

SCMO-ACADEMIC-INDUSTRY NETWORK SYMPOSIUM: AUDIENCE RESEARCH ON DIGITAL CLASSICAL CONCERTS AND PERFORMANCES

15TH OCTOBER 2021

A one-day academic-industry online symposium of the Streaming Classical Music and Opera (SCMO) network in cooperation with University of York (York Music Psychology Group), TU Dortmund (Institute for Music and Musicology), and TU Berlin (Audio Communication Group).

The global Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting lockdown imposed in many countries, as well as related safety measures taken by governments and authorities have posed big challenges to classical music culture. Concert producers, artists and audiences are still suffering intensely from the situation, whilst digital streaming of recorded or live music events has quickly turned out to be a new way to supply classical music enthusiasts and to provide way to reach audiences for musicians as well as opera and concert houses.

Shortly before lockdown, in March 2020 the successful **kick-of meeting** of the European “Streaming Classical Music and Opera” (SCMO) academic-industry collaboration network took place, with 14 participants from four different countries. Nine months later, we arranged a subsequent meeting in December 2020 that focused on **the institutional perspective** that continued and extended the fruitful discussion between classical music researchers and opera and concert producers regarding psychological, sociological, cultural and economic aspects that pertain to the use of streaming technology in the field of classical music.

We have now organised a follow-up symposium on 15 October 2021 that focusses on the **audience perspective** on digital concert and performance productions. We would like to invite network members, external researchers, and institutional practitioners to contribute to this event by presenting their research and experiences with audiences of digital offerings for classical concerts and opera performances.

Programme:

Friday 15 October 2021 (all times are in UK time, BST)

- 9.45 Welcome address, introduction round
- 10.00 Dana Swarbrick & Kelsey E. Onderdijk, *Enhancing Digital Concerts: Social connection, Presence, and Virtual Reality* (40 min presentation plus 10 min Q&A and change)
- 10.50 María Cecilia Ayalde Ángel, *Audience's Perspective on the Symbolic and Monetary Worth of Digital Live Music Experiences* (20 min presentation plus 10 min Q&A and change)
- 11.20 Ann-Kristin Zoike, *Opera streaming: Emergency solution in the crisis or a trend-setting form of reception?* (20 min presentation plus 10 min Q&A and change)

- 11.50 Lunchbreak
- 12.30 Gill Davies, *Audience Research Outcomes for Hebrides Ensemble Live Streamed Concerts* (20 min presentation plus 10 min Q&A and change)
- 13.00 Christian Weining, Martin Tröndle, Hauke Egermann, Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, Katherine O'Neill, *The Digital Concert Experience (DCE) Project – Researching Audiences for Streaming Classical Music* (45 min presentations plus 15 min Q&A)
- 14.00 General discussion
- 14.30 End of meeting

Access:

Our meeting will be held on Zoom:

<https://york-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/94872698480?pwd=RzRQMXlnaC9qVk1SM1dWUjJtL0NHQT09>

Meeting ID: 948 7269 8480

Passcode: 978008

For any queries, please contact the meeting host: Prof. Dr. Hauke Egermann, hauke.egermann@york.ac.uk

Abstracts:

Enhancing Digital Concerts: Social connection, Presence, and Virtual Reality

Kelsey E. Onderdijk Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music (IPEM), Department of Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies, Ghent University, Belgium

Dana Swarbrick RITMO, Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Rhythm, Time, and Motion, Department of Musicology, University of Oslo

The coronavirus crisis led to unprecedented cancellation of concerts; however musicians responded rapidly by providing concerts online. To assess what aspects lead to social connectedness and feeling moved in virtual concerts, 307 participants responded to a survey reporting concert and personal characteristics (Study 1). Exploratory analyses suggested that physical presence explained 40% of the variance in feeling moved and social presence explained 27% of the variance of social connectedness. Therefore, manipulating feelings of presence may result in enhanced social experiences of digital concerts. This was put to the test in an experiment that consisted of three livestreamed concerts in which manipulations examined what might facilitate social connectedness (Study 2). Hierarchical Bayesian modelling was used to examine the effects of agency, social context, and presence on responses of 83 participants. Results revealed that physical presence was a predictor of connectedness with both the artist and the audience, while social presence only predicted connectedness with the audience. Interestingly, a greater negative impact of COVID-19 (e.g.,

loneliness) predicted feelings of connectedness with the artist (but not the audience), possibly because participants fulfilled their social needs with this parasocial interaction. Based on this study, the usage of virtual reality (VR) seems to be a promising tool. However, little is still known of concert experiences in VR. Thus, we will conclude with a short discussion on this topic based on a third study in which 74 participants responded to a survey to understand the (dis)advantages of this way of experiencing concerts (Study 3).

Audience's Perspective on the Symbolic and Monetary Worth of Digital Live Music Experiences

María Cecilia Ayalde Ángel, University of Sussex, United Kingdom

This study focused on the audience's perspective concerning the worth (symbolic or monetary) of digital live music experiences, which includes live-streamed concerts on social media and virtual reality live concerts, among others. In order to analyse such perspectives, theories of Political Economy of Media and Cultural Studies were applied on the analysis of social media commentaries within two publications regarding digital live streamed concerts (one free and one ticketed), and the analysis of an online survey. The purpose of such study is to understand if these types of events could work as a viable and realistic alternative to live music during the COVID-19 social restrictions period. Interesting results were concluded in terms of what do audiences consider valuable in live musical experiences, which can or cannot be replicated in the digital realm. Additionally, the survey offered interesting solutions or alternatives that would make current digital live musical experiences more interesting or valuable in a monetary aspect.

Opera streaming: Emergency solution in the crisis or a trend-setting form of reception?

Ann-Kristin Zoike, Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, Germany

Opera has been undergoing a transformation since years: unsatisfactory audience figures continue to decline (Jacobshagen, 2019), while competition from other art forms and leisure activities is increasing (Vigolo, Bonfanti, & Brunetti, 2019). As an elite-dominated high culture, opera seems to lose relevance in western 21st century societies. Meanwhile, digital distribution modes, such as opera streaming, are giving rise to hopes of countering the downward trend. Especially during the pandemic, opera streaming gained social and cultural importance as a form of reception. Therefore, the aim of this research project was to report on what extent and in which respects streaming might represent a valuable form of reception for recipients even in the post-pandemic era.

By using the method of qualitative guided interviews with opera streaming recipients the following questions were examined:

What are the recipients' motives for streaming opera?

Which differences do recipients perceive between a traditional opera visit and opera streaming?

What are the advantages of streaming compared to a traditional opera visit for recipients?

Which of the recipients' expectations haven't been fulfilled, yet?

Seven interviews were conducted with individuals from Germany, Great Britain, Ireland and the United States during late summer 2020. The results of the interviews show that opera streaming is being integrated into the media usage repertoire of people interested in opera as a complementary form of reception to live opera. On the basis of the findings, I envision that actions can be taken regarding innovative design of both opera streaming and traditional opera live performance.

Sources:

Jacobshagen, A. (2019). Musiktheater. In Deutscher Musikrat/ Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum (Ed.), *Musikleben in Deutschland* (pp. 244–273). Bonn: Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum.

Vigolo, V., Bonfanti, A., & Brunetti, F. (2019). The Effect of Performance Quality and Customer Education on Attitudinal Loyalty: A Cross-Country Study of Opera Festival Attendees. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 48(6), 1272–1295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019861744>

Audience Research Outcomes for Hebrides Ensemble Live Streamed Concerts

Gill Davies, GDP, Digital Producer, gill@gdpdigital.com, United Kingdom

Hebrides Ensemble is a leading chamber music collective in Scotland, placing contemporary music at the heart of its diverse repertoire. Gill Davies is Digital Producer with Hebrides Ensemble. Her background is in production with the BBC and her Masters explored live streaming via Lola (Low Latency) audio visual technology. At Hebrides Ensemble, she explores how technology can be used to extend audience reach. Between 2016 – 2018, she set up a pilot project to live stream Hebrides Ensemble performances from Perth Concert Hall with the aim of reaching audiences in remote areas. Audience research was gathered after every concert and showed interesting outcomes. While audiences supported live streamed concerts, particularly those in remote areas, many said they missed being able to watch in a community setting. For others, their enjoyment was affected by the technology they had access to. Poor broadband access was a particular problem.

This led to us to consider how we could improve the experience for our remote audiences. After discussions with arts organisations in remote areas, we discovered that many community centres doubled as cinemas for the local community and some had fibre broadband connections. So, we were able to stream concerts to a number of community and arts centres including Gairloch in Highland region, the Mariel Centre on Stornoway and Taigh Chearsabagh, Uist in the Outer Hebrides.

As the live streamed concerts took place in front of an audience in Perth Concert Hall, we had to carefully consider how to present the performances for both a cited and remote audience. Our solution allowed us to create valuable additional material that could be used across social media channels.

In this presentation, Gill will discuss the audience research outcomes for Hebrides live streamed concerts and how they influenced the way future concerts were produced.

The Digital Concert Experience (DCE) Project – Researching Audiences for Streaming Classical Music

Christian Weining, Zeppelin University, Germany

Martin Tröndle, Zeppelin University, Germany

Hauke Egermann, TU Dortmund / University of York, United Kingdom

Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, Max-Planck-Institut für empirische Ästhetik, Germany

Katherine O'Neill, University of York / University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

In the past years, various concert halls, festivals, and private providers have developed audiovisual (live) streaming services. Originally, the motivation for these new services was to overcome the “crisis” of the classical concert or to launch new business models. Often, the main assumption was that digital offers could attract a new and younger audience that would not have attended a ‘conventional’ live concert. Through and during the current pandemic, however, this view is changing: Digital formats are currently the only way for cultural institutions to reach out to and hold their audience’s attention. Out of necessity, a variety of additional streaming services have emerged.

However, which of these offers is affective in what way, and which ones could actually be promising for the future is an almost unexplored question. Further, how the concert business can continue to assert itself as a cultural form and social forum under the rapid pressure of digital change is a current

and essential question for musicians and concert houses as well as for cultural policy. With *The Digital Concert Experience* (DCE), which is a seamless extension of and complement to the Volkswagen Foundation's [Experimental Concert Research](#) (ECR) project, an interdisciplinary working group will test the effects of various streaming concert formats. This way, the effect of digital concert formats (DCE) can later be contrasted with the effect of analog concert formats (ECR). DCE and ECR creates an internationally unique data set to understand the concert as a cultural form and its digital transformation.

In this presentation, we will first give an introduce the research project DCE, this will then be followed by a presentation of the results of a survey of digital concert stream users, exploring different user types and their interests for different digital concert features. Subsequently, we will present results of two analyses of an online audio-visual response experiment: one will look at the effects of different digital concert formats on aesthetic experience, the other one will look at the effects of digital concerts on social audience experience.