

Trainingseminar of the AEC in Antwerp, 9-10-2009

I was asked to say something about trends in the musical world, and what this might mean for your schools and your methods.

Well, I could make things quite easy: the trend is that there are no trends. There is not one line of direction. Anything goes.

But I have some ideas, and I know what direction I want to go. So I hope you will indulge me while I point out maybe not 'a trend', but certainly a direction.

First let's look at things from a pessimistic perspective. And perhaps we discover a rose on the dunghill.

Classical music in particular (but it goes for other genres of 'quality-music') is in a tight spot.

Let me just give you an idea of the situation in The Netherlands. It's a grim picture, with extra tones of black in it. Maybe it isn't as grim as I will describe it, but it will, I hope, lead you out of the comfort zone of the congenial group I guess we are.

When you visit shops on the internet, you can choose between 'music' and 'classical music'. Apparently 'music' is everything classical music is not, and viceversa.

Classical music is considered even by many of the intellectual elite as 'a genre'. A subculture. Like other subcultures, gothics, R&B, or winelovers, or trekkies.

It's not Mount Olympus any more, for which you all educate your students. There's isn't any more the general accepted idea that classical music, or classical culture in general, is the summit of what centuries of cultural sophistication brought us.

WE may think that, in cultural and musicological terms, but we are a minority, and shrinking fast.

'Bildung', as the Germans call it, doesn't necessarily go anymore with the cultural values that prevailed in the last century.

I hope this shocks you.

There are two ways to react to this: one stays in his own, known world, or one tries and lets classical music play a greater role.

Oh, a third way: shrug your shoulders.

Music is omnipresent. There is always and everywhere music. Nobody will tell you that they don't like music. Everybody likes music. You have to, there is something wrong with you if you say otherwise. Only 50 years or so ago you could say you didn't like music, like you can say you don't like the ballet, or fieldhockey, or novels. That option doesn't exist any more. You will like music. Because you have to (not to go crazy), and because there is such a vast supply that there is something for everyone, and for every social group – from heavy metal fans to the subscriber to the Rotterdam Philharmonic, from schlager-loving pubvisitors to the concentrated followers of improvising jazzmusicians. All these are coordinate subcultures. And knowing about someone's musical preferences tells you about his SES (socio-economic status).



It gets even more complicated.

THE audience – for whatever music - doesn't exist anymore. And the audience isn't in the least interested in the question high or low culture, in German: Ernstmusik oder Unterhaltungsmusik. They switch easily between Moby and Monteverdi, between Franz Ferdinand and Franz Liszt, between Mingus and Mahler. (You might know Charles Mingus, the jazzbassplayer and composer – Moby and Franz Ferdinand are popbands of the more or less intellectual kind)

Although it must be said that it is the highly-educated who switch, and may visit a Mattheus Passion in one week, and a U-2 concert the next. For our marketing departments this is agonizingly difficult.

But this mindset is important, because it brings different valuing systems to classical music.

We have arrived on the bright side.

Classical music is not burdened any more with the generation gap. In my days, you hated classical music simply because your parents listened to it.

First of all: the parents of the newest generation, the generation that just arrived in your schools, or are about to, people in their mid-forties, are probably the first ones not to have had a solid training in classical culture. (mind you – I speak about the Netherlands).

Most of your students probably will have a musical background, or come from a culturally inspiring environment, but that doesn't go for most of their peers. Your students were brought up in a different world than we were, and will know as much about the newest trends in popular culture as anyone of their age.

That means that they will think differently about many things.

And it may be summarized in one phrase: Music isn't only music: it's a story.

Music itself tells a story that people want to hear more and more. The story in and behind the notes - that is what the audience today wants to know. How did it come about, what did the composer mean? Etcetera. There is a new element involved: the personal one, the human interest one. Modern audiences don't see musicians as extension pieces from their instruments, but the other way around. And they want to know everything about the artist: why did you chose this piece? How did the rehearsals go? What is the emotional impact of this music on you?

Musicians have to learn how to work with new audiences. And work on their presentation, for instance. Simple things: learn how to bow, learn how to be on a stage, learn how to be conscious of the audience. But also: learn how to be articulate about your motivation, your choices.

So this is one of your new tasks: educate your students to be a person and be a personality.

Is it just a matter of presentation?

Janine Jansen who sells more records when there is a picture on it of her in a piquant dress?

No.



Another characteristic of the new generation –musicians and non-musicians alike – is that they are far more used to new sounds and harmonies than older generations were. Almost all filmmusic is based on 20th century composers like Korngold, Schönberg en Stravinsky. And also because young composers grew up with popmusic, and integrate that in their work in a natural way, modern music is much closer to the culture of listening of many young people than a 19th century symphony.

So there is a chance.

What is new now, maybe canonized later. Without creators, free spirits, musical culture deteriorates in a monoculture. All music that is still played was of course once new. But almost all music that is still played was at the time of its origin revolutionary. New music always was the engine that kept the musicworld running. But now its a pitiful corner in classical music, a ghetto of connoiseurs, an unimportant bystander at a merry-go-round of the music industry .

But it has all the potential to be again at the forefront of music, and be the thing that can interest young people in serious music.

Let me tell you a story to illustrate this.

Last year we had in de Doelen a performance of de Materie by Louis Andriessen with Reinbert de Leeuw. Main Auditorium, two weeks ahead 900 sold tickets. Quite good actually, for such a modern piece. De Doelen has 2.200 seats, so we wanted two things: the hall better filled, and more new audience. We invited the community of the Architecture department of the Technical University of Delft, which is 20 kilometers from Rotterdam. Their building had been destroyed by a fire just two weeks before, and we offered them to come and be together at a concert with a musical-philosophical treatment on matter and spirit. Something like that. Of course it was opportunistic, but it was at the same time sincere.

Our invitation had an enormous effect: 600 students and staff came. And I am sure that, certainly of the students, the vast majority never had been in a concerthall like ours, and had no idea of what was about to happen.

The two goals were reached: even more people, 1.500 in the hall. But the best was that during the intermission exactly 4 people left. And it was a moving performance with a really touched audience. And this is my point: I really think that this wouldn't have happened with a Brahms symphony. These people, most of them in their early twenties, were deeply impressed. Of course, they are all highly educated, with a more than average interest in culture, and burdened with the one lobe in the brain that architecture and music share – but still. They hadn't bought a ticket themselves.

New music as the introduction to serious music in a concerthall.

I am convinced that this is the direction that classical music should go: from new to old, not the other way. And the new generation of musicians must propagate this, restore the important avantgarde and social role of classical music, ty the knots of old and new, and convince new listeners of all music.



You play a initiating part in this.

Involve new music in your curriculum not as a specialism, but as the core of the musical education. Playing new music shouldn't be just an option, a class like any other; it should be at the heart of your school. And learn your students to be creative.

My training was in architecture (in that school in Delft, that burned down – one of the reasons I made that offer to them)

I loved it. I learned how to be creative. Creativity is not exclusively a gift, a talent – you actually can learn how to be creative, how to think of something, how to make something out of nothing. It's a process that goes for many fields, and it's a skill that I have been able to use ever since, in every professional and personal circumstance, in music or otherwise.

I really do think that you can and should do a better job in teaching creativity.

I am often amazed of how uncreative and nonintellectual musicians are. How conservative they can be. Sometimes it seems that there is no contact with the world beyond classical music. And it seems that, in a reaction to all modernities, and as an answer to the decay of the status of classical music, some musicians choose to not see the world, and put their head in the sand.

Although I think it's bad, I can understand that. But there are also policymakers who do the same. And that I can't understand. Orchestra directors, conservatory teachers, programmers who go back to the fifties and consider classical music to be the one stronghold against the threat of modern society. Only interested in excellence of performance of exclusively old pieces.

I am truly convinced that that is wrong. It will only enhance the trend that classical music is 'just another subculture'. The more classical music and its institutions withdraw in splendid isolation, on an island of self-proclaimed excellence, the more it will marginalize.

Like in the US, were fearful orchestras only play what they thing the audience wants, which resulted in a list of, say, 50 works. I am not exaggerating. Big halls, fancy dressed audiences, big sponsors with big money - artistic poverty.

Music didn't stop after Shostakovich (and he is even not on that list), music is not and never was a matter of sheer virtuosity, of technique, of preservation only.

What do we need, concert halls, go-betweens between the music and the audience?

We want stories. We want musicians who can tell stories – on their instruments, but also other kinds of expression: words, presentation, choice of music.

This is also what your students want.

There was a survey amongst musicians by one of the unions in the Netherlands: de KNTV, Royal Dutch Musicians Association

- 14% of all musicians has only one job: teaching or performing. 70% has more than one job – and for 61% those are solely musical jobs. They play in an orchestra and in an ensemble, teach, write reviews, sell instruments, run a recording studio – all sorts of things. Very few live entirely of having a solo-career – the very thing you train your students for.

And the musicians were asked how their education fits their 'real life' as a musician.

Well, that isn't a very happy picture. The figures show perfectly that the world has changed, and music has changed, but the conservatories hardly followed.

The elder musicians, say 60 plus, who had their education when musical life was still conveniently arranged, and their were solid jobs in playing and teaching, were the most content ones.

But the younger musicians are considerably less content with their education. They miss practical things like presentation and communication and how to be a free-lancer, and more fundamental things like reflection, the identity of the musician, the deepening of understanding of technique, performing, improvisation and other music styles.

They say that the conservatory doesn't give a realistic picture of musical life after school, that it is imbalanced in teaching styles, and that selfconfidence and the pleasure in making music decreased.

This doesn't go for all alumni, of course. But all together the answers in the survey are alarming enough.

It's no coincidence that the general feeling that comes out of the survey links up perfectly with the observations I gave before.

It's Zeitgeist, ladies and gentlemen.

And you may not like it, or think it doesn't concern you.

But it's there.

I am not suggesting that that you should embrace every hype. Please don't.

Or submissively succumb to it and forget your mission.

But use it. And give your students the right equipment to face their future, and shape the future of music.

So, for the sake of music and your students:

Embrace the new world.

Educate your students to play at the highest level, to be communicators who do more than that, to be teachers and ambassadors of music themselves, to be entrepreneurs in the arts, to embrace and explore the new and to advocate the best of the new, to really be: creative storytellers.

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Rotterdam, 9 oktober 2009