



Digital R&D Fund
for the Arts

PULSE: THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA STUDENT MOBILE PROJECT

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October 2012

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Student Mobile Project

- This report documents the key findings of a year-long collaborative research project focusing on the London Symphony Orchestra's (LSO) development, implementation and testing of a mobile ticketing and information system. This ticketing system was developed in association with the LSO's technical partners, Kodime Limited and in collaboration with the Aurora Orchestra.
- The Student Mobile Project was designed to provide an end-to-end marketing and ticketing solution to engage hard-to-reach student audiences for (initially) the London Symphony and Aurora orchestras, utilising a mobile phone application ('app') and a mobile web-channel, both called *Pulse*.
- The *Pulse* app was developed to work on both iOS (such as iPhone) and Android mobile telephones, and also with a simple mobile web-channel for those without access to an iOS or Android smartphone.
- The main target audience for *Pulse* are university students in or around London. Research has, time and time again, shown that audiences for classical music events in the UK, as in many other countries, are primarily educated and middle-class; hence, university students are a prime future market segment.
- The app and website allow students to access discounted tickets for certain performances (originally) at the LSO and Aurora orchestras, and to pay for these using the mobile payment system, PayPal.
- At the point of writing (October 2012) the *Pulse* app has now been expanded to cover student ticket sales for seven orchestras and two venues in London.
- This model of discounted ticketing developed out of, and built upon, the LSO's existing student discount 'Student Ambassadors' scheme, which was launched in 2004.
- The Student Ambassadors were recruited at university fresher's fairs, with the role of encouraging fellow students to purchase tickets for concerts. Under this scheme, for each ticket transaction, there would be one free ticket issued.
- The Student Ambassadors ticketing system operated through a text message system. The person buying a ticket would text a message with a specific format, and the money was collected via premium text messages, and then paid back to the LSO by the mobile telephone operator; minus a sizable cut taken by the phone company.
- However, quite frequently, students would sign up as ambassadors, then purchase only their own and one other ticket; effectively turning the scheme into a 'buy-one-get-one-free' offer. When coupled with the sizable administrative cost paid to the mobile phone companies, this meant that the initial scheme was becoming far less economically viable for the orchestra.
- Hence, the LSO along with their technical partner Kodime, turned to the Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture to provide the capital to introduce and test a new mobile and web-based ticketing system. The system would also allow students access to greater levels of information about the orchestra, its music and the venue, and to interact with others via social networking links.

1.2 The Classical Music Audience

- Classical music audiences have for some time typically reflected a narrow demographic: getting on in years, retired, white and middle-class. Research suggests audiences for live classical music are ageing, while younger audiences are in decline.
- Trends in cultural consumption see arts events, such as classical music, increasingly competing with a wider range of cultural activities, but in return see little expansion in their traditional audience demographic. It is therefore crucial that arts organisations, such as the LSO, explore new ways of (at least) ensuring that they hold onto the audience sector they already have.
- There is relatively little academic literature on classical music audiences and their patterns of engagement and attendance, and even less on the use of new technologies as a means of classical music audience engagement. However, there are some notable exceptions, and a small (though significant) literature on which this research builds.
- Key themes in the existing literature on classical music audiences emphasise the middle-class culture and (class-based) exclusionary nature of classical music events in the UK.
- It is suggested that during the twentieth century, which saw rapid and fundamental social changes, classical music concerts provided (and continue to) a sacred and solid space where the middle-classes can reaffirm their values and place within a social hierarchy. And, inevitably, these patterns of ritualised and learnt behaviour can act as a key barrier to those that are not schooled in the habitus of classical music attendance.
- Existing research also suggests that younger audiences may have different expectations and demands of classical music, as well as other cultural events they attend and participate in. In particular, several authors argue that a new, younger generation want a more visually stimulating and participatory experience than that commonly seen in most classical music concerts. Hence, several authors suggest that the presentation of classical music may need to change to meet the interests and demands of new and younger audiences.
- Brown (2004b) highlights a number of innovations that several orchestras have previously tried to engage new audiences, and suggests that these examples might provide models for others to learn from. These include: contextual or thematic programmes, dramatisation of concerts, visual enhancements, and ‘embedded interpretation’.
- One example of embedded interpretation is an electronic ‘concert companion’ (CoCo). Concert companions are hand-held PDA devices, which provide information for audiences during the live event. Concert companions were introduced into several concert halls and mostly in the US in the 1990s.
- Though Brown (2004b: 14) suggests that “consumer reactions to the device have been encouraging”, concert companions have failed to become a common sight at classical music concert halls around the world due to three key issues. First, the PDA handsets proved expensive for orchestras to buy and maintain; second, writing commentary for each individual concert is similarly expensive and time consuming; and third while some people appeared to enjoy embedded interpretations in the concert, many did not.
- To change the format of the traditional classical music concert, runs the real risk of alienating (and potentially driving away) classical music’s core audience. By attempting to meet the needs of both the existing and potentially new audiences, classical music runs the risk of pleasing neither.

- Moreover, it is difficult to guess what the demand for alternative concert formats might be. Furthermore, if classical music does seek to attract a new and different audience, and in particular, one that lacks a knowledge and tradition of attendance in this area, it is questionable if this would be a loyal and continued audience?

1.3 The Research

- The aims of this research were primarily to work with the LSO and their partners in the ongoing development and testing of new mobile- and web-based ticketing and marketing tools. And, to evaluate the effectiveness of mobile and web-based ticketing in engaging a student audience.
- The research employed a flexible mixed-method approach to researching a primary sample group of 18-25 year old university students.
- Seven groups were held after (or in one case before) LSO concerts at the Barbican Centre in London, between February and June 2012.
- The number of participants in the focus groups varied from ten to 13, providing an overall sample of 81 students.
- This group was a non-probability sample and primarily self-selecting. Students who had purchased tickets through the app, or in the case of the first two focus groups through the old text messaging system, were emailed and asked to participate in a focus group. The focus groups were then made up of those who responded positively and turned up on the night.
- Additionally, a short questionnaire was handed out to participants before each focus group; which was completed by 68 respondents. The questionnaire covered basic demographic information, like age and gender, but also, for example, attendance patterns, knowledge and interests in classical music.
- Observations of the audience were also recorded by two researchers at the four LSO concerts, and a number of photographs taken.
- One-to-one interviews were conducted with three members of marketing staff at the LSO, and also the leader of the app development team at Kodime.
- Finally, the researchers undertook textual analyses of the app, and data on usage patterns were provided by Kodime, and subsequently analysed by the research team.

1.4 *Pulse* and Marketing Classical Music

- It is evident that discounted tickets were very popular with the participants. All of the focus groups participants, when asked, indicated that the reduced price of tickets for students was a major factor that influenced their attendance. And some stated that they would not, or could not, attend classical music concerts if the ticket prices were more expensive.
- However, the new *Pulse* app was not launched without some initial concerns from the student focus group members. And some questioned why an app was being introduced at all?
- In particular, there was also some disquiet concerning the replacement of the old system, particularly at first. Some focus groups participants said that they found the

text messaging system easier, and also they were unhappy at replacing of what they (frequently described as) the 'buy-one-get-one-free' offer that previously existed.

- A small number of respondents suggested that the move to the new ticketing system was not adequately communicated to them by the LSO.
- Again, a small number of focus group participants expressed concerns that the new student ticketing system seemed to prioritise smartphone owners, which many students may not be. However, the pre-focus group questionnaires suggested that 75 per cent of the participants had a smartphone; though iPhone (26 per cent) and 21 per cent Android (20 per cent) phone ownership is somewhat lower.
- Some disquiet was also noted in relation to the web-channel, most commonly in relation to it being difficult to find on the website and the mobile site not working as well on a computer web-browser as on a mobile phone.
- In terms of ticket sales, the *Pulse* app appears to have been successful; data supplied by the app developer (Kodime) indicates that by August 2012, the app had 265 registered users, and of the 390 discounted tickets that were made available to students over the four concerts (between March to July 2012), 318 (82 per cent) had been sold. This compares with 175 ambassadors in place and with 67 per cent of tickets on offer to them in the six-month period before the launch of the app being sold.
- There were some, relatively minor, technical issues with the app. Due to regulations at the Barbican Centre, students were still required to be issued with paper tickets. Also, overly reflective screens sometimes meant that mobile phones could not be scanned easily at the event to enable the issuing of tickets, and also issues relating to a lack of wifi or phone signal in accessing the app when collecting tickets. However, overall the introduction of the app, in technical terms, seems to have gone well.
- At the later focus groups, the number of objections raised about the app was considerably lower, and the mood seemed to shift to one of general endorsement. In line with more general systems development projects, this is possibly due to users becoming more familiar with the app, and in the later focus groups, it was more common to hear praise for the new app.
- Generally, most participants welcomed the new reward system.
- Comments relating to the sound clips on the app were a little more mixed. Most had not listened to them, some liked them, while others were more sceptical as to whether they could get a real sense of a piece of music from such a short clip.
- Only one of the participants in the focus groups had used the in-app links to social networking sites, and most stated that they did not know the possibility to do so existed within the app.
- In the focus groups, opinion was divided as to whether they would like more information included in the app. Some suggested information normally included in the concert programme could be added to the app. However, others advocated keeping the app simple, and the information on it minimal.
- The focus groups also explored the idea that the app could be used as a 'concert companion' to provide information during the live event. However, generally this idea was not popular; as this was seen as potentially interfering with two key aspects of the classical music experience (highlighted above), of prior understanding and appropriate behaviour.

- What did seem popular was the idea that the app might include the opportunity to purchase discounted (student) tickets for other cultural events, and specifically, other classical music orchestras.
- Eighty-three per cent of respondents to the pre-focus group questionnaire indicated that they had attended at least one other classical music concert in the previous 12 months. These figures are similar to those found in the *Audience First* survey conducted with the LSO audience in 2010, which suggested that 97 per cent of their survey had attended another classical music concert over the last year.
- However, focus group participants were generally pessimistic that the app could be used to attract a *new* audience. And significantly, many in the focus groups further questioned whether classical music should be trying to attract a new audience at all.
- Further data obtained by Kodime, from when new users initially registered on the *Pulse* app, would appear to suggest that 36 per cent of users indicated that they had not attended a classical concert in the last 12 months. However, the validity of this figure must be questioned, as '0' was the default answer to the question of the number of 'concerts attended [in the] last 12 months'; and hence, if the user was to simply skip past this question, '0' would be their recorded answer.
- Thus, further long-term analysis would be beneficial to establish whether the app has been successful in encouraging attendance from 'new audiences'.
- The real benefits of the *Pulse* app may be in developing a more beneficial and deeper relationship with the existing audience and market sector, rather than utilising it to seek a, largely unknown, new audience.

1.5 Classical Music Culture

- Only 22 per cent of our survey suggested they were 'White British'; with more indicating they were 'White Other' (30 per cent) (most commonly from mainland Europe or North America), or 'Chinese' (29 per cent). None indicated they were 'Black' or 'Asian' British. Given the self-selecting nature of the sample group, inferences here are problematic; however, it is worth noting that the figure of 78 per cent of participants coming from outside of the UK is much larger than the 26 per cent of the student population in London who are international students. It is also different from the 67.8 per cent of respondents who indicated that they were 'White British' in the *Audience First* survey of the wider LSO audience in 2010.
- Some reasons given for the possible high number of international students coming to the LSO were that classical music was more accessible and cheaper than in some students' home countries, or that attending classical music in London was driven by a desire to engage in cultural events in this region and country, while the visiting students had the opportunity.
- Following on from existing research, this study sought to understand the culture of, and explore potential barriers to, attendance at classical music concerts.
- Though all the participants in the focus groups when asked suggested that they felt that classical music in the UK was largely a 'middle-class' interest, none was able to fully articulate what that meant.
- By far the two most dominant reasons participants gave for their initial interest in classical music were the influence of parents, and the playing of a musical instrument,

which they were encouraged to do, most commonly either at school or (once more) by their parents.

- The need to be 'schooled' into a classical music culture is further supported by participants' comments on patterns of 'acceptable' behaviour at the live music event and their understanding of classical music. And all those in the focus groups who commented on this subject, indicated that classical music attendance did have certain recognisable patterns of behaviour, which they had to learn.
- As with the importance of understanding appropriate behaviour at classical music concerts, participants similarly emphasised the importance of understanding and appreciating the music being played. However, unlike patterns of behaviour, where participants were much more willing to ascribe this to tuition and observation, the language used in describing their understanding of music was often somewhat different; relying more on terms such as a need to have good 'concentration', 'understanding', or 'intellectual' engagement.
- Hence, the findings from this research do seem to support the work of authors such as Small (1987) and Kolb (2000), as well as wider sociological literature, which emphasise the ritualised and middle-class nature of classical music attendance. These patterns of behaviour and culture seem deeply inscribed and it is therefore questionable if new media technologies, such as a mobile phone app, could be used alone to overcome these cultural barriers.
- Finally, a key aim of the project was for the research team to work with the LSO and their partners in the ongoing development and testing of new mobile- and web-based ticketing and marketing tools, and there is little doubt that this aim was achieved. All three key partners, at the LSO, Kodime and the University of Salford, worked well and effectively together throughout the research period and process. This has produced a new method of communication and ticketing for the LSO, a successful app that Kodime has rolled out to other orchestras in the London area, and a wealth of data, which the University of Salford research team will be able to continue to mine in developing our understanding of audiences and their patterns of engagement.

2. Introduction and Background

This report documents the key findings of a year-long collaborative research project focusing on the London Symphony Orchestra's (LSO) development, implementation and testing of a mobile ticketing and information system; developed in association with their technical partners Kodime Limited and in collaboration with the Aurora Orchestra. This project was simply entitled: The Student Mobile Project.

2.1 The Student Mobile Project

The Student Mobile Project was designed to provide an end-to-end mobile marketing and ticketing solution to engage hard-to-reach student audiences for (initially) the London Symphony and Aurora orchestras. The aim was to produce an experience-rich, smooth and barrier-free method to access information and tickets, primarily utilising a downloadable mobile telephone application ('app') called *Pulse*. The main target audience for the app was university students in or around London. Research has, time and time again, shown that audiences for classical music events in the UK, as in many other countries, are primarily

educated and middle-class; hence, as Kolb (2000: 13) argues, “university students are a prime future market segment”.

The *Pulse* app was developed to work on both iOS (such as iPhone) and Android mobile telephones, also with a simple mobile web-channel (replacing the app) for those without access to an iOS or Android smartphone. Initially the aim was to develop the app so that it could be used to access information and purchase tickets for the events of two orchestras, the LSO and Aurora (both based at the Barbican Centre in London); however, the long-term aim was that this app could be rolled out to incorporate other orchestras or cultural events in, or even beyond, London. As of September 2012, the app had been expanded to cover the events of seven London orchestras and the promotions of others by two venues.

Primarily the app allows students to access discounted tickets (currently £6 each) for certain performances (originally) at the LSO and Aurora orchestras, and to pay for these using the mobile payment system, PayPal. This model of discounted ticketing developed out of, and built upon, the LSO’s existing student discount ‘Student Ambassadors’ scheme.

The LSO’s original student scheme, on which the *Pulse* app builds, was first introduced in 2004. The Student Ambassadors scheme operated where students were initially recruited at university fresher’s fairs to become ‘ambassadors’ for the LSO. Their role as ambassadors was to encourage fellow students to purchase tickets for concerts, and the ambassadors received rewards on the basis of how many students they got to buy tickets. For the first ticket transaction, there would be one free ticket issued to the ambassador who had initiated the sale; the original idea being that the free ticket would be for the ambassador, who was encouraging multiple ticket bookings from the people they had recruited to come along.

The ticketing operated through a text message system. The person buying a ticket would text a message with a specific format, giving their name, which ambassador they heard about the concert from (using the ambassador’s pin code) and how many tickets they wanted. The money was collected via premium text messages, added to the student’s phone bill, and then paid back to the LSO by the mobile telephone operator; minus a sizable administrative charge taken by the phone company.

This scheme worked well for a number of years, but the LSO found that though the number of ambassadors signing up was increasing, they were each selling fewer tickets. This was because students would often sign up as ambassadors, then purchase only their own and one other ticket; effectively turning the scheme into a ‘buy-one-get-one-free’ offer. When coupled with the sizable administrative costs the mobile phone companies took from the ticket sales, this meant that the initial scheme was becoming far less economically viable for the LSO. Moreover, the text message mechanism of selling tickets only allows a limited amount of information and interaction. Hence, the LSO along with their technical partner Kodime turned to the *Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture* to provide the capital to introduce and test a new mobile phone app and web-channel ticketing system: a system that would allow students to access information about the orchestra, its music and the venue, and also involve greater levels of interaction.

The *Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture* was a pilot programme established in 2011 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Arts Council England and Nesta to fund arts and cultural organisations who wanted to work with digital technology in expanding their audience reach and engagement and/or explore new business models. Arts and cultural organisations were required to apply with a technical partner, who were to develop a

particular piece of technology to meet the need of the arts or cultural organisation, while research teams applied separately to work with one (or more) of the eight funded projects.

The technical partners in this project, responsible for developing the app and web-channel, were Kodime Limited, a developer and provider of cloud-based software solutions, with a track-record of working with a number of high profile companies, brands and arts organisations, including the National Health Service, Samsung and the New York Philharmonic. The partnered research team consisted of four academics from the University of Salford, with expertise in audience research, digital media and the cultural sector.

Hence, the Student Mobile Project explores new ways of engaging and interacting with students, and develops a new ticketing model; saving booking fees for audiences and transaction fees for arts organisations. The Project also explores new ways of engaging with audiences and other cultural organisations through new mobile technologies. But to fully understand the context and implications of the app, it is important to understand the current state of, and research on, classical music audiences in the UK.

2.2 The Classical Music Audience

Classical music audiences have for some time (certainly since the rise of 'pop' music from the 1960s) typically reflected a profile which *The Guardian* journalist Stephen Moss (2007) (drawing on Mintel data) described as: "a narrow demographic: getting on in years, retired, white [and] middle-class". More recent research (again from Mintel) shows that after a short-term rise in popularity up to 2006, attendance at classical music in the UK has been in significant decline; a pattern the Mintel report attributes to "the sector's relative failure to reach out to younger audiences" (Mintel 2010). As Dobson (2010: 111) highlights, research has clearly shown that "audiences for live classical music are ageing...while younger audiences are in decline".

From the early-1990s onwards, the literature on the 'cultural omnivore' (such as Peterson and Kern, 1996) suggests that, over recent years, there has been a softening of class-based taste distinctions. However, this has been most notable at the top of the class hierarchy. That is to say, while research data suggests that some traditionally 'popular' ('low brow' and 'middle brow') pastimes have seen an increase in popularity with middle and upper-class consumers respectively (for example, football in the UK, see King 1998), there is *less* evidence of those lower down the social hierarchy adopting interests in traditionally deemed 'high brow' culture. Hence, trends towards cultural omnivorousness see arts events, such as classical music, increasingly competing with a wider range of cultural activities, but in return see little expansion in their traditional audience. It is therefore crucial that arts organisations, such as the LSO, explore new ways of expanding their reach beyond classical music's traditional demographic, or at least ensuring that they hold onto the audience sector they already have.

There is relatively little academic literature on classical music audiences and their patterns of engagement and attendance, and even less on the use of new technologies as a means of classical music audience engagement; however, there are some notable exceptions, and a small (though significant) literature on which this research builds. In particular, the existing literature on classical music concert audiences identifies two key and related themes. The first of these relates to patterns of exclusion and middle-class ritual.

The literature on classical music in the UK, as well as in many other countries, frequently highlights the 'middle-class' nature of the audience and ritualistic nature of the event. Small

(1987) compares attending classical music to a Catholic mass, and keenly highlights its extremely ritualised nature, which requires attendees and performers alike to follow specific learnt and time-honoured patterns of behaviour. Small suggests that attending a classical music concert operates at two social levels; the first being the surface level of the musical experience, but secondly, at more fundamental level, where it plays out and reaffirms class cultures (*habitus*) and boundaries. Though dress conventions may have relaxed within recent years at classical music concerts, audiences are still expected to follow what Small (1987: 10) refers to as patterns of 'formal' and 'muted' behaviour. This includes patterns of 'appropriate' behaviour, such as sitting still and in total silence through performances, not interacting with those next to you, and only applauding at appropriate intervals. As Kolb (2000: 21) wrote: "for traditional audience members, western classical music is seen as an affirmation of the values of middle-class life which includes self-control and hard work". Small suggests that there even exists a 'built-in proletariat' of ushers, ticket collectors, piano turners, and other workers who are there to create the environment and serve the needs of the bourgeoisie patrons. Similarly, the performers adhere to a time-honoured dress code of formal attire, and patterns of behaviours, such as rarely ever speaking to the audience. The classical music repertoire itself became fixed sometime around the First World War, to include a canon of 'great classics', at the expense of anything more contemporary. Small argues that during the twentieth century, which saw rapid and fundamental social changes, classical music concerts provided (and continue to) a sacred and solid space where the middle-classes can reaffirm their values and place within a social hierarchy.

Inevitably, these patterns of ritualised and learnt behaviour can act as a key barrier to those that are not schooled in the *habitus* of classical music attendance. In particular, both Kolb (2000) and Dobson (2010) conducted studies where they took a small sample group of individuals, who had never been to a classical music concert before, and then interviewed them in focus groups about their experiences. In both cases the research participants highlighted feelings of anxiety concerning their lack of knowledge of both the music and also the accepted patterns of behaviour at classical music concerts. The term that Kolb (2000: 17) uses is the research participants' concerns over their lack of 'special knowledge'; which could also be theorised as a lack of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984).

A second, but related theme that develops out of the existing literature on classical music audiences, is the suggestion that new, younger audiences may have different expectations and demands of classical music, as well as other cultural events they attend and participate in. In particular, several authors argue that a new, younger generation wants a more visually stimulating and participatory experience than that commonly seen in most classical music concerts. Kolb (2000) suggests that younger people, used to pop music and pop concerts, have come to expect a more stimulating experience, which utilises dramatic visuals such as video and light shows. Also, Brown (2004b) suggests that younger audiences are used to their cultural activities involving elements of audience participation and interaction. This can be seen not only in pop concerts, but also in changes witnessed in what have been traditionally more sedate leisure activities, such as attending museums, which now commonly include more interactive exhibitions and other means of audience engagement.

Drawing on the work of Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), Kolb (2005) refers to this new type of audience as the 'cultural consumer'. Mimicking much of the literature on the cultural omnivore (though he does not refer to this literature) Kolb (2005: 42) argues that cultural life has become less hierarchical and more of a 'cultural buffet'; where audiences have a much wider choice of what to spend their (increasingly precious and limited) leisure time doing. The cultural consumer, Kolb suggests, wants instant gratification. They want access to leisure activities that they can dip into, which will engage them, entertain them, and preferably they can do with friends and family. In particular, both Brown (2004b) and Kolb

(2005) highlight the important role new interactive media technologies have played in changing audience behaviour and expectations. Again, this is an argument similarly seen in the literature on the cultural omnivore, and those concerning wider audience patterns (such as Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998), as well as that specifically addressing advances in new media (such as Jenkins, 2006a, 2006b).

Of course, some people will always want a deeper level of commitment in their leisure interests. They will want to engage at a deeper, more committed, level, such as attending a classical concert regularly, and want to learn more about it; becoming, what Abercrombie and Longhurst refer to in their audience model as an 'enthusiast'. However, this will not be the case with all cultural consumers; and as Kolb (2005: 55) argues: "people have many choices on how to spend their leisure time, and may not be willing to spend this learning more about culture".

2.3 Desperately Seeking a New Classical Music Audience?

Consequently, several authors, such as Brown (2004b), Radbourne *et al.* (2009) and Dobson (2010) suggest that the presentation of classical music may need to change to meet the interests and demands of new and younger audiences. Since (as Kolb, 2005, argues) a major barrier to many new audience members is their feeling of a lack of knowledge about classical music, Radbourne *et al.* (2009) suggests that it is important that classical music orchestras explore ways of overcoming this anxiety, by providing audiences with a more informed and interactive experience; as they argue, "the deeper understanding of the performance, the greater the appreciation, leading to a richer experience and likelihood of return visitation" (Radbourne *et al.*, 2009: 20).

In particular, Brown (2004b) highlights a number of innovations that several orchestras have previously tried, and suggests that these examples might provide models for others to learn from. The first Brown highlights is presenting contextual or thematic programmes, where a series of concerts share a similar theme; which provides the audience with a greater sense of continuity and understating of the works. Second, certain orchestras, such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, have introduced more dramatisation into their concerts; which blends music with theatre and multimedia presentations. Again, this is a means by which orchestras can provide more context for less knowledgeable audiences and it also replicates the style of presentation audiences have come to expect at many other forms of live entertainment. Linked to this, is Brown's third example of visual enhancements, but here Brown specifically discusses the use of large-screen video, such as those used at The Houston Symphony, which provide new angles and close-ups of the live performance. Finally, Brown (2004b) discusses the use of 'embedded interpretation', which covers a variety of means of providing the audience with various levels of information around or during the live performances. Examples of embedded interpretation are more common, and to some extent more accepted, in opera, where sometimes English-language interpretations of classical (such as Italian or German) operas are projected above or below the performers during a live concert. Similar examples can be seen in classical music, such as how the Atlanta Symphony has used video-taped interviews with composers, which were shown before performances to provide audiences with a greater understating and context for the piece they were about to hear (Brown 2004b). Another, more innovative form of embedded interpretation, are electronic 'concert companions' (CoCo). Concert companions are hand-held PDA devices, which provide information for audiences to read and learn more about the performers, music and composers, during the live event. Concert companions were introduced into several concert halls, and mostly in the US such as at the New York Philharmonic and the Pittsburgh Symphony, in the 1990s. Though Brown (2004b: 14)

suggests that “consumer reactions to the device have been encouraging”, concert companions have failed to become a common sight at classical music concert halls around the world due to three key issues. First, the PDA handsets proved expensive for orchestras to buy and maintain; second, writing commentary for each individual concert is similarly expensive and time consuming; and third (and possibly most importantly), Brown (2004b: 14) highlights that while “some people really enjoy embedded interpretations in their concerts...others really don’t”. This third and final point is an important one, in that while some new and younger audiences may appear to want a more interactive and more informed concert experience, others, and in particular, many older and more traditional audience members, may not. As Brown (2004b) highlights, when a less formal, more interactive concert format was introduced by the Minnesota Orchestra it was booed by the audience; and this is not an isolated example. This is a particular conflict that O’Sullivan (2009) has noted; while many participants in his research on ‘traditional’ (a sample he suggests that was biased towards primarily 55 to 64 year olds) classical music audiences recognised the need to attract new and younger audiences, they were often strongly opposed to changing the nature and format of the classical music experience. For example, one participant (Male 54-65) in O’Sullivan’s research suggested he felt the introduction of themed concert titles was ‘crass’ (2009: 220).

This is a real problem for classical music orchestras. Evidence shows that classical music audiences are ageing (Dobson, 2010) and that many of the conventions of the classical music concert are perceived as exclusionary by younger audiences. However, to change the format of the traditional classical music concert runs the real risk of alienating (and potentially driving away) classical music’s core audience. By attempting to meet the needs of both the existing and potentially new audiences, classical music runs the risk of pleasing neither.

A second potential problem here, is that much of the existing research (and in particular the work of Kolb) is built upon an assumption that there is a large and untapped market who would be attracted to classical music by introducing more interactive elements. It is certainly evident that there are far more people who listen to and enjoy pre-recorded classical music in the comfort of their own homes than attend live classical music concerts. But even Brown (2004b: 6) admits that it is “difficult, if not impossible, to guess what percentage of the potential audience...would prefer alternative concert formats”. Many authors, such as Kolb (2005) seem to simply assume that here exists, in sizable numbers, this new audience (of what he terms the ‘cultural consumer’) who would come to classical music concerts if only they were presented differently. These arguments are largely based upon the work of authors, such as Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), who in turn build upon the work of cultural omnivore writers, such as Peterson and Kern (1996). However, other researchers, such as Warde *et al.* (2007) question the validity of arguments about the rise of a new ‘omnivore’ class. Warde *et al.* argue that there is little empirical evidence to suggest that this new type of consumer exists, and much of this literature is simply based upon unsupported assumptions. Moreover they argue, that rather than this being a new trend, picking and choosing from a ‘cultural buffet’ (to use Kolb’s 2005 description), it is simply what the educated middle-classes do, and have always done. Therefore, the cultural consumer/omnivore may be the (traditional) audience classical music already has.

A third concern is that if classical music does seek to attract a new and different audience, and in particular, one that lacks a knowledge and tradition of attendance in this area, it is questionable whether this would be a loyal and continued audience. Though the comparisons might not seem obvious at first, lessons might be learnt from attendance patterns seen at ice hockey in the UK in the mid-1990s. As Crawford (2002) highlights, ice hockey in the UK was a sport with a relatively small supporter base, but the building of a number of new arenas around the UK (such as in Sheffield and Manchester) gave arena

owners a dilemma of what could be used to fill their arenas, week-in-week-out; and ice hockey appeared to provide the answer. Ice hockey in the UK in the mid-1990s in venues such as the Manchester and Sheffield arenas was marketed to a new middle-class family ('cultural consumer') audience, who had no knowledge or understanding of the sport. Those who simply wanted to come along and enjoy an evening of fast-paced, exciting Americana were welcome but for those who wanted a deeper understanding, match programmes, pre-match talks and large screens were all used to help educate this new audience. This proved extremely popular and successful for a few years, and in 1997 the Manchester Storm ice hockey team attracted a record (the largest number outside of North America) crowd of 17,425 supporters, and regularly played to crowds in excess of 10,000 (Crawford 2002). However cultural consumers, probably better described as what Bauman (1997) refers to as 'cultural tourists', never rest in one place for too long; why should they, when there is so much on offer on the cultural buffet? The success of Manchester Storm was therefore very short-lived and attendance figures started to dramatically fall. A team created in 1995 had folded by 2000, and had for some years before that been struggling to survive. The risk for classical music is if it similarly seeks to covet this cultural consumer/tourist market, it is likely that (as tourists do) they will not stay too long. Even Kolb, in her advice on marketing for cultural organisations, acknowledges that there may be real benefits to catering primarily to your key target audience, rather than chasing new (unknown) markets. As she writes: "by concentrating on a specific market segment, the cultural organisation can better ensure that it can provide a product that meets the needs of the segment" (Kolb 2005: 114).

All of these dilemmas raise real concerns for the marketing of classical music orchestras, such as the LSO. How do they attract (and crucially keep) the next generation of classical music attendees, who may be used to a more participatory and visually stimulating form of cultural engagement, but at the same time not alienate their existing (and core) market of older patrons? The hope was that a mobile phone app, specifically targeted at university students would overcome some (though of course not all) of these conflicts. The app would provide its (largely younger) student users with easy access to discounted tickets, in an interactive and informative way, but one that does not directly impact on the presentation of the musical experience, or the traditional (older) audience. The main aim of this research then was to work with the LSO, and their partners, in developing, testing and evaluating the success of their new mobile- and web-based ticketing and marketing tools, in engaging a younger, student audience.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Primary Research Aims

- To work with the LSO and their partners in the ongoing development and testing of new mobile- and web-based ticketing and marketing tools.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of mobile and web-based ticketing/marketing in engaging a younger/student audience.

3.2 Research Approach

Building upon the existing literature on classical music audiences, this research employed a flexible mixed-method approach to researching a primary sample group of 18-25 year old university students¹.

¹ In doing so, the research employed a number of key methodological tools, and this approach and the methods used, were all (prior to the gathering of data) scrutinised and approved by the University's research ethics committee.

The primary method of data collection employed in the research was post- (and in one case, pre-) concert focus groups undertaken by the researchers. Given its primacy in this research, most attention will be given to this method in this section.

Focus groups are the main method of data collection employed in the vast majority of existing studies on classical music audiences, including, Kolb (2000), O'Sullivan (2009) and Dobson (2010). However, where Kolb (2000) and Dobson's (2010) research focused primarily on taking research participants to concerts who had previously never attended a live classical music event, as with O'Sullivan the aims of this research were more keenly focused on the existing audience.

Focus groups are useful as they are more flexible than questionnaires, and are more time- and cost-efficient in gathering detailed qualitative information than one-to-one interviews (Morgan 1997). They are also beneficial, as to some degree they mimic social interactions that occur outside of the interview setting. In particular, in this research, it is important to understand the use of the app, not just from the perspective of an individual's use of a particular technology, but also how this is embedded in the interactions of everyday life. Therefore, a focus group of peers is a useful tool for understanding how technologies might be discussed and utilised in a social context. Hence, the focus groups also involved discussions at interface; that is to say, in line with recent methods in new media research, participants were asked to reflect on the technologies as they interacted with them and discussed them with the others present. Of course, focus groups are not without their shortcomings, such as the risk of certain individuals dominating discussions, but this, and other pitfalls, can (to some degree) be countered by a skilled facilitator (Morgan 1997).

In total, seven focus groups were held after (or in one case before) LSO concerts at rooms in the Barbican Centre in London (see Figure 1), between February and June 2012. These particular concerts were selected on the basis that they had reduced rate tickets made available to students (as not all concerts do). In three cases, two focus groups were held post-concert. On one occasion, the focus groups were held before a concert, but only 11 participants turned up; indicating that the post-concert format was the more effective way of gathering participants. The first two focus groups were held before the app was launched, and the remainder conducted subsequently.



Figure 1. Focus Group Interview Room at the Barbican Centre

The focus group participants were primarily self-selecting. For the first two focus groups (in February 2012 before the app was launched), students purchasing tickets for the concert were emailed and asked if they would like to participate in a post-concert focus group and (as was similarly the case with Kolb's 2000 research) offered a £20 incentive for their participation. Here, 26 agreed to participate in the research and were interviewed on that

occasion; split into two simultaneous focus groups, each with one focus group facilitator. For the subsequent concerts, students purchasing tickets through the app or new web-channel, were, as before, emailed, asked to participate in the focus groups, and offered the £20 incentive for doing so. The number of participants in the focus groups varied, from ten to 13, with the seven focus groups providing a total sample of 81 students. Given the nature of the sampling used, no claims of statistical representativeness can be made; however, the number of participants in this research is significantly larger than those interviewed in the studies by Kolb (2000), O'Sullivan (2009) and Dobson (2010), which each had fewer than 20 participants, and similarly utilised non-probability sampling techniques. All participants were asked to complete a research consent form, and given details to take away outlining the purpose and nature of the research and contact details of the lead researcher, so that participants could ask further questions or request removal from the research.

As highlighted above, focus groups are a useful means of gathering qualitative data, but to complement this, and to gather more demographic information, a short questionnaire was handed out to participants to complete before each of the focus groups. The questionnaires covered basic demographic information, like age and gender, but also, for example, attendance patterns, knowledge and interests in classical music and other cultural and leisure activities. This was useful, as it allowed individual information to be gathered, which would have otherwise been difficult to garner from the focus groups alone. However, since the focus groups were conducted, most commonly, in the evening after concerts (starting usually at about 9 to 10pm), it was important to keep the questionnaire brief, to take up as little time of the respondents as possible. So, rather than give the respondents a long questionnaire covering all the questions we might want to ask, some of the questions were varied from week to week. This allowed data to be gathered on a range of topics, but ensured that the questionnaires could still be kept relatively short.

In addition to these two primary means of data gathering, observations of the audience were also recorded (in notebooks) by two researchers at the four LSO concerts, and a number of photographs taken. One-to-one interviews were conducted with three members of marketing staff at the LSO, and also the CEO of the app development team at Kodime, in order to explore the aims and hopes of the orchestra and development teams. All interviews, both one-to-one and focus group, were transcribed, coded and analysed. Finally, the researchers undertook textual analyses of the app, and data on usage patterns were provided by Kodime, and subsequently analysed by the research team. What therefore follows is an analysis and discussion of the key findings obtained from this multi-method approach.

4. Findings: *Pulse* and Marketing Classical Music

As set out previously, the LSO's original student scheme, 'Student Ambassadors', was first introduced in 2004. The scheme worked by 'ambassadors' encouraging fellow students to purchase tickets for concerts, and receiving one free ticket for themselves when at least one purchase was made using their pin code. This system operated by text message system, but a sizable amount of the ticket price was taken by the mobile phone company. Though the scheme worked well for several years, students were frequently using the system to only purchase two tickets; so getting two for the price of one. Plus, the fees paid to the mobile telephone operators made this scheme start to look economically less attractive for the orchestra. This is where the LSO, and their partners, looked to the *Digital R&D Fund* to provide the opportunity to develop a new ticketing system, and to enhance student

engagement, information flow and interactions, using a mobile app and website. As the LSO's Digital Marketing Manager stated in interview:

"We wanted to build on the success of our existing student scheme by improving the ticket buying process and rewards programme, streamlining some features and dropping others and using some new developments in app technology."

She continued:

"The overall aim for the [new] student scheme is to remove some of the barriers to attendance for students by discounting tickets, incentivising coming as a group of friends and increasing repeat attendance through a structured loyalty scheme... The app is aimed at university and college students aged 18 plus, to roughly 25, although we have no upper age limit, based in and around London."

Similar aims were expressed by Kodime's (the app developer) CEO:

"Pulse is specially targeting university students and trying to make various concerts, classical music concerts, accessible to students...so we always explore new ways of approaching them. You can't really change the product, because it is always [the] orchestra...but we can change the way we communicate with them."

Following the methodology of Light and McGrath (2010) it was important to consider the user experience in areas such as interface presentation and functions. As Light and McGrath (2010) argue, it is necessary to understand things as they come into being, and where they raise challenges and issues for users.

The app is downloaded from the iTunes App store or the Android Market. Once installed the user accesses the initial 'Welcome' page (Figure 2). The welcome page, as with the rest of the app, is clearly set out with large and clear buttons, and utilises the red theme

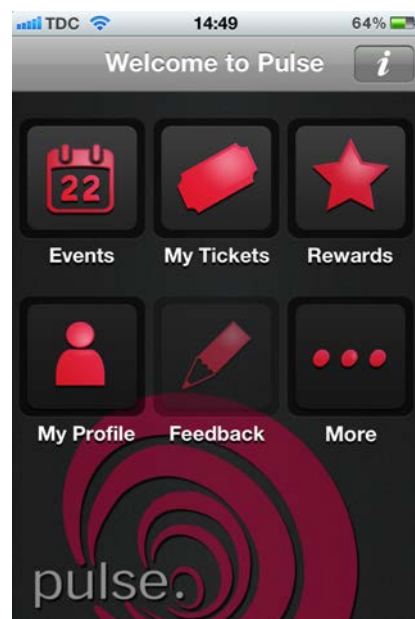


Figure 2: The Pulse Welcome Page



colour of the LSO against a contrasting black background. The top right of the Welcome Page features an "

button (for information), which takes the user through to a terms and conditions page; however, none of our focus group participants indicated that they had read the terms and conditions of the app. From this welcome page the user can select to create a profile (necessary to purchase tickets and earn reward points), or move onto any of the other key areas.

Figure 3: Pulse Event Details Page

The 'Events' page lists upcoming concerts the user can buy discounted tickets for, and then each event can be viewed in more detail on a further page. Information on

the 'Event Details' pages (Figure 3) are again kept quite simple. These pages give the title of the event, its date, location, the pieces being played and the conductor, the price, the number of points that can be earned by purchasing a ticket, and allows users to listen to a short sound clip (of less than a minute) of a sample piece of music from the forthcoming concert. Links at the bottom of this page take the user through to a number of other corresponding pages.

The first link takes the user to a page (Figure 4), which provides the user with a number of further links, to Facebook, Twitter and email, which allows them to easily construct an email indicating that they are looking at this event, or publish a similar message on Facebook or Twitter. The second link on the 'Event Details' page takes the user to further details on the orchestra; the third link is to a page which provides a short paragraph of information on the venue it is to be held at; and the final link is to an in-app map, which highlights the location of the venue.

Returning to the welcome page, from here the user can also select 'My Tickets', which takes them to the tickets they have already purchased for forthcoming concerts. The 'Contact' page provides links to allow the user to email or call the app developers (Kodime) for technical support. Finally, the 'Rewards' link takes the user to a list of rewards (Figure 5) they can claim by purchasing tickets to concerts through the app. The rewards begin at one month's subscription to the online music streaming service Spotify (for 100 points), ranging through a £15 iTunes voucher (for 300 points), two cinema tickets (400 points), all the way to the current (in October 2012) top reward of an Xbox 360 for 6,000 points.

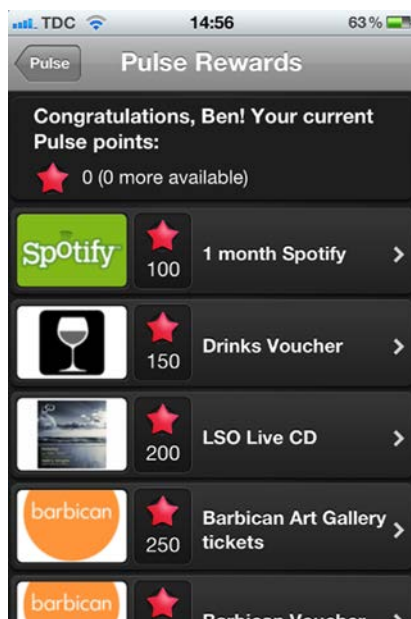


Figure 5 Pulse Share Page



Figure 4: Pulse Rewards Page

The app is purposefully kept quite simple for users, and does not deviate far from its core function of selling discounted tickets to students.

From the focus groups, it is evident that discounted tickets were very popular with the participants. All of the focus group participants who were asked to express an opinion on this matter indicated that the reduced price of tickets for students was a major factor that influenced their attendance; as was commented in Focus Group 1 (09/02/12):

Focus Group 1 Participant 7: One of the biggest things is that you don't [normally] get this quality at this kind of tickets price.

And some stated that they would not, or could not, attend classical music concerts if the ticket prices were more expensive; as another participant contributed in Focus Group 1 (09/02/12):

FG1P8: Personally I wouldn't buy a ticket over ten pounds ever unless it was like something special like something I really wanted to go to.

However, the new *Pulse* app was not launched without some initial concerns from the student focus group members. Some questioned why an app was being introduced at all. Such as the comments made in Focus Group 7 (21/05/12):

FG7P1: I just think they want an app, cos it's just trendy.

There was also some disquiet concerning the replacement of the old system, particularly at first. Some focus group participants suggested that they found the text messaging system easier, and also they were unhappy at the replacement of (what they frequently described as) the 'buy-one-get-one-free' offer that previously existed. Such as the comments expressed in Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P1: It might sound a bit basic but um I think I might prefer the SMS system because you don't have to log in and it's not a separate payment like it was just on your phone bill which was so much more convenient. Whereas this time each time I have to log in cause I'd rather not say like remember my password it's not as secure, so it's a lot more hassle I think.

FG3P2: I prefer the old system really...Oh just the...the free ticket thing is more practical for me rather than having to save up so many points to get something that I might not even use anyway.

Some respondents suggested that the move to the new ticketing system was not adequately communicated:

FG3P1: But you see the problem is it's [the change in student ticketing procedures] nowhere communicated...

Also, concerns were initially voiced in relation to the *Pulse* web-channel. As participants stated in the third focus group interview (15/03/12):

FG1P7: It was very cumbersome; it took about a long time to load so.

FG1P8: I must admit it's not that easy to find.

Some focus group participants expressed concerns that the new student ticketing procedure seemed to prioritise 'smartphone owners, which they thought many students might not be. As a participant in Focus Group 1 stated (09/02/12):

FG1P9: Not many of my friends have smartphones to be honest, no they just use the old ones.

Comments similarly expressed by another participant in Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P2: I'd just say that so many people who...those who don't have a smartphone generally don't want to have one, so all these people are going to be so discouraged to come here...why should they spend £800 buying one to just attend these concerts without paying extra fees or something. So maybe it would be a good idea to keep the old system for these guys and to add the new system for convenience for those who are having smartphones, so none of them is discouraged and um being discriminated and having to pay extra. I think that would be a great thing.

However, 76 per cent ($n=50$) of the 66 respondents who answered the question relating to smartphone ownership indicated that that they owned at least one smartphone; though ownership of iPhones (at 26 per cent, $n=16$) and Android phones (20 per cent, $n=13$) was somewhat lower. However, given the non-probability nature of the sample group, it cannot be determined if these patterns of smart phone ownership reflect that of the overall LSO student audience.

The raw profile data generated by Kodime provides information on 87 new users who registered on the app during the period of the research. This provided data on the users' age group, concert attendance history and purchasing behaviour.

The data do appear (at first) to suggest that the app has engaged the project's target group. Table 1 provides data on the frequency of visits to a conference in the last year by age group. It can be seen that the majority of new users of the app indicated they were in the target age range of 18-24 (71 per cent) and Figure 6 shows that 36 per cent of users seem to suggest they had not been to a concert in the last year. However, upon further investigation by the research team, there was an issue with how these questions were constructed in the app, raising concerns about the validity of the data. In particular, the *default* answers to the questions 'age group' and 'concerts attended [in] last 12 months' in the app were, '18 to 24' and '0', respectively. Therefore, if a user chose to simply skip past this page, and not answer these two questions, their responses, by default, would be recorded as '18 to 24' and '0'. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain which of these respondents were signifying their age as between '18 to 24', and that they had not attended any concerts in the last year, or had simply skipped past this page during the registration process (which any new user was able to do). In conclusion, further long-term analysis would be needed to establish whether the app had been successful in encouraging attendance from 'new audiences'.

No. in Age Group	Age Group	Concert Attendance Pattern in Last Year			
		Zero	Once	Between 2-5 Times	More Than 5 Times
62	18-24	22	9	20	11
16	25-29	7	3	2	4
6	30-34	1	3	2	0
1	35-39	1	0	0	0
1	40-44	0	0	0	1
1	45-49	0	0	0	1
	All ages	31	15	24	17

Table 3. Conference Attendance by Age Group (Registered Profile App Data) $n=87$

Conference Attendance Pattern in the Last 12 Months by All Ages n=87

■ Zero
 ■ Once
 ■ Between 2-5 Times
 ■ More Than 5 Times

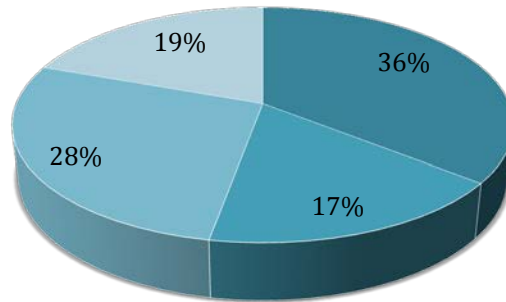


Figure 6. Conference Attendance All Age Groups

In terms of ticket sales, the *Pulse* app does appear to have been successful. Data supplied from the app indicates that by August 2012, it had 265 registered users, and of the 390 discounted tickets that were made available to students over the four concerts (between March to July 2012), 318 (82 per cent) were sold. This compares with 175 ambassadors in place and with sales of 67 per cent of tickets on offer to them in the six-month period before the launch of the app. Of the 318 student tickets sold between March and August 2012, 202 purchases were made via the app, and 116 via the mobile website. Their data suggests only two transactions initially failed, on either the app or mobile website, and both of these were fixed and transactions were subsequently completed. However, Kodime's data does seem to suggest that many users bought multiple tickets. For example, as illustrated in Table 2, for the first concert the app was introduced for (15th March 2012) 64 tickets were purchased by only 26 users, rising to a high point of 55 users buying 147 tickets on the 21st June, but dropping to a low of 23 tickets purchased by 11 users at the last concert.

	No. of Users Purchasing Tickets	Total tickets sold	Tickets Sold Per Transaction		
			1	2	>2
Brahms Symphony No 2 (15/3)	26	64	11	13	6
Stravinsky Festival (17/5)	11	30	10	3	4
Bruckner Symphony No 6 (12/4)	22	54	9	8	7
Aurora Orchestra: Battle (13/7)	11	23	2	9	1
Beethoven Symphony No 5 (21/6)	55	147	18	32	15
	135	318	50	65	33

Table 4. Tickets Sold Per Transaction

Table 2 provides more detailed data on the profile of tickets sold per transaction. That is, how many tickets were bought by one registered user of the app in a single transaction. For simplicity of reporting these have been grouped into categories of one ticket, two tickets and greater than two tickets per transaction. The data set for this is based on 148 transactions. Thus, of these 148 transactions, we can report that 98 were for two or more people and 33 were for a group of three people and above.

These kinds of figures were borne out by the focus groups, with many participants indicating that their tickets for the concert had been bought for them by a friend. Though the *Pulse* app allows, and in fact the reward system actively encourages, users to make multiple ticket purchases (more on this below), one would expect that the developers and orchestra might like to see a larger number of users purchasing tickets in the future.

The LSO and Kodime both appear to be very happy with the introduction and use of the app. As the LSO's Digital Marketing Manager stated:

“For a technology project, the development was surprisingly straightforward, with no real issues arising or compromises required. There have been the usual bugs and problems for some users, but nothing across the board.”

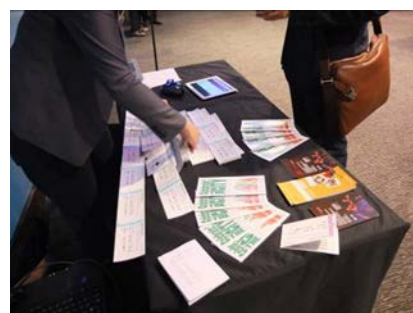
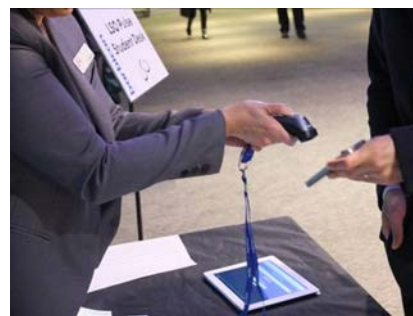


Figure 7. Scanning Mobile App, Finding Information on iPad and Issuing Paper Ticket

Upon purchasing the ticket(s) the app and mobile website show a barcode, which the user can print off or bring along on their mobile screen. The original idea was that these would be scanned by stewards on the doors of the Barbican Hall. But as the LSO's Digital Marketing Manager explained:

“We weren't able to operate the full system as we had originally conceived it at the Barbican concerts, because the Barbican Centre's auditing rules meant that each ticket buyer had to have a paper ticket for entry into the hall. Instead of scanning the barcodes and showing a verified screen to the stewards for entry, we had to hand each ticket buyer their corresponding official paper ticket after the barcode had been scanned at the designated desk. This added back in a layer of admin.”

Hence, at the Barbican Centre, students were still issued with paper tickets (see Figure 7). Some additional technical issues encountered included reflective mobile phone screens, which meant that sometimes they could not be scanned easily at the event to enable the issuing of a ticket, and also issues relating to a lack of wifi or phone signal in accessing the app when collecting tickets. Also, with many of the students being international, there was the odd complaint about the need to set up new (UK) PayPal and iTunes accounts to download the app and purchase tickets. Such as comments from Focus Group 6 (21/05/12):

FG6P3: This app requires that you have a PayPal account and PayPal is not international, so I have an American PayPal account, but I have to set up a British one to purchase these tickets.

However, overall the introduction of the app, in technical terms, seems to have gone very well. As Kodime's CEO stated in interview:

"[There were the] normal level[s] of technical fine-tuning, but surprisingly few real issues. For a prototype I think this was good."

Though objections to the introduction of the app were quite vocal in the focus groups immediately after it was introduced (on 15/03/12), at the subsequent focus groups the number of objections was considerably lower, and the mood seemed to shift to one of general endorsement. This is possibly due to users becoming more familiar with the app, and in the later focus groups it was more common to hear praise for the new app. Such as the comments made in Focus Group 4 (05/04/12):

FG4P5: I really liked it [the *Pulse* app]...Yeah it's really good....It's convenient...Better than I thought....It's easy to use, I like the point system.

However, some disquiet was still noted in relation to the web-channel, most commonly in relation to it being difficult to find on the web and the mobile site not working as well on a computer web-browser.

The comment above from FG4P5 highlights the reward points as a particular feature of the new app that they liked. Generally, most participants welcomed the new reward system. Such as comments from the Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P3: I thought the rewards were really good. The fact that you can get 8GB iPod Nano if you save up enough or...then I've already got a 100 points and I've only been to three concerts, so it's...you get quite a lot for the amount of concerts you attend. And so £60 Amazon vouchers is pretty much the same price of the tickets in things that you can spend on useful, so it's pretty much free going to all these concerts if you make use of the rewards the right way.

FG3P4: I love Spotify, so every four tickets that I get, which is usually what I get for friends anyway I get a month's free Spotify, which makes me very, very happy.

Comments relating to the sound clips on the app were a little more mixed. Most had not listened to them, some liked them, while others were more sceptical of whether you could get a real sense of a piece of music from such a short clip. Such as one view expressed in Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P5: Yeah, 'cos you can't sort of explain a symphony movement in a two minute sound bite, yeah so.

LSO marketing staff indicated in interview that they were optimistic about the ability to link from the app into social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. As the LSO Marketing Manager stated:

"What I'm most excited about is that because the app will be the link to Facebook and Twitter and you can send out information by email straight away from the app so the close connection with social network could be a huge potential."

However, only one of the participants in the focus groups indicated that they had used the links to social networking sites, and most stated that they did not know there was a possibility to do so. When the focus group facilitators highlighted this feature, some participants suggested it might be something they would use in the future (now that they knew it existed). As a participant in Focus Group 4 (5/04/12) suggested:

FG4P6: That would be interesting to consider that, you just click there and it creates an event and I just need to invite my friends to it. That'll be very handy.

In the focus groups, opinion was divided as to whether they would like more information included in the app. A few participants suggested information normally included in the concert programme could be added to the app. As a participant indicated in Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P6: It'd be nice to have a programme on the app, because I don't know how many times I've been sat there, and like oh my god I forgot what's coming up next and like learn a little bit more about the movement, maybe about the conductor while I'm sitting in-between breaks waiting for my friends to come back if I'm guarding their purses.

However, others advocated keeping the app simple, and the information on it to a minimal. As a participant in Focus Group 4 (5/04/12) suggested:

FG4P6: But I think the more options you have on the app the more liable it is to break down and just not work anymore. I'd rather have something that's minimally functional, reliable than something that has tons of options.

The focus groups also explored the idea that the app could be used as a 'concert companion', to provide access to information during the live event. Certainly using the app would overcome one of the key problems encountered with PDA-based concert companions in the 1990s, as the app removes the need to buy (and the concert hall lend out) expensive PDA units. However, generally, this idea was not popular; as this was seen as potentially interfering with two key aspects of the classical music experience (highlighted above), of prior understanding and appropriate behaviour. In respect of prior knowledge and understanding of classical music, a participant in Focus Group 4 (05/04/12) expressed a typical sentiment:

FG4P7: To a certain extent you prepare before a concert and know approximately what's going to happen...not everything has to be handed to us on a plate, like I don't see the need.

This participant is again highlighting the opinion that classical music should not necessarily be easy, and can (and possibly should) involve work by the audience. However, this is work that should not be *too* visible during the event, such as reading notes on an app. There were also concerns that using and reading from an app during the live performance would be inappropriate and disturb fellow audience members.

FG5P4: I really don't think we should be encouraging people to mess about with their phones in concerts *please*.

What did seem popular was the idea that the app might include the opportunity to purchase discounted (student) tickets for other cultural events, and specifically, other classical music orchestras; such as the typical opinions expressed in Focus Group 4 (05/04/12):

FG4P8: [The] LSO should pair up with other orchestras to make the app work for everyone. That would be really nice, that would be something I would be interested in, having this same app work for the Philharmonic and what not.

Certainly the LSO's Digital Marketing Manager when interviewed in August 2012 stated that the LSO and Kodime were, at that point exploring expanding the app to include other orchestras and possibly other cultural events in London:

"We are exploring some ideas for a joint student ticketing scheme powered by the app with other London orchestras and venues...We feel that the app would be useful to other arts organisations as well, not just for student schemes, but also for using mobile technology in ticketing. It would be particularly useful for museums and galleries who have one-off ticketed exhibitions within a free entry site."

Participants in Focus Groups 1 to 3 were asked on their pre-focus group questionnaire if they had attended another classical music concert in the last 12 months, and if so, where? Of the 24 respondents who answered this particular question, 83 per cent ($n=20$) indicated that they had attended at least one other classical music concert in that year. By far the most commonly attended other venue attended was the Southbank Centre in London, which 11 (46 per cent) had attended, but all of the other major London classical music venues and orchestras (such as the Royal Philharmonic, BBC Proms, Cadogan Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Kings Place, LSO St Luke's, Aurora Orchestra, London Philharmonic) had been visited by those surveyed, and many had been to these venues several times.

These figures are similar to those found in the *Audience First* survey conducted with the LSO audience in 2010, which suggested that 97 per cent of their survey had attended another classical music concert in the last 12 months, and 64 per cent had attended a concert at the Southbank Centre. So these surveys, together with the focus group findings, do appear to suggest that the majority of those questioned do also regularly attend other classical music venues and concerts in London. Hence, an app enabling ticket sales to multiple concert venues across the city seems likely to have a potentially large audience.

Most in the focus groups suggested that it was likely that purchasing discounted tickets as a student would encourage them to continue attending classical music beyond their university years. As one of the older participants in Focus Group 6 (21/05/12) responded to this question, highlighting the importance of exposing young people to different types of classical music:

FG6P2: I think that it's also for me it's where you plant a seed now and you just don't know when at which point when it's going to come in, because for example I got interested in a very odd form of opera when I was a teenager.... it got me hearing and being exposed to different forms of classical music, which I thought was in hindsight a very interesting journey.

However, focus group participants were generally pessimistic that the app could be used to necessarily attract a *new* audience, unfamiliar with classical music. As comments in Focus Group 2 (09/02/12) reflect:

FG1P10: If I'm honest I think your target audience is more going to be people – young people who are already interested in music I don't think you have much chance of um interesting people um into coming to concerts who aren't already interested in music, because I think that interest comes from a much younger age.

But significantly, many in the focus groups further questioned whether classical music should be trying to attract a new audience at all. Comments made in Focus Group 5 (5/04/12), when taken in context of other conversations within the focus groups, again support the common opinion that classical music is not, and maybe should not, be for everyone:

FG5P5: Does everybody need to listen to classical music, not everyone is into the same thing? I don't know, after football matches do they have focus groups about how to get people to go to football? Not everyone does everything.

Some participants made similar assumptions to writers such Brown (2004b), Radbourne *et al.* (2009), and Dobson (2010) that a younger audience may expect more from their arts and cultural experiences. Such as the comments of one participant in Focus Group 7 (21/05/12):

FG7P1: Sometimes I have a feeling that young people need to have all senses working, so only hearing is not enough for them, so they are bored... So the cinema is great, because sometimes you just wait for the story to go on and you see something and you hear something and so that's okay for everybody. But a concert you just listen, sometimes you can see and watch, but I think just to listen and to be quiet... they can't do it any more in this society....They have to learn...

Again, the emphasis in this comment seems to be suggesting that to require various forms of sensory stimulation renders the audience member somehow lacking. That they lack the ability to 'just ...listen and to be quiet', which 'they have to learn'. And this relates to patterns of behavior within the culture of classical music attendance, which the next section now explores more fully.

5. Findings: Classical Music Culture

In total, 68 respondents completed the pre-focus group questionnaires. Of those who indicated² their age 55 per cent ($n=36$) stated they were between 18 to 23, 34 per cent ($n=22$) between 24 to 30, and 11 per cent ($n=7$) over the age of 31. This age profile is somewhat different from that found in the *Audience First* survey of the wider LSO audience recorded in 2010; however, this is unsurprising given that the app was restricted to a student market who tend to be younger than the average LSO attendee. Responses to the questionnaire suggested that 55 per cent ($n=33$) were female and 45 per cent ($n=27$) male; not too dissimilar to the almost 50/50 gender divided recorded in the 2010 *Audience First* survey of the wider LSO audience.

Only 22 per cent ($n=14$) of our respondents suggested they were 'White British'; with more indicating they were 'White Other' (30 per cent, $n=19$) (most commonly from mainland Europe or North America), or 'Chinese' (29 per cent, $n=15$). None indicated they were 'Black' or 'Asian' British. This compares with 67.8 per cent of respondents to the *Audience First* survey of the LSO audience in 2010, which indicated that they were 'White British'. It is also

² As not every focus group participant completed the questionnaire, or answered all of the questions.

much larger than the 26 per cent of the student population in London who are international students (UKCISA 2011). The high proportion of international students at the LSO was also borne out by the focus group discussions, where respondents indicated that they felt there was a high proportion of international students who attended classical music concerts at the LSO, as well as at other classical music venues across London. The main reasons given for this was that classical music was more accessible and cheaper than in some students' home countries, or that attending classical music in London was driven by a desire to engage in cultural events in this region and country, while the visiting students had the opportunity; such as the comments expressed in Focus Group 1 (09/02/12):

FG1P1: Well for me it's uh I'm on a visiting year here in London and so it's a really nice opportunity to get one of the really good orchestras to hear that because well I'm not studying in such a big city in Germany, so it's a really unique experience. And it's also a good way to get some...to get out of your daily routine and focus on something for a while.

Or as indicated in Focus Group 3 (15/03/12):

FG3P1: I haven't had that opportunity, because in my country it's [attending classical music concerts] very expensive, that's why I came here because I know it's very cheap, so...

Kolb (2005) suggests that it is important that cultural organisations are aware of the potential of marketing events to 'cultural tourists' — here Kolb is using this term literally, rather than more metaphorically, as used by Bauman. Too often cultural organisations only consider their domestic market, while Kolb highlights that international visitors to a country or region often have a number of reasons for wanting to experience local cultural events. If these focus groups are seen as reflecting the wider student audience at the LSO, it seems that the LSO is being very successful in attracting international students. It is important to bear in mind, however, that most international students will, upon completing their studies, leave the UK. Hence they are unlikely (individually) to become a long-term attendee; but this is an audience that (currently) replenishes with each year's intake of new international students. This means that any future government policy changes that may place restrictions on the number of international students in the UK could potentially have knock-on consequences on the number of students attending concerts by orchestras like the LSO.

The research considered participants' interest in, and patterns of attendance at, classical music concerts in order to better understand what steps might be taken in seeking to overcome barriers to attendance.

Though all the participants in the focus groups, when asked, suggested that they felt that the audience at the LSO (Figure 2), and classical music in the UK more widely, was largely a 'middle-class' interest, none was able to fully articulate what that meant. For example, as one typical excerpt from Focus Group 6 (21/05/12) expresses:

FG6P2: Actually I think, I dunno how to put it, but like looking at it from some perspective people see it as like a high class, bourgeois kind of thing.

However, it is important that social class is not seen as an *independent* variable here. That is to say, we cannot simply say that a person's social class will determine their (for example) cultural interests, such as an interest in classical music. As Ollivier *et al.* (2009) (following Bourdieu) argue, a person's social class is an aggregate of a number of symbolic and behavioural, as well as material, factors. That is to say, just as much as social class may help

determine, for example, interests and behaviour, in turn, interests and behaviour also determine social class. Hence, it is not simply that it is the middle-classes who primarily attend classical music, but also, that classical music helps make and maintain who and what the middle-classes are. It is therefore important to bear in mind that the middle-class nature, or at the very least, the perception of it as such, may operate as a significant barrier to attending classical music concerts for many; and this research sought to further investigate the nature of this culture, and its potential barriers.

By far the two most dominant reasons participants gave for their initial interest in classical music were the influence of parents and the playing of a musical instrument, which they were encouraged to do, most commonly either at school or (again) by their parents. For example, a typical comment was given by one participant in Focus Group 6 on 21/05/12:

FG1P2: I'm an American and in the sixth grade we're all required to pick a musical instrument and participate in concert band and we played a lot of classical music there. I did that until last year.

Another two participants in the same focus group stated:

FG1P3: Basically my parents dragged me to opera until I started to like it.

FG1P4: Also because of my parents... they were interested in music... classical music, so....

This supports the arguments of Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves (2001), who suggest that an interest in classical music tends to come primarily from parents and in school. It supports the interpretation that classical music is a specific culture or habitus, into which most individuals are inducted and schooled, often at a young age. Similarly, O'Sullivan (2009: 218) writes (somewhat emotively): "a common biographical theme emerged whereby a particular individual in a respondent's life (a family member or teacher) had lit the respondent up with his or her own enthusiasm and illumined a new world of experience".

The idea of being schooled into classical music culture is further supported by participants' comments on patterns of 'acceptable' behaviour at the live music event and their understanding of classical music. All those in the focus groups who commented on this subject indicated that classical music attendance did have certain recognisable patterns of behaviour, which they had to learn. As this excerpt from Focus Group 4 (05/04/12) concerning clapping at 'inappropriate' times highlights:

FG4P1: You only make the mistake of clapping when you shouldn't once [laughter].

FG4P2: And we've all done it as well.

FG4P3: Mine was three concerts ago, three concerts ago was my first classical concert so.

FG4P1: The experience of being the one person clapping when there's 800 other people not clapping.

Or as a participant in Focus Group 5 (05/04/12) indicated how they learnt not to clap at the 'wrong' time:

FG5P1: Getting slapped on the wrist by my grandma [laughter].

Focus Group 6 (21/05/12) highlights that it is not just relatives, but also other audience members, who can play an overt role in policing what they see as 'appropriate' behaviour:

FG6P2: It's funny you mention that, because tonight I was seated behind this young couple and at the beginning of the concert they were very lovey-dovey, and I was also right next to...this...older lady, who obviously attends classical...I mean she was dressed to the nines and everything, and when they were doing that [being 'lovey-dovey'] within like, the first three minutes, she like tapped the girl's shoulder and she was like 'no' [laughter].

FG6P3: That's going to be very distracting.

FG6P2: It can be, yeah it can be I guess, yeah I dunno....it's that balance, like you want to encourage young people to come, but then when they do come, you know what I mean like? You should take it a little more seriously than going to the movie theatre.

Such comments reinforce Small's (1987) arguments, set out above, in relation to the ritualised and exclusionary nature of classical music. But as well as the importance of understanding appropriate behaviour at classical music, participants similarly emphasised the importance of understanding and appreciating the music being played. However, unlike patterns of behaviours, where participants were much more willing to ascribe this to tuition and observation, the language used in describing their understanding of music was often somewhat different; relying more on terms such as a need to have good 'concentration', 'understanding', or 'intellectual' engagement. This is highlighted in comments from Focus Group 1 (09/01/12):

FG1P1: I think also with classical music you need some kind of...you need to kind of invest intellectually, it's not pop.

Similar comments could be heard in the other focus groups, such as in Focus Group 4 (05/04/12):

FG4P1: I suppose that's a big difference compared with pop or other types of music, in that you actually need to be able to concentrate for an extended period of time, whereas I think that emphasis is completely missing in other genres.

A small number of focus group participants sought to emphasise that appreciation of classical music did not necessarily require any special *understanding*, but rather operated at a more fundamental and *emotional* level. Such as comments from Focus Group 5 (05/04/02):

FG5P2: But you don't require structural knowledge of the music to be able to appreciate the emotional impact of it. You don't need knowledge at all to appreciate what's coming across, like you don't need to be able to appreciate like the intricacy of like each movement or know the stylistic overtones to be able to just sit back and enjoy it.

However, the assumption here would appear to be, that those who do not like classical music do not share the same basic emotional appreciation of the music. Similar to the findings of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), in relation to middle-class patterns of taste, it appears that participants in this research were less willing to attribute their understanding and

appreciation of classical music to tuition, but more that this stems from either a deeper intellectual or emotional engagement with the music. However, this was not the case for first time attendees, such as a participant from Focus Group 4 (05/04/12), who indicated that he was lacking an 'education' in how to understand and appreciate classical music:

FG4P3: I mean the thing is like what you were saying before about sort of understanding classical music that's what I think I'm missing I'm not really that aware of what's actually going on so much. I'd appreciate some education on that...how I should go about listening to classical music to really get the full experience.

The importance of a deeper 'intellectual' or 'emotional' engagement with music was a theme that also appeared in discussions around the differences between classical and pop music in some of the focus groups. As this exchange from Focus Group 4 (05/04/12), involving the first time attendee (FG4P3) from above, illustrates:

FG4P1: It's [pop music] the most inane bullshit [laughter]. If you want someone telling you the most ridiculous things that just passes across the stream of consciousness then listen to main stream music, I really fail to see the intellectual insight that music offers, but...

FG4P3: It's good for clubbing.

FG4P1: It's not an intellectual type of thing.

FG4P3: It's got a time and a place.

FG4P1: A pretty limited one at that.

Similar comments, in relation to the lack of depth and level of engagement offered by pop music were made in other focus groups. Such as the comments made in Focus Group 5 (05/04/12):

FG5P1: It's [pop music] just wallpaper, noise that people have on all the time. I prefer to listen to music and not have it as background music.

The findings from this research do seem to support the work of authors such as Small (1987) and Kolb (2000), as well as wider sociological literature on cultural distinction, such as Bourdieu (1984), which emphasise the ritualised and middle-class nature of classical music attendance, which Kolb (2000: 21) describes as "an affirmation of the values of middle-class life". These patterns of behaviour and culture seem deeply inscribed and in most cases appear to be taught to regular concert goers early on in, and then reinforced through, their lives. It is therefore questionable if new media technologies, such as a mobile phone app or a concert companion, could be used to overcome these, often quite deep-seated, cultural practices and barriers.

6. Conclusions & Lessons Learnt

This research had two clear aims: the first was to work with the LSO and their partners in the ongoing development and testing of new mobile- and web-based ticketing and marketing

tools; and second, to evaluate the effectiveness of the mobile and web-based ticketing and marketing in engaging a student audience.

The first aim was undoubtedly achieved. All three key partners, at the LSO, Kodime and the University of Salford, worked well and effectively together throughout the research period and process. The University of Salford research team were able to attend one concert, and conduct two focus groups, before the app was launched, and feedback the expectations and wishes of the students. After these initial focus groups, as with the rounds that followed, data was transcribed and analysed, and initial thoughts, observations and findings fed back to the LSO and Kodime. This process and relationship worked well, and both Kodime and the LSO were very interested and receptive to the feedback and opinions of the users sampled. This ongoing dialogue between the arts organisation (the LSO), the developers (Kodime) and the research team (the University of Salford), worked well, and undoubtedly fed into the development and evolution of the app over the research period.

The research also addressed the second key aim of evaluating the effectiveness of mobile and web-based ticketing and marketing in engaging a student audience. The overall findings from this aspect of the research would seem to suggest that the app and web-channel have been successful in engaging with their target audience.

Though there was some initial disquiet about the change of student discount scheme and the new system for purchasing tickets, this was replaced by a general enthusiasm for the new app by the later focus groups. Opinions of users, gathered from a sizable sample surveyed primarily using focus groups, suggests that the *Pulse* app is well designed and relatively easy to use, and does not deviate far from its core purpose of selling discounted tickets to a student audience in and around Greater London in a simple and engaging way. The research indicates that discounted ticketing, which can be easily and readily accessed, is a major factor in determining attendance at the LSO, and classical music beyond, for these students. Therefore, keeping the app simple and focused primarily on ticketing, with some added information, does appear the most suitable model. Certainly many of those surveyed were reluctant to see too much information or features added to the app, and most were certainly against the app being developed to operate as a concert companion. One area for expansion that did appear to be popular with the focus group participants was including ticketing for other cultural events, and in particular other classical music orchestras. Many indicated that the ability to purchase tickets and find out information on events all in one place would be a key benefit of the app.

The app and web-channel also appear to have been successful for the LSO. Overall sales of student tickets have increased, and by cutting out the box office and replacing the existing student ambassador scheme, this new ticketing process removes lost revenue due to box office and phone company charges, and provides a mechanism for communicating directly with students; some of whom may continue attending classical music concerts beyond their university years.

Further lessons that have been learnt from the research process suggest that the replacement of the existing student ticketing scheme with *Pulse* probably could have been communicated to the existing scheme users better. Some respondents still suggested usability issues with the web-channel, and found this difficult to find; so again, this is an area the LSO and Kodime may wish to revisit.

Significantly, this research also builds upon, confirms and develops our understanding of the classical music audience and its culture. Research participants highlight the continued middle-class culture of classical music attendance; such as the need to follow appropriate

patterns of behaviour, and the opinion that classical music requires a deeper level of understanding and appreciation than that seen with most other genres of music. It is therefore likely that these, middle-class, patterns of behaviour and culture act as significant barriers to attending classical music for many; but of course, further and more long-term research on *non*-attendees would be needed to fully explore these links.

The participants were pessimistic that the app would bring in a new audience that was unfamiliar with classical music, but most seemed pleased that it was generally a good system for engaging with those who already attended classical music. Hence, the real benefits of the *Pulse* app may be in developing a more beneficial and deeper relationship with the LSO's existing audience and market sector, rather than using it to seek a largely unknown and possibly imagined, new audience.

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