicians who are musically skilled and enthusiastically interested in participating in orchestral playing.

It is noteworthy that in the general discourse of musicians and educators, there has long been a lamenting of "the unfortunate state of music education . . . at the primary/secondary level" (Polisi, 2005, p. 52), since for many years there has been a decline in the general quality, frequency and effectiveness of the delivery of music education in schools. This decline has resulted in fewer opportunities in schools for students to experience the musical, social, psychological and academic benefits of music education, specifically those offered through ensemble playing.[1] The obvious implication is that fewer members of the wider community have the skill or the inclination to participate in their local amateur orchestra.[2] Though it is puzzling and distressing that the acknowledged benefits[3] of music education have not halted

its decline, this chapter does not set out to solve the many challenges of music education on a global

scale. Rather, I will discuss the tensions which arise from the debate over the most effective ways of

delivering meaningful ensemble-based education, and explore the ways in which Community Music can

inform the practice of music education professionals or suggest new approaches to educational

programming, with the aim of ensuring the continuation of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical

communities of practice within communities.

Music Education: Tensions, Challenges and the Implications for Amateur Orchestras

Music in formal education systems, such as publically funded schools, already tends to be

delivered in an ensemble format, either through bands or choirs, recorder or drum ensembles, or—for

those schools fortunate enough to have a string programme—orchestras. However, school music

programmes as they are typically structured do not necessarily foster a life-long desire to participate in

amateur orchestral playing. For instance, school ensembles exist as part of an inherently inflexible and

highly structured educational system, diminishing the capacity for the development of individual

artistry. In addition, the situation in many schools—particularly in less accessible, rural localities—is that

there is a shortage of music classroom leaders with appropriate pedagogical and orchestral experience.[4]

This also contributes to a lack of consistent encouragement from teachers for students to pursue future

orchestral engagement. The implications for amateur orchestras if these issues are not addressed are

not difficult to imagine: there will inevitably be fewer skilled, enthusiastic and motivated

instrumentalists available for participation in amateur orchestral performance.

Tensions in Music Education: Suitable Role Models for Orchestral Engagement

Music teachers and school ensemble directors play a pivotal role in fostering a life-long interest

in ensemble participation; however, the reality of many formal educational environments is that the

teachers charged with directing musical learning are not themselves experienced orchestral

performers.[5]

This reality reflects the concerns of those who question the suitability of many teachers tasked with ensemble leadership in the classroom. Small (1977), for instance, unapologetically suggests that music education in schools is in jeopardy because "a sizeable minority, if not a majority, of specialist teachers of music in schools are musicians who tried, and failed, to establish themselves as professional performers" (p. 194), suggesting that such teachers are ineffective because they may be "apathetic, frustrated or disgruntled in their role" (p. 195). Pitman, in Babineau (1998), takes a different approach, pointing out the probability that "most of the teachers who are beginning their professional careers in the early grades of the elementary school . . . will have little experience with the world of classical symphonic music" (p.3), and, therefore, be unaware of or unable to demonstrate its various facets. Siebenaler (2006) agrees, suggesting that "teachers without the necessary skills may not be able to make high-quality music experiences available for their classes," and that "worse yet, they may pass down their own discomfort with and fear of music" (p.14).

The fact that teachers feel apathetic, unconfident or hindered in their ability to use music effectively in the classroom may be a result of the manner in which many teachers are trained to teach music in schools. Pre-service training or in-service professional development tends to be presented in one-off workshops (Joseph & Keast, 2005, p.135) over a short period of time, in ways which are "usually inadequate to support teachers through change" and do not allow the necessary time "need[ed] . . . to make connections and transfer knowledge" (Joseph & Southcott, 2013, p. 248). There is also generally a "lack of time for sufficient relating of the newly acquired [. . .] knowledge and skills to other practical classroom teaching skills" (Munday & Smith, 2010, p. 74). Further, it can be argued that such interventions may, in fact, be ineffective, or even detrimental, in fostering musical self-confidence and enjoyment for teachers in the classroom (Gifford, 1993).

Tensions in Music Education: Orchestral Musicians in the Classroom

Given the increasing scepticism over the ability of school music teachers to deliver high quality and engaging ensemble experiences to their students, it is not surprising to find that orchestral musicians are being brought in to support and enhance school music programming; however, as will shortly be discussed, this practice can be the source of tension between orchestral musicians and classroom teachers.

The potential benefits resulting from the utilization of orchestral players have been noted by many in the orchestral and academic communities, including Winterson (1998) who comments on the value of collaborations between schools and arts organizations, saying, "pupils working with professional artists can benefit through improved skills, attitudes and understanding" (p. 69). She echoes the conclusions of the Gulbenkian Foundation's 1982 report into artists in schools, which stresses "the need to foster contacts between the world of professional arts and that of education— between children, teachers and artists" (p. 111).

Pitman, cited in Babineau (1998) goes further, insisting that the "identification and development of orchestral members as appropriate educators and consultants for classroom teachers is a major opportunity that must be seized (p.4) and asserting that orchestral musicians, "whether appropriately knowledgeable of teaching methods or not, can be an educator either of classroom teachers or their students" (p.5). This view is echoed by Sharp and Dust (1997) in their handbook for artists working in schools (cited in Winterson, 1998). Further, Pitman highlights the inability of school systems to support instrumental music activities, and points out that the symphony orchestra has already increasingly taken on the role of music education provider in many schools, through outreach and classroom activities (Babineau, 1998). He goes on to assert:

> . . . the challenge to the symphony orchestra of taking on the responsibility for the survival of
>
> great music at a time when the organizations, now faced diminishing public support to carry out

its basic function of presenting a season of concerts each year, can surely seem overwhelming.

But if not the symphony orchestra, who else? (cited in Babineau, 1998, p. 3).

Yet it is exactly this attitude towards the music teaching profession which has many in the educational sector raising their voices in indignation, and it may be that such pronouncements are perceived by educators to come from a place of some elitism on the part of the classical music establishment. Colwell (2002) for instance, points out that "[s]chool music has seldom satisfied professional musicians" (cited in Siebenaler, 2006, p. 16). Educational professionals are also quick to point out that there are numerous exemplars of successful school-based ensembles which were started and continue to be run by very dedicated classroom teachers, often in the form of extra-curricular activities. Leong (2010) suggests that "[i]t is the teachers who tend to start or maintain extra-curricular string orchestras in the school community, because of the lack of other community groups available for the students" (p. 126). Teachers who run after-school band or orchestra programmes do so in part because they are aware of the limitations of "the timetable restrictions which are imposed by schools which do not lend themselves to extended and intense forays into creativity" (Winterson, 1998, p. 181), but also because they recognize the value of "activities that can be provided for students so that they will be motivated to attend school, and participate in the academic curriculum with a sense of ownership" (Leong, 2010, p. 124).

The adoption of orchestral musicians as classroom music instructors is further problematic, in that "the fundamental problem . . . is that completely unqualified and inexperienced teachers (i.e. players pretending to be teachers) are put into a classroom and given charge of a project" (Winterson, 1997, p. 165). Musicians often lack the specialized educational training necessary for effective classroom management, largely due to the way professional musicians are themselves trained during their formal educative careers, particularly in traditional conservatories—a topic examined at length in Chapter 5. As noted by Kang (2012), "the focus of these institutions had been on developing students' performance

skills, and consequently, the curriculum was comprised primarily of performance-related classes" (p.

14), with very little focus on pedagogical principles. In refuting Pitman's earlier assertion that orchestral

musicians are suitable classroom instructors, Winterson (1998) disputes the view that "the ability to play

an instrument [ ] automatically confers the capacity to undertake education work" (p. 169), pointing out

that:

> [t]his is not the case when players who have been trained in instrumental techniques are asked
>
> to work on composition projects or [. . .] they are asked to venture into other art forms and
>
> styles of music (p. 167).
>
> Further, Kurzawa (2007) points out the separation between performance majors and education

majors at the tertiary level, in large part due to the fact that education majors are "required to take

necessary education courses to complete state teacher certification," and must "take classes in other

instruments, such as brass, woodwinds, percussion, and strings in addition to their primary instrument

of study" (n.p.). For students whose aim is to become primarily performers, such course offerings would

no doubt be seen as "extraneous to those who just wanted to practice as much as possible and get their

playing level up" (Kang, 2012, p. 16). In addition, a model of traditional, hierarchical learning still

permeates the conservatoire environment, perpetuating a system of music education for future

professionals which is "unfortunately taken to a very large extent as the model for music in education

generally" (Small, 1977, p. 194).

Christopher Wormald, a school ensemble director in Bolton, England and the focus of an

example found later in this chapter, questions the training of pre-service music teachers who view

themselves as musicians first, saying:

> Are they being trained well enough? I would say no, because you can now get music degrees . . .
>
> without doing any Bach harmony . . . without playing a note, without composing a note
>
> (personal communication, June 13, 2012).

And while training opportunities exist for performing musicians to gain some of the skills needed for successful navigation of a school environment, "usually in the form of short courses which and often focuses on 'communication skills'" (Winterson, 1998 p. 170), these courses are generally seen as "a token gesture" which "do little more than skim the surface of the complex variety of skills and abilities that a teacher needs" (p. 171). Inadequate training opportunities such as these may not develop the skills or insight necessary to overcome the many challenges of the classroom, and may create a misperception among participants of the realities of working in that environment.

Challenges in Music Education: Outreach

This discussion leads naturally into the territory of orchestral outreach, a common practice for many professional orchestras but also a frequent activity for amateur orchestras in Ontario.[6] The issues examined above are relevant to this context as well however the kinds of outreach which are often employed raise other concerns. For example, the practice of sending a string quartet to schools or community events to perform educational concerts is common.[7] However, string quartets are not reflective of the composition of an orchestra and without representative instruments from the woodwind, brass or percussion sections students do not experience the full range of sound an orchestra can produce. Further, almost the entire orchestral repertoire will be inaccessible because of the quartet's limited instrumentation, meaning that students will not have exposure to the musical examples which may be of greatest interest or educational use for teachers—Britten's *The Young Persons' Guide to the Orchestra*, for instance. This leaves teachers with the task of filling the gaps in knowledge without having had the experience of hearing those pieces or instruments left out of the performance. Moreover, many outreach performances are one-time events, the effects of which may be short-lived without the sustained presence of the musicians in the classroom to help reinforce the concepts explored in the presentation. Students may simply not retain enough of the experience for it to have had a lasting impact.

Bowman (2009) points out further tensions, arguing that "[t]hose who presume to pursue musical engagements with educational intent . . . face unavoidable ethical challenges" (p. 114), such as ensuring that the line between educational outreach and marketing is not crossed. In addition, the need to satisfy certain stipulations from funders who require educational programming as a condition of their support makes it difficult to view such outreach as "an honest working model" (Cole, 2011, p. 86), and as Wall and Mitchell (1986) point out, "arts and cultural organizations have many impacts which are difficult to measure in narrow economic terms" (p. 214), making successful outcomes difficult to define to the satisfaction of these funders.

Finally, outreach programs of the type I have described are far from participatory, in that while students are exposed to repertoire from various composers, there is no opportunity to explore the process by which these pieces were composed, or for students to create their own works based on their experience.[8] This represents a missed opportunity in promoting activities which stimulate individual creativity and promote music as a life-long pursuit. It is incumbent on amateur orchestras, then, to ensure that these critical concerns are addressed if they are to reap the potential rewards of engaging, participatory outreach.

Tensions in Music Education: Encouragement in Life-Long Amateur Orchestral Participation

Another factor of school music programming which impacts amateur orchestra sustainability is that participants in school ensembles are not necessarily encouraged by their teachers to continue their orchestral engagement as adults. My research reveals that while a substantial number of amateur orchestral players have had previous ensemble experiences in school programmes, very few of these respondents indicated that they were encouraged by their teachers or school ensemble directors to take part in ensemble playing beyond school, with the majority of respondents either indicating that they were self-motivated in this regard or leaving the question unanswered (see Figure 18).

There is evidence that the initial motivations for continued ensemble participation in adulthood are often based on experiences or perceptions formed during pre-adulthood, either in the school music room or in other local youth ensembles (Coffman, 2002; Boswell, 1992). Hanley, for instance, asserts that the "supportive conditions for musical activities and strong positive emotions" (Hanley, n.d., p. 16) associated with positive experiences in childhood correlate with continued participation in music as an adult. An open pathway to continued participation is equally critical, with the first steps along this pathway taken during the school music or extra-curricular ensemble experience and culminating in sustained, meaningful ensemble participation throughout adulthood. Cavitt (2005) notes that one of the goals of music education should be to "provide opportunities for music students to master music making in such a way that will allow them to independently pursue lifelong learning and [a sense of] fulfillment" (p. 42).

Despite this acknowledgement of the role of music education in life-long musical participation, there is significant doubt about its effectiveness in prompting students to continue to play beyond school, in that a majority of students who participate in music activities during school years cease that participation upon graduation (Mantie & Tucker, 2008; Boswell, 1992). One reason for this abrupt cessation may be that the practice of music education in schools "exhibits a particular kind of institutionalization" (Mantie & Tucker, 2008, p. 217) which takes a short-term view of the value and goals of music education which "end upon secondary school graduation" (p.218). Instead, "music should be taught for the purpose of life-long participation or long-term engagement" (Mantie & Tucker, p. 218), with music educators making an effort to "[recognize] school music programmes as real musical cultures" (Morrison, 2001, p. 24) and to view participation in those cultures as "a real, 'in-the-world' social practice" (Mantie & Tucker, 2008, p. 220).

This view is consistent with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral participation, which suggests that people learn a particular skill not simply for the sake of learning, but

in order to fully participate in activities. As such, their learning is **"**configured through the process of

becoming a full participant in a sociocultural process" (p. 29). Further, legitimate peripheral participation

may be viewed as a "descriptor of engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral

constituent" (p. 35). Mantie and Tucker (2008), who draw on this theory of situated learning, suggest

that making the shift in perception to one which takes legitimate peripheral learning into account may

allow teachers and students to view participation in community ensembles as a logical progression from

school ensembles, that is, as "the object of their learning," (p. 225) rather than a sharp deviation from

the perceived safety and stability of the school ensemble curriculum. With the adoption of this new

paradigm, however, it becomes incumbent on school ensemble directors to become familiar with the

various musical outlets available locally for themselves and their students, so that they may be

confidently pointed in the right direction to continue their musical activities beyond the walls of the

school band room.

The impact if such an approach is not adopted is clear: increasing numbers of potential future

amateur orchestral participants will not be encouraged to apply their skills into adulthood, further

threatening the sustainability of amateur orchestras as they now exist.

Tensions in Music Education: Individual Artistry in School Ensemble Learning

It could be argued that in order to ensure the cultivation of a life-long interest in ensemble

playing, music education should focus not solely on developing musical skills, but also on fostering

individual creativity and artistry. This change of focus would ensure that the often ossified and

hierarchical modes of behaviour which are characteristic of traditional symphony orchestras are not

replicated in school ensembles. However, there is concern that schools are not environments in which

such a departure may be possible or, indeed, desired.

As David Elliott (1995) suggests, "[a]n essential task of music teaching and learning is to develop

student musicianship in regard to musical expressiveness" (p. 156); however, the rigid, fragmented and

standardized structures imposed by institutionalized education (Foucault, 1977; Small, 1977)[9] do not naturally encourage individual artistry and creativity. This is a critical concern; as Wiegold warns, by restricting opportunities for creative exploration, "we reduce the potential for people to become artistic" (personal communication, July 29, 2014). This, in turn, creates the risk that fewer individuals will develop the desire or the skills to participate in artistic activities, such as amateur orchestras.

Implications for Amateur Orchestras

A decline in amateur orchestral participation will undoubtedly hasten the departure of these institutions from the cultural landscapes of communities—at least as they currently exist. Moreover, a potential partner in the provision of intergenerational and experiential learning opportunities for both students and amateur players will have been lost. The value of such experiences to amateur orchestral musicians is revealed by the results of my research, in that many respondents expressed their belief that their orchestras should be engaging in youth-oriented programming or collaborations of an educational nature (see Figure 19). For instance, one respondent commented, "[w]e have in the past tried to involve young people . . . It would be nice to do more in this way" (personal communication, May 5, 2012), while another expressed their disappointment at not being involved in local music education, saying, "I think it is a shame that we cannot encourage music in schools more" (personal communication, July 7, 2012).

One respondent lamented that there seemed to be no interest on the part of local schools in undertaking ensemble-based activities, saying:

> [the conductor] tried to organize joint concert with local school choir, but [received]no response
> to his invites. Shame. Great initiative . . . to play "Peter and the Wolf," but sadly no interest
> from local schools (personal communication, December 11, 2011).

Another respondent echoed this sentiment, saying, "I would like to see more concerts jointly with schools—I've seen this be hugely enjoyable for all" (personal communication, March 10, 2012).

These responses suggest that there are a large number of amateur orchestral musicians who feel strongly about music education in their communities, and the role their ensembles can, or should, play in it. However, the fact that some orchestras have difficulty in forging relationships with local schools seems to confirm the earlier observation that school music providers are trepid where ensemble learning is concerned, resisting possible collaborations with local amateur orchestras. The implications stemming from this missed opportunity are that amateur orchestras are being denied the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of ensemble learning locally, further degrading their value as viable and meaningful artistic resources to their communities.

Community Music and Music Education: Tensions, Triumphs and the Smithills Brass Band

I have suggested that the current relationship between typical models of school music delivery and amateur orchestra sustainability is untenable, in that the erosion of school ensemble programmes, if left unaddressed, will lead to a reduction in adult amateur musicians which will adversely impact the number of potential amateur participants in orchestral playing. My contention is that the adoption of certain attitudes and behaviours from Community Music practice in the school ensemble context offers a unique pathway to meaningful ensemble experiences which foster a life-long interest in ensemble playing among students. However, exploring these methods requires an examination of the lingering tensions which separate Community Music and traditional music education.

Reconciling Tensions in Community Music and Music Education

The relationship between principles of Community Music and mainstream music education is not without tension, in part because Community Music eschews the highly structured, fragmented and ritualised approach to music education which is found in typical classrooms. Further, whereas practitioners of Community Music seek to create musical experiences which are "relevant and accessible" (Higgins, 2012, p. 4) to participants, Frierson-Campbell (2007) points out that the best school music programmes are "often limited to those students whose parents have purchased instruments

(and often instruction) outside the school setting," leading to "[q]uestions of equity and social justice,"

and concerns over "access to resources as well as instructional approach" (p.257). Moreover, the

standardized, Euro-centric nature of music education in schools is viewed by many to be incompatible

with Community Music practice's veneration of vernacular forms, such as folk or aboriginal music.

George Lyon, (1999) in his retrospective of the foundations of Community Music in Alberta, Canada,

voices this concern, acknowledging "[i]t may be that some music education tended to work against local

traditions, causing Albertans to value practices and skills from elsewhere more than those of local

musicians" (p. 4).

Nevertheless, Community Music practices, such as musical improvisation and the use of varied

musical genres in classroom instruction, are recognized and accepted practices in music pedagogy and,

importantly, the International Society for Music Education includes the Community Music Activities

Commission within its organizational reach (ISME, n.d.), giving further legitimacy to Community Music

within the educational sphere. In addition, there is a feeling among researchers into Community Music

practice that music teachers are often "relating a sense of community, democracy, and social justice—

informally, through their actions, and/or formally—to their learners" (Silverman, 2005, p. 9). Jorgensen

(2007) goes even further, suggesting that any argument which asserts that music education should focus

purely on musicality rather than on issues of social justice or societal equality "slips too easily into the

proposition that music is divorced from the rest of life" (p. 173). She elaborates:

> Music is interconnected with other aspects of life, education is concerned with the array of
>
> aspects of human life and culture, and music education is interconnected with other aspects of
>
> education. Construing aspects of justice as the legitimate purview of education and even its
>
> raison d'être . . . suggests that music educators likewise need to have an interest in justice (p.
>
> 174).

This interconnectedness is noted by Shiobara (2011), who examines the relationships between community music practitioners and school teachers, and how community music practice based on contextually relevant music (i.e. local folk traditions) can be adapted to suit pedagogical models in play within the classroom. Similarly, Lyon (1999) illustrates the historic relationship between schools and local vernacular musics. As he recounts, "[t]he schoolhouse became the location for a variety of essential social, cultural, and spiritual activities" (p. 1), and that "[t]hrough school instruction, school concerts, and the often school-related music festivals, Albertans learned techniques, repertoire, and attitudes towards music" (p. 4). This suggests that the relationship between Community Music and traditional music education is promising, opening pathways for the exploration of creative learning with lasting impact.

Community Music and School Ensemble Leadership

As suggested by the earlier discussion, experience as an orchestral player would be of significant benefit to any music teacher involved in instrumental ensemble leadership. Moreover, school ensemble directors must display artistic leadership, as well as musical ability. School music directorship, then, is comprised of three components: pedagogical director (the role of educator), artistic director (the role of conductor), and modeller of musicianship (the role of performer).These are qualities which are also embodied by Community Music practitioners and which I would contend are applicable to the role of school music director as I have described it.

I have already discussed the value of a Community Music facilitation approach in Chapter Five; however, this takes on an added dimension in the educational context. Higgins (2007), for instance, relays the viewpoint of Joss, who "pinpoints the combination of 'musical, facilitatory, administrative and communication skills' as keys to the knowledge domains needed to [execute] the practice" (p. 30), aspects which mirror the pedagogical, managerial and artistic demands of music education. Jorgensen (1996) describes the implications of a Community Music approach to education this way:

[I]t means surrounding students with musical experiences that are excellent, appropriate to the

situation, inspirational, imaginative, challenging, and within their powers to grasp and master. It

means students watching and listening to demonstrations performed by competent musicians,

modelling their actions on those of their teachers, and gradually, through osmosis as much as

through direct instruction and practice, by participating in the activities of music making, coming

to a knowledge of music beyond that they might have hoped or expected (p. 92).

Vatuaz (1990) stresses the social focus of Community Music in musical learning, asserting the

importance of an approach which "stimulates the desire to move beyond established limits and enables

music to be played regardless of social barriers" (p. 381). This supports the previously offered view of

Silverman (2005) that social issues should equally be the concern of music teachers.

These are significant responsibilities, yet the application of the aspects of Community Music I

have described here is possible and ensures the kinds of positive experiences which I have argued are

essential for continued musical participation beyond the school ensemble. I would characterise the

following example as an illustration of good practice in this regard.

Case Study: The Smithills School Brass Band

The Smithills School Brass Band in Bolton, England, is situated in one of the most economically

depressed areas of the country, and in a neighbourhood known for higher-than-average rates of

antisocial behaviour (U.K. Crime Stats., 2013). *Christopher Wormald, assistant head teacher and director*

of the ensemble at Smithills, explains:

We are in one of the lowest 10% economic areas nationally . . . locally we are really deprived. A

third of the school is entitled to free school meals because they are so poor. At least a quarter of

the school [pupils] are on single parent status (personal communication, June 13, 2012).

What is remarkable about this school is that despite the many factors which might adversely

impact student success, the Smithills Brass Band has become one of England's most renowned high

school ensembles, winning numerous national and international awards for musical excellence. This is

due in no small part to the efforts of Wormald himself, who attributes the artistic excellence of his

students to the fact that he has become a positive role model for them in not just musical, but also

personal ways. "For the last twenty years I've been dad to more kids than I know," says Wormald, who

goes on to say that given the social situations of many of the families in the school's catchment area, he

is likely "the first adult male they've ever met that either didn't come home drunk every night and beat

their mums up, or didn't shout constantly because I'm in a bad mood." The students demonstrate a level

of attentiveness and dedication to their craft far beyond their experience, as I was privileged to witness

during my visit to the school. Though he is careful to maintain a certain professional distance, Wormald

feels that a sense of mutual trust and support has contributed to their success:

> *They [pupils] know rehearsals . . . I'll always be there. They never call me anything except sir . . .*
>
> *to maintain a healthy barrier, but they know that I would walk on broken glass for them and I*
>
> *know that most of them would walk on broken glass for me. They know how hard I'm trying to*
>
> *make something special for them (personal communication, June 13, 2012).*

His dedication is further illustrated by his skill as a music director, in that he not only

programmes music that is artistically challenging and rewarding, but also arranges the parts so that less

experienced players are still able to participate. This practice has a positive pedagogical impact, in that it

enables all participants to learn at their own pace while still contributing to the overall product. Further,

Wormald's background as a professional orchestral French horn player lends him credibility, in that he is

able to expertly demonstrate examples from the repertoire and speak from a position of authority about

the challenges and rewards of ensemble participation, further inspiring trust and respect on the part of

students in his leadership.

I had the opportunity to listen to the Smithills band as they were preparing for a tour of the

south-eastern United States. Wormald is adamant that all costs associated with their tours are covered

through fundraising so that there is no drain on school resources, and that all members of the ensemble

are given an equal share of the subsidy, to avoid any perception of unfairness or favouritism. The results

of this inclusive policy are that the students are highly motivated to raise the necessary funds year after

year in order to continue to have the opportunity to travel. This approach also cultivates a sense of

collective responsibility and motivates the students to work even harder.

     The importance of these positive musical and social experiences may also extend beyond the

school years for these young musicians. When interviewed, several students indicated their desire to

continue to participate in ensemble playing into adulthood, based in large part on their experiences with

the Smithills Brass Band. One sixteen-year-old trumpet player described the ensemble as being "like a

family" and "just good fun, always something new to do," and went on to say, "we'll find out what path I

go down . . . I definitely want to do music, no matter what" (personal communication, June 13, 2012).

The Triumph of Smithills: Community Music in Educational Practice

     The example of the Smithills Brass Band, in my view, represents the successful synthesis of

Community Music and traditional music education, embodied in the figure of Christopher Wormald. For

instance, his personal dedication to the social and emotional well-being of his students illustrates his

awareness that their "social and personal growth are as important as their musical growth" and the

importance of including "disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5)

in his activities. At the same time, his assertion that he and his students would "walk on broken glass"

for each other demonstrates the value of group trust, a vital component of Community Music facilitation

(Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 6).

     Further, Wormald's practice of selecting and arranging repertoire which meets the musical

needs of his pupils, while at the same time allowing them to participate on equal terms with each other,

corresponds with the practice of Community Music workers who enable "opportunities to develop

everyone's creative potential" through "inclusive frameworks for involvement" (Moser & McKay, 2005,

p. 187), and who "seek to enable accessible music-making opportunities" through "flexible facilitation modes" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). The high musical standard demonstrated by the band is reflective of the Community Music belief in "achieving the highest quality" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186) and pursuing "excellence in both the process and products" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). This standard is assured thanks to a "commitment to accountability through regular, diverse and relative assessment and evaluation procedures" (Ibid.), a concept with which teachers, as practitioners in a highly accountable and regulated field, are familiar.

Finally, the commitment to "life-long musical learning" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5) is evident in the attitudes of both teacher and students, with positive implications for the sustainability of amateur orchestras.

The example of the Smithills Brass Band illustrates how the adoption of attitudes and practices associated with Community Music enhances the musical learning of students in school ensembles, with the added effect of instilling a life-long desire to participate in ensemble performance. In this way, students acquire not just a musical education with aspects of ensemble learning included, but rather an "ensemble education," the focus of which is long-term socio-musical growth.

Ensemble Education: Individual Growth and Life-Long Learning

I have described a kind of musical learning which, I would argue, may be defined as "ensemble education," in that students learn not just basic musical ensemble skills but are educated about the value of ensemble playing throughout their lives. In addition to providing the benefits which are commonly associated with participation in school music programmes, I would further suggest that an ensemble education also promotes the importance of individual artistry in developing musical confidence and competence, as well as fostering a life-long interest in ensemble performance.

Ensemble Education and Individual Artistry

If individual artistry and agency are not allowed to germinate and develop in the school climate, there is a chance some students will develop a negative view of music education, thus discouraging them from future musical engagement. Contemporary repertoire[10] or non-traditional practices such as improvisation and score realisation—to be more fully explored in the next chapter—offer intriguing opportunities for a kind of musical learning which fosters individual artistry while at the same time boosting musical self-confidence, the latter a significant factor in the development of a life-long love of musical engagement.

Ensemble Education and Life-Long Engagement

Ensemble education encourages life-long orchestral participation, the importance of which is expressed by some of the musicians who participated in my research, who commented on "[t]he opportunity to extend years of performing" (personal communication, December 2, 2013), the "chance to play with a group and a reason to keep practicing" (personal communication, November 24, 2012), and the opportunity "to continue to express themselves into their adult years" (personal communication, January 20, 2013).

Ensembles also provide social and emotional benefits to their members, allowing them to cultivate life-long friendships and to experience emotional fulfilment. One respondent, for instance, said, "[t]he friends I've made over the last 14 years are important to me and have helped me get through some extremely difficult times in my life" (personal communication, November 26, 2011), while another responded, "it helps keep my wife and I, both in our seventies, in touch with younger people" (personal communication, May 5, 2012), reflecting social cohesion on an intergenerational level.

Amateur orchestral playing is also viewed as a form of life-long learning. As one respondent reflected, amateur orchestras "allow a venue for musicians to keep learning, playing" (personal

communication, January 20, 2013), while another said, "[t]hey provide opportunities for players at all

levels to continue to learn and participate" (personal communication, December 2, 2013).

The significance of these responses is noted by Carr (2006), who found that musical

participation among older adults "helped create a way of thinking that transferred to other parts of

life"(p. 12), and that such new thinking gave them "a deeper emotional connection to other people and

other things and making life more enjoyable because of it" (p.12). This deeper connection to fellow

musicians not only serves to improve the emotional health of the individual (Carr, 2006) but also has

wider societal implications, in that it promotes cooperation and involvement in community life which, as

Jones (2010) asserts, should be "an implied goal" (p. 292) of music education.

Carr's findings suggest that ensemble education aimed at adults can also impact amateur

orchestra sustainability, directly through participation or indirectly through other activities such as

lectures, open rehearsals, question and answer sessions or other ensemble-related activities which

"contribute to adult appreciation of orchestras and good music which enrich their lives," in the hope

that "musically aware and educated adults will influence children and encourage them to get involved"

(Association of Canadian Orchestras, 1984, p. 33). As Leonhard (1995) asserts, "[a] person can continue

to experience and enjoy music until the end of his life" (p.5), while Yarbrough (2000) goes so far as to

warn the danger of ignoring the role of adult education in music, suggesting that it is equally as

important as high school music education.[11]

Ensemble education, then, is an intergenerational approach to music education which fosters

individual musical artistry and which promotes life-long ensemble engagement through numerous

platforms. The implications for amateur orchestras are positive, in that there is the potential to cultivate

a "critical mass" of adult amateur players who have had the benefit of high-quality, socially enriching,

and creatively stimulating ensemble experiences from which to draw participants.

Summary

This chapter has examined the role that music education plays in the sustainability of amateur orchestras, suggesting that the standard practices of school ensembles are no longer adequate as a means of generating interest in ensemble participation beyond pre-adulthood. It is argued that adopting the principles and practices of Community Music enables the delivery of music education which focusses on individual creativity and life-long ensemble participation, with the goal of ensuring that there will always be musicians with the skill and desire to take part in orchestral performance.

Yet the task of delivering ensemble instruction in schools is one which requires specific skills and experience, leading to a debate over who is best suited to lead ensemble activities in the classroom: orchestral players, who are perceived to lack pedagogical and organisational experience, or school music teachers, who are perceived to lack orchestral experience and whose work is confined to a rigid institutional model. Further, the tension between the differing paradigms of traditional music education—which relies on structure and formality—and Community Music—an inherently informal practice—must also be addressed. Yet their successful integration is possible and results in positive socio-musical ensemble experiences for students, as exemplified by the Smithills School Brass Band, under the direction of Christopher Wormald.

The adoption of Community Music principles and practices enables the delivery of an "ensemble education," which is concerned with cultivating individual artistry and fostering a life-long love of ensemble participation, in addition to developing musical ability. This, in turn, positively impacts the sustainability of amateur orchestras, in that they are the benefactors of a "critical mass" of skilled and enthusiastic musicians willing to engage in amateur orchestral participation.

Notes

1. My own former high school, Lasalle Secondary School in Sudbury, Ontario, serves as an example: since my attendance there, the once-envied music program—which boasted several concert bands, an orchestra, and a nationally-recognised jazz ensemble—has been gutted, the string instruments sold and the orchestra gone.

2. I have observed this in my own ensemble, the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra. Musicians who have left the ensemble are not being replaced by other local amateur musicians, forcing the organisation to hire increasing numbers of freelance professionals from further afield.

3. For instance, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) highlights music's power to foster "creative and dynamic ways of thinking and knowing" (p. 3). Bolduc (2008) asserts the value of music as an "efficient complementary educational approach" (n.p.), while Newman (cited in Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras, 1994) describes music's ability to help students "be a productive team member, understand diverse cultures, create a sense of community" (p. 153–154). Further, numerous studies have examined the impact of music education on such areas as: literacy (Bolduc, 2008; Butzlaff, 2000; Standley and Hughes, 1997), numeracy (Cheek and Smith, 1999; Graziano, Peterson and Shaw, 1999); "social competence" (Rickard, Appelman, James, Murphey, Gill, and Bambrick, 2013, p. 305,); self-esteem (Ward-Steinman, 2006; Koopman, 2007; Rickard, N. *et al.*, 2013); self-discipline (Phillips, 2014); and academic retention (Peard, 2012; School Family, 2012).

4. A report from People for Education (2016) illustrates the degree to which this problematic in Ontario, saying:

    43% of elementary schools have a music teacher, either full- or part-time, compared to 45% last year. This is the lowest percentage in 10 years . . . and is dramatically lower than in 1998, when 58% of elementary schools had specialist music teachers (p. 7).

5. In my home town of Sudbury, Ontario, the majority of high school music directors do not play traditional symphonic instruments.

6. For instance, five of the ten Ontario orchestras that participated in my research offer outreach programming for local schools.

7. This reflects my own experience; as principle violist of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra from 2006–2010, I performed numerous outreach concerts at schools throughout the City of Greater Sudbury, along with my colleagues in the core string quartet.

8. The Sudbury Symphony Orchestra's program, *Wolfie Goes to School* (Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, 2015), teaches students about the world and music of Mozart. However, the creative freedom with which students are able to explore the content is limited, and while students do have the opportunity to reflect, respond and analyse, as per the requirements of their curriculum, they do not have the opportunity to play Mozart's music or compose original music inspired by their experience.

9. Small (1977) points out that schools exhibit a kind of "fragmentation in the form of subjects, and in the fragmentation of the pupil's day as moved passively from one room to another" (p. 185), while Foucault (1977) describes the "normalizing" effect of institutionalised education in which the process of study and examination are "highly ritualized" (p.184).

10. Lawrence's (2011) portfolio of 'transparent' compositions for use in school music classes is an example of how contemporary music may be incorporated into the curriculum.

11. There is widespread recognition of "the imperative for learning to be an activity engaged in throughout people's lives" (Aspin, 2000, p. 75), as noted by Olson (2005), who points to "the adult education that occurs through the medium of music in a variety of formal and informal community settings across the world" (p. 55).

CHAPTER EIGHT: WAYS FORWARD IN PRACTICE FOR ENSEMBLE EDUCATION

Predicting the future may be impossible. However, by synthesizing patterns, current trends, structures, and systems, it is feasible to uncover power relationships and underlying assumptions. Through these it is possible to consider what could be—the probable, the possible, and desirable as people create, teach, learn and connect through music (Veblen & Waldron, 2012, p.204).

In the previous chapter, I explored the ways in which Community Music principles and practices influenced the ability of traditional school music education to foster individual artistry and a life-long desire to participate in ensemble playing among students. In this chapter, I propose to continue that discussion by examining the nature of the relationship between improvisation and traditional music education, as well as the specific practices of score realisation and directed improvisation, to determine whether they are suitable vehicles for ensemble education which encourages individual musical competence and confidence and supports life-long ensemble participation, all of which will contribute to the success and sustainability amateur orchestras.

Improvisation in Ensemble Education: Tensions, Resolutions

I have described the strong ties which connect the fields of traditional music education and Community Music. For practitioners of the latter, group improvisation is a preferred medium for musical learning (Moser & McKay, 2005; Koopman, 2007; Higgins, 2012), in large part due to the informality, flexibility and accessibility inherent in the form. For instance, "collective improvisation does not uphold dominant aesthetic or technical criteria that players must master as a benchmark of their 'education'" (Thompson, 2007, n.p.), and offers "many opportunities to learn by exploration" (Koopman, 2007, p. 157). Yet adopting improvisation on a wider scale has been described as "a bold and risky move with the possibility of transforming music educational practice or at least challenging it a bit" (Custodero, cited in

Abeles & Custodero, 2010, p. 76–77). This suggests the need to examine the extent to which

improvisation disrupts or complements traditional music education.

Improvisation: Tensions in Traditional Education

Despite the potential for musical improvisation to play a powerful role in ensemble education,

its adoption in formal music classroom settings has not been widespread.[1] Moser and McKay (2005)

note that "[i]n music education circles there has long been ambivalence about the place and method of

teaching improvisation," in part because of the belief that teaching how to improvise runs "counter to

the intuitive improvised nature of the music . . . all technique and idiomatic mannerism" (p.65).

Koopman (2007) relays a similar view point from Community Musician Phil Mullen, who states,

"[t]eachers and teaching are not necessary for creative music-making" (p. 155), and instead suggests

that individual creativity of the kind needed for successful improvisation is something to be explored by

the individual rather than taught to an individual.

In addition, because improvisation is a skill not usually cultivated by pre-service music teachers

during their training, they are apprehensive about use of improvisation in the classroom. Creech et al.

(2008) suggest that this is because classically trained musicians tend to view improvisation as a less

important skill than those typically described as requirements for technical and musical excellence,

while Green (2007) points out that "the majority of classical instrumental teachers and classroom music

teachers are formally trained and many have never engaged in informal learning practices," such as

imitation or group improvisation (p.184). Patricia Shehan Campbell, cited in Solis and Nettl (2009),

further illustrates the reticence of teachers to improvise as part of their music lessons, relating the

thoughts of one classroom music teacher who insisted, "[i]mprovisation is chaos, and that does not

work in my classroom" (p. 137). She goes on to confirm Green's earlier comment, saying that because

teachers are themselves unfamiliar with it, "improvisation is a vague and distant notion, and

pedagogical approaches are unclear when they themselves have no first-hand experience in the process" (p. 137).

The resistance to including improvisation or other instrumentally non-specific music in the school music curriculum reflects the view that "the emphasis on *Improvisation,* advocated by Orff and others, has been lost in favour of the Composition/Product model*" (*Addison, 1988, p. 255, original emphasis removed), in that the majority of music education programs continue to focus on traditional orchestra, band, or choral performance. This formal approach, while successful in preparing music students for a particular role within one of those traditional ensembles, also limits the parameters of their participation and places strict guidelines on their contribution to the overall performance. It may be that by preparing young musicians for future ensemble participation "in factory-like settings" (Elliot, 2003, p. 33), school music programs are actually doing them a disservice, in that such students will lack the socio-musical confidence, flexibility and tolerance of the type gained through informal musical practices[2] which are necessary for them to participate in and positively contribute to amateur orchestras in the future.

Improvisation: Resolving Tensions in Ensemble Education

Despite these concerns, there is significant support for the view that improvisation constitutes a useful and effective way forward in ensemble education. Green (2007), reflecting on the importance of the development of listening skills in musical learning, notes that improvisation "is an aural activity par excellence," and argues that improvised music "is by no means totally lacking in formalized music education" (p.195), suggesting that improvisation may not be as incompatible with traditional approaches to ensemble education as the detractors believe.

Stevens (2007) asserts the validity of improvisation in musical pedagogy (p.6) as a medium in which participants gain the skills necessary to succeed in ensemble playing, without the stress of reading notes. Pitch correction, ensemble playing, volume, balance and communication are all integrated into

the process, allowing novice and advanced musicians alike to hone their group performance skills. In

addition, since improvisational music is not genre specific, there are numerous possibilities for

collaborative work with musicians of diverse backgrounds and styles.

More important, though, is the fact that unlike traditional ensembles, improvisation ensembles

invite all participants to contribute to the musical process, regardless of their level of ability, allowing

those participants to reap the benefits of ensemble education without the demands associated with

traditional ensemble playing, such as execution of passage work or uniformity of sound and texture.

There is also substantial room for individual creativity (one of the pre-requisites for improved artistry

and ability) and musical expression (a desired outcome of music education) on the part of the players.

As Campbell, cited in Solis and Nettl (2009) asserts, "[i]mprovising within a musical education . . . may

be central to making an expressive musician" (p. 140).

This has implications for the sustainability of amateur orchestras, in that the cultivation of

artistic expression, along with greater musical competence and confidence, provides young musicians

with the skills required to meaningfully contribute to ensembles later in life. This view is shared by

Green (2007), who asserts:

. . . young musicians who acquire their skills and knowledge more through informal learning

practices than through formal education may be more likely to continue playing music, alone or

with others, for enjoyment later in life (p. 56).

Ways Forward for Ensemble Education: Realisation, Directed Improvisation and The Third Way

It is necessary to make a distinction between forms of free improvisation and the specific

practices of score realisation and directed improvisation, which are anchored to a particular set of

parameters or musical material. The presence of a structural framework is by no means a limitation to

creativity; as Small (1977) points out, "some of the world's greatest musical cultures, notably those of

India, are founded on improvisation, albeit within a strict framework" (p. 176). An examination of these

practices through the example of my own improvisation ensemble, The Sudbury Sound Collective, will illuminate the value of such activity in fostering individual artistry and a desire to participate in ensemble playing later in life.

Ways Forward in Practice: Score Realisation and Directed Improvisation

The practices of score realisation and directed improvisation are exemplified by the work of Peter Wiegold, a composer who believes strongly in the synthesis of individual creativity, musical excellence and ensemble playing. His music explores the relationship between composed and improvised music in performances which follow a directed improvisation model, often through the realisation of short scores.[3] As Yun and Willingham (2014) explain, short scores are "essentially mini-scores (one to two pages) where musical materials are arranged in linear and non-linear fashions: "Most often these [consist] of a page of notation, directions, and/or graphic representations" (p. 239). The process of realisation combines this minimal notation with the potential for improvisation and variation in the presentation of the written material. Wiegold describes the ways in which some of the composed ideas are pre-prepared while others are left to the individual initiative of the performer, saying, "[s]ometimes this is fixed in rehearsal, sometimes left for improvisation in performance, but it produces a very dynamic mix of written, realised and improvised music" (Wiegold, n.d., n.p.).

In examples of directed improvisation of the kind innovated by Wiegold in ensembles such as Brunel New Noise or Notes Inégales,[4] much of the musical content is created by the musician while a sense of cohesion and direction is imparted by the conductor. A typical rehearsal begins with Wiegold asking one of the musicians to play a short, simple musical fragment, something which can easily be looped and copied. Once this is established, he asks another player to copy that sound, but at a random pitch level. Others may then be asked to play something similar to that sound, but with an amorphous rhythmic feeling, or he may have others simply hold a tone cluster under that figure. This pattern continues with the direction provided by a series of hand signals which players learn as they participate,

building a cohesive soundscape which is based in part on the whims of the individual players. Suddenly,

all but one player will be directed to stop playing, and the remaining player will hold a note which then

becomes the foundation for a new improvisation. This approach grants each member of the ensemble,

as well as the director, equal responsibility in the creation of the music which emerges.

Ways Forward in Practice: The Third Way

Directed improvisation and score realisation represent the evolution of ensemble performance

from the traditional, hierarchical model maintained in ensembles such as orchestras, to a practice which

celebrates the fusion of artistic tradition and creative innovation.[5] Wiegold (2001) explains the basic

philosophy behind his approach in this way:

> If the first way is like a box, rigidly containing and restricting, the second way is an open space,
>
> the way of the 1960's—let it all hang out, or maybe a completely flat democracy. The third way
>
> is, for me, a strong centre, but one which can invite many spirals around it and, as it moves into
>
> the future, can bend and respond (p. 4).

This method reflects much of the discussion in Chapter 5 regarding the nature of musical

leadership, in that while the director may represent the "strong centre" around which the music is

established, the extent to which the director controls the evolution of the music is limited and

intertwined with the contributions from the other performers. As Wiegold (2015) observes:

> How wonderful the idea too that in a musical community, every person will have their
>
> 'moment', and every instrument too, a discrete place where that particular light shines, with no
>
> bias (p. 223).

In other words, directed improvisation represents a potentially democratic approach that allows

the musicians and the director to be jointly responsible for the product.[6] From this standpoint, the

overtones of cultural democracy and individual freedom present in Community Music may seem

prominent. Ironically, however, the Community Music ethos which espouses the contributions of

individuals has the potential to reduce the group to a kind of utopic ideal, in which participants are

intent solely on their own musical explorations, to the point where what emerges may well lack

cohesion while exhibiting a kind of anarchic "sameness." In contrast to the "flat democracy" of free

improvisation described here, the "third way" implies that musical cohesion and individual initiative may

be achieved. Wiegold describes this difference, saying, "[a]ll do the same thing, all do your own thing, or

all do the same thing your own way" (personal communication, May 20, 2016). In this way, musical

quality and cohesion are achieved while individual artistry is celebrated.

Ways Forward in Practice: Ensemble Education and The Sudbury Sound Collective

As a way forward for educational practice, directed improvisation represents an enticing

opportunity for the provision of socio-musical experiences which are not only of pedagogical value, but

which support the goals of fostering individual artistry and life-long learning established in the previous

chapter. Yun and Willingham (2014), for instance, found that students who participated in a concert of

semi-improvised choral music experienced "an enhanced sense of community and connection, which

added both socially and musically to the choristers' experiences" (p. 245). Wiegold (2015) asserts the

potential for socio-musical growth among participants, saying:

> every idiosyncratic—or profound—inflection in one player might expand the expressive range of
>
> another. Teachers like to use the expression 'caught not taught'. One seeks a heightened
>
> sensibility, a circle of affirmation between the musicians (Wiegold, p. 266).

This approach strongly resembles that of a Community Music event, in that it enables

spontaneous, collaborative, creatively nurturing experiences which are artistically refined and

rewarding. Moreover, directed improvisation complements ensemble education through its ability to

stimulate socio-musical growth. The following example from my own practice serves to illustrate these

effects.

Case Study: The Sudbury Sound Collective

The Sudbury Sound Collective is a directed improvisation ensemble which I lead at Cambrian College in Sudbury, Ontario. It is comprised of musicians of all levels, on a variety of instruments, drawn from the Cambrian School of Music's various streams of study. The ensemble rehearses on a weekly basis for sessions lasting approximately one hour. In that time, the players are encouraged to explore the limits of their ability as well as the depth of the possibilities of sounds created by their instruments. A typical rehearsal will include musical warm-ups, such as "round table," a musical game in which one player begins to play—freely, with very few parameter—and, after a suitable period in which that player's musical ideas have been established, other players join in one at a time, so that the solo becomes a duet, duet becomes trio, etc. The intent of the activity is to focus on listening and latching onto musical ideas which, as the ensemble size and variety increases, change and re-establish themselves. Players are forced to actively listen and work together to maintain rhythmic and textural cohesion, as they would in a typical Sound Collective performance. Yet Sound Collective performances are not totally unstructured, in that in my role as facilitator/conductor/composer for the ensemble I relay information to the players through a series of signals, inviting them to join in, asking them to remain on a particular note or rhythm, or cutting off all but one or two musicians in order to allow the music to advance and have shape. In this way, the musicians learn to observe a conductor and maintain an awareness of where they are in the form, as they would in a traditional ensemble. Through this process, musical confidence and competence are developed, as well as a degree of trust between participants and director, allowing the group to eventually progress to explorations of greater complexity and, intermittently, move into semi-composed short scores, enabling them to apply the skills they learn in the curriculum as their individual artistry develops.

The students who play in The Sudbury Sound Collective benefit from their participation in numerous ways, as their responses to interview questions reveal.[7] For instance, Alan, a percussionist,

commented on the opportunity to play as an individual while maintaining a sense of collective purpose, saying, "I like being able to be expressive and creative but still have a greater purpose than mindless noodling" (personal communication, March 4, 2015), whereas Robert, a violinist and composer, commented on the development of his musical sense, saying:

> I liked having what I knew to be music challenged (playing to depict a painting, playing to sound like another instrument etc.) and playing with fellow musicians in a laid-back atmosphere (personal communication, March 4, 2015).

It is significant to note that several Sound Collective players felt that their skills as ensemble players improved as a result of their participation in the group. Sue, a cellist, remarked, "[l]istening skills [is] definitely an asset I have learnt a great deal of while in this ensemble." She went on to say:

> The opportunity to join an ensemble like this has really allowed me the chance to open up my learning experiences with cello. I can listen to what others are doing and try and imitate it, bringing the aspects of the cello to all kinds of different levels (personal communication, March 4, 2015).

Robert added, "[n]ot only do I have more confidence in my playing, but I also have a different perspective when I listen to and write music" (personal communication, March 4, 2015), while Alan replied that "[b]eing able to find a spot inside the rest of the music and just feel the direction it's going in has made me more capable and confident" (personal communication, March 4, 2015). He went on to add:

> I know for sure that I would have benefitted from this sooner in my musical career. Even being involved in this for a few short weeks has drastically increased my confidence when playing (personal communication, March 4, 2015).

However, what is most significant is that these students acknowledge that the skills they have acquired in the improvisation ensemble are skills they will use in other musical contexts. Sue, for

instance, asserts, "I find myself listening to what relates well to what I am playing and then transfer

those skills over to either choir or my solo rep" (personal communication, March 4, 2015), while Alan

adds, "[t]he ability to play musically in any situation is very easily transferred" (personal communication,

March 4, 2015).

These responses echo the findings of Wright and Panagiotis (2010) who suggest that more

frequent work with improvisation "might lead to a more self-confident relationship between musician

and instrument" (p. 80). Wiegold (2004) has also noted this increased self-confidence, observing,

"[t]here is a very interesting moment when the player knows they have the reins. And this power and

freedom folds back very well into straight repertoire" (n.p). In other words, players who are more

confident in their abilities will perform better in any circumstance, whether it is improvised music or

traditional orchestral performance. This has implications for amateur orchestras, in that players who

have had the experience of participating in directed improvisation ensembles will feel better equipped

and encouraged to participate in other ensembles.

Further, I am conscious of my own role in this process, particularly from the perspective of the

researcher. As noted in the methodology for this thesis, my privileged position as director, performer

and teacher, places me in a unique position which will undoubtedly cause discomfort for

anthropological purists. As the director of the ensemble, I hold a certain degree of power over the

performers and the musical product which emerges. As a performer, I am as beholden to the

exploratory process as any other member of the ensemble, reacting and contributing to the process

with equal measure. As the teacher, I have a responsibility to ensure the pedagogical quality and

relevance of the activity and the socio-musical well-being of my students. Yet Wiegold describes a

certain level of comfort with this multi-contextual role, stating, "[t]he art of the band-leader is

fascinating, potentially combining conducting, creative direction, playing and writing" (Wiegold, 2015, p.

272). He elaborates on the potential value for participants, despite the tension present in the leader's position, saying:

> My reflection was that the teacher/leader will of course find ways to address problems that come up, but should *constantly* maintain the latent presence of the opposite—and hold that tension—because at any point, any one of those players, might have benefited equally from stupidly jumping in as much as waiting (Wiegold, 2015, p. 269).

What emerges from these discussions, then, is that directed improvisation represents a viable and effective way forward for ensemble education which stimulates individual artistry, fosters socio-musical growth, and enables opportunities for musical exploration which highlights the role of all participants. Further, the role of the improvisation director as leader, player, teacher and creative contributor in this context is of significant importance, in that it represents the "strong centre" around which these opportunities develop.

Summary

This chapter has examined the value of improvisation in ensemble education, establishing its validity as a model for music education delivery. It is argued that the specific practices of score realisation and directed improvisation represent enticing practices for ensemble education, through which individual artistry and a life-long interest in ensemble playing are cultivated, as well as positive socio-musical experiences for participants.

These practices are explored through a discussion of The Third Way, a philosophy of improvisatory practice innovated by Peter Wiegold through his activities as a composer, ensemble director and pedagogue. The implications for ensemble education of this approach are further examined through the example of the Sudbury Sound Collective, an improvisation ensemble I lead at Cambrian College in Sudbury, Ontario. This examination highlights the potential for directed improvisation to act as a vehicle for developing musical confidence and a desire for further ensemble playing among

participants, with positive implications for the sustainability of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-

musical communities of practice.

Notes

1. While it is possible that in larger cities, where specialist music teachers are more plentiful, improvisation may indeed be present in the music curriculum; however, this is not the case in Sudbury, ON, where specialist music teachers with improvisation experience are rare.

2. The link between informal learning and music education is made clear in a Community Music context, in that "CM (Community Music) consists of, but is not limited to, informal music making, which includes teaching and learning dimensions" (Veblen et. al, 2013, p. 1).

3. Improvisation is not a new development in Western classical music; as Wiegold points out, "in the Baroque period, it was frowned upon if you didn't depart from the score" (Wiegold, personal communication, December 2, 2011). In this regard, improvisation and score realisation may strike some as a step *backwards* in performance practice rather than a way forward however I would argue that music has always looked to its past for inspiration; consider Bach's adoption of Renaissance dance forms in the cello suites, Berlioz's inclusion of the *Dies Irae* in his Symphonie Fantastique, or Bartok's emulation of folk instruments and vernacular melodies in his string quartets.

4. New Noise is a directed improvisation ensemble based at Brunel University in London, UK. Notes Inégales is a professional contemporary ensemble, the focus of which is to present concerts which blend aspects of improvisation and realisation with the cultures and idioms of individual guest artists from around the world. I have been privileged to perform with both of these unique ensembles. Cree

5. As Wiegold notes, "[t]he great Western symphonic blend, the notion that all must play *in concert* has actually has been comparatively rare historically" (p. 229), suggesting that such practices are not as unorthodox as may be commonly believed.

6. Wiegold is not convinced that moral constructs such as democracy need to be so pronounced in performance, expressing his view that "there is no morality in music" (Wiegold, personal communication, December 2, 2011). Instead, Wiegold prefers the suggestion of structure, saying that in his music, "some things are fixed, some things are melting down into the sand . . . I'm not interested in democracy" (Wiegold, personal communication, December 2, 2011). He does, however suggest that there is room for discussion about "what's pre-prepared, what's discussed in terms of possibility, what's completely open" (Wiegold, personal communication, December 2, 2011). This approach maintains the integrity of the performance while celebrating the individual voices which contribute to it.

7. In the interest of maintaining anonymity among research participants, the names of these respondents have been changed.

CHAPTER NINE: EL SISTEMA, COMMUNITY MUSIC AND THE LESSONS FOR AMATEUR ORCHESTRAS

Is it to lower the crime rate? Or is it to provide outstanding, immersive music education for young people? That should be enough of a goal, and have enough intrinsic value and benefit, in itself (Govias, 2013).

The triangulation of music education, ensemble playing and socio-musical development inevitably leads to the subject of El Sistema. However, the paradoxical relationship which exists between aspects of traditional orchestral practice and the progressive, socially focused agenda exhibited by El Sistema ensembles raises significant questions about the nature of these programmes and their suitability as vehicles for ensemble education in an ever-diversifying world. I propose to explore these issues through a comparison with aspects of Community Music, in order to determine the degree to which these two practices diverge or align, and to draw from this examination lessons for amateur orchestras which are of value in furthering their status as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

No Doubt it's Community Music: Limitations and Contradictions in El Sistema and Community Music

The much-publicized El Sistema movement has its roots in the economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Venezuela, where its founder, José Antonio Abreu, saw an opportunity to improve the lives of local impoverished youth through music.[1] El Sistema seeks to "systematize the instruction and the collective and individual practice of music through orchestras and choirs as instruments of social organization and human development," by providing a "pedagogical, artistic and social model . . . of social responsibility with major impact" (Fundamusical, n.d.). As such, El Sistema appears to be the very embodiment of the Community Music movement, striving as it does to celebrate both the participating students and the music they play (Tunstall, 2012, xvii) while improving their social conditions. This is certainly a belief held by many Community Music practitioners;[2] for instance, at the 2014 conference of the Community Music Activities Commission in Salvador, Brazil, a colleague and I found ourselves

discussing the topic of El Sistema. At one point in the conversation, he exclaimed, "there's no doubt it's

Community Music!"

Yet the assumption that El Sistema and Community Music are parallel practices requires critical

examination. The fact that El Sistema relies on traditional models of orchestral practice in the delivery of

its programming reveals limitations and contradictions between El Sistema's practices and those

commonly associated with Community Music, such as a commitment to critical self-reflection, respect

for aspects of cultural democracy, and the need for strong community partnerships. An exploration of

these tensions is enabled through a study of In Harmony, the El Sistema-inspired pilot programmes

active in three British cities: the Liverpool suburb of Everton, the city of Norwich and the Greater London

borough of Lambeth.[3] Aspects of Big Noise, Scotland's version of El Sistema, will also be examined.

Limitation: Lack of Critical Self-Reflection

My examination of In Harmony, Big Noise, and the El Sistema movement broadly, reveals an

apparent lack of critical self-reflection associated with many Sistema-styled projects, including the fact

that El Sistema itself "has attracted little qualitative study of its model and activities" (Uy, 2012, p. 7),

despite evidence of positive results. For instance, a 2011 report entitled "In Harmony Lambeth: An

Evaluation" (Lewis, Demie and Rogers, 2011), makes several recommendations for expanding the

programme, including the development by the Department for Education for "a national strategy to

improve the social circumstances and life chances for children living in a socially disadvantaged area in

England by using music," and the development of "appropriate musical skill assessment and data

collection systems to monitor standards and provision at national and local level" (p. 90). However, with

all of the recommendations for expansion and support to various decision-making bodies, there is very

little in the form of critique, nor are there any stated caveats to the findings or recommendations of the

authors, leaving the impression that there are no negative aspects to the Lambeth initiative and thus

suggesting that perhaps the results may be too good to be true. For instance, the theoretical grounding

for the evaluation fails to address the "epistemological challenges" (Wilson, 2013, p. 3) inherent in the

delivery of programmes which are at once culturally, academically, and socially driven, such as the

questions raised "on the significance of the cultural intervention if purely designed to fulfil social

objectives" (p.3), and if that intervention would have the same impact if delivered by personnel with

less unique, specialized skills.

This epistemological confusion is also evident in Scotland's Big Noise programme, as Allan

(2010) points out:

> The appointment of staff described in publicity material as "musicians" rather than as "music
>
> teachers" suggests the possibility of a privileging of musical excellence over social inclusion,
>
> although this was denied vigorously by those running the programme in discussions with them
>
> (p. 117).

Further, there is no discussion of the "risks involved and missed learning opportunities . . .

particularly in terms of musical and artistic capacity—of a major strategic music education intervention"

(Wilson, 2013, p. 3) if the cultural or social impacts of such activities are not fully considered. Also, while

the methodology for evaluating the success of the impact and outcomes of In Harmony Lambeth or its

counterparts are spelled out in the evaluation, such assessment models have frequently been subject to

scepticism and scrutiny, "both in terms of the utility of the methodologies employed and the extent to

which the results illuminate our understanding" (Holden, 2004, p. 17).

These revelations are troubling from a Community Music perspective, given the "ongoing

commitment to accountability through regular, diverse and relative assessment and evaluation

procedures" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5) that are characteristic of Community Music practice. Further,

thoughtful self-reflection and critical questioning of Community Music's identity are endemic to the

field, in part due to its uncertain place in the cultural, educational and political landscape (McKay and

Higham, 2011; Higgins, 2012; Veblen *et al.*, 2013). This represents a disjunction between the two

practices which, I would argue, limits their comparison.

Limitation: Incompatible Contexts and Cultural Appropriation

A significant point of tension regarding projects such as In Harmony or Big Noise is that the

current socio-political and economic realities of the United Kingdom are vastly different from the

circumstances under which El Sistema came to exist, and that ignoring the contextual situation in which

El Sistema programmes operate represents a form of cultural appropriation. True to its origins, In

Harmony and other similar interventions locate themselves in economically deprived areas in order to

make the impact of their activities of most value. Yet, as suggested by Allan (2010), there is some

concern that the circumstances under which El Sistema began are not necessarily replicated in other

national contexts. There has, for instance, been commentary on the "often nationalistic tone" (Borchert,

2012, p. 14) adopted by El Sistema in Venezuela, leading some to question the capacity for the

programme to successfully be transplanted from one national context to another, such as The Raploch

in Stirling, Scotland, home to Big Noise.

In addition, the deep-seated stigmas and poverty which affect the community of Raploch have

persisted for centuries (Robertson, D., Smyth, J. & McIntosh, I., 2008) and stem from a variety of

historical and current conditions which do not necessarily mirror those leading to the deprivation found

in the barrios of Caracas. As Furedi (2010) points out in his critique of Big Noise, "it would be foolhardy

to overlook the formidable cultural and social barriers that could make it difficult for El Sistema to work

in Britain."[4] He goes on to suggest that the communally-oriented approach advocated by El Sistema

"goes against the grain of Britain's atomised culture of childhood, where success is measured in a one-

sidedly individualised manner" (n.p.).

These arguments resonate strongly from a Community Music perspective, in that practitioners

endeavour "to value cultural distinctiveness and cultural identity" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 187).

Further, it would be impossible to discuss the El Sistema movement without acknowledging its strong

association with its social, even nationalistic Venezuelan roots (Wilson, 2013), the implication being that

it would contradict Community Music ideals for programmes such as In Harmony or Big Noise to claim

ownership over a product which has been so clearly and historically identified with Venezuelan culture.

In addition, there remains a paucity of work examining the ethical implications of appropriating El

Sistema for use in a non-Venezuelan context.

Limitation: Social Improvement at Music's Expense

Other concerns about the El Sistema model focus on the extent to which music is downgraded in

relation to the overt social agenda of El Sistema projects. Allan (2010) raises the issue of whether the

musical value of such interventions is of a quality or substance suitable enough to inspire participants to

pursue further musical engagement as adults. This concern is evident in the substantial discourse

around "music as social action" (Baker, 2013, n.p.), which suggests that "music is not seen as an end in

itself; it is not valued as a way for individuals to express themselves by exercising their free creativity"

(Borchert, 2012, p. 58). This is troubling, not least because of the risk that social interventions such as In

Harmony may, "firstly, downgrade the importance of music; and secondly, downgrade the importance

of particular kinds of music" (Baker, 2013, n.p.), and that as a result "[i]n the search for outcomes and

ancillary benefits, the essence of culture [is] lost"(Holden, 2004, p. 20). This effect is already being

observed by some involved in the El Sistema movement.

Marcus Patteson, director of Norwich and Norfolk Community Arts and one of the lead

administrators of the In Harmony pilot project in Norwich, notes his discomfort with the ever-expanding

social agenda of musical interventions and the fact that artistry is not given the same focus as social

improvement, saying, "[a]t the moment, In Harmony is seen as a social intervention tool through

classical music . . . unfortunately it's [musicianship] got a bit lost" (personal communication, June 12,

2012).

The many stakeholders involved in the delivery of programmes such as In Harmony, or indeed

any organization whose social goals are met through artistic interventions, must examine more closely

"the implications of constantly banishing music from the centre of a music education programme"

(Baker, 2013, n.p.), the most challenging being the "larger question . . . that needs to be addressed

through a multi-agency approach: What is the role of music education within a wider society?" (Burns &

Bewick, 2011, p. 86). If the answer is not the development of musicality in order to foster a life-long

ability to enjoy and participate in group music-making, then there arises yet another contradiction in the

comparison of El Sistema with Community Music, since practitioners of Community Music are deeply

concerned with "surrounding students with musical experiences that are excellent" (Jorgensen, 1996, p.

92), striving "for excellence in both the process and products of music" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5), and in

"achieving the highest quality" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186) in their interventions.

Limitation: "Saved" by Classical Music

Another significant tension arises from the acknowledged place of the classical canon in El

Sistema activities, and the assumption that participation in El Sistema-inspired programmes which focus

on the standard masterworks of classical music will be a more effective means of improving the lives of

participants than would other musics. This bias is noted by those within the El Sistema movement itself;

for instance, Steve Copley, director of In Harmony Norwich, commented on what he felt to be the need

to maintain a "strong focus on classical repertoire" (personal communication, June 12, 2012) within

their programme. And while there is evidence that some of the people involved with the In Harmony

programmes included in my research attempt to include a variety of musical genres in their activities,

overwhelmingly the music being studied is traditional western art music for orchestral ensembles.

This music may hold very little cultural value for populations within the In Harmony target

neighbourhoods, such as the Liverpool community of West Everton, where, for instance, many children

may have not been exposed to classical music as a part of their upbringing. As Wilson (2013) suggests,

while In Harmony Liverpool may represent "an immersive community-based intervention using 'legitimate' cultural forms" (p. 4), such interventions should "not exist in cultural isolation, but rather complement existing forms of community-based cultural capital" (p. 5).

Wilson (2013) goes on to point out that pre-existing musical traditions may already exist "in traditional working class communities such as West Everton, where older generations will have been proficient musicians (e.g. pianists) but rarely classically trained" (p.5). There is, however, a tendency on the part of established cultural providers (such as symphony orchestras) to ignore these pre-existing forms in favour of traditional repertoire and as Holden (2010) reminds us, "cultural enfranchisement cannot be achieved simply by increasing access to an already-determined 'legitimate' culture" (p. 63) .

By ignoring local vernaculars, such as brass bands or folk music, programmes such as In Harmony Liverpool reinforce a widely-held concern: that El Sistema-styled projects are perpetuating a form of cultural dominance, through the continuous reference to "legitimate" forms of music and by basing their practice on "the supposition of universal qualities inherent to Western classical tradition" (Borchert, 2012, p. 38). Lui (2012), for instance, identifies this tendency in the Venezuelan El Sistema programme, pointing out that "ignoring local traditional Venezuelan music and giving the impression that the European musical tradition is saving Venezuelan youth from poverty" reinforces the "lingering tendencies of cultural imperialism" (p.49) that remain in Venezuelan culture generally. This musical exclusivity is even more pronounced in the UK context; for instance, Allan (2010) questions the "exclusive emphasis by Sistema Scotland on classical music," and suggests that "the absence of the Scottish traditional genre raises some questions about the extent of the recognition of the Scottish context" (p.117).[5] Similarly, Borchert (2012) compares Big Noise to its Venezuelan progenitor, claiming:

> The same focus on Western classical music seen in El Sistema is even more distinct in the Scottish version as no other musical genre seems to have been included in the curriculum so far (p. 36).

Partnerships such as those between In Harmony and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

Orchestra, or between Big Noise and the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, also raise interesting questions about

the suitability of a professional orchestra as a partner for social change, in part because "the 'orchestra

as community' model" (Wilson, 2013, p. 4) seems incompatible with the realities of the traditionally

hierarchical structure of orchestras, and also because "its focus on classical (or more accurately

orchestral) music excludes other musical forms and traditions which may be of equal or more cultural

value to participating children and communities" (p.4).

A further implication is that the term "legitimate," in reference to cultural forms, is itself

problematic. Small (1998a), as cited in Wilby (2013) for instance, reminds us that the distinctions

between so-called great works of classical music and other cultural vernacular musical forms "are

themselves social constructions which become clearer as we shift our focus from musical forms and

performances to the social practices that surround these forms and practices" (p.58–59). There is a

sense among observers of social intervention that projects such as In Harmony Liverpool, which rely on

established elite art forms such as the symphony orchestra, take on "Eliza Doolittle characteristics," in

that they "[seek] to empower communities to 'aspire' beyond current limits" (Wilson, 2013, p.5). As

Wilson (2013) further points out, "[t]he aspirational aspects of the model . . . can be problematic and

misleading" in that the "consistent use of descriptive terms such as 'joy' and 'passion' imply that these

are somehow missing from other models of music education" (p.6).

One of the stated goals of the In Harmony Liverpool programme is to stimulate "[i]ncreases in

take up of Further and Higher Education by people from West Everton (a key part of Government's

Widening Participation agenda)" (Burns & Bewick, 2012, p. 13). The influence of government policy in

this statement is telling, in that it may help to perpetuate "a paternalistic social action apparatus, within

which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of 'welfare recipients'" (Freire, 2000, p. 74), which

includes the need to "transform" the communities targeted by such interventions and to evaluate the

success of such transformations.[6] However, as Belfiore and Bennett (2008) suggest, "the idea of

transformation is so complex that it is impossible to imagine how it might be reduced to a set of

measureable attributes" (p.6), and "public pronouncements about the value or impact of the arts rarely

reflect this complexity and tend to fall back instead on somewhat ritualistic use of the 'rhetoric of

transformation'" (p. 193). This concern is echoed by Allan (2010), who asserts:

> Researchers must not seek to make banal causal links between the intervention and such
>
> ontological states as "transformation" and "empowerment". This is hopeless in every sense.
>
> Researchers would also do well to avoid the pursuit of proof that changes in health, education
>
> and wellbeing are down to the arts activities that have been introduced" (p. 120).

That El Sistema-styled cultural interventions such as those described here assume that the

communities on which they focus are culturally inferior or deprived contradicts Community Music

practice, which emphasizes "the variety and diversity of musics that reflect and enrich the cultural life of

the community, the locality, and the individual participants" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5), values "cultural

distinctiveness" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186), and respects "cultural, specifically musical, diversity"

(Jorgensen, 1996, p. 92).[7]

Limitation: Failure to Successfully Engage Local Partners

By adopting the culturally exclusive approach described above, El Sistema-inspired programmes

run the risk not just of devaluing local musical traditions but also of alienating local stakeholders whose

support may be vital for the success of the project. This is evident in critiques of Big Noise's approach to

public engagement. Allen (2010) points out that "the speed at which the initiative was required to move

appears to have made consultation with the community impossible," making it a challenge for the

organization "to distinguish the community's desires for itself from what it regards as in being in the

community's best interests" (p. 117), while Borchert (2012) affirms that this kind of "unilateral move"

serves only to "generate a negative impression among residents" (p.38), whose support was considered

essential by the planners. This possibility was verified in the Scottish Government's own review of the

Raploch Sistema project (Scottish Government, 2011) which revealed that several local partners

"expressed dissatisfaction with their current level of involvement" leading to a sense that the group was

"working in isolation rather than linking with other community based activities" (p.19). However, the

report downplays this fact, saying that there was "no evidence to suggest that wider community

engagement would add value" to the activities of the programme itself or those of the wider

community. Further, the report expresses no concern that "a lack of this type of community

involvement is hindering the achievement of positive outcomes for the children and so, social

transformation" (p. 20). This self-justification serves only to engender further divisions within the

community over the value of Big Noise and its contemporaries and, as Borchert (2012) observes,

"[t]aking into consideration the social inclusive goal of the programme, such a conclusion seems at best

precipitate" (p. 39).

El Sistema programmes are viewed as a form of music education as well as social intervention;

however, evidence suggests that discussions between organisations such as In Harmony or Big Noise

and local educational authorities do not necessarily take place. As Allen (2010) points out, there is

considerable "evidence of scepticism" on the part of local music teachers, who fear that investments

made in Big Noise "will be at the expense of mainstream music tuition" (p.118). Further, Borchert (2012)

reports that "[t]he absence of clarity regarding the programme's ethos generated a feeling among

Raploch teachers that the initiative was being imposed upon the local schools" (p. 39).

The perceived disconnect between El Sistema programmers and local educational authorities

may explain some of my own observations of the In Harmony pilot project at Catton Grove Primary

School in Norwich. Even though Catton Grove's In Harmony programme took place largely outside of

classroom hours, the students and staff did not have the benefit of access to classroom space for their

activities, being instead forced to squeeze into a portable on the school grounds, which was divided into

two small rehearsal spaces. One of the activity leaders explained that the head teacher at Catton Grove

was not as invested in the project as their counterpart at the other Norwich site, Larkman Primary

School, and did not feel justified in giving the In Harmony programme adequate classroom space.

Lack of support from Catton Grove's administrator reveals a gap in understanding or a lapse of

communication between school authorities and In Harmony Norwich regarding the goals and benefits of

the programme. However, it also illustrates another reality when working within an educational

environment: the ever-present challenge faced by school officials to make best use of their diminishing

funds—a reality with which the In Harmony Norwich administrators are all too familiar.[8]

The tensions highlighted here suggest that the impact of El Sistema-type models as agents of

societal change may be impeded by the lack of meaningful consultation with and engagement of local

communities.[9] By contrast, for practitioners of Community Music, "[g]aining the trust of the group is

vital," while "[f]inding the right way to first engage with people is crucial" (Moser &McKay, 2005, p.6).

Further, "participation in decision-making creates a new ownership" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 22),

certainly a consideration when seeking to gain validation and credibility within communities.

Positive Practices: Reconciling Aspects of El Sistema and Community Music

Despite the substantial concerns over cultural appropriation or elitism described above, there

are several important characteristics and principles manifested in the El Sistema programmes included

in my research which suggest that some of the good practices found in these ensembles reflect

fundamental Community Music principles. These include a shared emphasis on socio-musical learning,

an awareness of intercultural understanding and respect, and the desire to enable accessible music

making opportunities for the whole community. An examination of these aspects of El Sistema-style

programmes makes possible the derivation of lessons for amateur orchestras which are of value in

establishing them as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Positive Practice: Socio-Musical Learning

Those who administer and deliver El Sistema programming are deeply concerned with emphasising the socio-musical aspects of ensemble education and endeavour to ensure that participants' needs are being met from artistic, social, and cultural perspectives. The primary and most visible mode of programme delivery in El Sistema contexts is through ensemble participation, reflective of El Sistema's belief in the music ensemble "as the main site of social transformation, and with the positive behavioral changes that can occur within students as they express greater concern for others and their well-being" (Uy, 2012, p. 13). While the benefits of ensemble playing were touched upon in the previous chapter, it is the perceived improvement of social awareness and the socio-musical interactions between participants which is of particular importance in this context. This importance is noted by Lipidaki et al (2013), who contend that musical creativity in an educational context is a "socio-musical practice," in which participants are offered "a path to socialization, inclusion, and political awareness" while fostering musical growth "by offering pedagogic techniques and approaches based on social settings and contexts" (p.2).

While participation in traditional orchestral ensembles may not necessarily encourage the same kind of creative freedom as, for instance, composition or group improvisation, the socio-musical effect as described above is none-the-less present in an El Sistema context. Further, a reconceptualization of the function of the socio-musical process suggests it comes not just as a result of collective creative practice but that it is as a kind of learning in and of itself. Corresponding with Small's (1998) concept of "musicking," El Sistema programmes seek to seek to foster the social development of participants along with their musical development, in order that they will experience musical meaning "through the relationships created in the process of musicking" (Lui, 2012, p. 55).

Gerard Kelly, acting Head of Service and senior instrumental instructor for the Lambeth Music Service, emphasized this point. While he understands the importance of individual instruction, in this

case, delivered by peripatetic specialists through the Lambeth Music Service, Kelly stresses the

importance of social interaction in the ensemble experience, which is "about more than technical

expertise on the instrument." He asserts:

> It seems a bit perverse to learn a musical instrument in isolation. Since we do know that music
>
> making is fundamentally a social activity it seems a bit strange to think that [peripatetic] will
>
> cover all those bases (personal communication, March 28, 2012).
>
> Marcus Patteson, of In Harmony Norwich, agrees, stating, "I want to see a move away from

pedagogic, one-on-one, dictatorial teaching to much more ensemble based work; it fits children's

education and social development" (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Social interaction in ensemble activities is a commonly desired outcome among music

educators, who have long advocated for formats which encourage participants "to meet and play music

together from an early age free from any competitive strain, apart from trying to do their best" (Vuataz,

1990, p.381). In this way, "musical education will then help to provide the community with individuals

ready to serve not only as musicians but also in daily life and the functioning of its services" (ibid.). This

is also a desired outcome of Community Music practice, which recognizes that "participants' social and

personal growths are as important as their musical growth" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5), and that

participants'"[s]ocial skills can increase as people collectively collaborate in challenging musical

environments" (Koopman, 2007, p. 158), leading to greater and more meaningful interactions among

participants. This fact has positive implications for amateur orchestras and their communities, as

participants move from their ensemble experiences out into their communities, bringing with them an

improved sense of social awareness and a desire to work collaboratively.

Positive Practice: Intercultural Acceptance and Respect

I have pointed out the challenges regarding cultural appropriation, imperialistic overtones and situational differences inherent in the wider proliferation of El Sistema beyond the Venezuelan context; however, it must be noted that none of the El Sistema-inspired programmes highlighted in this research have ever made a proprietary claim to the El Sistema model. Rather, significant efforts have been made on their part to clarify the collaborative relationship that exists between them and their progenitor organization. The Sistema Scotland website states, for example, "[w]e are very proud of our close links with Venezuela. We seek to benefit from the South Americans' expertise, while adapting their methods to suit conditions in Scotland" (Sistema Scotland, n. d.). A statement from the website of Sistema Europe goes even further, refuting the allegation that El Sistema organizers would seek to limit the activities of any other global El Sistema initiatives out of any sense of national protectionism. The statement reads:

> Sistema Europe would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognise the generosity of El Sistema in Venezuela in putting their model and experience at the disposal of European Sistema inspired organisations without asking for anything in return. This includes not asking for financial compensation of any kind; according European organisations complete freedom to adapt and apply the model to European cultures and context; and for the very generous training opportunities and repertoire suggestions that have been received from El Sistema Venezuela over a period of years. We find nothing in this help that suggests any desire by El Sistema Venezuela to control our activities, nor anything that could be described as an autocratic relationship between El Sistema Venezuela and Sistema Europe (Sistema Europe, n. d).

Further, despite the contextual differences between Venezuelan and British society, proponents of In Harmony, Big Noise, and other similar programmes point out that the fundamental conditions of poverty in which participants live enables them to benefit equally from their exposure to El Sistema activities, as would children in any impoverished community.[10] Norwich's Marcus Patteson, for instance,

emphatically dismisses the suggestion that El Sistema is a culturally specific phenomenon as being

merely politically motivated or short-sighted, saying, "[t]his whole notion that because it's in South

America somehow it has no relevance as a model . . . is bollocks!" (personal communication, June 12,

2012). He points out that in Norwich, "[t]wo thirds of the city is in the bottom 20% of deprivation

nationally," the effect being that many young people in that city "have very low levels of aspiration"

resulting in the majority of students in those areas of impoverishment scoring in the "bottom 10% of

GCSE achievement" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). Patteson is adamant that at both of the

Norwich sites—Catton Grove Primary School and Larkman Primary School— their programme is

succeeding in improving student achievement and social well-being, saying, "[b]oth schools . . . have

made major leaps forward . . . In Harmony has been a really big part of that" (personal communication,

June 12, 2012).

In rebuttal to Furedi's (2010) earlier suggestion that a community-minded approach would be

anathema to British societal values, Patteson goes on to assert that the success of El Sistema-based

programmes can be replicated almost anywhere because of its communal approach, adding that if

authorities are serious about "devising ways of getting more access to music it seems whole-class

work— ensemble-style, In Harmony-style work—is by far the most appropriate way of going" (personal

communication, June 12, 2012). Steve Copley agrees, adding, "I was absolutely taken aback within the

first six months, just seeing the effects . . . it wins you over very quickly" (personal communication, June

12, 2012).

From a Community Music perspective, these assertions are significant. Not only do El Sistema

programmes endeavour to "show respect for the cultural property of a given locality and/or

community," and "use music to foster intercultural acceptance and understanding" (Higgins, 2012, p.5),

but they seek also to "include disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups" (Higgins, 2012,

p. 5), to acknowledge "the value of creativity in social and community development" (Moser & McKay,

2005, p. 186), and to enable experiences which "support the potential for individual and group

progression" (Ibid, p. 187).

Positive Practice: Accessible and Diverse Music Making Opportunities

I have highlighted the criticism levelled at El Sistema regarding the perceived singular status

afforded to Western classical music in its activities; however, the assumption that El Sistema is

perpetuating a colonial attitude towards culture and ensemble participation is, I would suggest,

simplistic. For instance, the very fact that the school districts in which In Harmony and Big Noise operate

are so culturally diverse suggests that because communities are becoming increasingly multi-cultural it is

unlikely that any one cultural form will remain uninfluenced by others for very long. Indeed, such has

always been the trend in music. As Lui (2012), citing Kraidy, points out, "[t]he difficulty with cultural

imperialism is that our cultural relationships are now far more complex than they were the past, " and

the attempts by critics to paint the use of classical music as a form of cultural imperialism "risks

essentializing and ignoring the complexity and constant mixing of cultural forms" (p.59). In fact, this

intermingling of cultures and genres has, in part, led some El Sistema nucléos in Venezuela to adopt

popular music as part of their course of study (Borchert, 2012).

Moreover, critics who accuse El Sistema of encouraging a kind of musical imperialism based on

European musical forms neglect the fact that, unlike true colonization, participants in El Sistema

programmes are not forced to take part. Certainly, efforts are made by some programme organizers to

seek partnerships with local educational authorities, promote their activities and strongly encourage

participation by local students. But those behaviours are no different from those of many other arts

organization seeking local support and legitimacy and are not an attempt to impose one musical

ideology on an entire community. Indeed, any attempt to do this would, no doubt, be met by strong

opposition from local cultural leaders. Rather, El Sistema seeks to provide an "equalization of

opportunity . . . regardless of socio-economic status, the choice to engage in activities that we recognize

as profoundly powerful, meaningful, constructive, if not critical to human social development" (Govias, 2009).

In fact, it may be the case that classical music would be as acceptable to participants as any other genre, a possibility consistent with the earlier assertion made by Lui (2012) that the complex relationships which now exist between cultures and their musics have fostered wider acceptance of classical music within a particular cultural context. For example, Marcus Patteson expressed his belief that the assumption that classical ensemble music must be forced onto students is erroneous, believing instead that "the disjunct between the common person and classical music is a fictional one" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). Steve Copley added that when local students were approached about the kinds of music they might learn, they were less opposed to the prospect of learning classical music than one might expect. He relates:

We've asked the children what they want to play, and surprisingly the first two or three suggestions were classical ones; however, you get pop, what the current trends are . . . The focus does need to be classical, it's orchestral; however, I think especially for education value you need to look at music as one whole genre (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Orchestral repertoire is considered an important, but not exclusive, component to El Sistema programming. This view is supported by observation of the In Harmony projects conducted as part of this research, which consciously maintain a diversity of repertoire in their activities, as Patteson— who is not primarily a classical musician—describes:

My background is South American music . . . we do appreciate and like other stuff. We try to keep a diversity of cultural stuff within what we do, especially around the singing side. We do lots of African stuff, we sing Caribbean songs (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Similarly, Gerard Kelley of In Harmony Lambeth describes the demographic of his programme as "extremely diverse." He adds, "[w]hat's nice is that all of our tutors and practitioners recognize that . . .

This is what's good about music services, music specialists—they come from all walks" (personal

communication, March 28, 2012).

By actively seeking to include music which reflects the cultural diversity of their localities, taught

by musicians who themselves come from diverse musical backgrounds, the In Harmony musicians of

Lambeth and Norwich are acting in a manner consistent with Community Music practice, in that:

> Community music is an expression of cultural democracy, and musicians who work within it are
>
> focused on the concerns of making and creating musical opportunities for a wide range of
>
> people from many cultural groups (Higgins, 2012, p.7).

El Sistema and Community Music: Lessons for Amateur Orchestras

The shortcomings and successes illustrated through a comparison of El Sistema programming

with the attitudes and practices of Community Music offer valuable lessons for amateur orchestras.

These include the importance of inclusive socio-musical frameworks which encourage wider

participation in orchestral playing, the belief that social development through music is beneficial to

individuals and society, the realisation that attending to socio-musical needs does not necessarily entail

diminishing artistic quality, and that critical self-reflection is necessary for ensuring a successful socio-

musical experience for all participants.

Lessons for Amateur Orchestras: Inclusivity Promotes Participation

A valuable lesson gleaned from the comparison of El Sistema and Community Music practices is

the importance of establishing an environment in which participants feel as though they are welcome, in

which their socio-musical needs are met, and in which they are able to progress at a pace which is

suitable to their level of skill while still feeling that they are equal contributors. While the Community

Music concept of "the welcome" is important here, of equal value is the establishment of frameworks in

which teaching and learning are reconceptualised. As Marcus Patteson states, "I don't believe

accessibility comes simply by giving someone an opportunity . . . the opportunity [must be] right and

delivered in the right way . . . " (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Responses from research participants make it clear that they desire "stable and consistent

outlets" (Uy, 2004, p. 12) for socio-musical interactions—a fundamental goal of El Sistema

programmes—stating: "I've been told we are the friendliest and most caring orchestra in this area,

accepting and encouraging each other" (personal communication, December 2, 2013); and that

"amateur orchestras should "provide opportunities for players at all levels to continue to learn and

participate" (personal communication, December 2, 2013), regardless of ability.

Lessons for Amateur Orchestras: Social Responsibility Benefits Individuals and the Community

The belief of El Sistema practitioners that individual socio-musical growth—and, by extension,

social development—is achieved through participation in group activity presents another lesson for

amateur orchestras, in that by enabling an atmosphere that is socially, as well as musically, stimulating,

participants become more responsible towards each other and their ensembles. In the same way that

the El Sistema movement recognizes the importance of socio-musical aspects of ensemble education,

orchestral ensembles may be viewed as microcosms of society. Ramnarine (2011), Lui (2012), Uy (2012),

and many others, note that participation in ensemble playing can lead to "a way of thinking that

transferred to other parts of life, developing a deeper emotional connection to other people" (Carr,

2006, p.12).

The importance of socio-musical learning was highlighted by research participants who stated:

"[m]usic of any kind is a common denominator and a social leveler, so it is of great value" as a vehicle for

social cohesion (personal communication, December 2, 2013); ". . . people do get to know each other.

They are very loyal to the group" (personal communication, June 23, 2012); "We often say it feels like a

big family" (personal communication, May 5, 2012); and "People treat one another like family. Yes, a

slightly dysfunctional family!" (personal communication, December 2, 2013). These comments reflect

the language of El Sistema proponents who seek to "build a spirit of solidarity and fraternity" (Abreu, 2009) among participants.

Many comments from research participants emphasized the importance of social interactions which extend beyond the rehearsal focusing on " feel[ing] more connected"(personal communication, May 31, 2014);"catching up with friends . . . and enjoy[ing] conversations (personal communication, November 24, 2012); "[gaining] a sense of belonging"; (personal communication, December 11, 2011), and "a chance to get to know other members of the orchestra" (personal communication, December 3, 2011) all of which indicate the stabilising effect of these relationships, the importance of which are highlighted by Jorgensen (1996: points out the stabilising effect of such relationships, stating:

> In a changing and shrinking world, in which a sense of dislocation and alienation is pervasive, *community as place* with its concomitant notions of rootedness, interconnectedness, boundedness, feelingfulness, and empowerment offers a corrective (p. 90).

This desire for social interaction is a driver of amateur orchestral participation and should be considered a cornerstone of the activities undertaken by amateur orchestras.

Lessons for Amateur Orchestras: Artistic Quality and Socio-Musical Development Are of Equal Value

Just as amateur orchestras must balance the individual socio-musical needs of participants with the overall development of the group, so must the musical quality of their product be maintained. El Sistema practitioners such as Marcus Patteson of Norwich and Norfolk Community Arts are concerned with maintaining the artistic quality of their work through sound pedagogical approaches which balance individual and group learning insisting that an "ensemble first" approach is highly motivating claiming, "You have to require them to step up to the plate in terms of their artistic stuff" (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Patteson further points out the value of "learning progression" an approach which allows novice players to work on simplified parts while advanced players work on more complex arrangements, while

Uy (2012) emphasizes that "students can return to teach younger students" which enables students not only to progress musically but to develop important social skills such as mentorship (p.12). Further, Gerard Kelly of In Harmony Lambeth insists that "involved teachers" and "dedicated professionals" enable learning that is personally and pedagogically meaningful" (personal communication, March 28, 2012).

Amateur orchestras can learn from these proponents of El Sistema that the quality of both the social and the musical interactions of their ensembles are of equal importance, and that such a balance is attainable if the opportunities for participants are appropriate to their level of ability, and delivered skilfully and earnestly.

Lessons for Amateur Orchestras: Critical Self-Reflection is Key

An absolutely fundamental component of the reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice is the concept of critical self-reflection. While this quality is abundant in the field of Community Music, there remains a comparative lack of material that examines El Sistema from within the practice. Yet without this essential characteristic, discoveries relating to the other lessons illustrated herein would not be possible. For instance, issues related to identity and purpose—such as the effectiveness and value of social interventions through music, or the overtones of elitism and artistic colonialism—require a clear understanding of organisational provenance and well-defined goals, without which the epistemological and operational challenged described earlier become problematic. The lesson for amateur orchestras here, then, is that undertaking a thorough and thoughtful self-examination is necessary in order to reimagine them as unique, socio-musical communities of practice.

Summary

This chapter has examined the phenomenon of El Sistema in relation to practices and attitudes commonly associated with Community Music, revealing that while the two movements share similar

beliefs regarding the importance of providing positive socio-musical experiences to all participants,

there are crucial differences related to issues of self-reflection, cultural appropriation, musical elitism

and community support which make the comparison of El Sistema to Community Music challenging.

Both the tensions and the correlations which emerge from such a comparison are illustrated through

the examples of In Harmony and Big Noise, two El Sistema-inspired projects in Great Britain.

Further, the shortcomings and successes revealed through the critical examination of El Sistema

through a Community Music lens provides lessons for amateur orchestras, including the need to

maintain an inclusive atmosphere in order to promote participation, the belief that the social

responsibility cultivated in ensemble playing benefits individuals and the community, the realisation that

musical quality and social development are not mutually exclusive, and the importance of critical self-

reflection. Adopting these lessons further enables a reimagining of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-

musical communities of practice.

Notes

1. Abreu's view was that participatory learning through music ensembles could transform the lives of the impoverished children of his native Venezuela, a philosophy that continues to permeate and guide the El Sistema movement. Since its inception in 1975, El Sistema has been adopted as part of that country's national music education programme; what was once a social experiment for impoverished youth is now one of the predominant models of music education in that country. This focus sets El Sistema apart from other Western music education programmes.

2. Examples from literature associated with Community Music which describes El Sistema as representative of Community Music practice include (Bergman & Lindgren, 2014; Snow, 2013; McKay & Higham, 2011). The attempt by those within the Community Music movement to draw El Sistema into its sphere of practice is certainly worthy of scrutiny, as no formal relationship between the two phenomena—at least as represented in the United Kingdom—exists.

3. In Harmony has now been rebranded as Sistema England and has grown to include programmes in Telford, Newcastle and North Kensington in Greater London (Sistema England, n.d.).

4. Furedi (2010) outlines four differences which make the implementation of El Sistema programming in the UK more challenging than is generally believed by the programme's advocates: the first of which being "the institutionalisation of low expectations in British education" (p.46.) and the pervasive sense that the economically deprived class in Britain possesses "a strong consciousness of entitlement and have become distracted […] from understanding how their own efforts might lead to positive outcomes" (p.46).

5. My own experience as an audience member for Big Noise's 'Big Concert' in June of 2012

    echoes this criticism. While the joint-performance of the Raploch Big Noise orchestra and

    the Simon Bolivar Orchestra was heartening and exciting, the programme of Beethoven,

    Purcell and Britten (the latter undeniably 'British' composers) was not reflective of the

    region's musical heritage, to say nothing about the 'Scottish-ness' of the Latin-American

    mambo played as the show-stopping encore.

6. Freire (2000) suggests that in this hierarchical framework "knowledge is a gift bestowed by

    those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know

    nothing" (p. 72), in that "the teacher chooses the programme content, and the students

    (who were not consulted) adapt to it" (p. 73). This is the approach taken by the teachers

    within the In Harmony programmes discussed here; most of the repertoire is given to the

    ensembles, rather than chosen by them. While there are sound practical reasons for this

    approach, it is representative of a traditional approach to ensemble education.

7. The positive results for the children who participate in In Harmony Liverpool's programming

    are not in dispute and should be lauded. However, given the acknowledged status of the

    Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra as a pillar of the cultural establishment, coupled

    with the view by some that as a construct, "the orchestra is described as complex,

    competitive, stratified and dysfunctional; autocratic and elite," (Wilson, 2013, p. 4) it is

    necessary to question the suitability of professional orchestral organizations as partners in

    the delivery of community-based, social interventions in communities for which classical

    music may not be the cultural norm. Baker (2013) describes such social interventions as "a

    new kind of stratification . . . one that grants certain musical activities more value (and

    provides them with more funding) than others" (n.p.).

8. In Harmony Norwich rebranded itself as *Sistema* Norwich after the initial pilot funding from the Department for Education came to an end and now faces a precarious funding situation which Patteson describes as "dire" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). Patteson's frustration with unstable funding and uncertainty about partnerships is consistent with Allen's (2010) findings that there is "extreme discomfort" (p. 118).

9. Access to the In Harmony Liverpool project could only be gained through the Learning Department of the RLPO rather than through In Harmony staff. In Harmony employees indicates that the Liverpool programme has assumed a corporate model of behaviour, and it was suggested that a visit to that project could accurately be described as "the Chinese factory tour," which would focus on only the very best aspects of the programme. This may result from the external pressures facing not-for-profit social programmes whose aims are not easily quantifiable, in that "[t]he funding system does not have the confidence to take risks and to make judgements" (Holden, 2004, p. 20), and that the most successful programmes will be "those best able to 'work the system' through the processes of lobbying and proposal-writing" (p. 21).

10. Critics point out that as opposed to the variety of music education schemes and social improvement programmes available in the UK, "[c]hildren have very few alternatives in Venezuela. This gives them the hunger and drive to practise and rehearse four hours a day" (East, 2010, p. 9). However, Borchert (2012) notes the inconsistency in this thinking, suggesting that such arguments are based on the premise "that remaining in poverty is almost a matter of choice" (p. 42), and that "by opting for this simplistic model, the exclusory mechanisms intrinsic to a specific social rationality are left out from the 'equation'" (p. 42), in that simply trying harder to get out of poverty is less effective than is being suggested in the critique.

CHAPTER TEN: MUSIC FOR ALL: CULTURAL DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND AMATEUR

ORCHESTRAS

In an open and democratic society, it should be possible for everyone, from whatever

background or viewpoint, to take part fully in cultural life (Holden, 2010, p.63).

Amateur orchestras are comprised of members of the local community who are interested in

creating positive and meaningful socio-musical experiences through orchestral engagement. Yet the

question of who constitutes "the public" for whom these experiences are available is significant,

especially considering the barriers—real or perceived—which often separate the public from their local

amateur ensembles and the music they make. This chapter, therefore, explores the nature of public

engagement and its relationship to the interrelated concepts of cultural democracy and diversity, as well

as the extent which these concepts influence socio-musical cohesion in communities.

Thompson (1952) outlines the importance of these fundamental issues, stating:

[R]esponsibility for musical and cultural leadership is thrust upon the community orchestra

almost from the outset, and the degree to which it meets the community's challenge is often an

index of the extent of moral and financial support which the orchestra merits from the

community (p. 103).

This strongly suggests a link between amateur orchestras and community engagement. Yet

investigating this relationship raises some of the most challenging and important questions about the

function of amateur orchestras in our cultural landscape, including the issue of who should have access

to amateur orchestral playing, the effect of blurring the lines between performer and audience member,

and the impact of wider ensemble participation on communities. Further, the principles of cultural

democracy and participatory engagement which resonate here are strongly associated with Community

Music practice, inviting an examination of these concepts in an amateur orchestral context from a

Community Music perspective and enabling a reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as sustainable

and socially relevant communities of socio-musical practice that are unique within their communities, enterprises which, as Thompson suggests above, are worthy of public support.

Cultural Democracy and Amateur Orchestras: Tensions and Challenges

Cultural democracy may be seen to consist of three interrelated factors: participation, democratic control, and cultural co-existence (Adams & Goldbard, 1995). However, when examined within the context of amateur orchestras, obvious tensions emerge, such as the existence of barriers to access and participation in amateur orchestral playing, limitations placed on direct democratic control by amateur players in ensemble affairs, and the singular status afforded to one particular cultural idiom despite the increasing diversity in communities.

Challenges to Cultural Democracy: Barriers to Access

Adams and Goldbard (1995) argue that "[c]ultural democracy proposes a cultural life in which everyone is free to participate" (n. p.). They emphasize the importance of free expression, the removal of censorship or artistic restrictions, and access to the instruments of cultural expression, "paper and pens and stages and musical instruments, as well as help in learning to use them" (n. p.). This suggests that access to outlets for artistic expression, such as amateur orchestras, is of critical importance. The value of these opportunities is noted by research participants (see Figure 20). One research respondent, for instance, pointed out that amateur orchestras "make music accessible for more people" (personal communication, February 25, 2012), while another commented, "[t]hey make orchestral music accessible to more people, both to perform and to hear" (personal communication, November 26, 2011). Another respondent added that amateur orchestras "bring classical music to those that would not be able to access it with ease" (personal communication, November 26, 2011), while another replied:

There are so many quality musicians who don't have the opportunity to play in the top

professional orchestras. Orchestras give us the opportunities to perform and experience a great

wealth of repertoire etc. (personal communication, February 25, 2012).

Yet the belief by amateur orchestral players that their orchestras are open and accessible

outlets for musical participation ignores the reality of the practical limitations inherent in the orchestral

tradition, in that opportunities for members of the public to "pop in and play" are not characteristic of

orchestral practice, nor is access to orchestral instruments widely available. Further, barriers such as

auditions, financial requirements for membership, or even mobility limitations which may keep amateur

orchestral players from their closest available orchestras, all serve to reduce participatory access to

amateur orchestral engagement.

Challenges to Cultural Democracy: Diminishment of Democratic Control

Adams and Goldbard's (1995) insistence that "cultural life itself should be subject to democratic

control" (n.p.) has important implications for amateur orchestras. As my research suggests, there is a

divergence in how these ensembles are overseen from the perspective of organisational governance, in

that while the majority of ensembles in the United Kingdom are run by committees comprised of players

from the ensemble, this is not the case for as many amateur orchestras in Ontario (see Figure 21). The

lack of player input in the decision-making process was discussed in Chapter Five and there are certainly

overtones of that discussion here; however, this issue also resonates strongly from the perspective of

cultural democracy**,** in that the additional layer of bureaucracy places democratic control on an

organisational level further out of reach for the members.

However, democratic control as understood within the framework of cultural democracy,

suggests a broader view of artistic ownership, in that the public, as stakeholders in local cultural life,

should have a say in how that culture develops to serve their needs (Adams & Goldbard, 1995). In other

words, "culture must be seen as a public interest" (ibid., n.p.). Yet despite this assertion, amateur

orchestras—like most arts organisations—are not usually subject to public oversight or governance. This raises interesting questions about the extent to which the public can, or should, influence the affairs of amateur orchestras, particularly if these ensembles are recipients of public funding.[1]

Challenges to Cultural Democracy: Cultural Dominance

Adams and Goldbard (1995) argue that "many cultural traditions co-exist in human society, and that none of these should be allowed to dominate and become an 'official culture'" (n. p.). However, the establishment of cultural equality within the cultural landscape is by no means universally lauded. The government of France, for instance, suggests that some elements of culture are "legitimate" while others are not (Canada Council for the Arts, 2012).[2] On a local level, the historical practice of privileging Western symphonic repertoire at the expense of local vernacular musics reinforces the perception that orchestral performance occupies an elite place in community arts. In my view, such thinking impacts the sustainability of amateur orchestras in two ways: first, it excludes those who play the "wrong" instruments or because they lack a certain form of musical training and, second, it severely limits the ability of amateur orchestras to engage effectively with ever diversifying communities, in that the traditions associated with the Western classical orchestral idiom may not resonate with the public as they once did.

Adams and Goldbard (1995) go on to suggest that "measures should be taken to preserve and promote cultural activities from the full array of traditions present in any community, not from just one of those traditions" (n. p.) adding that in order to co-exist in a multicultural environment, there must be mutual respect for all viewpoints and traditions. The tension here stems from the reality that amateur orchestras are not traditionally well-equipped, or even designed, to meet this challenge.

Community Music in Public Engagement: Cultural Democracy, Participation and Authentic Experiences

As "an expression of cultural democracy" that is concerned with "making and creating musical opportunities for a wide range of people from many cultural groups" (Higgins, 2012, p. 7), Community

Music practice suggests new ways of seeing the issues of accessibility, democratic control and cultural

inclusivity in an amateur orchestra context, enabling meaningful opportunities for public engagement

through various forms of "active arts participation rather than simply wider arts consumerism" (Higgins,

2012, p. 33).

Participatory engagement includes "[a]ctively engaging more people in the artistic life of society

notably through attendance, observation, curation, active participation, co-creation, learning, cultural

mediation and creative self-expression" (Petri, 2013, n. p.). This is supported by UNESCO's (2009)

statement on cultural participation, (part of its *Framework for Cultural Participation Statistics)* in which

the authors emphasize the value of "informal cultural action, such as participating in community cultural

activities and amateur artistic productions" (n. p.). This suggests that amateur orchestras are part of a

wider arts ecosystem in which opportunities for public contributions are considered important.

Brown (2008) expands on this notion, saying:

Audience engagement is both educational and participatory. It is about creating opportunities

for audiences to interact physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually with the form

beyond the role of being an observer. It is about empowering audiences to better appreciate

and connect with the meaning and impact of the art experience. Audience engagement

practices may be tied to specific performances, but also may occur independently (p.126).

This view of participatory engagement calls into question assumptions regarding artistic

ownership and suggests that the divisions between players and patrons which are traditionally

associated with orchestral performances may be softened. The implications of this view will be

discussed shortly.

Cultural Democracy and Public Engagement: Access and Participation through Authentic Experiences

Arts engagement has been described as "the entire spectrum of ways that people can be

involved in the arts" (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011b, p. 5), and implicit in this definition is the notion of

access and participation. As a critical component of cultural democracy, arts participation is "broadly

accepted to imply multiple modes of engagement—including attendance, interactivity through the

electronic media, arts learning, and arts creation, and a broader scope of contexts and settings (Brown &

Novak-Leonard, 2011a, p. 26). This viewpoint closely aligns with the Community Music view that "music

is and should be for all" (Veblen & Waldron, 2012, p. 204), that "access to individualized and group

musical experiences" (ibid., p. 207) should be universal, and that the "particular contribution people in

communities make to the artistic process, in partnership with the artist" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 187)

is of significant value.

The provision of "authentic experiences" (Cohen, 1988; Prentice 2001) represents an innovative

approach to the removal of participatory barriers. Authenticity involves "a higher level of cultural

experience for the audience provided by spiritual fulfillment and self-actualization through participation

in arts events and experiences" (Rentschler & Radbourne, 2008, p. 241).[3] In an amateur orchestral

context, this self-actualization occurs "through the ability to participate in the music-making process,"

(Wilby, 2013, p. 53). This includes "listening, learning, singing choruses, jamming, engaging in dialogues,

the full gamut of practices that would be encompassed within Small's (1998a) concept of 'musicking'"

(Wilby, 2013, p. 53). Increasingly, audiences are searching for a "backstage" experience as part of their

arts consumption and this search can be seen "as one of the main drivers for building relationships,"

(Rentschler & Radbourne, 2008, p. 241) between the public and arts presenters. As Wilby (2013)

suggests, "[i]t is through this 'genuine' level of experience that people's engagement with music appears

to become more profound than the mere act of consumption" (p. 54).

While there is concern that cultural performances such as concerts can often be contrived or

"staged" (Hinch & HIgham, 2004, p. 62) for consumption by audiences, others feel that such events can

become authentic experiences for audiences as long as "the object and its ownership have provenance,

thus providing an ideal standard and preservation of brand heritage (Leigh et al. 2006)" (Rentschler and

Radbourne, 2008, p. 241). I would suggest that in the context of an amateur orchestral performance, the

"object" referred to above is the ensemble itself, while "provenance" refers to the history or

development of the orchestra from within its own community.[4]

The notion that an amateur orchestra both comes from and belongs to its local community, in

that the public feels a sense of ownership or pride associated with it, is an important factor in public

engagement. As Rentchler and Radbourne (2008) point out, this has been strongly argued "in relation to

museum audiences (Prentice 2001), but is equally true for other types of arts audiences, such as in the

performing arts and at festivals and events (Urry 1991)" (p. 241). They go on to suggest that an

authentic experience is one which "has provenance in that it is providing knowledge and liminal

experiences of the world, whether old or modern, such that a true engagement with a culture is evoked

in audience members" (Rentschler and Radbourne, 2008, p. 242). In this sense, the repertoire presented

at an orchestral concert, whether a brand new composition or a well-known masterpiece, make up part

of that experience and the extent to which the audience is involved in its selection or production, or

given insight into the process of planning concerts, will increase the authenticity of the event, as "the

content of musical compositions and their deconstructions by audiences is secondary to the terms of

reference shared by those who are brought together" (Wilby, 2013, p. 58) by the performance. This is

supported by Lewis and Bridger's definition of authenticity, which includes "the desire to be involved in

the process of production" (2001). Recognizing that the public "want[s] to participate and be free to

express their engagement" (Rentschler and Radbourne, 2008, p. 250) enables authentic experiences

which are meaningful and which cultivate a collective sense of satisfaction and ownership.

Viewed as an opportunity for an inclusive, communal creative experience, performances by

amateur orchestras can be seen "not only as moments of shared consumption and reaction," (Wilby,

2013, p. 59) but also as events which consolidate communal identity "through the (re)affirmation of

friendship bonds, shared tastes, shared cultural terms of reference and, in the study of amateur music,

the possibility of rejecting 'mainstream' musical values," (Wilby, 2013, p. 59) or in the case of concert

presentation, mainstream traditions. In such a way, the public is granted a more authentic musicking

experience, in that they may achieve "an understanding . . . of amateur music, manifested through

shared practice, communal participation and interaction focused on the performance of, and

engagement with music" (Wilby, 2013, p. 59). This supports the view that "attendance is not purely, or

perhaps even primarily, an aural experience but a social ritual of profound importance to its

participants" (Babineau, 1998, p. 4).

Cultural Democracy and Public Engagement: Democratic Control

Another pathway to attenuating a level of cultural democracy in amateur orchestral practice is

through increased opportunities for participation in the democratic processes which govern amateur

orchestras, reflecting the Community Music view that "participation in decision-making creates a new

ownership" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 22) and that control over musical life should not be controlled by

"those who hold our society's musical purse-strings" (Stevens, 2007, p. IV), advocating for "the return of

music to all the people" (Birchard & Co., 1926, p. 9).

This is one aspect of cultural democracy that is prominent in the amateur orchestras that

participated in my research (see Figure 21). As one respondent remarked, "[t]he players/members are

the biggest part of the running of the orchestra. Most of the key roles apart from conducting are fulfilled

by orchestra players" (personal communication, May 5, 2012), while another described their

organisation as "quite democratic" (personal communication, June 23, 2012). Another respondent

noted the ill effects of imbalance in the decision-making process, saying, "[i]t can be a problem if one

person dominates the committee, and does not help the committee to work as a group for the good of

the orchestra" (personal communication, June 23, 2012).

Yet as I have argued, public engagement extends beyond the limits of the ensemble, giving all

members of the public the opportunity to take part in orchestral affairs. Offering greater input into

programming is one simple pathway to increased democratic participation for the public; however, as

was explored in Chapter Five, this kind of engagement has limitations in terms of its sustainability in

what is still a traditional orchestral environment. Further, many amateur orchestras adopt a model in

which players pay a yearly fee to remain members in good standing (see Figure 22), raising the question

of whether it is appropriate to grant the general public control over what is, essentially, a private

concern. These realities suggest that addressing the issue of democratic control from a public

perspective constitutes one of the "unresolved questions" (Webster, cited in Wiegold & Kenyon, 2015,

p. 176) with which orchestras—amateur or otherwise—must grapple.

Cultural Democracy and Public Engagement: Embracing Diversity

Amateur orchestras inhabit a diverse cultural landscape, reflective of the communities in which

these landscapes exist. In order to effectively coexist within the increasingly complex artistic mosaic of

our communities, amateur orchestras must embrace the concept of diversity, a critical aspect of cultural

democracy.

In one sense, amateur orchestras represent an aspect of diversity within the specific cultural

parameters of traditional classical music. This is the view of several research respondents (see Figure

23), who describe their ensembles as "a pathway . . . to the enjoyment of classical music" (personal

communication, October 5, 2013), as "important building blocks" (personal communication, June 23,

2012), and as "a substrata to our national musical life" (personal communication, March 10, 2012).

However, asserting their role as vital components of healthy cultural communities requires amateur

orchestras to do more than simply exist as part of a spectrum of traditions. A crucial aspect of cultural

democracy is the recognition and celebration of the diverse musics and cultural traditions which

comprise the communities in which these orchestras reside. Bau Graves (2005), for instance, observes

that "[e]lite, 'classical' arts . . . draw on [folk traditions] routinely for vitality and inspiration" (p.8), while

Higgins (2012) notes that the artistic establishment "has long drawn its most exciting new developments from its furthest fringes" (n.p.).

This attitude is also prominent in Community Music practice, which "embraces and respects a diverse world of musical styles and contexts" (Higgins, 2008, p. 31), while practitioners "recognize the value and use music to foster intercultural acceptance and understanding" (Higgins, 2012, p. 5), enabling "music to be played regardless of social barriers, encouraging musical activities at all levels of society" (Vatuaz, 1990, p. 381).

Authentic engagement with non-Western musics can be as simple as including examples on a concert program or as complex as innovative collaborations on a larger scale,[5] though ensembles that do so must remain wary of avoiding the perception of tokenism or patronisation of a particular segment of the public. Innovations which I would characterise as successful practice in this regard include BICMEM – the Brunel Institute For Contemporary Middle Eastern Music – an organization which promotes the "general cross-fertilization of Western and Middle Eastern music traditions" (Brunel University, 2015), giving composers an opportunity to create new orchestral music, drawing on their own musical and cultural roots. BICMEM exemplifies an approach to musical diversity which connects the traditional symphonic and non-Western genres, utilizing an idiom with which amateur orchestras are already familiar—that of symphonic writing. And while it is tempting to fall into the rhetoric of "bridging cultural gaps" through such activities, Higgins (2012) reminds us that "Western art music is *world* music, another tradition like the many others" (p. 128), suggesting that the boundaries which separate traditional orchestral performance from other forms are false ones.

Amateur Orchestras and Public Engagement: Blurred Lines, Social Capital and a New Paradigm for Community Engagement

In aspiring to the ideal of cultural democracy through authentic engagement that is participatory, democratic and that celebrates diversity, a new paradigm for envisioning amateur orchestras and community interaction becomes possible. The breaking down of socio-musical barriers

through increased access to orchestral activities calls into question the unique nature of both performer and audience, and enables the cultivation and circulation of social capital from within the ensemble to the community beyond, with benefits to wider society.

Public Engagement: Blurring the Lines between Amateur Orchestras and Audiences

While it is self-evident that audiences for amateur orchestral concerts constitute a segment of the public, a distinction must be made at this point between notions of "the public" and "the audience," in order to better conceptualise activities which might take place inside the concert venue that reduce the boundaries distinguishing the performer from the observer. Yet the traditional engagement strategies commonly employed by orchestras, such as the deployment of community outreach teams, do little to aid the reduction of these barriers, working instead within "comfortable parameters [which] fail to acknowledge the potential and power of shared music-making" (Webster, cited in Wiegold & Kenoyn, 2015, p. 151). As Oh and Wang (2011) suggest, the "social communication between the audience members is a by-product of active engagement, almost even an emergent property of a successful audience-participation design paradigm" (p. 3), further validating the value of shared musical experiences.

The kind of musical co-operation required for ensemble playing mirrors the need to hear and respect the opinions and contributions of others in the social sphere. As Stevens (2007) observes, an "important part of the process . . . is learning how to participate in a group" (p. 2). Engaging the public through active participation also realizes "the value of creativity in social and community development" (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 186).These comments reflect a view that musical participation in group music-making can foster the qualities necessary to build successful communities. Indeed, there are strong arguments to support the view that participation in ensemble playing, which both requires and enhances co-operation between participants, can improve our communities as a whole, as I will discuss later.

As Brown (2008) observes, "[s]ome practitioners in the field see audience engagement as blurring the line with the art-making itself" (Brown, 2008, p. 10); however, there are limits to the ways in which amateur orchestras might achieve this paradigm. Inviting the entire audience on stage to join in a performance, for example, would be impractical, and the latent necessity of instrumental ability among participants cannot be ignored. More important, though, is the question of the value of the performer/composer in society. As Moore, cited in Wiegold & Kenyon (2015) points out, there are ethical concerns surrounding the performance of a particular composer's work "and its distillation and appropriation as collective, creative property" (p. 68). Further, Webster, (cited in Wiegold & Kenyon, 2015), reminds us that "adjusting the presentation and packaging of performances can only go so far, and should not distract us from the core business of connecting with the wider community in music" (p. 147).

Public Engagement: Engaging Repertoire

Programming presents an obvious avenue for exploration in the mission of connecting with the community, in a manner which reflects the classical orchestral tradition. Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, for instance, is an example of orchestral music intended to engage the community in music making, in a format that is artistically meaningful and challenging, yet accessible. *Noye's Fludde* enables authentic experiences for participants, who are all engaged in the rehearsal/production process from start to finish. Examples of real-time, spontaneous audience participation include *Orkestra*, by Nicholas Bryan, in which volunteers from the audience are recorded grunting or making other vocalizations that are then uploaded live to a sound system to be integrated into the performance (Oh and Wang, 2011).

Jason Freeman's *Glimmer* allows audience members to "influence the actions of the orchestral musicians on stage" (Freeman, 2006, p.1), through the use of advanced technology which captures the movements of members of the audience and translates them into instructions for the musicians on-stage. This enables a "more collaborative musical experience" allowing audience members to "discover

their own creativity as they listen in new ways" (Freeman, 2006, p.1). In the words of the composer, the

separation between musician and audience member is intended to "make non-musicians and musicians

alike comfortable in participating" (Freeman, 2006, p.1). For the composer, a successful performance

would depend on "every audience member [believing] that the performance would have been different

without him or her" (p.3) and if the audience were able to "discover its limits, and find imaginative ways

to express their creativity by pushing against those limits" (p. 4). This belief is shared by Turino (2008),

who notes that the success of any cultural activity should be measured not just by the quality of the

product but also by "the level of participation achieved" (p. 29).

Such programming has potentially positive implications for amateur orchestras. As Radbourne

(2007) observes, "[a]udiences . . . will be fiercely loyal if they can experience fulfilment and realisation in

the arts experience" (p.3), while Brown & Novak-Leonard (2011b) note the potential for "a subtle but

fundamental shift in self-perception from a producer . . . to a facilitator of creative exchange and

aesthetic growth" (p. 37), enabling access to the aesthetic experience for the public as a whole.

Public Engagement: Amateur Orchestras and Social Capital

Shared experiences such as those attained through authentic participatory engagement with

amateur orchestras can help bind people together (Putnam, 2007, p. 164 cited in Jones, 2010), forming

more cohesive communities and building social capital, the latter described by Putnam as the

"connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that

arise from them" (Putnam, 1993, p. 19). Fukuyama (1999) adds that social capital can be seen as "an

instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals" (n. p.), while

Adler and Kwong (2000) cite Nelson in asserting that "frequent interactions among groups permits

faster dispute resolution and prevents the accumulation of grievances and grudges" (p. 106). Social

capital may be viewed, then, as an expression of democratic principles, which can be imbued and

reinforced through the shared musical experiences of audiences and performers alike. As such, the

generation of social capital through meaningful interactions within amateur orchestras is a significant

factor distinguishing them as unique socio-musical communities of practice, in service to their

communities.

The notion that musical engagement can help to condition participants for democratic or social

interaction is supported by research from several perspectives. Putnam (1993), for example, found a

positive correlation between engagement in community cultural activities and effective civic governance

in Italian communities (p. 2–5), observing that successful regional democracies were dependent on

participation in the "traditions of civic engagement" (p. 2) by the populace. Putnam observes that the

generation of social capital is often "a by-product of other social activities," and that the trust

established between participants is "transferable from one social setting to another." He notes that

"[m]embers of Florentine choral societies participate because they like to sing, not because their

participation strengthens the Tuscan social fabric. But it does" (p. 4–5).

Jones (2010) recounts the work of Stern and Siefert (2001; 2002) which found that active

engagement in community arts was a predictor of community revitalization in several measurable ways.

Jones (2010) also describes separate studies from Chorus America and the National Endowment for the

Arts which show that citizens who participate regularly in the arts also have higher rates of community

involvement. Jones' (2010) assertion that "musicking not only develops a sense of shared identity and

intercultural understanding, but also can teach skills for democratic action such as leading and following,

teamwork, debate, compromise and so forth" (p. 295), underlines the importance of extending

opportunities for musical engagement to the public.

The social networks extended through the creation and exchange of social capital in an

orchestral context has been observed by O'Sullivan (2009) who, in his study of symphony orchestra

audiences as consuming entities, points out that the services of arts providers, "are rendered by people

to people," extending the boundaries of the community "beyond consumers to the employees of the

service provider" (p. 219). The reciprocal nature of this experience, "where there is a personal as well as

an economic relationship between consumer and producer," is described by Goodwin (cited in

O'Sullivan, 2009) as "communality" (p.215). Goodwin's characterization of the artist/audience

relationship reflects a further level of social interaction, that of "camaraderie" (Fraering & Minor, 2006;

cited in O'Sullivan, 2009), which is characterized by "the affiliation felt between consumers with each

other within a consumption community" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p.224) and which can operate on several

levels, "from intimacy with immediate companions and neighbours, to less direct fellow feeling with the

general audience" (O'Sullivan, 2009, p.225).

     Stilz (2009) points out the ability for orchestras to foster corporate decision-making, observing

that, "members of an orchestra are obviously acting together in the service of a well-defined goal"

(p.191), an observation with which participants in my research agree (see Figure 23), expressing the

view that amateur orchestras "bring together people of all ages and backgrounds to work together on

something difficult but rewarding" (personal communication, December 11, 2011), that, "[t]here is less

competition between people—the aim is to be as good as you can, not better than the player next to

you" (personal communication, May 30, 2012) and that participation promotes "a kind of soft social

capital that may have wider benefits" (personal communication, December 11, 2011). One respondent

drew a direct link between orchestral participation and community cohesion, saying:

     Participating in making music with others is the epitome of team work, personally challenging

     and rewarding—therapeutic even—and socially cohesive too. It is not something you can do on

     your own so the organization is essential if that opportunity is to exist (personal communication,

     May 5, 2012).

     These comments reflect "a growing awareness of the civic leadership role that arts organizations

can and must play in their communities" (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011b, p. 37) and imply that the

societies which these communities comprise will benefit significantly from increased interactions

between audience members and players through the medium of amateur orchestras, which act as

"vehicles not just for music but for the powerful human desire for social intercourse" (Finnegan, 2007,

p.328).[6] As Bernard Keefe, in an address to the 36th annual meeting of the Standing Conference of

Amateur Music, states:

What then are the amateurs to do? I think they should aim at participation in community affairs,

rather than imitate the pattern of professional concerts . . . it would mean relating to the audience, and

making a positive contribution to communal life (Robinson, 1985, p. 97).

Redefining Public Engagement for Amateur Orchestras

Public engagement of the kind I have described aspires to "deepen relationships with existing

audiences and also build connections among prospective audiences" (Brown, 2008, p.128) and

recognises that "[t]he outcomes of engagement practices . . . are not attendance or ticket sales alone,

but impacts" (Brown, 2008, p.129) for their communities. Based on these arguments, I would humbly

suggest a new definition for public engagement that captures the spirit of cultural democracy through

authentic participation:

Public engagement is an accessible, democratic, participatory practice which recognizes the

variety and value of other cultural activities in the community, and invites members of this

diverse public to share in ever-evolving musical practices which are enriching to the individual,

the community, and society.

This definition suggests that amateur orchestras are called upon to become active partners in

local cultural life, by providing opportunities for participation in ensemble playing to a wider segment of

the public but also by acting as a pillar within a diverse cultural landscape, supporting the artistic

practices of others through an evolution of their own traditions. In so doing, they become generators of

social capital, helping to ensure more cohesive communities. This, in my view, constitutes working in the

public interest, making them worthy of support from all stakeholders in order that they might flourish as

unique, socio-musical communities of practice for generations to come.

Summary

This chapter has explored the subject of pubic engagement and its implications for amateur

orchestras, through the lens of cultural democracy. As a concept which encompasses important aspects

such as participation, democratic control and cultural co-existence, cultural democracy resonates

strongly with Community Music practice, inviting examination from this perspective. Yet the pursuit of

cultural democracy presents challenges for amateur orchestras, in that the restrictions inherent in

traditional orchestral ensembles are immutable to a certain degree. It is argued that the provision of

authentic experiences to the public through innovative programming which respects local diversity

presents an avenue for resolving these tensions.

Further, by blurring the lines which traditionally divide performers from the audience, it

becomes possible to undertake activities to engage the public in meaningful and authentic ways,

enabling the cultivation of social capital among all participants. In so doing, amateur orchestras not only

exemplify cultural democracy but become actors in the public interest for their diverse communities.

Notes

1. The Sudbury Symphony Orchestra (2014), for example, received $65, 626 in publically funded

   grants for the year 2013 (p. 9).

2. This policy statement from the French Ministry of Culture and Communications (cited in Canada

   Council for the Arts, 2012), describes two phases through which their strategy of cultural

   democracy may be achieved:

   > on one hand, the conservation and dissemination of inherited forms of 'high' culture,
   >
   > and on the other, support for creation in its popular/populist forms. The
   >
   > democratization of culture is a proselytizing action that involves converting society as a
   >
   > whole to an appreciation of works that are established and accepted or in the process of
   >
   > becoming so (p. 6).
   >
   > The statement is summed up with the assertion that cultural democracy is a means of

   "ensuring that the general population has access to culture – to 'cultivated' or legitimate

   culture" (Ibid.).

3. This has disputed by Grazian (2003), who characterizes the attempt to achieve authenticity in

   cultural experiences as "a failing prospect" (p. 11), because the concept itself is an "artificial

   construction" (Wilby, 2013, p. 57). However Wilby refutes this pessimism, saying "its symbolic

   potency . . . needs to be understood if we are to comprehend in greater detail the cultural

   character and significance of amateur music-making practices" (p. 61–62).

4. Gillian Moore (cited in Wiegold & Kenyon, 2015), offers this remark by playwright Mark

   Ravenhill in illustrating the importance of community provenance in the arts, saying that great

   works of art are derived from:

> . . . the specific, the local, the working with friends and neighbours . . . Great art is made from a great paradox: it is grounded in the local, the specific, the ephemeral and yet it achieves the metaphysical and cheats time and place (p. 56).

5. I was privileged to conduct such a concert with the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra in 2014 featuring *The Sultans of String*, a 'world music' ensemble which blends traditional orchestral writing with folk styles from various cultures. Their performance remains one of the best attended and most talked-about in recent local memory.

6. Daniel Barenboim (2003) goes so far as to say:

> If you wish to learn how to live in a democratic society, then you should do well to play in an orchestra. For when you do so, you know when to lead and when to follow. You leave space for others and at the same time you have no inhibitions about claiming a place for yourself (p. 173).

The degree to which his comments ring true within a traditional orchestral context is, perhaps, debatable, however the sentiment is relevant.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE CALL TO SOCIETY

The arts are the best insurance policy a city can take on itself (Dumas, cited in National

Performing Arts Convention, 2012).

The previous chapter examined the proposition that amateur orchestras promote the

generation of social capital and socio-musical cohesion, by providing opportunities for the public to

participate in musical activities which are diverse, meaningful and authentic. It could be argued that, in

so doing, amateur orchestras are actors in the public interest; therefore, this chapter proposes that it is

incumbent on society, including government and private enterprise, to support amateur orchestras

through the investment of human and financial resources, in order that they can continue to thrive as

unique, socio-musical communities of practice which benefit their communities.

Amateur Orchestras and Society: Cultural Democracy, Advocacy and the Public Good

It is generally understood that the structures which govern civil society are concerned with

upholding systems which act in the public interest; however, it is often the case that the cultural

sector—and particularly the amateur arts—are neglected in this regard. An exploration of the concept of

the public good, the role of advocacy for amateur orchestras as actors in the public interest, and the

renewed role played by cultural democracy will help to illuminate this issue.

Amateur Orchestras and Cultural Democracy (Reprise)

I have examined the concept of cultural democracy as it relates to public engagement. In this

context, I would suggest that it is incumbent on providers—i.e. governments—to ensure that the

conditions exist in which cultural democracy may thrive. Holden (2008), for instance, suggests that

cultural democracy is a system wherein "governments provide citizens with the tools and infrastructure

to understand the cultures of the past and create the cultures of the present" (n. p.). Similarly, Ivey

(2008) suggests that "citizens of a mature democracy possess a just claim to a cultural system that

enables them to engage heritage and expand individual creative capacity" (p.21). In other words, the

public ought to play an active role in public discourse surrounding the arts and should keep that

discussion at the forefront of political agenda by insisting on continued political commitment.

Such commitment is, in theory, present in some societies. Bunting (cited in Canada Council for

the Arts, 2012), for instance, affirms the importance of "investing in more accessible and democratic art

forms" and "supporting arts engagement at a local level" (p.10) in order to ensure a healthy and

sustainable arts landscape. Similar statements can also be found in Achieving Great Art for Everyone:

The Strategic Framework for the Arts published by Arts Council England in 2011, which sets out the

following long term goals:

> Our mission is Great Art for everyone. We work to get great art to everyone by championing,
>
> developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. Our aim in
>
> championing [Great Art] is to embed the arts in public life through advocacy and by brokering
>
> partnerships (p. 23).

Yet despite these avowed commitments, there is evidence that the support required to ensure

the sustainability of amateur orchestras is inconsistent (see Figure 24).

This is not to suggest that governments in developed countries such as Canada or England are

ignoring the arts and cultural sector; indeed, significant amounts are allocated by both national

governments each year for the support of cultural programs or events.[1] However, governments must

also recognize and support many priorities across a wide spectrum of categories, such as sports or

national media. It is, perhaps, unsurprising then to find that despite the affirmations of cultural

democracy put forward by governments such as those included above, performing arts funding accounts

for only a fraction of total cultural support. While it may seem unrealistic to expect any government

whose cultural commitments are so divided to devote significant attention to the activities of amateur

orchestras, promoting such activities, directly or indirectly through advocacy partners or arts funders, is

not only critical to ensuring the success and sustainability of these ensembles but is also, I contend, in the public interest.

Amateur Orchestras and the Public Good

Public interest can be defined as "public benefit, public good and the common good," in which members of the public share "a common purpose" (ICAEW, 2012, p.2). The arguments presented in this dissertation contend that while amateur orchestras benefit their members, who gain personal satisfaction through their socio-musical engagement, many benefits also accrue in the wider community, whose participation in and support of concerts and other musical activities creates the type of social bonding important in democratic and socially cohesive communities.

The concept of public interest includes "public goods"—materials or services which exist to benefit the public, which are "non-excludable and non-rival in consumption" (Kaul, 2000). Amateur orchestras fulfill these parameters, as they offer unique opportunities for intergenerational, artistic, educational and social engagement between members of both the ensemble and the public.

But while amateur orchestras and members of the public who support them assert the value of such activities "it is essential to recognise that the publicness of a good does not automatically imply that all people value it in the same way" (Kaul, 2000). Kaul continues by suggesting that the poor may not be able to take advantage of opportunities available with the public good as a goal. Further, those people who find themselves socially or financially isolated may not place high value on such experiences. Nevertheless, she asserts that "equity" in the distribution or availability of such opportunities is essential, and is a "public good" unto itself (Kaul, 2000). This supports the arguments made in Chapter Ten that orchestras must work towards reaching a more diverse segment of society, so that of the benefits associated with artistic engagement can be experienced by a wide spectrum of society. By so doing, amateur orchestras will demonstrate their credibility to the public and be worthy of "the confidence of those affected" (ICAEW, 2012, p. 3).

Amateur Orchestras and Advocacy for the Public Good

Despite their affirmed role as actors in the public interest, there remains vital work to be done

in maintaining interest in supporting amateur orchestras. It is in this capacity that arts advocacy

organisations play an important role. This is also significant from a Community Music perspective, in that

social justice and activism are hallmarks of Community Music practice. For instance, Veblen *et. al.* (2013)

note the long history of advocacy for Community Music work in North America, while Post (2006)

explores the relationship between social and political activism and advocacy through music from an

ethnomusicological perspective, acknowledging that "advocacy and music have been linked for years"

(p. 10). It is appropriate, then, to examine how advocacy can help to promote amateur orchestras as

vital, unique socio-musical entities.

There are notable exemplars of organizations focused on the advancement and well-being of

orchestras which through their advocacy act in the public interest. Orchestras Canada, for instance,

seeks to be "the united national voice of the Canadian orchestral community" (Orchestras Canada, n.d.),

and offers a range of services and supports to its members including advice on board governance,

financial planning and community partnerships (Orchestras Canada, n.d.).

As Catherine Carleton, the organization's director, refreshingly asserts, financial support for her

organisation "has actually remained pretty stable . . . the fact that that 26%, on average, has remained

in place has been incredibly helpful" (personal communication, August 23, 2011). This indicates that the

effectiveness of her organizations efforts has been recognized by government funders and also validates

society's role in supporting arts and culture programming. As Carleton notes, those responsible for such

decisions in government recognize the importance of arts activities:

> MP's that I have met with do have a recognition of the role that arts and culture play within
>
> their communities . . . they're MP's because they have real interest in their communities
>
> (personal communication, August 23, 2011).

While this seems to suggest that attention is being paid by funding authorities to orchestras, this

support may not be extended to amateur ensembles. Carleton, for instance, makes the point that public

policies do not strongly advocate for the cultivation of amateur arts, stating:

I think cultural policy possibly took a wrong turn at a point when we said we fund professional,

we don't look at what helps to produce a cultural thing in which professional activity isn't seen

as the logical outcome (personal communication, August 23, 2011).

In other words, professional activities often receive political attention at the expense of amateur

activities, which are often neglected.[2] This is unsurprising to observers such as Carleton, who notes that

organizations whose mandates may include amateur classical music advocacy are not plentiful in

Canada, saying:

. . . the number of organizations that are set up to reflect community /grass-roots organizations

— very low . . . are there organization that deal specifically with amateur arts stuff? I can pretty

much guarantee that there's not a high level of orchestral take up (personal communication,

August 23, 2011).

Carlton's observations suggest a certain degree of complacency among advocacy organisations

and funding bodies, in that there may be an assumption that amateur arts are either not in need of

advocacy and support, or that the current model is adequate to meet their needs.

By contrast, there are organizations in the United Kingdom whose specific focus is amateur

music. Making Music, for instance, seeks to "support and champion amateur musicians and music

groups" (Making Music, 2013), by acting as a resource in areas of governance, financial planning,

fundraising and marketing, and which advocates on behalf of amateur music of all stripes. Yet the scope

of activity included within Making Music's mandate is wide, encompassing all aspects of amateur music,

so that amateur orchestras are not necessarily areas of focus.

The apparent lack of specific focus on amateur ensemble activity at a national advocacy level suggests that amateur orchestras must focus on the socio-musical benefits of their ensembles in order to distinguish them from other arts organizations. This requires that amateur ensembles make clear to advocacy and funding organizations that they are not merely venues for entertainment or for the satisfaction of the leisure interests of a select few, but rather that they are unique and valuable cultural assets which act as generators of social capital for the benefit of the wider community. However, this also requires that amateur orchestras change their behaviours in order to incorporate the practices and policies which will enable them to fulfil that mandate. This is a crucial step in securing the recognition and support of advocacy groups, governments, funders or even private interests, in order to ensure that amateur orchestras remain visible, sustainable and successful actors in the public interest.

Music for All: Investment, Partnerships and the Lessons of Club Inégales

I have suggested the need for potential funders, such government or private industry, to devote the resources necessary to ensure the sustained presence of amateur orchestras in their communities. An exploration of the value of partnerships between these ensembles and local stakeholders reveals the extent to which such support may be seen as investment in the health of communities, as well as possible lessons for how amateur orchestras and local partners may work together to sustain and stimulate cultural diversity and growth in communities, as illustrated by the example of *Club Inégales*.

Investing in Music for All: Public and Private Support

The notion that businesses should act as conscientious corporate neighbours within their communities has garnered much attention in recent years. However, Stern (2015) points out that the ways in which this practice may be realized from the perspective of local amateur orchestras is often unclear, saying:

While "corporate social responsibility" is a term and evolving practice now ubiquitous in

business and some corners of the non-profit sector, it is less well-known and understood in the

arts and culture sphere (p. 11).

This disconnect may be attributed to a perceived lack of clarity regarding "the specific benefits

to businesses in an economic and financial sense that would flow from CSR [corporate social

responsibility] activities and initiatives" (Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 92), further complicated by the fact

that corporations must make decisions about where to direct their limited financial resources, and

community-level musical activities "may not be perceived as central or a priority in relation to the

company's other giving areas, such as education, community and economic development, environment"

(Stern, 2015, p. 29). This view is confirmed by the committee chair of one amateur orchestra in the

United Kingdom, himself a small business owner, who notes that "music is always going to be a very

small part of the corporate identity of any organisation and if it's a major part they won't be going for

amateur music making" (personal communication, July 16, 2012). Moreover, businesses tend to "look

for 'return on community'—the impact of their companies' investments in arts and culture on

community building, social cohesion, education, etc." (Stern, 2015, p. 25), adding further weight to the

suggestion that amateur orchestras have to prove their value in order to be considered for such

investment.

Another challenge arises from the lack of confidence on the part of business owners that public

support will also be provided, leading to fears that they alone will be expected to make investments in

activities for which there may be no immediate return. Therefore, governments are equally called upon

to recognize and assert their role as supporters of community level arts and culture, in order to spur

further investment from the private sector.[3]

When governments take the first steps in paving the way for private sector investment in

cultural endeavours, many stakeholders, including local arts organizations such as amateur orchestras,

are the benefactors. The Sage Gateshead development in Northern England exemplifies this potential,

illustrating the value of public investment as an enticement for the private sector to take on greater risk

in efforts to revitalize underdeveloped urban areas (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005), while at the same time

creating an artistic centre for use by groups from the wider community. The Cobweb Orchestra, for

instance, holds one of their "reading days" at the venue every year, an event which is of mutual benefit

to the orchestra and the arts centre, in that the ensemble has the opportunity to play in a premium

concert environment, while the Sage can demonstrate its commitment to the local arts and culture

sector, as well as its financial viability to its public and private investors.

Further, investments in cultural programmes of the type described above are a way for

governments to demonstrate to the public that they are serious about their role in fostering cohesive

and diverse communities. As Cameron and Coaffee (2005) suggest:

> [I]n Gateshead the use by the local authority of the arts as a catalyst for regeneration has
>
> involved a long-term strategy which might reasonably be described in words which, in
>
> contemporary discourse, are not usually associated with the public sector, words such as:
>
> initiative, enterprise, imagination, risk and courage (p. 55).

While Cameron and Coaffee note that the above descriptors are not commonly used in the

public sector, I would suggest that they are commonly associated with the creative sector, further

strengthening the argument supporting the need for a strong relationship between both public and

private investment and socially relevant arts practices, such as community orchestras. Further, there is

evidence that the public favourably views companies which prioritize support for the cultural sector, in

that "by supporting the arts the business community is supporting a set of activities that many

Canadians value highly" (Gregg *et al.*, 2015, p. 10), and that "if that support is directed toward greater

accessibility of the arts then that will be furthering an important public goal" (Gregg *et al.* p. 25).

Investing in Music for All: Community Partnerships

Private enterprise has a potentially powerful role in supporting local orchestral music and while

examples of corporate sponsorship in the orchestral world can be found, they tend to be large-scale

endeavours which focus on professional ensembles whose marketing or outreach apparatus are often

equally large. While the value of such partnerships is not being questioned here, the reality is that they

are not as plentiful as they once were,[4] suggesting that amateur orchestras must rely on partnerships

with local small business to help promote or support their organizations.

In fact, many amateur orchestras may resist entering into partnerships with large corporate

bodies, in favour of cultivating relationships with small, local, community-based businesses. As one

committee chair who participated in my research explained, support from large corporations was not

seen as a crucial goal, saying, "I could answer both yes and no to that. Their involvement and support is

important, but it's not critical to our survival" (personal communication, 20 November, 2012). Another

orchestra administrator indicated that such involvement impacted notions of ensemble identity, saying:

> [Y]ou need to engage the local, the unique, the one-off and the specialist . . . if you engage with
>
> the corporate, and the mega, you actually squeeze and flatten and press out the very warm-
>
> centred heart that is necessary to make it work at all (personal communication, July 16, 2012).

In other words, once an ensemble becomes too involved with or reliant on corporate support,

there is the risk that the ensemble might compromise its identity as something which belongs to the

community. This has implications from a Community Music perspective, which asserts that the

distinctiveness of any cultural activity should be celebrated and maintained (Moser & McKay, 2005;

Higgins, 2012).

Further, my research indicates that relationships cultivated with other community organisations,

such as schools or churches, are seen by amateur orchestra organisers as equally valuable. For example,

one committee member replied, "our connections with churches are that we can provide a service when

they are trying to raise money, and that can be very important to them . . . for us it's our main source of

revenue, so it's mutually beneficial" (personal communication, May 12, 2012). The president of another

British orchestra points to the successful engagement his orchestra has "with the schools through the

music service . . . there's a very good atmosphere" (personal communication, February 25, 2012). He

goes on to describe the importance of engaging in activities which are of importance to the community

as a whole, adding, "We do a joint concert with the hospice . . . that's another thing that the town holds

very dear to its heart" (personal communication, February 25, 2012).

The idea that orchestras should support a cause universally lauded by its community is

supported by the conductor of one Ontario amateur orchestra, who asserts the importance of

"attaching music to social cause" (personal communication, December 8, 2012). For instance, under

leadership of Matthew Jones, the Timmins Symphony Orchestra undertook an ambitious project to

commemorate the 100th anniversary of the city of Timmins, a town located in a remote part of north-

eastern Ontario whose economy is heavily reliant on the gold mining industry. The orchestra

commissioned a musical called "Heart of Gold", based on the history of the town, a project which

brought together local musicians, writers, an amateur theatre company, the city government, and the

local history museum. The event was not only successful from a financial standpoint, but it also served

as a reminder to all participants of what may be achieved through community-wide collaboration.

It is enlightening to discover that the relationships which help to stimulate public engagement

and generate social capital are seen by amateur orchestra organisers to be of greatest value. Such

partnerships illustrate the point that these ensembles are not only "well suited as agents for social

change, partners for community improvement" (Webster, 1994, p.119), but they also exemplify the

belief that "[t]he orchestra is, or should be, in partnership with its community" (Webster, 1994, p.16).

Investing in Music for All: Lessons for Amateur Orchestras from Club Inégales

What emerges from the discussion above is a sense that amateur orchestras will be more successful if they engage with local partners with whom there may be a shared interest. The potential benefits of cultivating relationships with like-minded local partners, as well as possible lessons for amateur orchestras, may be explored through the example of *Club Inégales*, a unique concert venue in London, UK.

Case Study: Club Inégales

Club Inégales provides a unique musical experience in which special guest artists—ranging in style from Baroque singers to West African folk musicians—collaborate with the "house band" Notes Inégales (Club Inégales, n.d), presenting diverse concerts which appeal to lovers of all forms of music. Programming at Club performances give equal voice to these diverse musics, incorporating them seamlessly into the concert in a way that is reflective not only of the broad spectrum of music which comprises London's cultural and artistic landscape, but which also realises the celebration of diversity through its performance. Further, the nature of the music performed at the Club—improvised and instrumentally non-specific—ensures that there is potential for all participants, even audience members, to join in the music-making, an activity which has occurred at the Club in the past. The space itself is small and intimate, with no defined "stage," so that audience members sit around and up close to the performers, in effect dissolving the traditional boundaries that separate performers from patrons. Players and audience members frequently mingle before, during and after the concert, strengthening the authenticity of their experience. Finally, the improvised music performed at the Club is inherently democratic, in that it allows participants to express themselves creatively while contributing equally to the performance. It is this potential for authentic participatory engagement through democratic and diverse music which exemplifies cultural democracy and promotes social capital through socio-musical engagement.

Yet it is the relationship with the Club's hosts which is of greatest significance, in that the performance venue is a basement bar owned by Hodge, Jones and Allan, a London law firm with a special interest in social justice that regularly works with diverse cultural or ethnic groups who come from disadvantaged communities. As such, the concept of cultural democracy is represented in the community-conscious corporate identity of the firm, bringing both it and Club Inégales into a measure of philosophical alignment. This relationship benefits both parties, in that Hodge, Jones and Allan are seen to be supporting valuable cultural activity, while Club Inégales has access to a unique performance space which suits the ensemble's purpose. Most poignantly, though, this collaboration between the corporate and the artistic has provided a space for authentic shared experiences which reflect the notion of cultural diversity that lies at the core of meaningful public engagement as I have presented it. In this way, Club Inégales serves as an example of how small arts organizations, partnering with local stakeholders, may benefit both themselves and the wider community.

This example illustrates that the successful pairing of small-scale arts organizations and local business can result in opportunities for musical events which are unique and enjoyable for all stakeholders, made possible in part because of the alignment of the goals and identities of both organizations. However, such successes "require both arts and corporate sectors to learn from their peers as well as from one another about exemplary models and approaches" (Stern, 2015, p. 31). In other words, in order to find appropriate matches between community arts organizations and private industry there must be an effort on the part of both sides to educate each other about the benefits of corporate sponsorship of local arts programs. As Stern (2015) suggests:

> More storytelling to elevate compelling examples of how corporations engage the arts as strategies to enhance their community/ societal impact would help promote understanding and learning among peer corporations inclined to give more to the arts to advance their priority social causes and encourage others to consider engaging the arts in the first place. Likewise, arts

leaders need to become more knowledgeable and conversant in the language and important

business objectives that can be addressed through the work of arts and cultural organizations

and artists (p. 31).

This represents a valuable lesson for amateur orchestras, in that the goals cultivating social

capital and fostering cultural democracy through authentic participatory engagement for the community

are achievable, provided there is open dialogue and an awareness of the shared responsibility on the

part of ensembles and their investors to the cultural health of their communities.

Interestingly, parallels can be drawn between the activities of *Club Inégales* and the practice of

amateur orchestras. For instance, just as *Club Inégales* performances occur in a venue which is small and

which has been donated, so, too, do many amateur orchestras perform in local churches, school

auditoriums, community centres and the like, made possible by maintaining strong partnerships with

their hosts. There is also the example of *Academy Inégales*, an artistic development program hosted by

Club Inégales and the Institute of Composing (Club Inégales, n.d.), which is "[m]ade up of people from all

sorts of backgrounds, and not all are musicians" (The Cusp, 2016). The parallel here is that while

amateur orchestras represent a non-professional aspect of traditional orchestral performance, the

Academy represents a non-professional aspect of the *Club's* practice. Moreover, I have already pointed

out instances in which amateur orchestra directors find themselves in unique positions whereby their

power as leaders is checked by the power of the players, albeit on an organisational level. This power

dynamic exists on a musical level within the *Club* context, in that the nature of the music being

performed requires the band leader and musicians to share responsibility for music making.

Where these examples differ is in their musical practice. Whereas amateur orchestras remain

committed to performing standard works of the classical canon*, Club Inégales* crosses stylistic and

cultural borders, using score realisation and improvisation as the principle musical approaches. The

comparison raises the question of whether the *Club* example represents a pathway to an evolving form

of practice, and suggests the need for amateur orchestras to explore their communities for

opportunities to collaborate with diverse local artists, such as dancers, folk musicians, poets, or digital

artists. Amateur orchestras might also consider altering the configuration of the concert space, to the

extent possible, in order to create a more inclusive atmosphere for audiences. Most importantly,

though, amateur orchestras are encouraged to establish partnerships with local stakeholders for whom

the social health of their community is a concern.

In this way, amateur orchestras and their stakeholders can work together to achieve "the

double bottom line of healthy society and business" (Stern, 2015, p. 31), thus reinforcing the role of

amateur orchestras as unique, sustainable actors in public interest for their communities.

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Summary

</div>

This chapter argues that amateur orchestras, because of their role as generators of authentic

participatory experiences which foster the generation of social capital, are actors in the public interest.

Society is therefore called upon to make the investments necessary to support and sustain amateur

orchestras so that they can continue to play their important role in maintaining cohesive societies. Such

support should be seen as an investment in healthy communities, a view for which greater advocacy is

needed in order to secure partnerships with willing investors, both public and private.

On a local level, those who are involved with the administration of amateur orchestras assert

the value of small-scale partnerships, in order to preserve the unique nature of their ensembles. Such

collaborations are possible if amateur orchestras find partners with whom they share common interests

or characteristics, as illustrated by the example of Club Inégales in London, UK. Club Inégales exemplifies

innovations in performance which exhibit aspects of cultural democracy, making them ideal partners for

local businesses who are equally community-minded. This represents a valuable lesson for amateur

orchestras, in that both they and their investors must maintain an open discussion about their shared

roles as actors in the public interest. Through such innovative and meaningful community partnerships,

the sustainability of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical communities of practice is assured.

Notes

1. For instance, in 2011 Arts Council England granted £81,593,620 to music-related events in England, twenty percent of total arts funding for that year (Arts Council England, December 2011, pg. 29). For the year 2003/2004 in Canada, total cultural funding from all levels of government stood at $7.3 billion (Canada Council for the Arts, October 2005, pg. 7), however $402.8 million of that total was allocated to the performing arts (p. 10), less than one percent of total funding.

2. As an example, Orchestras Canada maintains a listing of orchestras for each province, catalogued by budget size. This means, for instance, that the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra – a community orchestra, as defined by the Ontario Arts Council (Ontario Arts Council, 2015) – is grouped with The Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra and the McGill Chamber Orchestra, both internationally renowned professional ensembles (Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra, 2016; Montreal Times, 2016), making it difficult to compete for attention.

3. As Business for the Arts (2015) points out, for instance, private funders tend to be less committed to supporting community arts when there is a perceived lack of support from the public sector. The authors state:

    > While Canadian businesses are increasing their investment in the arts, those surveyed emphasize that government support of the arts is essential and only 23 per cent of large companies stated that they would increase support if government cuts occur (n.p.).

4. In fact, as of 2015 several major financial sponsors—including two mining corporations, one national bank, and one government funding agency—have opted to discontinue their historic support of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, creating a funding shortfall in the tens of thousands of dollars.

CHAPTER TWELVE: SYNTHESIS

This story is one of love and devotion. The participants in it came together to share their love of

music with each other and the community at large (Hill, 2011, p. 210).

I have called for a reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical

communities of practice which may be considered "community orchestras" because of the singular and

important role they play in society. This chapter represents the culmination of the discussions and

explorations which lead to this conclusion, presenting a synthesis of the arguments and the concept of

communities of practice in the context of the amateur orchestra.

Synthesis: Reviewing the Arguments

A brief review of the arguments and explorations from the preceding chapters of this thesis

provides a foundation for a synthesis of key concepts.

The overarching themes which emerge from an analysis of the research data suggest three

interrelated concepts: amateur identity; socio-musical interaction; and community engagement. In

addition, the two paradigms of traditional symphony orchestras and Community Music are juxtaposed

to establish a framework for the reconceptualization of amateur orchestras as unique, socio-musical

communities of practice which can rightly be described as "community orchestras."

Amateur orchestras occupy a unique territory in the orchestral landscape, distinguished by the

concepts of amateurism, serious leisure and community. These ensembles balance the practices of

traditional symphony orchestras and the socio-musical practices associated with Community Music.

Further, tensions arise from the increased professionalization in amateur orchestras. Adopting

the characteristics and attitudes of Community Music facilitation and mentorship enables the cultivation

of positive socio-musical exchanges and fosters a culture of musical achievement among participants.

This requires an approach to conservatoire training which adopts concepts associated with Community

Music and allows for the development of a new kind of practitioner able to work effectively in a variety

of artistic contexts.

In addition, adopting practices and attitudes commonly associated with Community Music

enables school ensembles to promote individual artistry and life-long ensemble participation.

Improvisation, as a commonly adopted performance practice in Community Music circles, is an enticing

vehicle for improving music education in this regard; score realisation and directed improvisation are of

particular value.

A critique of the El Sistema phenomenon reveals critical differences between the El Sistema

model and Community Music. A comparison of these phenomena offers lessons on socio-musical

engagement for amateur orchestras.

Moreover, concepts of cultural democracy, such as access, democratic control and diversity,

suggest innovative approaches to public engagement through the provision of authentic participatory

experiences which generate social capital and, thus, act for the public good.

Finally, as actors for the public good, amateur orchestras are deserving of support from public

and private community stakeholders.

Synthesis: Community Orchestras, Communities of Practice, and The Manifesto

In many ways, amateur orchestras fit the commonly understood definition of "communities of

practice" (Wenger-Trayner, 2015; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002; Brown & Duguid 1991; Lave and

Wenger 1991), in that they are characterized by the collective pursuit of a particular activity. Yet this

alone does not characterise amateur orchestras as "unique," particularly in comparison to other

ensembles. Moreover, Wenger advises that such conceptions are overly simplistic, saying that "[a]

community of practice is not just an aggregate of people defined by some characteristic" (Wenger, 1999,

p. 73–74). Examining the critical issues which ensue from the discussions that have led to this point will

highlight the uniqueness of amateur orchestras as socio-musical communities of practice, and open a

pathway for the establishment of a new paradigm which enables a reconceptualization of amateur

orchestras as "community orchestras." I propose a manifesto for this new paradigm; a call to action

which outlines the steps necessary for creating the conditions under which community orchestras will

prosper.

Synthesis: Amateur Orchestras as Unique Communities of Practice

Amateur orchestras are unique communities of practice. They:

1.   . . . are distinguished by the influence of "musicking" (Small, 1998) in their practice.

Christopher Small's concept of "musicking" as a primarily social activity, in which participants

engage in the "spontaneous affirmation of identity" (Small, 2011, p. 379) through shared musical

experiences creates a unique identity defined by a common desire to improve in their chosen activity

through regular interaction in an environment of mutual support, engagement and validation (Wenger-

Traynor, 2015, n. p). This environment of mutual validation "can become a very tight node of

interpersonal relationships" (Wenger 1999 p. 76), because participants "sustain dense relations of

mutual engagement around what they are there to do" (ibid.) Mutual engagement, then, "is what

defines the community" (Wenger, 1999, p. 74).

Further, amateur orchestras exhibit characteristics of unique communities of practice because

of their focus on inclusion and belonging: "[B}eing included in what matters is a requirement for being

engaged in a community's practice, just as engagement is what defines belonging" (Wenger, 1999, p.

76). In addition musicking involves mutual engagement in a "communal regime of mutual

accountability" (p. 21), and "in which all those present are involved and for whose nature the quality,

success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility" (Small, 1998, p. 10).

That amateur orchestra participants view themselves as engaging in serious leisure also

highlights the unique nature of these communities since it is consistent with developing an "ethos" and

"strong identification" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 6–7) with orchestral practice. Most importantly, the

conventions of traditional orchestras are counterbalanced with the socio-musical implications inherent

in a "musicking' community of practice.

    2.   . . . are environments in which the tensions created by the substantial interaction between

        amateur and professional musicians can be addressed through a focus on positive socio-

        musical engagement .

    Far from the utopic ideal often implied by the rhetoric surrounding descriptions of the

orchestras-as-societal-model, orchestras are not—and have never been—"comfortably self-contained or

unremittingly harmonious" (Ramarine, 2011, p. 348), nor is perfect cohesion considered a precondition

for viable communities of practice. Wenger (1999), for instance, points out that "[m]ost situations that

involve sustained interpersonal engagement generate their fair share of tensions and conflicts" (p. 77).

    It may be challenging for professional musicians to become members of two communities of

practice, a condition which Wenger (1999) describes as "multimembership" since there are "competing

demands that are difficult to combine into an experience that corresponds to a single identity" (p.

viii). However, by adopting skills and attitudes characterized by mutual respect and collaboration and by

forming mentoring relationships, it is possible for professional musicians to engage in positive socio-

musical relationships with their amateur colleagues and by so doing enable amateur orchestras to

function as unique communities of practice. While navigating this terrain requires a broader skillset then

is cultivated in most conservatoires—the example of the Performance and Communication Skills

Department at the Guildhall suggest that that this is possible.

    3.   . . . are committed to life-long musical learning.

    As unique communities of practice, amateur orchestras are committed to stimulating a desire

for life-long ensemble engagement and to providing experiences and opportunities for musical learning.

In order to achieve these goals, a radical shift in practice is necessary. Score realisation and directed

improvisation offer opportunities for participants and for students who are only "peripherally" involved

in ensemble education to become more fully engaged, developing skills and artistry that will enable

them to become more engaged and creative members of their ensembles.

4.   . . . contribute to the social health of their communities through meaningful opportunities

for public participatory engagement.

As unique communities of practice, amateur orchestras improve the communities they serve by

generating social capital and promoting cultural democracy. By engaging in "legitimate peripheral

participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), by providing "modified forms of participation that are structured

to open the practice to non-members" (Wenger, 1999, p. 32), members of the public are afforded

opportunities to gain insight into the practices and experiences associated with amateur orchestral

participation. In order to fulfil this role, amateur orchestras:

must provide access to all three dimensions of practice . . . mutual engagement with other

members, to their actions and their negotiation of the enterprise, and to the repertoire in use

(p. 32).

As unique communities of practice amateur orchestras must to recognise the equal value of all

potential participants and the cultures they represent. While this is challenging, employing practices

such as those described in this thesis—directed improvisation, score realisation—or judiciously selected

examples from the repertoire make it possible to open a pathway to more successful and diverse public

engagement.

5.   . . . are important and effective partners in community life.

Amateur orchestras can be characterised as unique communities of practice because the

partners who support them are stakeholders in their success and are thus implicated in their practice. It

is, therefore, important that amateur orchestras negotiate the terms of their partnerships with advocacy

groups, funders, sponsors, and even venue provider, in ways which reflect their core values. The

example of *Club Inégales* represents this politic of participation, in that the partners of *Hodge, Jones,*

and Allen are interested on a human level in the *Club's* activities: the institutional goals of both parties are in alignment.

6.   . . . must ensure that in striving to fulfil their expanded role, they do not lose their unique identity.

Debate continues about whether ensembles associated with El Sistema and indeed Community Music ensembles can be characterised as communities of practice since the sheer variety of activities which are encapsulated by either phenomenon makes defining the nature of these ensembles difficult. In order to maintain their character a unique communities of practice, amateur orchestras must learn from the challenges faced by these ensembles. The reconceptualization of amateur orchestras requires that they exhibit qualities of traditional and non-traditional ensembles, strive improve the social condition of the communities they serve, embrace all styles and cater to all cultural needs, there is a danger that in seeking to become all things to all participants the uniqueness of these communities will be diluted.

A New Paradigm

Amateur orchestras can be reimagined as unique communities of practice which embody characteristics of traditional orchestra and Community Music practices and which enrich the lives of participants and their communities. By adopting a new paradigm amateur orchestras can be transformed into vibrant and sustainable "community" orchestras.

The Manifesto for Community Orchestras

I propose a call to action for this transformation:

Whereas community orchestras are unique, socio-musical communities of practice which are characterised by the socio-musical engagement of amateur musicians and a culture of musical achievement fostered by positive interactions between amateur and professional members;

Whereas community orchestras provide opportunities for participatory engagement for amateur orchestral players and members of the public;

Whereas community orchestras embody the concepts of community engagement and cultural democracy;

Be it resolved that:

If amateur orchestras achieve a balance between the demands of the traditional symphonic paradigm and aspects of amateurism, serious leisure and community—what might be encapsulated in Small's (1998) concept of "musicking"—exhibited by amateur musicians;

If the behavioural paradigms at play in the amateur context are such that the interpersonal relationships between amateur and professional players and conductors foster a culture of musical achievement through well-established modalities such as mentorship;

If the training grounds for future orchestral professionals promote positive attitudes towards amateur socio-musical engagement through innovative and collaborative real-world music-making experiences and focus on the development of total practitioners able to thrive in diverse creative and community contexts;

If school ensembles adopt an approach which encourages and enables students to participate in amateur orchestral performance throughout their lives, by fostering individual artistry through innovative practices such as score realisation and directed improvisation;

If amateur orchestras take the lessons offered by other socially oriented ensembles seriously, by attending to the socio-musical needs of participants, striving for musical excellence, and ensuring access to diverse music making opportunities;

If amateur orchestras act according to the principles of cultural democracy in their interaction with the public, through programming practices which respect and engage with the diverse elements of their communities;

And if all stakeholders work towards forging creative and effective partnerships which promote amateur orchestras as a public good;

Then the conditions under which community orchestras will thrive, and continue to serve and represent their communities, are assured.

Summary

This chapter represents the culmination of the arguments, discussions and explorations presented in this thesis. The synthesis of these discussions is presented in the form of a manifesto, highlighting the critical issues for consideration in this new paradigm and outlining the ways in which amateur orchestras may be regarded as unique, socio-musical communities of practice that may be best described as "community orchestras."

CONCLUSION

It is patently obvious that drastic steps must be taken if there is to be any substantial improvement in community orchestras in the next twenty-five years (Schabas, 1966, p.11).

In drawing my writing to a close, I reflect on the challenges and transformations experienced on my academic, musical and personal journey. In addition, I am conscious of the importance of the issues raised to the current challenges facing many amateur orchestras. For example, the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra—which has provided the impetus for much of this research—is currently undergoing significant financial and socio-musical upheaval, with its very future at stake. This adds urgency and relevance to the critical and personal examination of my work.

Critical Reflections: The Research, the Journey and the Challenges Going Forward

My review examines critically the academic approach taken and provides an opportunity for reflection on my personal journey towards a new understanding of the nature of ensembles with which I have had a life-long association. This reflection also highlights the challenges which amateur orchestras currently face.

Critical Reflections: Process, Questions, Future Research

Although I believe that the results of my field research are valid and offer some important insights into the nature of amateur orchestras and the issues which are affecting their sustainability, reflecting on the process followed in my research raises some issues. For example, the process of distributing questionnaires at rehearsals was an efficient means of reaching potential research participants and enabled me to observe the environment first hand, and my frequent participation as a violist also granted me greater access; however, my very presence at rehearsals also made me highly visible—it was not long before everyone knew who I was and why I was there—potentially influencing the data. More importantly, though, I became a temporary part of the groups I was studying, raising the

ever-present issue of researcher bias and the degree to which my participation influenced the data, or even my own perspective. This is a critical issue for consideration as I contemplate future research.

In addition, framing the research questions differently could have generated alternative results. For example, the question "*why* are community orchestras important?" produced a type of response that would have been different had the question been phrased as "*are* community orchestras important?" Or, questions such as "Can you describe a positive/negative encounter with one of your colleagues/conductor?" could have more clearly elucidated important aspects of the relationship in the amateur orchestral context. Also, I refrained from asking participants to identify their instruments so as to avoid any stereotypes which might persist regarding the personality traits of certain instrumentalists; however, many respondents self-identified in this regard, suggesting that future research into psychological associations with particular instruments among amateur musicians might be fruitful.[1]

Further, I retained the same questionnaire content for the entirety of the data collection phase, yet coding the responses in the early stages with a test sample might have suggested the need to adjust or revise the questions. The same could be true for the interview questions; Rubin and Rubin (2011), for example, suggest the use of a "responsive interviewing model . . . in which questions evolve with the study" (p. 91). Again, alternative responses may have resulted from these adjustments.

There are instances in which the interpretation of results could be different. For instance, the number of respondents who indicated that they had been encouraged by their teacher to join their local amateur orchestra is comparatively low, however the degree to which this result is influenced by the way in which the question was asked and interpreted, or the personal circumstances of individual respondents, remains unclear. While I do not believe that the overall findings of my research are compromised by this variance, further investigation into the reasons for these results is needed. Moreover, while the similarities between orchestras in Ontario and the United Kingdom identified in this thesis highlight important issues, the data also reveals differences. I have presented the results primarily

as an aggregation however it is also possible to compare data from either geographical sampling of research participants. A comparative re-examination of the data from this perspective might reveal new insights and suggest new avenues for research into the differences between British and Canadian amateur orchestral musicians.

It is possible that my own viewpoint as a professional player/conductor/educator that interacts with amateur orchestral musicians on a regular basis has influenced the research design or led me to favour a particular hypothesis prior to the completion of my research. While at the beginning of the process I held some strong opinions about the direction my ensemble should take, I attempted to ensure that the research was not an opportunity to promote those views. Rather, my intention was to explore, as open-mindedly as possible, new ways of knowing and doing for amateur orchestras in an increasingly complex social and cultural landscape. While some of my initial views were confirmed by my research, my thinking has evolved considerably and my current views are informed by many new concepts. Of particular significance are my deeper understanding of Community Music, of the nature of artistic leadership and the importance of evolving practice.

Moreover, research which examines the relationship between amateur orchestras and their communities, with a focus on the impact these ensembles might have on specific aspects of community life such as mental health or local business development, would be valuable in furthering an understanding of the importance of these ensembles. While my research highlights the importance of stakeholder support, more work needs to be done to better understand the complexities of these relationships. In addition, a study examining the efficacy of a hybrid student-community orchestra model, such as that of the London College of Music, might suggest valuable lessons for amateur orchestras as they seek to reconceptualise their role. Lastly, musical practices such as score realisation and directed improvisation have tremendous potential for encouraging musical growth and skill, and

more work examining how such approaches may be adapted for the amateur orchestral context is

needed.

Critical Reflections: My Journey as Researcher

I came to this project with little experience in ethnomusicological research and can attest to a

significant degree of trepidation in undertaking this work. However, the personal discoveries which

accompanied my academic explorations have been rewarding. I have reviewed and examined academic

material from a wide range of practices, and I have been forced to closely and constantly re-examine my

own writing in an effort to achieve greater precision and impact. I am richer for the experience.

In discovering the field of Community Music, I have been introduced to a world view which has

tremendous appeal as an area of academic inquiry, particularly as it relates to the work of non-

professionals in small communities similar to my own. Community Music is a field rich with social and

cultural variety, and the people who work within it share a genuine passion for their involvement. This

has been enlightening from a professional standpoint, and I believe my own performance, teaching

practices and interactions with the community are better for the exposure to this movement. However,

examining Community Music also reveals critical issues for consideration, such as the pervasive belief in

music's ability to bring about social improvement. Often, there is an unwillingness to examine critically

the limits of such interventions and the continuous tensions between musical quality and the

phenomenon's inclusive ethos. These issues are worthy of further debate particularly as they relate to

amateur orchestral engagement.

Equally important, though, this research is relevant to the issues currently facing the Sudbury

Symphony Orchestra with which I am closely associated as player, conductor and board member. While

some of these challenges are unique to the Sudbury context, many are reflected to a greater or lesser

degree in many of the orchestras included in this research.

One of the most significant issues for the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra results from the tensions which exist between amateur and professional players which have arisen due to the increased professionalization of the orchestra. Discussions with local amateur players (beyond the responses included in the research) reveal lingering resentment resulting from a sense that professional players are privileged in the organization, and that the dedication and commitment shown to "their" orchestra by community musicians is undervalued. In addition, the orchestra is facing a financial crisis resulting in part from this professionalization, and serious budget cuts have had to be made as a result of which some professional musicians have left the ensemble. In addition, several major corporate and public sponsors have withdrawn their support adding to an already precarious situation.

The orchestra is at a crossroads, being forced to question its very nature as an ensemble. It must re-evaluate its policies regarding the recruitment of new community members, and explore new and creative ways to forge meaningful relationships with local schools and diverse community groups, in order to build a more diversified audience base and to be recognised as a valued contributor to the health and vibrancy of the community. Reaching out to more diverse local partners, embracing the cultural mosaic which comprises the community, and embarking on projects which expand and evolve traditional programming practices in order to involve more of the public in the orchestra's affairs are ways forward in this regard.

The socio-musical framework presented in this thesis suggests pathways for examining these very issues, enabling new perspectives and practices which are essential if this orchestra and others like it are to thrive. Yet there is still much to learn about the impact of these practices. For instance, what is the effect on programming and performance if the role of the "band leader" (Wiegold, 2015) is adopted by conductors? To what extent can concepts such as participation and hospitality be applied in the local context? How far can the Sudbury Symphony go in attempting to reach the ideals of diversity and cultural democracy as I have described them without losing its core identity as an orchestra? I contend

that by answering these questions the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra will be able to adopt the new

paradigm for "community orchestras" proposed, and that by so doing it will ensure its sustainability.

Critical Reflections: My Journey as Musician

As a violist firmly rooted in the traditional, Western classical idiom, being introduced to the

practices of score realisation and directed improvisation through my work with Peter Wiegold has been

refreshing and illuminating. I will not dwell on the already-discussed aspects of classical music in the

conservatoire, except to say that my own training as a musician, while excellent in many regards, was

lacking in terms of enabling broader creative engagement of the kind developed by participation in the

"Third Way." The freedom to explore my innate creativity, while contributing to a cohesive and

artistically gratifying ensemble, completely complements my training as a chamber musician, taking

those skills and experiences to places which I now see as the logical evolution of my musical career.

My early experiences with Brunel New Noise and subsequent performances with Notes Inégales

have propelled me to redefine my position as a performer/artistic director/teacher. I have adopted the

communal, exploratory learning in my own practice, introducing my students to score realisation and

improvisation. My community work has become more diverse and, I believe, more relevant.

Yet again, there is more to be learned. How does my own practice as a musician intersect with

the many cultures in my community? What do I, as a traditional practitioner, have to learn from

methods of, for instance, music pedagogy in aboriginal drum circles? How can a classical violist meet on

common terms with a Ukrainian folk band, or a Métis step-dancer? How do I enter into socio-musical

interactions with these diverse groups without encountering the problems of musical colonialism

described earlier in this thesis? These are critical questions for which pathways to understanding may be

achieved through continued development of my own practice, the results of which I look forward to

discovering.

Critical Reflections: Challenges Going Forward

The paradigm proposed in this thesis which reconceptualises amateur orchestras as "community orchestras" in the truest sense, provides opportunities for these ensembles to become more sustainable and more relevant to the communities they serve. Adopting this paradigm presents challenges for amateur orchestras on many levels. For instance, the prerequisite of instrumental ability remains a latent concern, making repertoire choice an important consideration in programming of concerts or community outreach events with a participatory theme. Furthermore, it is possible that in the attempt to reach diverse cultural communities through their programming, amateur orchestras risk compromising their core identity as ensembles which, for good or ill, are still part of the classical tradition.[2] In addition, the question remains of whether musicians, both amateur and professional participating in these orchestras would respond enthusiastically to the radical structural and musical alterations that are suggested by an approach which resembles that of *Club Inégales*, for instance.

Other aspects, though, are promising. For instance, I was given the opportunity to organize an open "play day" for the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, with the goal of inviting current members of the orchestra as well as members of the public to participate in a day-long reading session. The event was held at the lakeside home of one of the orchestra's board members, and included read-throughs of selections from the upcoming season's program, as well as some light pops repertoire. Above all, though, the event was social, with food, drinks, and ample opportunity to socialize. Families were encouraged to attend; children could swim, play games, and even participate in the music—as my then four-year-old daughter did, sitting next to the concertmaster and enthusiastically playing the open strings of her violin as we played Dvorak. Surely, this was "musicking."

Yet one-time events such as this are not enough to halt the decline of ensembles like the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra. The new paradigm I have presented represents a call to action; an appeal for dedication to the ideals of the "community orchestra" in the everyday working of amateur

orchestras, in order to prevent their loss. I remain committed to further work—in terms of research and

developing practice—in order to maintain an open pathway to this ideal. As I look back over my journey

along this pathway, I feel empowered by the academic literature I have consulted, by the amateur and

professional musicians who have enriched my understanding of the issues, and by the opportunity to

reflect on my experiences as a professional musician and educator. In particular, I am grateful for the

mentorship Peter Wiegold, whose insights and activities have inspired me to examine the ways in which

my own practice might evolve.

A Last Word for Ezra Schabas

As a final comment on the current and future state of amateur orchestras, it is fitting to offer

the last word on the topic to Ezra Schabas, whose work was a major catalyst for this dissertation. The

year 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of his report on Ontario's community orchestras and as I reflect

on its legacy, I am struck by the similarities between my own observations and those of the Schabas

Report from half a century ago. My interview with Ezra Schabas reveals the extent of these similarities.

St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

Ezra Schabas' recollections from nearly fifty years ago suggest that they were times of great

promise for Ontario's orchestras. He recounts:

> *It was a very optimistic period in the 60s and 70s; the sky was the limit—of course we didn't*
>
> *reach the sky, but we had a very positive view about what to do, and very good people to do it*
>
> *(personal communication, August 28, 2014).*

Yet he remains circumspect about the impact his research has had, saying "I think that in

retrospect it was a very nice full-bodied objective but whether it really registered . . . I've never been sure

(personal communication, August 28, 2014). He reflects on the education of conductors, remarking "[w]e

trained them how to make not-such-good musicians [better]. . . . But you know that's only the tip of the

iceberg," and comments on the training and employment of professional musicians, adding "[y]ou have

to pick musicians who view this engagement . . . as [becoming] a catalyst to the whole musical activity of

the community, so you need the right people" (personal communication, August 28, 2014). He laments

the state of music education, saying "[s]chools aren't helping at all, so we have decline—and we're going

to continue to decline," and he asserts that "society has to create the situation" (personal

communication August 28, 2014) in which music in schools and the community are sustained and

celebrated.

Yet Schabas is optimistic that a path to sustainable and relevant "community orchestras" lies in

securing the commitment of musicians, schools, communities, and governments, to the conditions

necessary for growth. His final thoughts are encouraging, and they appropriately summarize the

argument of this thesis:

> *The right people, the right locations for them— which means all across the province or, in fact,*
>
> *all across the country—and enough money to support them, and an attitude towards good music*
>
> *which is unshakable . . . If you want it, you shall have it (personal communication, August 28,*
>
> *2014).*

Notes

1. Kemp (1981), for instance, examined the personality traits associated with music students of particular instruments, raising the question of whether some people are better suited for some instrument than others. His study also reviewed the work of other researchers examining the relationship between character traits and instrument choice. However, these studies are out of date and focus on either practicing professionals or conservatoire students, suggesting that contributions from the amateur perspective would be of value.

2. Conductor Martin Thakar (2003) raises this concern, stating:

   No doubt it is possible—by playing non-traditional repertoire in non-traditional venues—to touch some people whom we would not otherwise reach at all. And their experiences might be extremely good, even though it might not be the best we have to offer. Clearly, such opportunities should be pursued vigorously. But orchestras may not be wrong to be wary of embracing any fundamental change that would limit the value of their core offerings (p. 119).

Appendix: Research Material

Brunel University Department of Music, doctoral research

Orchestra member survey (please do not feel limited by the space provided, feel free to use the reverse)

1. When did you first take up your instrument?

2. How much formal study have you had on your instrument?

3. Did you join this ensemble because of its proximity to you?

4. Had you ever played in an ensemble before? Were you encouraged by anyone to join this or any previous community ensemble? Have you ever been discouraged from joining an ensemble?

5. Do you describe yourself as an amateur musician? What problems, if any, do you have with that term?

6. What makes a rehearsal enjoyable? What makes it tedious?

7. Do you feel a sense of accomplishment after your rehearsals? After concerts?

8. How would you prioritize rehearsals and concerts? Why?

9. Do you ever regret missing rehearsals or concerts?

10. For you, how important is the social aspect of participating in this orchestra?

11. Do you feel that playing in this orchestra generally relieves stress or improves your overall health? In what ways?

12. Do you pay a participation fee? If yes, do you object? If no, would you still join if a fee were required?

13. Do you feel respected by the conductor? Do you respect him/her? Is your sense that the audience respects or appreciates him/her?

14. Is there something the music director does to make rehearsals enjoyable/unenjoyable? Is your sense that the conductor enjoys working with the ensemble?

15. Do you feel that the conductor provides adequate musical and technical direction? Do you appreciate learning about the musical elements or background of a given piece? Does this information enhance the performance?

16. How much input do the players have into concert programing? How much involvement do the players have in the day-to-day operation of the ensemble?

17. Does your orchestra hire additional professional players to supplement the ensemble? If so, do you agree with that practice, or do you feel that programs should be based around the personnel that are available?

18. What do you think this orchestra does best? What do you think is this orchestra's greatest shortcoming?

19. For you, what was the ensemble's best moment? What was its worst?

20. What changes, if any, would you like to see happen in this organization?

21. Do you, as an individual player, feel valued within the organization?

22. Is your sense that the ensemble is valued within the community?

23. What services are offered to your local community by the organization? What services would you like to see offered?

24. What do you think would be missing from your community if this ensemble didn't perform?

25. Why are community orchestras important?

Brunel University Department of Music, doctoral research

Music director/conductor survey (please do not feel limited by the space provided, feel free to use the reverse)

1. How long have you worked with community orchestras as a conductor?

2. Do you currently work with more than one orchestra? What conflicts, if any, arise?

3. What are the difficulties in being a conductor of amateur ensembles? Do you ever feel the need to adjust your expectations of your ensemble(s)?

4. Did you actively seek to direct the group/groups you're working with now?

5. Do you live in the same community as your orchestra/one of your orchestras?

6. Do you do other work besides conduct ensembles? If so, does that work occur in your community of residence?

7. Is the presence of a resident music director or conductor as a necessary element to the success of a community orchestra?

8. Do you have any educational training? (ie. teacher's college, PD workshops, short courses related to pedagogy)

9. Is an education/outreach program an essential part of a community ensemble's identity?

10. Should a community ensemble director be an advocate and active force for music education within his or her community?

11. Do you believe in an integrated educational program as part of the orchestra's core values? Should an education program exist for the sake of the musical education of the community or is it better suited to attracting audiences and funding?

12. In what way should community ensembles be active in area schools?

13. What local partnerships are important for the success and sustainability of a community orchestra?

14. Is audience development part of the music director's responsibility? If so, what do you do to maintain good audience relations or increase audience numbers? What is your relationship with the audience outside of the performance venue? Do you feel you are a recognizable member of the community?

15. What is your approach to concert programming for community orchestras? What is your "formula" for a successful concert season, in terms of the repertoire presented and how it is presented?

16. Do you believe in a progression of repertoire, in terms of difficulty or musical complexity, for your ensembles? How do you judge the pace of that progression?

17. Should a music director take an active interest in the technical and musical improvement of the individual members of the ensemble?

18. Do the players in the ensemble have any input into programming decisions? Does the audience?

19. Is it important to program music by local composers? How often have you performed works by composers within the community?

20. What is one initiative you would like to see the orchestra(s) undertake?

21. What is your short-to-medium term vision for your ensemble(s)? What is your long-term vision?

22. What is your ensemble(s) greatest success? Greatest failure?

23. What is one shortcoming of the orchestra(s) that you want addressed?

24. What would be the effect on the community if its local community orchestra stopped operating?

25. Why are community orchestras important?

Brunel University Department of Music, doctoral research

Executive director/manager survey (please do not feel limited by the space provided, feel free to use the reverse)

1. How long have you served in your capacity as general manager?

2. Are you also a performing member of your orchestra? Have you ever been a member of a community orchestra, choir or band? Did your musical experiences prompt you to get involved with community music at the administrative level?

3. Did you actively seek to be the manager or executive director of this ensemble?

4. Do you see your role as one of active policy development and administrative leadership or do you feel your role is one of oversight and approval?

5. To what extent do you feel your board of directors is a balancing force between the artistic leadership and the administration of the ensemble? Is there ever any debate over who gets the final word in any disagreements?

6. Who is responsible for communicating and enforcing the policies of your organization?

7. What is one policy that you are proud of?

8. What is one policy which is hindering the growth or success of the ensemble?

9. What political factors influence policy decisions for your orchestra?

10. What economic factors influence policy decisions for your orchestra?

11. To your knowledge, how much money does this orchestra receive from government? How much of that funding comes from local government?

12. To your knowledge, how many applications do you make to various levels of government for funding per year? What is your most frequent reason for funding requests?

13. Would this orchestra fold if it were ever denied its usual level of government funding?

14. Do you feel that funding for the arts is a high priority for granting organizations or governments?

15. What amount of fund raising does this orchestra do? Who is responsible for fund raising activities?

16. What is ensemble's single greatest expense on a yearly basis? Do you believe that expense is justifiable?

17. Do you believe that there is a high sense of awareness about your organization in this community (as compared to other community activities, ie. sports, large events, markets, etc.)? What can you, as a committee or board member, do to improve or maintain that awareness?

18. Do the people in your local community recognize and value your contribution to their community orchestra?

19. How much contact do you have with the volunteer players in your ensemble? To what extent should administrators be encouraging participation in the orchestra?

20. When was the last time you attended a concert by your local community orchestra?

21. What is your organization's long term plan for the development of this orchestra?

22. Does your organization feel that outreach, education and audience development programs are vital to the health and growth of community orchestras? Should educational programs be fully integrated into the mandate of community orchestras, with the aim of providing quality music education for its own sake? Are such programs better suited to attract new audience members and funding?

23. What other services, if any, does your organization offer? What would you like to see offered?

24. Do you actively encourage or seek the forming of community partnerships with schools, religious institutions or community development organizations?

25. Do you believe the future survival and sustainability of community orchestras (and this orchestra in particular) will rely more heavily on partnerships with corporate entities?

26. As a primarily volunteer organization, to what extent do you believe you need to adopt professional standards or models of operating? To what extent is this necessary in order to survive and grow as an organization?

27. What wider political or societal view is reflected in the policies of your organization?

28. What would be the effect on this community if this orchestra disappeared?

29. What is the greatest challenge facing your organization? What is one thing this organization has of which you are very proud?

30. Why are community orchestras important?

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