

Socio-Economic Perspectives on the Conditions for Art Music in A Changing World - A Pre-Study

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Table of contents

Introduction	4
The structure and focus of the report	4
"Art music" and research	4
Interesting research themes	5
Musical life and mass consumption	5
Music, IT and social interaction	5
Social homogeneity, groups, taste and economic aspects	7
The permanence or changeability of musical taste through life	8
Mainstream, status and marginalisation	9
Art music and society	10
Does listening to and performing art music improve people and society?	11
Innovation systems	12
Music society: one or many separate or interacting innovation systems?	12
Music, organising and leadership	14
Music industry economy and business logic	15
Movies and art music	16
Background music and ambiance	17
Music as language	17
Further research ideas	19
Ringtone symbolism	19
Bugs and plagues	19
Transfer effects	20
The culturally diverse society and art music	20
The development of ceremonial music	20
Music, health and development	20
How to progress?	21

Introduction

The pre-study *Socio-economic perspectives on the conditions for art music in a changing world* attempts to create a broad foundation for art music-related research. The primary aim has been to formulate interesting questions and indicate possible ways of finding answers, not to provide the answers. The two main areas of the study are *Musical life and mass consumption* and *Art music and society*. The two areas are not completely separate – they overlap and interact to some extent, but what is foreground and background differs depending on the perspective taken.

The structure and focus of the report

Musical life and mass consumption deals with the balances between music with more narrow and wider audiences, with the survival and justification of narrow-audience music – and its importance for wide-audience music. In addition, *Musical life and mass consumption* deals with music as a part of a pattern of consumption (or pattern of life), with social homogeneity and diversity.

Art music and society deals with music as a component of life and society, with art music as part of a living community, with art music as carrier of traditions, and innovativeness in art music and the development of society, with art music and democracy in the form of co-creation, participation and diversity, with art music and economic sustainability and growth.

It is obvious that globalisation, commercialisation, digitisation, changes in values and beliefs, and other trends also affect the conditions for art music; the question is how. Art music is composed, performed, listened to and sold. On this, we can agree. Assessments of the state of and the conditions for art music are less unanimous. The debate is characterised by opinions, often based on a vague image of the facts. It is therefore urgent to lay a foundation for further research that will shed light on the current situation, and thus affect both the debate and future research.

The issues presented below are examples of possible, relevant research questions. Of course, there are many aspects that are not covered. In addition, there are perspectives that are raised under one heading that could very well be relevant to several, or all, questions. A gender perspective is one example. Democracy aspects is another. A third example is to attempt to quantify the economic aspects. My ambition has been to inspire further development of research ideas, not to provide a complete list of all conceivable research questions and combinations of issues. Neither have I intended to provide full descriptions of how to answer the questions I raise. I hope you will be interested by the themes I bring up. But also, whenever you find something missing, or identify an aspect that interests you, but is not described in this report, this pre-study has started to work and provides effects.

”Art music” and research

Art music, classical music, contemporary music, post-modern music? Art music, popular music? Narrow-audience / wide-audience music? Commercial / non-commercial? Commercially successful, commercially unsuccessful? The terms we choose provide somewhat different associations, and also direct the discourse – and the content. All

classifications of music create problems with the borderlands. Certain pieces of music can be difficult to assign to the categories chosen, and some composers act within more than one category – and want to be transdisciplinary and boundary-spanning. In this report, I use the term "art music" to denote music sprung from a Western tradition of composing that has been tended, nurtured and transmitted by composers, conservatories of music and some music departments at universities. "Popular music" is here used for other music, sometimes with a broad audience, sometimes with a narrow one, in line with the imprecise meaning of the term in everyday language. Labels as vague as these, can be of use in a broad inventory, like the present one. In a specific research study, they would typically have to be replaced with clearly delimited definitions of the music actually studied, in order to achieve precision and state findings in a relevant and substantiated manner.

Research with a music connection is conducted also in academic disciplines other than musicology. Sometimes the connection is with Western art music, sometimes with other genres. But in these cases, such research appears to be viewed as a somewhat exotic variety of research within the main discipline, rather than primarily appearing as music-related research. I have met examples of music-related research in sociology, ethnology, theology, philosophy, literature, cinema studies, communication theory, education, economics, business administration, organisational theory, management, leadership, neurobiology, care sciences, psychosocial environmental medicine, history, diffusion theory, innovation theory, computer science, materials analysis, and thermo and fluid dynamics. Probably, some of the music-related research that is being conducted could stand to gain from an increased contact with other music-related research, not just with its own core discipline.

Interesting research themes

Below, a number of themes deserving further research are described. The themes are grouped under either of the two main areas Musical life and mass consumption and Art music and society.

Musical life and mass consumption

Within the first group, Musical life and mass consumption, I present the themes Music, IT and social interaction; Social homogeneity, groups, taste and economic aspects; The permanence or changeability of musical taste through life, and Mainstream, status and marginalisation.

Music, IT and social interaction

The development of exchange of music via file-sharing software over the Internet has brought a dramatic increase in the access to a supply of music where the individual is free to choose what she or he wants to listen to – via a computer. Furthermore, the rapid technical development of digital music players has led to a state where music downloaded via the Internet can find its way into the pocket of any boy or girl, and can be listened to at any time. In combination, these developments have brought about a real, and utilised, possibility to choose and compose, from one minute to the next, an individual music program, a personal mosaic of excerpts from larger works or collections. In this manner, the border between composer and listener is (partly) erased; the listener becomes more of a prosumer, a co-creator. These two technical trends (the exchange of computer-readable

music via the Internet, and the availability of small, portable computer-compatible music players) have contributed to a situation where individualised music listening perhaps plays a more prominent part in young people's lives than ever before.

Music sociologists are developing an interest in how technology affords possibilities to isolate yourself from the environment and preserve – and build? – your own identity. At the same time, file sharing and diffusion of music build on social networks and communication between individuals, possibly leading to individuals influencing each other, by actively providing each other with music samples, by providing access to a range of music they have collected, and by offering specific selections (playlists). The playlists serve not just as ways of adjusting the choice of music to your personality, but also as means for communicating your identity, or as products, products offering others the opportunity to use the playlists you have created – a type of music radio without the need for a broadcast licence. Classifications that make it possible to find music of a kind that you like also lead to reinforcement and development of genres, in turn possibly leading to increased specialisation among listeners and artists, or to an increased possibility to find types of music that are new to you.

It is clear that this Internet-based music communication mainly deals with other types of music than what we normally view as Western art music. However, it is not obvious that the technical development marginalises art music. It could just as well work in the opposite direction: since so many people devote so much time and energy to exchanging and listening to music, it is possible that art music of different kinds also is disseminated more widely. And since anyone can provide access to music, and to selections of music, there are opportunities for dissemination of both narrow-audience and wide-audience music.

Our knowledge about this fascinating contemporary phenomenon is still very limited. The sheer magnitude of this type of music dissemination and listening makes it worth investigating. In addition, it is important that art music actors do not place themselves outside the development, but rather attempt to understand and maybe influence it. To be able to do this, it would be useful with a mapping of the extent to which art music actually can be found on the Internet, is exchanged between people and is listened to. Such an investigation ought to identify which art music occurs in this way, what other music it is supplied together with, and what music it is accompanied by when listened to. Analysis of the patterns that appear could provide insights regarding who listens and why; what gives the impulses leading to the wide dissemination of some pieces and genres, but not of other; and if there are dissemination routes that are based on similarities across genre boundaries.

Research design

The mapping of the incidence of music could take the supply on one or more file-sharing services as its point of departure. A systematic study of a file-sharing service could identify the genre labels available, attempt to identify the overall existence of art music or track the occurrence of a specific selection of pieces. To derive a picture of the traffic, the actual downloads, the researcher would either need the cooperation of the file-sharing services or the Internet operators. It is not obvious that the desired information could be obtained from these sources. An alternative would be to post a web questionnaire targeted at users and, based on the answers derived, attempt to estimate the traffic volumes. Another alternative would be to solicit questionnaire or interview answers from people probably belonging to

the target population, primary and secondary school children and members of chat sites, for example. These alternatives would require more work and would render less accurate estimates of traffic, but, on the other hand, leave room for additional questions regarding behaviour and motives. Regarding topics relating to the users and what goes on in their minds, rather than actual traffic patterns, focus groups could be a useful and cost efficient source of further insights. Additional material, and inspiration regarding research methods, can also be obtained from the studies of Internet habits and use patterns conducted by academic and commercial research companies.

Social homogeneity, groups, taste and economic aspects

Some say that music is a universal language, but such a claim probably does not stand up to scrutiny. Homo Sapiens Sapiens has probably always made and enjoyed music; melodic instruments close to 40,000 years old have been found. But like other languages, music, too, is socially constructed. Music is embedded in culture, derives its meaning from, and lends meaning to, the cultural and social situations where it is used and produced. Even though music borrowed from another culture can speak to us and give rise to emotions, it probably speaks in a different voice and possibly also incites other emotions and feelings than in its original setting and among people who share its original culture.

Every type of music thus has its peculiar abode, is shaped by this culture and expresses it. Musical innovation does not take place in a void. The tradition in comparison to which it is to be viewed as an innovation is as important a part of the music as are the novelties: the breaks with or developments of the tradition. As individuals, we are also shaped by the surrounding culture and inherit our musical tastes from it. Some become musical omnivores. For others, the choice of musical style among the ones available becomes an important part of their identity. Some musical styles also carry a strong and clear connection with lifestyle, complete with dress, appearance, use of language, forms of socialising, parties, etc. Other musical styles have less pronounced connections, but no music is entirely free of cultural contingencies. This raises a number of questions.

One question concerns the creation of identity and lifestyle. In marketing, "consumer baskets" and "bundling" attract attention: which combinations of goods and services attract a certain target group? If we can tie a certain product to a combination offer that attracts the target group, we are able to create a more competitive offer, and possibly also increase the customer's interest in a certain product by connecting it with other products or services that interest the customer. A customer or target group perspective has probably been more prevalent, or at least more evident, in popular music than in art music, but can possibly be productive in art music, too. In which "bundles" are different kinds of music to be found? What other music, other products and services and other experiences is the music in question bundled with. What do the social identities consist of, where a certain type of art music is part of the concept? And what are the characteristics of the people forming such a group, concerning socio-economic status, age, gender, education, etc.

An increased knowledge of such patterns could form a basis for adapting to a target group when composing, and for bundling in marketing, choice of distribution channel and design of the offer. The idea that there could be a more limited or a larger target group, perhaps even a billion audience, to communicate with, if you could only better understand how, does it not hold a certain appeal? Such "market thinking" can be alien or repugnant even,

to some artists and enthusiasts, but for those who want to make a living out of their art, or are worried by the current marginalisation of “their” type of music, market thinking can play a valuable role.

Research design

If there are clearly identifiable groups, an ethnographic approach would seem appropriate – to associate closely with and study the identity and behaviour of the group in question over an extended period of time. Regarding Western art music, it is probably difficult to find such naturally occurring groups, where a certain music style forms an important part of the group’s identity and is closely knit with a specific set of other lifestyle choices. To the extent that such groups can be found, they are probably rather small and hardly representative of music consumers in general. Consequently, more useful results could be obtained by attempting to reach a larger selection of individuals to whom art music is of some importance, although not the centre around which their lives revolve. It is sometimes claimed that art music is of some importance to 20% of the Western population. If this carries any truth, a survey could be a realistic approach. By means of a postal or telephone survey, relevant people to include in the study could be identified.

If, on the other hand, the research interest is directed at a specific type of art music, the portion of the general population interested in that particular type is probably so low that a more directed selection method is called for. One possibility is to use self selection: to target visitors at specific concerts; to cooperate with a music store to identify the customers who buy this type of music; to poll subscribers of specific music magazines or members of organisations where it is likely that a substantial portion of the people hold an interest in the specific type of art music, etc. Depending on the willingness to participate shown by the people thus identified, focus groups, structured or semi-structured interviews, deep or intensive interviews, structured or unstructured diaries, etc, could be employed.

The permanence or changeability of musical taste through life

Altriciality: we humans have a rather long period when we are formed as individuals, and the late teens and a few more years, perhaps ages 16 through 21, prominently shape who we will be the rest of our lives. This probably also means that the music tastes we develop in those years will direct much of our “use” of music and our musical encounters later in life. Simultaneously, a prevalent image of the typical art music listener is that of a somewhat aged person, often a woman. Do these two images fit together? Are they then signalling that art music is on its way out, that a steadily declining number will encounter art music during their formative years, and, consequently, that potential audiences and interest will dwindle? Will the young ones who today mostly listen to popular music continue to do so for the rest of their lives? Or is there, as some believe, a “maturation” of musical taste, where the richness offered by art music is more appreciated as one grows older?

Research design

To find an answer to these kinds of questions, we can only get indications from cross-section studies or retrospective studies. Retrospective studies can benefit from artefacts – the record bookcase, home videos, diaries, written or recorded objects that can facilitate recall. We can thus achieve a clearer picture of who listens to what today, and their own views on how their music taste and their listening have changed over the years. This can be

ever so interesting, and provide a basis for speculation regarding what the future holds in store. But the development is today shaped by an increasingly internationally communicating world, and with increasing possibilities of forming communities and interest groups which do not build on geographical proximity. Deriving less speculative images of this development would require longitudinal studies, possibly covering decades. Broad studies of this type require considerable resources. A more narrow form, but still interesting, would be to repeatedly, say every five years, follow a number of individuals by interviews, and why not TV recordings?

Mainstream, status and marginalisation

Until some decades ago, cultural ideals made it desirable to like art music. In a Bourdieuan tradition, we could see interest and knowledge in art music as an aspect of the cultural capital, the cultural knowledge that confers status and power in society. Over time, the desirable configuration of cultural knowledge has become less distinct, and there have also been counter-movements actively touting alternative ideals. In addition, increasing migration has introduced more diversity into a previously more homogeneous culture. Now, there is a larger spread in habits, taste, and skills. The standing of art music differs somewhat between countries, but in Sweden, for example, it is by no means obvious that Western art music is still a positive part of the cultural capital. In some circles, previous values live on, but not in others. Which are the ideals and the values today? What speaks for and against different types of musical tastes? Which parts of art music represent a positive cultural capital in which circles, which parts are neutral or even liabilities in terms of cultural capital?

Some say that art music is being marginalised. At the same time, the supply, and the listening, has probably never before been as extensive as it is today. But the total supply of music has grown, the musical styles continue to multiply, and large areas of musical production have become commercially highly attractive. It is likely that the art music share of the total music market has decreased, and that within this share, a large part of the turnover – and listening – pertains to a limited number of works of art music. Furthermore, it is likely that “classical” music has a stronger standing than contemporary music.

But is this part of an ongoing marginalisation threatening the existence of art music in general and contemporary art music in particular, or does art music still hold an important position in our society and our minds? What is the connection between values and different musical styles, really? Research attempting to answer this question could reveal interesting patterns between social groups, ethnic groups, and countries in an increasingly multi-cultural and international society. This would increase our possibilities to understand society and changes in it. Such an increased understanding would constitute a basis for more nuanced views of art music, could inspire attempts to influence views in society and among decision makers, and could be valuable input in shaping cultural policy.

Research design

An important step in this type of investigation is to identify people who wield power and who greatly influence what counts as cultural capital in their circles: business leaders, politicians, media people, opinion leaders and role models. Which ideals do they express in words, and which are expressed by their actions? What are their views on different styles of music and the value and connotations of these styles?

Another step is to identify people who are attempting to climb, who have explicit intentions to achieve more power and status in some part of society. This could entail studying those who attend prestigious education programs, or those who have already achieved positions some steps below the top in business, public administration, political parties, pressure groups and lobby organisations. Which values and preferences do they profess and demonstrate, and how does this match those who have already reached the top?

Finally, it is important to capture the views of “people in general” – those who neither have reached, nor are about to reach, positions of power in society. What are their views on different styles of music and the value and connotations of these styles? To what extent does this vary according to social or ethnical background, profession, stage in life, etc, and how does it match the patterns found among those who possess, or are about to acquire, cultural capital?

Gender perspectives

A specific twist to the question is if there are gender aspects in the valuations of music, and if gender aspects strengthen or weaken the standing of art music. In the genre debate, men tend to be presented as wealthy and influential. Women are not. Men value sports, women the fine arts. The men’s interests receive more subsidies. The men’s interests receive more room and attention in the media. It could be inferred that the fine arts in general, and thus also art music, fall into the gender trap.

But are there truly gender-based differences in how we value art music? And is art music really a predominantly female area, or on its way to become so. What is the gender distribution among composers, artists and listeners? Among music teachers and students? How does public funding of art music compare with that of sports, or for example that of art music concerts versus team sports? How much space in newspapers is devoted to different forms of art music, other art and other activities? Is it possible to identify patterns and drivers of these patterns that can serve as substance in the debate?

In addition to the value studies outlined above, this topic would require for example analysis of space allotment and content in media. Studies of actual financing of different activities, and analyses of the considerations underlying the financing decisions, could constitute other pieces of the puzzle. Yet another could result from quantitative analyses of gender distributions in different parts of the field of art music, and in other fields for the sake of comparison. The patterns thus identified at a surface level can then be investigated further to try to identify the underlying drivers.

Art music and society

The questions raised above have gradually moved towards a societal level. Now we move further in that direction, to the second main theme of this pre-study: art music and society. Simultaneously, the central ideas of innovation systems provide connections back to the preceding main theme’s interest in economic aspects. Below, I present the themes Does listening to and performing art music improve people and society?; Music society: one or many separate or interacting innovation systems?; Music, organising and leadership; Music industry economy and business logic; Movies and art music; Background music and ambiance; and Music as language.

Does listening to and performing art music improve people and society?

Some people want to view art music as a positive factor in developing a community or the society. Such a perspective often builds on the social aspects of music listening and performing, and that social activity is something good. According to researchers who participate in the public debate, such as Putnam, Coleman and Fukuyama, social activities build social capital – they shape and maintain the social infrastructure which promotes people's wellbeing and facilitates economic activity. If the social activity is to lead to an increase in social capital, it needs to be viewed as "good", not destructive or evil. (Gangs and organised crime are social activities, but do not qualify as good.) On this account, art music would probably qualify according to most people – but not according to everyone. In addition, the social activity should help develop the individual or the network. Whether this holds for art music would depend both on the form of activity and on the participating individuals. Furthermore, attention should be paid to whether art music competes with other social activities, and if so, whether it strengthens the fabric of society less well, as well, or better than, for example, bingo or floorball. The connections with alternative activities are even more complex than a strict comparison would indicate; perhaps the very range of activities has a value of its own.

It is probably difficult to find an unambiguous and generally valid answer to the question of the value of art music to a community or to society, but since the topic appears repeatedly in public debate, it could be worth researching it. Certainly, such a research effort could provide interesting insights – and new questions.

Research design

An exciting design would be to attempt to capture the perspectives of concert attendants (both listeners and performers), close friends and relatives of attendants, and other non-attendants. How do these groups view art music activities and those who participate in such activities? Examples of questions to study are:

What does concert attendance provide the individual with: peace, fellowship, experiences, stimulation, conversation topics, development ...?

What makes the attendants go to concerts: breaking monotony; social pressure; the possibility of social contact; "commitment" towards the organiser, a listener or a performer; rest; cultural stimulation; intellectual curiosity ...?

Can they articulate their musical experience: by describing emotions; in musicological terms; in other ways?

How do they view the connection between repertory and experience: novelty versus the well-known; classical versus contemporary; certain categories rather than others ...?

What social effects do the musical activities bring: contact; development of networks; a sense of joint identity; distancing from non-attendants; increased or decreased demand for other activities or products ...?

What would life be like without the art music activities?

Interviews would be an obvious alternative for conducting the study, but a combination with some kind of self-reporting, such as structured or unstructured diaries, would be an interesting supplement. Such a study could be a snapshot or a retrospective one, but a longitudinal study, preferably over a long period of time, could provide even more interesting results. Sociograms and network analyses attempting to identify and illustrate the development of the social capital would be important components of the research.

Innovation systems

The international success of Swedish "popular music" the past few decades has made music export an important industry in Sweden; art music fights for survival. This is often heard in discussions about music in Sweden today, and similar views can be found in other Western countries. But is this image correct? The commercial success of the Swedish music industry builds on a limited number of composers, arrangers and artists. The majority of popular music in Sweden operates on a tight or nonexistent budget and mainly depends on the engaged interest of individuals for its continued existence. Simultaneously, there are some art music composers who are successful, and musicians, ensembles and orchestras that have a secure, and even comfortable financial position. There is also a professional community of people with an art music education who do not achieve fame, but who find employment in orchestras, as church musicians and as music teachers. A large proportion of the population spends considerable time practicing and performing art music in choirs, instrumental ensembles and orchestras, and at home. Both popular and art music thus exist on both commercial and idealistic conditions, but for composers and artists in the popular music field, a commercial mindset is perhaps closer at hand than for those engaged in art music.

Innovation systems has become a buzzword lately. What are the innovation systems in the music field? How is musical activity organised? What is the balance between exploration and exploitation, between innovation and care of the existing? What is the road like from idea to commercial product? Where do impulses come from? Who derives impulses from the music field? What roads do impulses travel on their way to being used? Where does innovation meet a market? Who are the actors / middlemen between composer and listener / music user? What are the innovation systems in different genres and for different classical composers? What are the connections between popular music and art music? What does popular music learn or borrow from art music? What does art music learn or borrow (or could art music learn or borrow) from popular music (for example musically, organisationally, commercially)? What does art music stand to gain from the successes of popular music? What does more commercially successful music learn or borrow from more idealistically-based music, and vice versa?

The innovation systems perspective raises many questions with its emphasis on economic viability and development, and interest in entire systems rather than specific individuals or actors. Research with those characteristics could contribute with valuable insights to those who engage in art music.

Music society: one or many separate or interacting innovation systems?

Discussions about music tend to polarise genres, and at a high level, it could appear as if popular music and art music live in separate worlds. But is this really the case? Do we

really have two – or more – separate innovation systems, or are there connections and mutual dependencies? To what extent are composers and artists active in more than one genre? To what extent are the individuals raised and trained in the tradition in which they now work, and to what extent have they met, and found inspiration, in other traditions? Whence do ideas come for new works and changes in performance practice? Strictly from within the genre, or across borders? Is perhaps the music society one integrated innovation system?

Research dealing with these questions could offer surprises and overturn cherished beliefs – or perhaps provide them with well-founded support. A more profound understanding of these aspects of the innovation systems could influence both our views of genres and of musical socialisation, and provide valuable impulses for musical training and education. It could also affect music policy.

Research design

Retrospective interviews with influential actors – composers and musicians as well as pedagogues – about their musical upbringing and their present activities could start to provide answers to the research questions. Studies of less prominent actors in the music field could deliver additional insights. Similar studies aimed at music students of different ages and in different genres could add complementing material concerning the early musical socialisation. Studies of decision makers at publishers and record companies could add yet a perspective. The analyses should strive to develop images of social networks as well as identify flows of ideas with less clear connections to specific individuals.

Interaction between professional and idealistic activities and between music and non-music activities

An important, related question concerns the interaction between more idealistic and more commercial music making. What is the interaction? To what extent do ideas and innovations originate with those who make a living from music and to what extent from those who do not? How much mobility is there between different roles in the innovation system, and to what extent is there mobility between musical professions and other professions? What impulses does such mobility bring to the musical arena from elsewhere and what moves in the opposite direction? And the mobility generated by being in the borderland between musical and extramusical activity, what does it mean to the musical innovation system and to the other innovation systems? Clearly, there are musicians who take an interest in other areas, just as there are musically interested researchers in other disciplines who sometimes combine their musical interest with their normal research, and people who combine a musical interest with an extramusical profession: physicians, engineers, public servants and others who nurture a profound musical interest outside their places of work. These combinations probably lead to impulses both to and from the field of music.

Research design

Here, many exciting ideas can be developed for studies of the interaction of individuals, groups, and musical innovation systems. One is to study the connection between a specific discipline and (a part of) the musical innovation system. Primary focus could be placed either on musicians with an interest in this other discipline, or on people active within that discipline, but with an interest in music. Based on a wider sample of individuals, one could

strive to find answers to what roles this discipline plays for musicians and the music, and what roles the music plays for those who are primarily engaged in the other discipline. A somewhat different approach is to start with specific individuals, and more thoroughly study their cross-border contacts. Where do the musicians find their impulses, to the extent that they go beyond the field of music, and how does it influence their musical activities? What impulses does a musically interested physician, researcher or management consultant derive from the music field, and how do these impulses influence their work?

The answers to these questions can, to a large extent, be expected to be examples and narratives. Perhaps it will be possible to identify specific, important events, but more likely, the connections and influences will be more general and more vague. Together, the examples could paint a rich picture. It could even be possible to identify more frequent and more unusual connections, and more and less important ones. In specific cases or at an overarching level, it could even be possible to measure or estimate the value of the connections. However, it is more uncertain whether it would be possible – or even meaningful – to attempt to derive a cost-benefit analysis at societal level of the exchange between the field of music and extramusical activities.

Music, organising and leadership

A type of comparison between musical and extramusical activity that has been the subject of some research, but is still in its infancy, regards organising and leadership. Studies of symphony orchestras, string quartets, concert halls, etc, have been used as the bases for understanding, describing – or challenging – organising, collaboration and leadership in extramusical settings. The symphony orchestra, with its balance between individual professionalism and central coordination, with conductor and first chairs, clearly illuminates some aspects. The string quartet, with an intensively listening cooperation, and where leadership is not organisationally as clearly defined, provides a basis for somewhat different analyses. Comparisons of the way of working during rehearsal and performance contribute interesting material for analysing error handling and quality assurance work. Sheet music as work instruction, basis for coordination – and for interpretations – is yet an angle. The development of, and collisions between, ideals, establishment of norms, roles and negotiations at a concert hall exemplifies interaction and tensions between the highly visible musicians and the more secluded administrative personnel, interaction and tensions between guest “stars” and the quotidian work, tensions between musical ideals and economic realities, etc.

Some ideas from this type of studies have found their way into management literature and leadership training. But the area is still largely unresearched, and comparisons made sometimes build on shallow or even erroneous understanding of the art music activity and its conditions. The potential for interesting parallels has only begun to be tapped, and continued research can be expected to make significant contributions.

Research design

Methods that have been used include participant observation, interviews of different depth, and focus groups. These methods, one by one or in combinations, probably still have much to contribute with. In addition, more collaborative research could probably add additional perspectives and insights. When academically trained researchers discuss research questions, methodology, perform the studies and analyse the material together with people

from the studied settings, points and angles appear that have hitherto remained hidden to research. Active collaboration, with people working in the types of settings from which research attempts to draw comparisons, could add qualities to the research.

In all research, the perspectives of both the researchers and the researched direct what the research will be able to treat and will result in. This is true here, too. No single study will be able to capture all the relevant perspectives. No collaborative study could fully engage all those studied – and it probably would not even be desirable. But a multitude of studies with somewhat overlapping, somewhat separate perspectives could together form a rich and meaningful image of the area.

Music industry economy and business logic

A central theme for the music industry researcher Keith Negus is that an industry produces culture and culture produces an industry. Commercial activities influence the culture they focus on, and the commercially interesting culture influences the industry that commercialises it. In business, music is organised according to a portfolio concept: genres, socio-cultural classifications, target groups, brands. The truly unique, whether a customer or a product, is difficult to handle profitably. Grouping music into genres makes it possible to market it efficiently. Grouping potential customers into distinguishable target groups is important to make the marketing cost-efficient. A genre that proves to be commercially successful will attract attention, also from creators and artists. A target group that proves to be profitable will give rise to product development that can further capture the interest of the target group.

To distinguish yourself from your competitors, it becomes important to build and nurture your brands, and to make it clear to the target group what each brand stands for. Stability and tradition thus become important. Novelty, change and creativity can be important, but mainly within the bounds of the established brands and with a clear connection to existing genres. Exploration is important to future competitiveness, but it is the exploitation of the existing, the well-established and well-known, that provides efficiency and profitability now. The objective is thus to strike a balance between stability and change, tradition and novelty, genre and creativity, exploitation and exploration, where emphasis is on stability and tradition, and where change, novelty and exploration are but spices, not the core of the effort.

An interesting area within this field concerns power relationships and business logic in music industries versus in other industries, and between different music genres:

- Ownership groups
- Market shares and concentration

Who owns what? How specialised are the different brands and companies, and to what extent do they form larger systems by having the same owners? What is the distribution of market shares in different genres, and how important are the independent actors in relation to the large groups?

- Goal setting and product mix decisions

- Target group identification and market development

To what extent are profitability or growth the primary goals and to what extent is it an interest in a music style, technical quality, or other non strictly economic goals that are prominent? How are economic potential, risk diversification, image and other considerations weighed against each other in product mix decisions? How is target group identification and market development conducted? Do educational ambitions or attempts to create or develop markets play any role, or is it more a question of adapting the product range to the existing demands of the identified target groups?

- Production chains and actors
- Cost-benefit analysis of the production chain

What is the path from composer to customer, via performance and recording, product design, creation of copies, marketing and distribution? Which marketing aspects connect performances with the selling of recordings? Which actors are driving the development of new products? What influence do the originators have on the design of the products and the exploitation of their music? How are costs and revenues distributed between actors in the chain from composer to customer? What are the similarities and differences between genres in these respects? Is certain music “subsidised” by other music, and in that case, on what grounds?

Research design

Much of this could be determined from archival research – accounting, industry statistics, analysis of product ranges, etc. But some research questions require interviews with company representatives and other people with an insight into the business practices. A number of interesting results can probably be achieved by comparing more easily obtainable material from a larger number of organisations. Other results would require more elaborate case studies of individual companies or groups of companies.

Movies and art music

Movie music is an important part of commercial use of music. Film music is probably the form in which contemporary art music reaches its widest audience. While composers may need to subordinate the music to the movie logic, film can provide contact between an audience and art music that they would not have gone to a concert to listen to, or would have chosen not to listen to on the radio or buy in the record shop. Film music is also of growing importance as a complementary product to the film; a successful movie should also result in a successful music record.

Research design

The role film music plays in widening people’s taste in music and in marketing of different types of art music is an interesting subject. One indicator could be obtained through a study of sales figures of film music and related music at an aggregate level. Analyses of leading and lagging connections between film music and related music over time could reveal something about the dynamic patterns and the directions of the influences. Changes in sales of a certain composer or genre at an aggregate level in connection with the release of a film is another indicator. But such analyses would then rely on aggregates where the

patterns of individual customers can not be determined. By cooperating with larger record stores, physical or online, it would become possible to analyse customer baskets: for example, what does a customer buy together with a certain film music title? Or what are the subsequent purchases after having bought movie music? With access to such data, a firmer connection regarding the influence on individuals, rather than inferences regarding patterns in populations, could be established. An alternative approach would be to interview salespeople in record stores regarding how customers show or do not show an interest in music resembling that in successful movies.

Yet a design would be to target moviegoers. Interviews in close connection to the visit to the cinema, and with a certain time lag, would give a possibility to catch experiences of the music and attitudes to it and to similar music. Ability to play examples of recorded music would be a valuable complement at such an interview. Since watching film is such a widespread activity, another feasible approach would be to interview randomly selected people about their film music experiences. Which movie music has made lasting impressions on them? Why has it captivated them? Has it led to repeated listening? Has the musical experience had any consequences for their taste in music or for listening? Has it widened their horizons? Etcetera.

Background music and ambiance

Background music is yet a type of commercial use of music. Its occurrence grows and we meet it increasingly often. At the shopping mall, we encounter background music intended to increase our willingness to buy. In the elevator, music is playing so the silence should not be embarrassing. At trade fairs, receptions, etc, background music is there to create the right atmosphere. In the telephone queue or the shop queue, music is played to distract those waiting and reduce the feeling of waste of time while waiting. When boarding airplanes, we are greeted by music intended to calm us and create a nice atmosphere. This background music is often art music, but typically classical, seldom contemporary.

Research design

This type of use of music opens up for experiments. Is it so obvious that it should be Mozart? What are the effects of different types of contemporary music? How are the people subjected to background music actually affected by it? Do they get stressed or calmed down, irritated or happy, ...? The investigations could encompass both questions to the listeners and measurement of blood pressure, stress hormones, or other medical indicators. The results of such studies could be of interest, not just to those who want to use background music for instrumental purposes, or to demonstrate a potential for new markets for contemporary music, but also to the general public, by increasing our knowledge of how we are affected – or manipulated.

Music as language

As noted above, music is embedded in culture, receives its meaning from, and lends meaning to the cultural and social settings where it occurs. If we regard music as a language, questions arise concerning communication and interpretation, ability to express and ability to interpret, inclusion and exclusion. We can ask ourselves how music is (re)interpreted by performers and by listeners, and if important parts of intended messages are lost or corrupted, or if unintended, interesting interpretations arise. We can ask what music can serve to express, and how it complements or competes with alternative types of

language. We can ask ourselves how the command of language creates possibilities, and lacking command of language generates social exclusion. We can pose questions regarding the development of the command of language and if there are stages similar to the ones that have been identified in other areas of development, and what consequences this could have for musical socialisation and human development.

If music is viewed as a language, to what extent is it then intellectual and to what extent emotional? Is it the very combination that gives music its power? To a composer, music is an active language. Composing lays the foundation for one or more intended interpretations. The performer who interprets the piece by herself, could follow one of these intended interpretations partially or completely, or diverge from them. The performer who is led by someone else, will experience a mix of the leader's and her own interpretation. The listener who has actively chosen to listen to the piece, can look for something specific in it, or meet it more unbiased. The listener's interpretation can be influenced by knowledge of the musical language in question, of the composer and of the performer(s). The listener who has not actively chosen to listen, can still listen actively, or just become a passive listener, where the music only plays a background role.

The more active the command of the language, and the more the performer or the listener shares the composer's musical language understanding, the more likely that the interpretations will be similar and that the composer's intentions will reach the listener. Some pieces are composed with a clear communicative intention, or use a musical language with a well-defined symbolism that conveys messages to those who master it. This does not necessarily mean that alternative, or by the composer unintended, interpretations are "wrong". The interpreters interpret based on their own frames of reference. It could even be the case that the composer appreciates when listeners create their highly individual interpretations. But with a lacking command of the language, the risk increases that the listener will not find much to appreciate in the music. Those who have a limited command of the language are then excluded from the communication and from potential experiences. An increased command of the musical language, or specific indications from the composer regarding what to look for, could open doors that otherwise remain closed.

It would be interesting to study the degree of command of art music language that experienced and less experienced listeners, or more or less musically trained performers and listeners, have and what they see in a piece of music or how they appreciate it. It is not unreasonable to believe that appreciation of art music is a matter of schooling or cultural socialisation. A deeper understanding of how musical schooling and access to keys for interpretation affect the possibility to interpret and derive an interest in art music, could provide a basis for more effective marketing, not least of contemporary art music. From a humanistic and societal perspective, such an understanding could also influence active attempts at cultural socialisation, from kindergarten, through school and on up, and provide more people with a richer access to the experiences that can be gained from this living part of our cultural heritage, and reduce possible exclusion effects.

Research design

In order to study the chains of interpretation from composer to listener and the reinterpretations that occur in these chains, case studies based on specific pieces would

appear to be appropriate. Such studies should target those who on their own accord would come to perform and listen to the piece in question. It could also be possible to conduct experiments, where people are assigned a piece to listen to, and are provided with more or less access to keys for interpretation before listening. Interviews after listening could provide images of the interpretations. Think-aloud protocols – that the listeners describe their experiences while listening – could provide other, and probably more spontaneous, reactions. Experiments with repeated listening to similar pieces could provide insights into how interpretations and views develop through increased familiarity with a specific musical language.

The development of models of stages in the development of command of a musical language could be based on discussions with experienced music teachers. Competent composers and the introspection by musicians into their own maturation process could lend further inspiration. Phenomenological studies aiming to understand how listeners and musicians with varying degrees of experience think about music, and how they try to articulate their views, could provide yet other angles, and also a possibility to test tentative models developed based on the other sources.

Further research ideas

Socio-economic perspectives tend to emphasise instrumental aspects of art music, rather than its intrinsic values. Music becomes interesting as a language; because of its commercial potential; for its value as example and inspiration for other activities; etc. This report does not aim to highlight such aspects *at the cost of* the intrinsic values. Rather, it builds on the belief that if we *also* study and clarify instrumental aspects of art music, it can be given more space and attract more interest than if we take a stand against the instrumental aspects. And if art music is allowed to grow in society, for whatever reason, there is always the possibility that its intrinsic values will also be appreciated.

In addition to the themes treated above, I want to conclude by briefly sketching some more ideas and suggestions for research.

Ringtone symbolism

Ringtones, the sound snippets that mobile telephones play when someone calls, tend to become (yet) a way to create and display our identity. Which ringtones do people use, and why? Which snippets of art music are used and what are they signalling?

Bugs and plagues

Especially in videos and in popular music, but also in the art music field, bugs and plagues occur – pieces that suddenly become something that everyone *must* have. From being completely unknown, a short video or a piece of music suddenly achieves cult status and spreads extremely rapidly, typically with the Internet as an important means of transport. What is the pattern of diffusion, how does it affect the artist, the composer, the publisher, the first to post it, the genre, ...? Which examples can be found in the field of art music, and what is needed to make contemporary art music the object of such processes to a greater extent?

Transfer effects

Transfer effects, whether music listening and rehearsing and performing music provide skills that directly affect other skills, has been a cherished topic, but where for example research on the “Mozart effect” has found it difficult to demonstrate substantial results. However, there appear to be tangible effects from musical activity on group dynamics, and ensemble playing has been used as part of teambuilding, cooperation training, creating a sense of identity, etc. Further research regarding the effects of the use of different kinds of art music for such purposes could thus appear worthwhile.

The culturally diverse society and art music

The connection between music and identity has been discussed above. An angle on this, which has led to projects elsewhere in Europe, takes connections between children’s ethnical origin and music as their starting point. In some projects, children present the music of their country of origin to their classmates. The idea is to treat cultural differences from a positive perspective, and to contribute to communication across cultural boundaries and increase the children’s knowledge of each other’s cultures. In other projects, children from a certain cultural tradition are given the opportunity to work together with professional musicians, in preparation for and during concerts that are given specific attention. The Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Harmony project, with for example Indian and Southeast Asian music is such an example. Exciting research questions could be developed regarding how art music from different cultural origins can help strengthen self-esteem and open possibilities for communication and understanding across cultural borders.

The development of ceremonial music

Music has probably been used in ceremonial events since time immemorial. ”We need magic and bliss and power, myth and celebration and religion in our lives, and music is a good way to encapsulate it.” said guitarist Jerry Garcia. As society changes and old ceremonies fade, new ceremonies develop. Which symbolic functions does music fill in these developing ceremonies: non-confessional funerals and marriages, academic degree festivities, opening ceremonies, etc, and how are these functions captured and fulfilled by different types of contemporary and older art music?

Music, health and development

Music can be expected to be connected with our biological and social development – normally viewed in a positive light regarding the biological development, but with strong positive and negative connotations when it comes to the social development. “Desirable music” is a social construction, and shapes what we are looking for in research, too. Those to whom art music is important, and perhaps viewed as threatened at a societal level, want to find the beneficial effects of the cherished type of music: harmony calms and soothes, rhythms increase concentration, organised complexity stimulates brain development, ... But there may also be wishes to find the negative aspects of the music one is not fond of: pop music leads to impaired hearing; uniformity blunts the intellect; the captivating and undemanding rhythms pave the way for brainwashing to promote drug use, increase class tension and ethnical tension; the steady beat leads to moral decay ...

In healthcare and medicine there are trials and research investigating how music can slow down old-age dementia, facilitate healing, decrease stress, support children’s development,

etc. There are studies of brain activity during music playing and how the brain develops from practicing. All these attempts seem to look for beneficial influences on our health and development, and over time, it is likely that an increasing amount of evidence of such influences can be identified, at cell and substance level and based on more judgemental and subjective indicators. It appears to be common to concentrate on harmonious, calm and familiar music. Provided that these research initiatives continue, we could expect a move towards a wider selection from the art music repertory.

How to progress?

This pre-study has aimed to formulate questions that can inspire people to undertake research on art music from perspectives other than musicological. I hope that this report can sow seeds that give rise to such research, but a single report is unlikely to produce substantial results. More initiatives supporting the same goal will be needed.

For example, conferences could be arranged for researchers with an interest in music, and musicians with an interest in research, where art music is in focus and the common denominator, rather than the different disciplines that the researchers normally belong to. This type of conference would draw attention to music-related research, and facilitate contact between researchers with an interest in music, and between researchers and musicians. Such contacts can lead to new perspectives, new questions and perhaps transdisciplinary collaboration.

This pre-study has not had the ambition to conduct a systematic literature review, identifying art-music-related research. But such a review would be valuable, and could provide important and useful inspiration for further research. It could also be used for spreading knowledge about existing research findings to a wider audience, for example via seminars for journalists.

Both a literature review and a conference could be steps toward the establishment of more permanent networks in the research community and between universities, musicians and the musically interested general public for continued exchange of ideas and dissemination of results. Provided that someone takes responsibility for being an active and permanent node in the network, some kind of periodic publication and a homepage could be established and kept active. Another task for such a network would be to inspire the writing of masters theses and other larger reports in academic programs, and in the longer run, development of courses and course segments that build on music-related research, for use in both music programs and other disciplines.

But research also needs financing. Thus it is of central importance to conduct activities that could raise the awareness and interest within research councils and other institutions that could finance music-related research. Such activities should target managers and assistants at both public councils and private research funds. It is also important to reach the board members and the politicians who influence research policy.