

The new artpreneur – how artists can thrive on a networked music business

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Abstract

Drawing upon interviews held with classic music students and teachers, international artists and players from the Berlin music industry this paper suggests that artist concepts like they are taught at conservatories and discussed in advisory books have to be revised. Contemporary concepts are adopting entrepreneurial logics in addition to esthetic ones and design careers that will be both fulfilling from an artistic as well as an economical perspective. However, market figures and our own research show that these two perspectives alone cannot provide enough orientation for established and future classical musicians. We suggest a new approach that redefines an artists' creativity and enables them to develop their careers and scope of action by acquiring and exchanging social and cultural capital within their networks.

Keywords: Music education, classical music markets, career

1 Introduction

There exists a huge gap between the educational culture within conservatories (and their notion of an artist), what is written in the available literature and what actually happens in real life. Recent literature dealing with concepts and ideals of artists reveal a slowly changing paradigm, shifting away from a purely aesthetic to a more economic focused perspective. Vocational text books aim to introduce marketing and promotion techniques (e.g. Beeching 2010) and to

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encourage a more business-like approach (Brink 2011) for those from a music background. Studies confirm a shift from artists solely culturally focused to a more commercially-oriented entrepreneur within the field of popular and dance music (e.g. Smudits 2008). In the field of classical music however, our research highlights a very much more conservative perspective still exists within the education system. At German conservatories, the culture is still based on an education where artistic criteria and achieving a role in an orchestra are the main determinates of and basis for future success; even though, as statistics show, the orchestral market cannot supply every alumnus with jobs. On the other hand in observing the Berlin music scene, professional and successful working environments can be found, even though the artists are not essentially driven by economic rationales. Crucially we wish to examine how their businesses operate, despite this apparent inconsistency. We will empirically analyse and evaluate contemporary concepts of the artist within classical music education, outlining and developing a revised notion of the entrepreneur to encourage further studies as well as to orientate new students and those seeking to become professionals in this area.

2 Culture in classic music education is still oriented around the genius ideal

Hanover is an important place in the classical music sector. In this industry important players like the well-known artist management companies IMG Artists and Konzertdirektion Schmid are based in Hanover, and the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media has an outstanding reputation for its performing arts courses.

In a series of interviews with music performance students, professors and one tutor from the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, we investigated student's motivations and what kind of career they wanted to pursue in the future and compared this to the information the representatives of the conservatory gave during our interviews. Guided interviews allowed us to combine inductive and deductive re-

search whereby basic hypotheses could be reviewed, whilst leaving room for new aspects we were previously unaware of (Gläser, Laudel 2006). Following this qualitative approach meant we were able to identify several discrepancies between the dominant culture at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media and the situation students already and face in the classical music sector after they graduate. Four additional interviews with international educators and artists were held to contextualise the data. Interviewees for this were Davy de Wit, Head of the ArtEZ Popacademie (NL), John van Houten, who is a music and music business instructor at the Bob Cole Conservatory in the USA, Juliane Banse a professional soprano who performs internationally, and Ferit Odman, a Turkish jazz drummer who has studied in Turkey, Sweden and New York City.

From the interviews it became clear the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media is not the ivory tower one might expect of a conservatory. Different opportunities are provided to gain practical experience, for example through co-operation with opera houses or within a new, voluntary compact course covering networking and self-marketing. Nevertheless, the primary goal of education at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media is to prepare the students for a job in a classical orchestra and/or as a soloist. This key point was articulated by all the interviewed students and the instructor:

Student 2: "[T]he education, like how the University beholds it, is directed onto the orchestra, I think."

Interviewer: "You say, later you surely want to go into an orchestra?"

Student 2: "I want that, yes!"²

Instructor [Hanover]: "Of course, every teacher has a specific ideal. Here in the performance courses, they don't even want orchestra musicians, in fact they want *soloists* here. Okay, if the solo career doesn't work out, then *of course* they get a job in an orchestra."

² Interviewees studying or teaching at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media were made anonymous.

This inability for the conservatory educational culture to take economic realities into account, was also identified by our experts when they spoke about the transition from university to the job market.

Davy de Wit: "[I] studied at the conservatory in Hilversum. [...] Did the performing artist thing and what I learned there was, that I learned there to play bass very well, but I didn't learn how to make a job from my bass playing and how to make money. In other words: You come from your studies - as someone, who [...] has no idea what [happens] in a company and how you can implement business models and so forth [...]."

Interviewer: "What was your moment of realization?"

Davy de Wit: "The first day after my graduation."

As with the students, interviews with the teachers from the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, showed, they did not turn a blind eye to the changing environment for artists working in the classical music sector. However the aesthetic ideal still dominates their actions, almost as if nurturing talent allows them to ignore other aspects of education:

Interviewer: "What does one need to make a living as a classical musician nowadays?"

Professor [Hanover]: "Well, first of all he has to be competent. I really need to be versed in playing my instrument [...]. So I am utterly convinced that this still counts, although there may be variances that seem to object to this sometimes. No, I'm utterly convinced: If somebody has something to tell, when musical substance gets transported, emotional content, then it is something, a basis that can carry. And in addition it can help, if someone possesses communicative skills - that is not given to anybody."

Nevertheless, there remains the dominant aesthetic ideal of the authentic, performing artist that will somehow survive outside the university if he simply 'has' it. Quotes like the following were common: "*The*

main thing for me and also my colleagues, with whom I played together, is, to go in for a musical piece – and anyhow the faith exists, that it will work out in the end." (Professor from the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media)

As scientists, usually concerned with examining music industry matters from a macro perspective, we became very interested in how these aesthetic ideals could be understood and whether contemporary, marketing oriented artist concepts could help to foster a career in the changing field of classical music in Germany. We will therefore summarise the market situation for classical musicians.

3 Markets alone cannot provide enough orientation for musical performance students

Contemporary notions of the artist claim that artists cannot merely pursue aesthetic ideals and live the concept of 'L'art pour l'art' as the economic situation becomes harder for them (e.g. Smudits 2008, Brink 2011). According to these commentators, artists have to develop entrepreneurial skills as opposed to solely aesthetic ones. As an example, Smudits postulates in his theoretical framework of the artpreneur, that artists should expand their competencies to include technical, commercial and artistic skills within several various activities (Smudits 2008). Brink (2011) claims an artpreneur should combine "*business skills with artistic values*" (id: 23). In her definition of the term, the artpreneur finds fulfilment in making money out of his/her creativity. The main challenge is seen as being able to translate creativity into money. To her mind, this is mainly a mental and psychological process: Artists have to understand "*money as a trading tool*" and should liberate themselves from their emotional attachment to money (id.75).

The reasons for the development of new notions of an artist lie in the changing markets within the classical music sector. In 2009/10 independent orchestras in Germany received public funds totalling € 216 million, about 60 percent of the total budget spent. Apart from 2007/08, when orchestras obtained € 217 million, this is the highest public

amount since 1993/94 (Deutscher Musikrat 2011a). In addition, German theatres and opera houses – including their orchestras – were supported by a total of € 2,168 million in 2009, financed by the federal government, the states and municipalities (Deutscher Musikrat 2011c). Despite this high level of subsidies and a unique funding of cultural institutions in Germany by the state, established posts in German orchestras have declined. From 1992 to 2012, the number of posts fell by 19 percent, from 12,159 to 9,844 as shown in picture one (Deutscher Musikrat 2012b). Furthermore the number of orchestras in Germany declined by 168 orchestras in 1992 to 132 in 2012, accounting for an even bigger decrease of 21 percent. At the same time, the number of alumni of instrumental and orchestral institutions rose continuously from 1,543 in 2000 to 1,932 in 2010, as can be seen in picture two (Deutscher Musikrat 2012a).

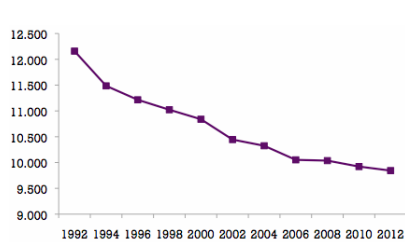


Fig. 1: Established posts in German orchestras. Based on figures of Deutscher Musikrat (2012b).

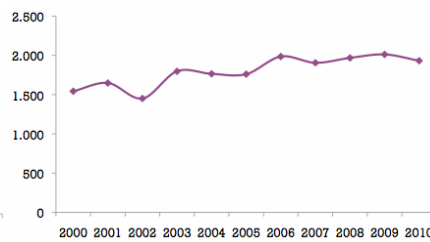


Fig. 2: Number of alumni instrumental per orchestra. Based on figures of Deutscher Musikrat (2012a).

The above two graphics illustrate the growing gap between the number of musicians available in the labour market and the number of established orchestras posts, the ones, which once offered a secure job and income.

Another important change within the classical music market is its declining audience. Whilst in 2006 63.5 percent visited an event "occasionally", only 59.8 percent did so in 2011, and only 6.4 percent visit concerts regularly (Deutscher Musikrat 2011b). Moreover, the audience for classical music concerts is aging, with little growth in demand from younger generations (Gembris 2009). It is not just music students but

also established classical musicians who face a much smaller, much more competitive market in the future.

This data and the developments of the past few years clearly show that students can no longer look to the security of an orchestral position. Hence, the job market in the classical music sector alone cannot be the sole focus for the students and musicians have to develop what Gembris characterizes as "*portfolio careers*" (id. 63). These incorporate various activities within a more self-employed career. Within these careers there are new concepts, aimed at increasing an artist's options by adding market logic and these have to be examined given neither the job market nor the scope for audience development offer a secure basis for career development and education.

4 Artists have to develop a new concept of creativity enabling them to expand their scope of action

The aforementioned concepts, although clearly showing the positive effects of self-employment and portfolio careers, focus on the market as they add economic logics to an artist's aesthetic ones (or replace them). They have to be evaluated by reference to shrinking markets. Increasing market orientation among classic music students will eventually increase competition endangering the aesthetic component of arts as such (Eikhof, Haunschild 2007). This might apply even more in the shrinking market of actual listeners of classical music. Economic thinking cannot be abandoned in a market economy and also not, as we will soon show, in the economy transformed by networks. However, acquiring and trading capital other than the economic one must not be forgotten in the arts sector where social and especially cultural capital have different values to that of the economic world. Bourdieu, the founder of social practice theory, criticizes a predominately economic view that distinguishes practices as economically selfish or non-selfish (Bourdieu 1983). Therefore, we argue, concepts for classical musicians, especially those used in music education, not only have to take account of aesthetic and/or economic logic, but also include other kinds of capital.

5 Artists have to develop a new concept of creativity enabling them to expand their scope of action

In reviewing concepts connecting the aesthetic and economic basis of professional practice within the artist's mind-set, creativity is often used as the interface between the two (Williams 2005). Hong, Essig, and Bridgstock (2012) for example state that in entrepreneurial education, creativity is what the entrepreneur needs to discover business opportunities.

As the accumulation of cultural and economic capital alone cannot provide sufficient focus for classical musicians, additional perspectives have to be evaluated. Furthermore in examining the interface of creativity, different perspectives are opened up in the research beyond the aesthetic creativity (musical skill) and the economic one (entrepreneurial skill) and these allow for a new broader conceptualization of the entrepreneur.

Schumpeter's characterisation of the entrepreneur allows for the notion of a cultural entrepreneur as the one who combines, integrates and creates from what was not connected formerly (although of course Schumpeter never analysed the creative industries himself) (Swedberg 2006). Studies on creativity management within the creative industries show, that it is primarily important to connect people, who do not necessarily have to work for ones own corporation. Here, social factors like trust and friendship play an important role as do the assembly of creative teams with divergent intellectual capital (Banks et al. 2002). In her book aimed at classical musicians, Beeching also suggests a conscious building and tracking of one's personal network as an essential part of a musician's business that opens up opportunities (Beeching 2010). A form of creativity management can also be found in the studies of Amabile, who shows that it is getting more important to be "*drawing together individuals with diverse skills and perspectives*" (Amabile et al. 1996: 1156). Creativity here is a social process more than natural ability. This suggests that artists can be more productive in being creative, and thus acquire more cultural, social and economical capital by – in Schum-

peter/Swedberg sense – being creative working with others with whom they never have been creative before.

The importance of social capital is also mentioned in Eikhof and Haunschild's (2007) article on German theatre actors. However they immediately eliminate that influence again by focusing only on the available aesthetic and economic logic. We will therefore support this theory with our own research into networks in the Berlin creative industries.

6 An artist's network can transform old market oriented focal points and allow a new understanding of the artpreneur

As part of transforming the traditional understanding of the term 'creativity' into one as a social process we will take a closer look at a year old study on the Berlin music industry. As a part of a research team from the Institute of journalism and communication research Hanover, lead by Prof. Dr. Carsten Winter (see his article in this issue) we were investigating potential gains in value for the whole sector through interviews with more than 30 experts and artists in the Berlin music business. The results of this year long monitoring were very revealing: Artists, who were interviewed amongst other players, showed that connecting through digital network-media and in urban, physical spaces like the clubs in Berlin enabled them to build networks with diverse kinds of players leading long-term to a further creation of value. Cultural, social and economical value was created and exchanged in a new and varied way.

There is a tendency amongst artists to strategically invest their cultural capital, (time, knowledge, creativity) and social capital (their network) into new and established relationships for producing creative and cultural productivity. This not only leads to a cultural good (performance, recording) but eventually to a valuable relationship. This is mutual social capital, which, by definition and as shown in our research findings,

increases the artist's access to resources and potential choices. The music business is a 'buddy' business.

Winter shows in this process, how an artist's scope of action for his activities, e.g. playing a concert or producing a record, is increased by networking and the willingness to work with fans. These 'common people', strategically interpret, manage, organize and vary meaning, contexts and relationships and particularly public representations and images of artists' work for themselves leading to a 'pull' or 'on demand culture'. Artists, sharing their cultural capital (time, skill, taste) will increase their fans' range of choices enhancing their own identity. In return, fans invest their social capital (contacts, networks) and that is what enables fans, their network and the artist in this case, to create a new cultural good that can be sold (Winter 2011).

Logically, artists that need to share different kinds of capital must possess these in advance. The more diverse the participants within an artist's network, the more he/she comes under pressure to understand the codes, values and practices within this network. As network theory shows, artists must contribute value to the network to be able to participate. Value in that sense is the ability to contribute to networks goals which in turn reinforces the artist's own capital (Castells 2009). This explains, why for example business -oriented knowledge, as part of cultural capital, is important to increase one's connectivity. One female drummer from Berlin told us: *"Currently I produce music for TV, documentaries and whatever is possible with a colleague of mine. You have to propose that to a publisher and so forth."* Hence, a successfully networking and sharing artist must fulfil several conditions to expand his/her connectivity to link with other individual players or networks and even their status within this structure. The new artrepneur therefore is not only skilled as a musician but he/she will incorporate and learn various other skills to provide value for his/her network. By reconfiguring the basis of their professional structure from the purely aesthetic ones, they are able to invest into different kinds of capital that can be shared, and can increase their connectivity and value for networks that reach out to the entire fan community as the case below shows:

"Often people write to me: 'Hey, I like your music.' Let's take one example from South France and he asks: 'When are you going to be in South France for playing here?' Then I answer: 'Sorry, at the moment I do not have any requests, but if you know any promoters or club operators talk to them and tell them my name'. That's how it works sometimes - that you let your fans work for you. [...] Like for example last weekend in Oslo. There where two young fellows who liked what I do and sat down together with a promoter and got a party going" (Berlin Techno DJ).

To understand the way the new artist currently works as an artpreneur it is important to demonstrate his/her actions by creating a model (see picture 3). As it can be seen in the model below artpreneurs are capable of reverting to their inherent professional logic and to avail themselves of the required capital to handle unique situations. They are able to match their skills to the circumstances and configure them to connect with people, institutions and networks that share and exchange as well. They can support and provide value for different and diverse practices and groups. The new artpreneur increases connectivity for networks by being multi-skilled, reflecting and arranging professional structures and investing different kinds of capitals in different networks. In Schumpeter's sense the artpreneur is an entrepreneur, but not (only) an economic one. As Castells describes, it this "*relational capacity*" (Castells 2009: 10) confers power, and cannot be characterized as an attribute. In fact relationships and relational competence are supposed to be the core of success for the up and coming new artist and constitute power when compared to those other artists not doing so; to help mobilise his/her own resources including his/her own social capital, and network. An artist's established networks can transform the traditional market creating a new sense of what the artpreneur is.

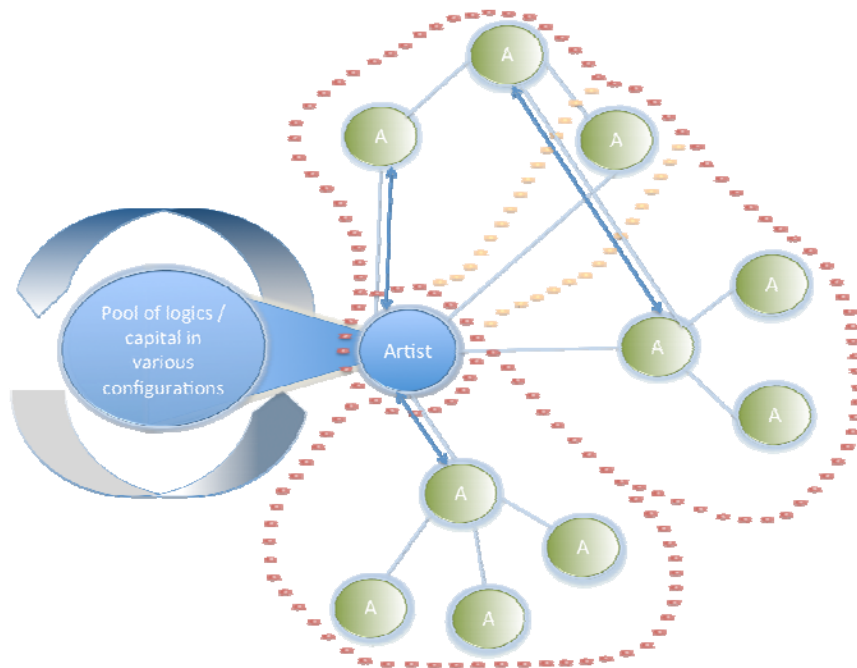


Figure 3: The model of the new artrepreneur

As a result artists now face a variety and heterogeneity of opportunities and challenges by virtue of the progressively networked environment. Especially in contemporary musical education it is by no means certain, that the new circumstances have been recognised nor understood. The model analysis of interviews with the students compared to those with experts from the current artist business has not yet shown any link. In fact this has merely demonstrated, that the modern requirement for an understanding of the current and future working and general living conditions in the conventional studies is impossible. That particularly indicates conflict with the new market conditions for every single artist is more likely than ever before. But this requires approaching the market not only through economic means, but instead by seeing the macro-environment as a connected world, where social and cultural capital is exchanged without the need for price negotiations or con-

tracts. This new understanding becomes more and more important and will become the principle and pre-requisite for market success. Beeching, who understood the wealth of a network for a musician articulates this as: "*The best agenda or mission to adopt is that of contributing positively to your community and the work*" (Beeching 2010: pos. 749)³.

7 Conclusion

The changes taking place in the classical music sector are both a challenge and an opportunity for established artists as well as students. A lot of what is taught together with some of the scientific material already demonstrate that an artist has to face the economic situation, suggesting the adoption of creative, entrepreneurial characteristics, and where appropriate apply economic logic. Although it cannot be denied that these principals are important, the current situation for the classical music market shows clearly that a market orientation alone is not sufficient. Our empirical research shows that artists are far more productive by not initially adopting an economic approach. The exchange of social and cultural capital in a networked environment, where not just artistic or mere economic logic is available enables artists to expand their range of choices eventually leading to economic success. Examples from the Berlin music industry already showed instances of how such an exchange could work, although more empirical research is needed to confirm and understand these processes. These include how different kinds of capital are being acquired, exchanged, shared and transformed by artists, how these processes can be managed and how they can support normative goals of security, health, satisfaction and value creation. Overall it can be concluded that the situation has become much more complex for the artists and the students requiring a revision of the notion of the artist that can be used in education and career planning. It is therefore necessary that this new situation is made known to students. Our proposed model of the new artpreneur, as one who is neither a

³ Publications used in this paper which are Amazon Kindle editions work with positions as opposed to page numbers. The abbreviation of pos. will be used here.

short slighted idealist, nor just a commercial entrepreneur but in fact an artist using his/her creativity to combine people, institutions, ideas and different kinds of capital to create something of value might prove useful in this task.

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