Beyond Classical: A Comparison of Alternative Programming in American Orchestras: Annotated Bibliography

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Bernstein, J. *Standing Room Only*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014. Springer Ebooks.

This book is divided into seventeen chapters, plus an introduction. The first section I'll be referencing is chapter 1, which is about the history of performing arts and the crises surrounding audience attendance. This chapter details the recent funding issues surrounding major orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony. This section also gives statistics related to audience attendance trends and possible reasons why orchestras are losing money and audiences. Another helpful part of this section is where the author discusses "accessibility issues" or reasons why many people aren't interested in attending a live performance. This goes in hand with chapter 4, which is titled "Exploring Characteristics of Current and Potential Performing Arts Attenders". This chapter goes more in depth about the multiple types of American classical music audiences and explores how multiple factors (ex. Age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic statues, etc.) influence an individual's attendance. I'll be using this chapter to help explain why orchestras should be striving to reach larger, more diverse audiences through more unique programming. The other chapter that will contribute to my research is chapter 17, which focuses on current and future audiences. This chapter will be useful when I'm explaining the aspects that directors and board members need to consider when creating a season program. Through understanding what audiences desire, I can understand how orchestras have successfully integrated alternative programming.

Schweitzer, Vivien. "Survival Strategies for Orchestras." New York Times, May 25, 2011. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/arts/music/survival-strategies-for-orchestras.html.

This article details the "string of crises" faced by multiple symphony orchestras regarding financial issues. These crises resulted in orchestras finding it necessary to re-think their artistic and financial structuring in order to attempt to alleviate the economic problems they were facing. I'll be using the details of these very real issues to show why orchestras are looking into alternative programming to draw in larger audiences, therefore increasing their revenue. Along with this, there's a paragraph I found helpful about Gustavo Dudamel. The author states that the energy and "adventurous programming" that he brought the Los Angeles Philharmonic caused a sold-out performance to a younger audience.

McCarthy, Kevin F., Julia Lowell, Julia Brooks, and Laura Zakaras. *Performing Arts in a New Era*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. 2001. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1367.html.

The concept that sticks out to me the most from this reading is that there's a hypothesis that "Americans' interest in innovative programming should increase as they become wealthier and better educated". While this is only one hypothesis, the authors also include how the size of an organization can influence their ability to experiment with programming. Ensembles in smaller cities might have to continue to perform standard

repertoire in order to retain their audience, while orchestras in major metropolitan areas may have more room to experiment.

Tepavac, Lela. *Fearless Journeys: Innovation in Five American Orchestras*. Edited by Catherine Marciariello New York: League of the American Orchestras, 2010. https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/fearless-journeys-innovation-in-five-american-orchestras.pdf.

What I appreciate about this source is that it answers a lot of the basic questions related to "innovation". It explains what it can mean for an orchestra to be innovative. It also gives examples of orchestras that can be deemed innovative, and what these orchestras have in common. The common denominator among these ensembles is that they've found that experimenting with programming is crucial to their ability to survive and thrive in the arts. This source gets extremely detailed with the experimentation done by five different orchestras. I think this will be perfect for the central idea of my essay, which will focus on which orchestras have had success with program diversity, how they did it, and their reasoning.

Más-Arocas, Octavio. "Fearless Programming: Invigorating the American Orchestral Tradition Through New Music." DMA diss., Bowling Green State University, 2016. https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/dma_diss/24/.

This dissertation includes information about five major American orchestras that have experienced success through a synthesis of both contemporary and standard repertoire. This dissertation pairs really well with the above source, which also discusses orchestras that have found success in contemporary programming. The author also discusses how contemporary programming can serve "the needs of their communities" by programming repertoire that is representative to the cultures of the audience members. Another thing that I appreciate about this thesis is that the author discusses how a music director can impact the programming choices and the audience's interest in the program. This goes with a few other sources I've found that have a similar opinion on the impact of music directors and guest artists.

Valoris, Henry. "Recent Trends in Orchestral Programming Among Major American Orchestras, 1988–2009." Master's thesis, American University, 2009. ProQuest Central.

This study shows the trends in American orchestral programming. From what composers are frequently programmed, to their region of origin and musical era. What I like about this source is that it's much more long term in its research than most of the other studies I'm looking at. This one spans over ten seasons rather than one, which is great in showing audience attendance trends through a larger scope. This source will be useful to me in seeing similarities among programming between major American orchestras and understanding what pieces and composers are most popularly programmed. I'll use this information to compare and see with other sources which of these orchestras have experienced audience number increase or decline.

Dobson, Melissa C., and Stephanie E. Pitts. "Classical Cult or Learning Community? Exploring New Audience Members' Social and Musical Responses to First-time Concert Attendance." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 20, no. 3 (2011): 353-83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41417555.

The research done in this study revolves around new or non-regular concert attendees and their experiences at a variety of instrumental performances. The overall findings were that the participants were unable to immediately appreciate the music due to lack of background knowledge. Some of the participants stated that certain types of performances were more comfortable to experience without prior knowledge, which is exactly what I think orchestras need to pay attention to when creating programs. This goes along with the idea of knowing your audience and being aware of what they want. The concept of accessibility and audience comfort is something I'd like to lean into in my essay.

Neff, Martha Mueller. "Akron Symphony Orchestra Gets Creative in Attracting New Audience Members." *Crain's Cleveland Business* 37, no. 13 (March 2016): A004. ProQuest Central.

This article focuses on the success of the Akron Symphony. The overall theme that I gathered is that the Akron Symphony is more relaxed in their performances, which puts a wide variety of attendees at ease. Audience members can wear anything, clap at "the wrong time", or engage in a what would typically be considered a classical performance "faux pau" and not receive judgement from performers or other attendees. I found the variety of ways the Akron Symphony gained new audiences to be interesting. Gospel collaborations, psychiatry and music presentations, and other special concerts have proven to reach younger audiences in Akron. I'd like to use this in my essay as an example of an orchestra that had success in innovative programming.

Pompe, Jeffrey, Tamburri, Lawrence, and Munn, Johnathan "Factors that Influence Programming Decisions of US Symphony Orchestras." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 35, no. 3 (2011): 167-84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23883723.

The authors of this journal entry discuss the relationship between funding and programming. The overall concept is that with increased funding comes more possibilities of diverse programming. Along with this, they provide evidence to show that some ensembles struggled when experimenting with programming, and actually saw a decrease in audience attendance. I think it's important to show that not all orchestras are successful when trying to diversify programming, and I'd like to include the pros and cons of this concept in my essay.

—. "Repertoire Conventionality in Major US Symphony Orchestras: Factors influencing management's programming choices." *Managerial and Decision Economics* 36, no. 2 (2015): 97-10. https://doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/mde.2654.

This article further discusses the relationship between funding and programming. This source also provides data from studies related to various programming choices. For

example, the inclusion of studies related to composers and compositions that were overrepresented showed that "compositions of 28 composers accounted for over 50% of the concerts by 27 major US symphony orchestras". I think this is a really good way to explain the hypothesis that audiences are bored or uninterested in attending concerts that are so largely saturated with the same composers. On the other hand, this article explains the downside of performing nonstandard works, which includes potentially more expensive costs to perform contemporary works and fewer ticket sales.

Robinson, Joseph. "Raising the Demand Curve for Symphony Orchestras." *Harmony: Forum of the Symphony Orchestra Institute* 10 (2000): 1-9. https://iml.esm.rochester.edu/polyphonic-archive/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2012/03/Raising_Demand_Robinson.pdf.

This source focuses on why the demand for symphony orchestra performances is lacking. Robinson takes a more pessimistic approach to the reasoning why classical music is "under attack" by its potential audiences. He explains that classical music is seen as too male, too European, and oversaturated with music coming from too many directions. In his opinion and personal experience, the standard repertoire is loved across nations and is "one of the greatest and most universal achievements of Western civilization". I'd like to include Robinson's viewpoint in my essay, and also include some other contrasting ideas that he has. This includes his paragraph that explains how although hyping up guest soloists may bring in larger audiences, it makes the members of the orchestra feel like they're less important. This would go well with the NY Times article I cited, which discusses how big-name soloists like Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lang Lang can spark greater interest in patrons. Robinson's big idea to spark interest in audiences is to create competition between orchestras. I think this idea of competitive concerts is really interesting, and I'd like to include in my essay the successful specific examples stated in the article.

Sigurjonsson, Njordur. "Orchestra Audience Development and the Aesthetics of 'Customer Comfort.'" *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society* 40, no. 4 (October 2010): 266–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2010.502011.

This article discusses orchestras that have experimented with new programs to "increase the interest of and attract new groups of listeners". In one case, the Sacramento Symphony decided to try out new programming, and also hire a new, more vivacious orchestra director. This idea goes well with the Dudamel story in the NY Times article that I referenced above, and I'll be pairing those two concepts together in my essay. The author tells of other similar instances and really focuses on this idea of "audience development". This idea of audience development is one that I'd also like to explain in my essay. The concept is that the relationship between the art and the consumer is symbiotic. The group must make an effort to appeal to its audience, and in return the audience will appear in larger, more interested, more diverse numbers.