Young Audience Development and Aesthetics: John Dewey's Pragmatist Philosophy and its Implications for Orchestra Management

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Abstract
This paper is about John Dewey's contribution to aesthetic theory and its relation to audience development. Instead of focusing on the work of art as the finished product, Dewey defines art as a process involving the audience, as well as the creator, and the qualities of the object. By this he draws attention to the role of the receiver as an integral and active participant in the process of art and emphasises the nature of the aesthetic experience as belonging to both the artist and the audience. It is suggested here that young audience development projects should be conducted because they have aesthetic value and intrinsic purpose, beyond marketing or education, and that Dewey's theory of art could be seen as useful metaphor for orchestra audience development.

Keywords
Audience Development, Aesthetics, Orchestra Management, John Dewey.

Introduction

Derrick Chong says about audience development in his book *Arts Management*: "There can be an uneasy relationship between artistic programming and audiences. For too long, audience development has been constrained within the confines of a marketing discourse." (2002, p. 14). Like many others, Chong is concerned about the kind of discourse arts managers use to formulate their thoughts about how to make the arts relevant to more people. That, if we look only to the marketing conception of audience development, we might loose something that is essential to the integrity of the art form and what we think is special to the arts. Since orchestra management, like any other management, is a projection of an idea into the world, our work, projects and programs, are shaped by what we think needs to done and those thoughts are shaped by our system of thought, our ideology, paradigms and metaphors (Morgan 1983). Those beliefs are seldom made explicit or discussed but they manifest themselves through our actions and the objectives we set ourselves.

This paper is a part of an investigation into managerial and aesthetical aspects of young audience development events that are initiated by symphony orchestras. The objective is to employ the theoretical framework of John Dewey's aesthetics to investigate aesthetic characteristics of audience development events and see if it could offer some guidance in how audience development projects are to be successfully managed. Twenty different events promoted by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Berliner Philharmoniker and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra were reviewed. The main findings of the

research are that the events have many aspects in common with ideals of pragmatist aesthetics, such as: pluralistic attitudes towards programming, presentation based more on the background and experiential reality of the audience rather than classical conventions, and placing an emphasis on participation and practical understanding. The findings can be used for further evolution of a theory of audience development with special regards to aesthetic aspects of presentation and the relationship between art and audiences.

In this paper I will highlight two points about Dewey's contribution to aesthetic theory and its relation to audience development. Firstly his critique of the "museum conception of art" and how the institutional surroundings of the orchestra concert can have the effect of separating music from people. Secondly Dewey's conception of art as an experience and the integral part the audience plays in the process of art. Focusing on the individual's aesthetic experience encourages us to think about the orchestra performance from the point of view of the audience rather than that of the institution, performer, composer, educator or marketer.

Dewey's Pragmatism

John Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1859 and died in 1952. During his professional life he wrote prolifically and when he died in his 93rd year, he left behind forty books and around 700 articles covering issues such as education, democracy, logic, ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics. Dewey was a part of an intellectual tradition known as *pragmatism*, or as he preferred to call it, *instrumentalism*.[1] For Dewey any worthwhile philosophy must be practical and take its point of departure from the problems of human activity. Successful theory develops responses to the problems of real people and the evaluation of any philosophy should be guided by its value to the life of human beings. By "value" Dewey does not mean mere material efficiency or short-term gains that could be stated as a set of objectives or measurable targets, but rather beneficial in a broader or global sense as good for *experience*.

Experience is a key term in Dewey's philosophy. It is perhaps best understood as the process of living, thinking and communicating with the world, with the significant emphasis Dewey puts on thinking as *acting* in the environment, or *living* in society. Experience in Dewey's sense is both the product and the producer of culture, and incorporates bodily activity, perceptions, feelings, etc. as well as the different forms of knowledge, such as "know-how", social understanding, cultural capital and technical expertise. Experience is understood in the broadest sense as the human interaction with the world, its life condition, and Dewey's instrumentalism can be seen as a project of improving experience, where the arts and the aesthetical play a vital role.

For Dewey, the roots of the aesthetic experience lie in ordinary, commonplace, experience. Art, as a manifestation of the aesthetical, is in a sense as natural as any other activity. He asks us to imagine a prehistoric time where the distinction between high-art and other parts of life were not as rigid as now:

> Dancing and pantomime, the sources of the art of the theatre, flourished as part of religious rites and celebrations. Musical art abounded in the fingering of the stretched string, the beating of the taut skin, the blowing with reeds. Even in the caves, human habitation were adorned with colored pictures that kept alive to the senses experiences with the animals that were so closely bound with the lives of humans. Structures that housed their gods and the instrumentalities that facilitated commerce with the higher powers were wrought with especial fineness. But the arts of the drama, music, painting, and architecture thus

> exemplified had no peculiar connection with theatres, galleries, museums. They were part of the significant life of an organized community. (Dewey 1980 [1934], p. 7)
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> The collective life that was manifested in war, worship, the forum, knew no division between what was characteristic of these places and operations, and the arts that brought color, grace, and dignity, into them. Painting and sculpture were organically one with architecture, as that was one with the social purpose that building served. Music and song were intimate parts of the rites and ceremonies in which the meaning of group life was consummated. (Dewey 1980 [1934], p. 7)

According to Dewey, art comes from natural everyday living, through gradual and emergent development from other human activities that are by convention not seen as art, and not the other way around. High-art has not fallen from the sky, pure and perfect, separate from society and material struggles. Instead, art has changed through history and its status changes constantly in relation to the cultural epoch in which it happens to be experienced in. Dewey sees art as a necessary component of life, social reality, and human existence, and he suggested that rather than storing away and guarding works of art in institutions we should look at art as a basic human activity. For anything to have human value it must be put in context of human existence, and fundamentally relate to the development and growth of human beings.

The Museum Conception of Music

Dewey's interest in aesthetics concerns the practice of experience and the institution of art. He wants to change the traditional conception of art and open up the conventional discourse, which he calls "the museum conception of art". "The museum conception of art" entails creating a category of "art" as objects to be stored away and appreciated in a safe environment, preferably secured in a glass box, in a place where you have to get permission to enter. To Dewey this model is no less prevailing in the theatre and the concert hall where important works of art are segregated from ordinary people, or at least their everyday lives, so that they could have no experience of them or find relevance in them. For example classical performances take place in an environment with a particular kind of exposure and customs that shape the air and feel of the concert experience. Concerts have a distinguished set of rules about what is appropriate and what is not. These rules are as much a part of the musical experience as any prior knowledge of the music is, or knowledge of the performer, and these things should not be thought of as arbitrary or "extra". The rules and customs frame the aesthetic experience and create the means of contact between the audience and the music in the concert situation. It follows that if the customs have no relevance to our lives and background, and even feel unpleasant, the musical experience will never have the potential of being a important to us.

Dewey's point is that because of how we treat the subject of high-art, how we talk about it as a sacred thing and put it on the highest pedestal, we have alienated people from valuable experiences. By putting art into temples of quiet, remote contemplation, we have cut it from the very thing it should be a part of: the everyday lives of people. And we create, in Dewey's words, "the beauty parlor of civilization" (Dewey 1980 [1934], p. 339). The dichotomies of artwork and experience, of creation and interpretation, body and soul, means and end, are all examples of distinctions that he sees as obscuring our thought about art and are symptomatic of a classification system that Dewey refers to as *compartmentalisation*. The main effect of this system of distinctions is that it hides the underlying life and dynamics of the things that are

being classified. We accept segregation as the natural condition of things, as long as we do not question it, and we condition our thoughts and actions so we do not have to confront it. Within this dualistic thought system we then organise things into *hierarchies* - of things that are higher or lower, closer or further. Dewey's objection to this condition is that this kind of thought devaluates things such as hands-on work, emotions and practice, in favour of thinking, insight, and contemplated imagination. He suggests that we put those distinctions and classifications aside and try to link the things we see as distinct. We would then understand that an aesthetic experience is not as atomised as the "museum" setting suggests. In his words:

> A primary task is thus imposed upon one who undertakes to write upon the philosophy of the fine arts. This task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. (Dewey 1980 [1934], p. 3)

In this condition, of institutional distinction between art and people's lives, the role of the orchestra manager is to find ways to link the music with its audiences. The aim becomes to overstep the distance created by the "museum" setting and to create a platform for audiences and artist to experience orchestra music.

Art as Experience

In his main book on aesthetics, *Art as Experience,* Dewey redefines the concept of art as a process. Instead of focusing on the work of art as the finished product, Dewey identifies art as a process involving the audience as well as the creator and the qualities of the object. By this he draws attention to the role of the receiver as an integral and active participant in the process of art and he describes the aesthetic experience as belonging to both the artist and the audience. Dewey sees art as instrumental in enhancing the life experience, and rather than separating the aesthetic experience from our lives, he posits it as an effective way to secure our interest in better living (Eldridge 1998, p. 4). The aesthetic experience is a cognitive concept, but no less a psychological, emotional, social, and cultural, and the role of art is to improve experience so that human beings can better cope with life's situations.

For Dewey, art production and perception, doing and undergoing, are part of a process that he calls *an* experience. We should not be focussing on the material art object when we talk about "art" but rather the process of making and perceiving, of which the object is an integral part. Art could not happen without the object, but it does not tell the whole story since it is the interaction between the object and the artist/perceiver that makes "art" a meaningful concept. The artist "embodies in himself the attitude of the receiver" (1980 [1934], p. 48) and becomes the audience when he or she works on the art product.

Dewey turns the apparent hierarchy of artist > artwork > spectator on its head and he wants to look at the situation of the observer, reader, audience and the concept of art from their (our) point of view. In the case of the symphony orchestra the point of view of our investigation becomes the position of an audience member, as a participant, and her/his aesthetic experience rather than the inherent qualities of the composition, or the perspective of the conductor.

If we look at music as an experience of the symphony orchestra, the focus shifts from the *works* that are being played to the *experience* that we have of them. Indeed the whole definition of the symphony orchestra changes from "someone who plays X music" to "someone who provides an

experience of X music". This is an important distinction since the next question that follows is not "what are we playing?" but rather "what is the experience we are providing?". In the context of strategic management of the organisation as a whole, this move enables us to see that many of the things that are not "music" are nevertheless a part of the experience that we want to provide. We can bring together then, in one thought, the musical and the extra-musical when we start organising our efforts in, for example, young audience development.

To understand this principle in practice, we can look at Zukunft@BPhil, which is the Berliner Philharmoniker's education and community programme: "designed to bring the music of the Berliner Philharmoniker to the widest possible community" as it says on their website. Starting in 2002 with the arrival and initiative of Sir Simon Rattle, who at the time took over as Artistic Director of the Berliner Philharmoniker, the program has brought thousands of young people in contact with the orchestra. Children and young people of various ages, in cooperation with schools in Berlin, participate in projects that take the orchestra repertory as its starting point and then work with a particular composition in a creative way. The aim is to create musical relationship and understanding through hands-on work, participation and "practical understanding":

> At the core of the programme is creative music making which enables people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to work with musicians from the orchestra and create and perform their own music. Creative projects take the repertoire of the orchestra as their point of departure and aim to promote a practical understanding of an involvement in the music the orchestra plays.[2]

In a sense "practical understanding" of the music could be seen as an antithesis to the passive listening of the concert hall and can be likened to the difference between "learning by listening" and "learning by doing." The objective is not to "teach" music but to approach the music from other directions, from within the individual, and from within the sphere of the musical idea. The music is not treated as an object of distant contemplation but rather as a field or province of meaning that the audience can enter and play around in.

This ideal can be seen in a program that was created for a new composition involving a school visit of around a hundred secondary school pupils to witness a rehearsal of John Adams' *Century Rolls* at the Berlin Philharmonie in February 2003. Sir Simon Rattle conducted the Berliner Philharmoniker and Emanuel Ax played piano (Adams wrote the concert on Ax's initiative). Beforehand the students had experienced minimalist composition and xylophone playing in the foyer of the Philharmonie under the guidance of Richard McNicol, the orchestra's music animateur. The visit was a part of a project in which most of the group had previously met the soloist at their school and were introduced to the music by visiting a historical museum where they could hear the sound of a player piano that formed John Adams' main inspiration for the piece. At the rehearsal the relaxed atmosphere was closer to "music making" and folk traditions of performance, than the formal relationships of "composer > work > performer > audience" typical of an orchestra concert. And this event is essentially different from the normal concert experience of the concert hall were the audience is supposed to sit in its place, opposite the performers, and passively receive and listen. The event also motivates questions of the necessity of the traditional surrounding aesthetics of the concert, by challenging and changing the classical concert conventions, the 'right and proper' way to access orchestra music.

What this event at the Berlin Philharmonie suggests is that the orchestra music performance can be reframed to better suit the needs of audiences unfamiliar with the traditional practice. The customs most commonly practiced today are not an unchangeable given and the classical

surroundings of the orchestra concert are not the only way to access musical performance or experience music. At the same time we might want to be sensitive to the needs of existing audiences, and their procedural and presentational preferences, we should also be on the look out for other ways of creating musical experiences. There is no 'one size fits all' since the presentation of orchestra music is a social construction and what we have today is but a construct and one possibility of many.

Experience and Education

Dewey's identification of art as *an* experience, does not to mean that everyone has the same aesthetic experience from the same work of art, or even the same experience from one moment to the next. Experience is culturally conditioned as it takes place in an interactive process between the individual and the social environment. This means that Dewey's idea of experience is far from being as essentialist as it might seem at first glance, and this aspect of experience is perhaps better understood in terms of education.

Dewey is well known for his theory of education and education plays a large part in his writings on other subjects as well. His basic idea is that all genuine education comes through experience and that experience should be seen from the point of view of the particular student (1997 [1938], p. 25). Learning, therefore, is based in and on our personal experiences, and everything we acquire through education must be considered as relating to a particular time and place.

Education is for Dewey a continuous growth in an interaction between objective and internal conditions (1997 [1938], p. 36). Rather than being a one-way relationship where either the objective reality of things and facts is put into the mind of the child, or, where the child shapes the world as its personal mental construct, Dewey sees the relationship as interactive, where each side influences the other. Experience is a two-way process of observing and serving, perceiving and performing. We change the environment and the environment in turn changes us:

> Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had. (1997 [1938], p. 39)

In this complex interaction between the environment and the individual Dewey asks the educator to consider the circumstances of the student and not to presume that objective qualities are automatically known. This means, for example in music education, that music or musical work, that becomes relevant to us through playing or listening, singing or dancing, is both culturally and personally conditioned as the product of our prior familiarity. Not to mention the difference between the experience of music that one *plays* and the experience of music that one *listens* to. Even though we identify ourselves with the same cultural background, we still experience the same music differently. And there is no ultimate right way to experience or understand a piece of music since we approach it from our own familiarity with it and the world we relate to.

> It ought not to be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs. No one would question that a child in a

> slum tenement has a different experience from that of a child in a cultured home; that the country lad has different kind of experience from the city boy, or a boy on the seashore one different from the lad who is brought up on inland prairies. (1997 [1938], p. 39-40)

Dewey's point is that we learn on the basis of our former experiences, what we know before, where we come from socially and personally. He also suggests that through the process of experience, what we are to learn involves our prior understanding of it and the process of learning is continuous since our new educational experiences are related to our environment and what we know before.

This takes us back to the event at the Berlin Philharmonie were we see the musical encounter is regarded as a continuous process of experience that helps to create a sense of practical understanding. The event is designed to suit the needs of people who have not had much experience with minimalism or perhaps orchestra music in general. But it is no less artistically valuable for that reason, it is simply different from what the regular audience is used to at orchestra concerts, and different from the process they go through in their musical experience. At the Philharmonie the event is based on factors such as contact with the musicians, hands-on instrument playing and composition, and vivid cultural/historical backdrop. The youngsters had the opportunity to connect Adams' music on multiple levels and from various directions, that all made up the holistic experience of a musical encounter that generates an aesthetically fulfilling orchestra event.

Audience Development, Young Audiences and the Orchestra

Many orchestra managers do see the homogeneity of the audience base as a problem and they would like more young people to come to concerts and experience live performances. Consequently, they have tried to attract and raise the interest of young audiences through management of audience development projects and concerts aimed at younger audiences (Baker 2000, Maitland 2000 [1997], Kawashima 2000). These events range from school concerts with various levels of participation, special gatherings and discounts for younger people, explorations in visual presentations, programmes of film music, concerts of light and popular classics, to concerts of popular music arranged for symphony orchestras.[3] But, though audience development projects have been discussed by various authors, the focus of attention has often been on their institutional aspects. The project is thus considered and evaluated in terms of organisational interests rather than in terms of development of the art form or the personal aesthetic experience. And what is young people's view on orchestra concerts?

"I don't think classical music is aimed at our age group" said an interviewee aged between 14-18 in a study by John Harland and Kay Kinder (1999) on young people's views of cultural venues. The study collected the views of 20 people, aged 14-18, and the interviewees had some interesting comments on their perception of classical music concerts: "it's people that are dressed up in tuxedos with their opera glasses." The young people also felt the concerts were excessively long and not for them, "It's just sitting there for hours listening to some woman whining on". It is worth noting that the comments were made by people who generally had not experienced orchestra concerts themselves and, perhaps more importantly, were not about to rush off to buy tickets. According to this research, young people do not feel wanted or welcome at classical music concerts.

It is common knowledge that generally audiences for symphony orchestra concerts are not thought to adequately represent the general population and particularly, there seems to be a lack of interest by younger people (Kolb 2001, Baker 2000, Harland and Kinder 1999). Figures from the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics for the year 2001 show that in Britain 4% of people aged of 16-24 and 6% of those aged 25-34 attended classical music concerts while 16% of those aged 55-64 year old attended concerts. Comparatively, the level of attendance for "cultural events" (including films and pop concerts) was 93% and 90% for the first two groups, respectively, and 74% for the 55-64's. Furthermore, 17% of young people in the 16-24 age group and 14% in the 25-34 age group attended live dance events, while 15% and 13% respectively attended cultural festivals. In the US, research suggests that young people between the ages of 18–34 do not frequent classical music concerts, and the level of attendance in this age group has in fact been falling in the period of 1982-1992 (Kolb 2001) and again in the period of 1992-2002 (Nichols 2003). [4]

But statistics only tell a part of the story. The musicologist Lawrence Kramer for example expresses his concerns about the future and development of classical music, with this observation:

> For those who care about "classical" music, the possibility of tapping new sources of cultural and intellectual energy may come not a moment to soon. It is no secret that, in the United States anyway, this music is in trouble. It barely registers in our schools, it has neither the prestige nor the popularity of literature and visual art, and it squanders its capacity for self-renewal by clinging to an exceptionally static repertoire. Its audience is shrinking, graying, and overly palefaced, and the suspicion has been voiced abroad that its claim of occupy a sphere of autonomous artistic greatness is largely a means and perpetuating, a narrow set of social interest. (Kramer 1995, p. 3-4)

Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics might be just the sort of theoretical platform that Kramer is calling for. Particularly in relation to the problem of what the young people in Harland's and Kinder´s research speak of as "not aimed at their age group". Orchestra managers have to ask: Is it *the music*, whether that is classical or other kind of orchestra music, that young people see as unwelcoming or exclusive? Or, is it rather "the museum conception of art", the image of people "dressed up in tuxedos with their opera glasses", that is preventing them from experience orchestra music? If the orchestra wants to broaden its audience base, would it be worthwhile to try other approach for the representation and the live performance of orchestra music that better suits the experiential background of different audiences? According to Bonita M. Kolb these are the sorts of issues that orchestras should address:

> Evidence from the UK suggests that the decline in attendance is not due to dislike of classical music, but to the concert setting itself. The formality and elitism of concerts, and their association with personal improvement, have principally been experienced in live performances. This has not stopped younger generations enjoying classical music on the radio – with nearly 40% of 18 – 24 year olds currently tuning in.
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> Classical music is in danger of becoming a fly trapped in amber – highly decorative but of interest only to an ageing part of society. […] It has become trapped in the sterile confines of the concert hall, and needs to rediscover its social purpose in order to recapture the imagination of the young. (Kolb 2002b).

However, even though issues of presentation and concert setting are in essence *aesthetical,* audience development is nevertheless often viewed as a part of orchestra *marketing* intended to find new customers for the orchestra.[5] Keith Diggle for example points out how the definition of arts marketing, for most purposes, embraces the philosophy of audience development: "Given that Arts Marketing contains the fundamental idea of Audience Development within it I think it could be said that audience development is much more an orientation, or degree of emphasis in the practice of arts marketing than an activity that is separate from it." (Diggle http:/www.audience-development.net/). In Diggle's view audience development doesn't need to be separated from arts marketing and he sees it as more of a leaning towards what he calls "educational public relation." Arts education can also take the form of institutional directive. According to Sue Knussen the rise of the education departments within symphony orchestras was caused by, among other things, the need to teach high culture to children, and also, the fear that the orchestra's regular audience was be coming too old. And through the years educational programs have become a way of fulfilling orchestras' government funding contracts and obligations of demographic inclusion (Hayes 2003).

That suggests that education, like marketing, can be used as a means for narrow institutional ends that have in essence little to do with music or musical experiences. If the education program is thought of as process of instruction were the "underdeveloped" novice, is taught how to like the classical institutional representation, we are thinking about education from the point of view of the orchestra rather than the audience. We are in fact getting the audience "concert-trained" rather than offering musical representations that suits the individuals needs and interests.

However, the main thing about the marketing and education viewpoints, is that they represent audience development as marginal activity to the core purpose of the orchestra. If the purpose of the orchestra is to play music, the purpose of audience development, seen as education or marketing, is to find audiences and teach/get them to like what the orchestra has to offer. This is by no means an uncommon view of the orchestra and the composer William Schuman no doubt articulated the thoughts of many when he said that:

> The purpose of the symphony orchestra is to reveal the literature composers have created for it. […] If the symphony orchestra has become a multi-purpose organism – and it has – there is still no reason for its basic purpose to be compromised. Yet the complexities and the interplay of endless economic, esthetic, social and political considerations have become so pervasive and omnipresent that the purity of the orchestra's original purpose has been reduced to an irritant. (Schuman 1985, p. 27)

Dewey's theory not only places the issues of audience development in the realm of aesthetics, it situates audience development at the centre of the orchestra's purpose. Audience development becomes a principal issue of orchestra management since the orchestra, as an arts institution, has the role of making music part of peoples lives. For this reason, Dewey's theory of art can be viewed as a guiding ethos for audience development strategy and even the orchestra organisation in general. For, by focusing on the audience and their aesthetic experience in the context of their experiential background, pragmatist aesthetics asks the arts managers to look at the artistic process as a whole and make the role of the audience the centre of their attention.

Conclusion

John Dewey's aesthetic theory is an interesting contribution to this discourse about the nature and purpose of the arts institution. His main concerns are the implications of theoretical mechanisms and institutional frameworks that have separated art from people's everyday lives. By associating orchestra music exclusively with the specific setting of the classical music concert hall, we are inevitably choosing a presentation of the music that is not to everybody's liking. Those who might like the music but do not feel comfortable in the surroundings are by default excluded from participating. That is not to say that every event could be or should be to everyone's liking, but that efforts should be made to make the orchestra, as an institution, inclusive rather than exclusive.

Tim Baker discusses the Harland and Kinder research, and other sources, and summarises the main factors he sees as preventing people from attending orchestra concerts. Baker states that: "much of the research into potential attenders suggests that there are many more people – many more than currently attend concerts – who are interested in classical music and don't reject the idea of going to concerts, but for whom concerts don't appear on the 'menu' of choices for their leisure time." Baker maintains that it is not for the lack of awareness, or money, that people do not attend classical concert but rather: "the 'value' of concerts as perceived by potential attenders is undermined by what they see as areas of 'risk' in investing scarce resources of money and, especially, time." (Baker 2000, p.49)

We need to look at the concert experience holistically and find what are the obstacles preventing young people from attending orchestra concerts. Then we need to systematically change the concert surroundings and the air of selected concerts to better suit their needs. We need to reduce the risk associated with attending orchestra concerts. We should not look at it as dumbing-down, or lowering of standards, but rather as essential to the purpose of the orchestra and our role as orchestra managers. People's experiences and backgrounds differ and it is our role to find ways to make the orchestra part of people's lives. Not by "pulling them up" to this or that level but to provide them with valuable aesthetical experiences that they feel comfortable participating in. One of the contributions Dewey makes is that he rejects over-spiritualization of the aesthetic experience and the notion of art's "higher" or transcendental origin (Dewey 1980[1934], p. 27). He stresses the need for institutions to focus on the qualities of the aesthetic experience not as an isolated incident, but as a continuity with the "normal process of living" (Shusterman 2000, p. 6). The aesthetic is a part of life and a part of human nature, part of being human. And even though Dewey's theory of the aesthetic experience is by no means complete or the last word on the matter, it is important to appreciate from the start that he does not posit that people have a naïve or primitive relation with art, or that people should try to look at art without regard to its social and historical context. Dewey's point is that because our aesthetic experiences are influenced by our cultural environment and personal conditions, we should not try to authenticate art by affixing it in an idealized, "neutral", or museum-like setting.

We should ask at this point if it is really the role of audience development to change so dramatically the nature of the classical music concert that young audiences are not introduced to the traditional experience but rather something else? And further, is it not the role of audience development to sustain and create audiences for the future and to teach them to understand and appreciate the traditions of the orchestra? The reply to these questions is to ask back: what is it that the symphony orchestra has to offer? Is it the construction of customs that only those who are already initiated feel comfortable in? Or is it rather access for people to experience some of the most precious works of art mankind has ever known? Is it more important to maintain a uniformity of behaviour and experience within the art form? Or to offer people from all

walks of life and from all backgrounds the opportunity to experience symphonic music? The answer to these questions could inform how we decide to address the issue of audience development and whether we do it from the standpoint of the institution or from the standpoint of aesthetics and people's relation to music.

Dewey suggests a fundamental swift in the way we think about the purpose of art, arts institutions and the role of art in the lives of people. His proposal is that we turn our attention from the dualism that follows from separating the artwork from the experience of the artwork. Not because the separation doesn't exist but because the fixation on the inherent qualities of the artwork, classification or supposed intrinsic value prevents us from appreciating the experience of art and its value to human life.

Notes

[1] It is important to begin by saying that in this context "pragmatic" does not mean short sighted materialism and "the end always justifies the means" way of thought. What is meant is a philosophical tradition that has its roots in the writings of thinkers such as Charles Pierce, William James, John Dewey, and more recently Richard Rorty, Lois Menand and Richard Shusterman, with the influence of critics and theorist such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Hans-Georg Gadamer and others.

[2] http://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/projekte2003+M5d637b1e38d.html

[3] Specific examples of orchestra audience development projects are the 'New Rituals / Old Rituals', 'Stravinsky on your doorstep' and the 'Sharpe Edge' projects, all produced by London based Orchestras. All three projects include active participation by people in the community or by the audience, as well as performance in accessible locations (http://www.newaudiences.org.uk/).

[4] The statistics give us a general idea of which age groups are most likely to attend an orchestra performance. They tell us that that young people go out more and attend cultural events more often than their elders but that they prefer other events to classical music events. They show us that even though people of the age of 16-34 frequent cultural events, orchestra concerts are not high on their agendas. At the same time, the numbers tell us little because they do not specify what kind of concert attendance people are talking about. "Classical music concert" can also include church music, children's choir ensembles and string quartets, while "attending" can also mean aesthetically different things to different people, like "listening to classical music" can also mean different things to different people.

[5] A notable exception is Carù's and Cova's 2003 AIMAC paper on marketing and the classical music concert experience.

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