

The Role and Efficacy of Public Institutions of Higher Education in Fostering Interest and Involvement in Classical Music: For The Few or The Many?

By Stefan Kac

E-mail: kacattac@gmail.com

Background

Could there be a relationship between dwindling interest in classical music and the policies of today's public university music departments? Could increasing access to practice facilities, ensemble programs and applied study have a tangible effect on the classical music world? Today, many public university music departments restrict or deny access to the general student body as well as the public simply so that there are enough resources to meet the needs of music majors. Such schools claim to be helping to keep classical music alive, operating under the assumption that increased access to conservatory-style training is of primary importance. As noble a cause as this may be, for public schools to allocate their resources in a way that excludes and alienates more students than it serves is not only contrary to their mandate as public institutions but also harmful to the very same classical music tradition they claim to nurture through such programs.

Under current circumstances, it is paramount for the public institution of higher education to ensure that any and all students who have the inclination to participate in classical music are afforded the opportunity. Despite eroding arts programs in public elementary and secondary schools, large numbers of students still show up to college having been active in school bands, orchestras and choirs. Many want and expect to continue in some capacity but find only limited opportunities available to them if they choose to major in another field. There are two principles at stake here:

- (1) the public nature of these institutions demands that their programs be administered in as utilitarian a way as possible;
- (2) these students are the audiences not only of tomorrow but of today: as college graduates, they will be the best educated and highest income earners.

The typical public university has nothing in its charter proclaiming it a guardian of classical music, yet as the classical music world increasingly envisioned this as an appropriate role for such schools, many now proudly (and rightly) behave as such. But simply becoming a conservatory in everything but name is not enough: in order to make a real difference where it is needed most, their efforts must involve as many students (who pay tuition) and members of the general public (who pay taxes) as possible. Classical music can ill afford to exclude vast numbers of potential participants and audience members, and a public university system that denies significant numbers of interested people meaningful access to its music programs and facilities is doing a disservice to the art and its practitioners.

Methods and Objectives

This study aims to determine the extent to which public colleges and universities in the United States restrict access to their music programs and facilities, as well as to offer insight into possible causes, effects, and solutions. A survey was designed to obtain information about schools' policies towards enrollment in ensembles and applied study as well as access to practice facilities (see Appendix A for the complete survey). In October of 2005, the survey was sent via US mail to music department administrators at 285 public colleges and universities nationwide (see Appendix B for a complete list). The names, e-mail addresses and campus mailing addresses of department chairs or school of music directors were obtained from school websites; envelopes were addressed generically if this information was not available online. Follow-up e-mails were sent several weeks after the surveys were mailed resulting in a modest number of additional replies. By March of 2006, 179 surveys (about 63%) had been returned with at least one received from every state except Florida and Maine.

In addition to policy information, administrators were asked to indicate which degrees are granted by their school and whether or not their school is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). This information would allow the general objectives of each school to be taken into account, the intention being to determine more conclusively the extent to which such objectives effect access to participation in music on the part of both the general student body and the public. As the study was anticipated to be highly critical of certain policies, the survey was conducted anonymously in order to ensure an adequate number of responses from administrators who one must assume would not want to be seen as being responsible for the propagation of a negative image of their institution. Hence, no information is available in this study about the responses of individual schools or administrators, nor is the data indexed by school, location, or enrollment, all of which would offer valuable insight but fall outside the means and the scope of this study.

The Survey Questions

Note: the complete survey as it was sent to administrators is reproduced below as Appendix A.

The survey was in two parts, the first dealing with ensemble participation and applied study, the second dealing with access to on-campus practice facilities. Some schools make enrollment in applied study contingent upon enrollment in an ensemble, ostensibly to balance the student-to-faculty ratio for financial reasons. In rare cases, ensemble participation is also contingent upon enrollment in applied study. Whether intentional or not, these policies can be obstacles or deterrents to non-majors who may be too busy to do both or simply not be interested in one or the other. Worse yet, some schools go as far as to offer ensembles and applied study only to students who have been admitted by audition as music majors or minors. The consequences of this policy are obvious.

The six questions on practice room access can be divided into two categories: policy and practice. The policy questions asked who is allowed access, how tightly access is monitored, whether students must sign up ahead of time to use the facilities, and whether or not students must pay an extra fee to be allowed access. The practical questions asked whether the rooms remain locked and how often they are full to capacity, taking into account that these factors may, in some circumstances, trump the actual stated policies of the school. Taken together, these considerations will give a general idea of the barriers to participation that exist for students and citizens nationally.

In order to ensure that trends could be recognized in the survey results, all questions were multiple choice. Each included the option to respond that none of the given answers accurately describe the school in question. In order to facilitate the most accurate comparison between groups of schools with varying sample sizes, all percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number regardless of whether the total for each group's response to a given question would then add up to exactly 100%. The complete raw data from the survey is included below as Appendices C through G; statistics mentioned in the written portion of the study are highlighted in either red (expected results) or blue (unexpected results).

Undergraduate Performance Degrees

The most telling comparison is between schools that grant undergraduate degrees in instrumental and/or vocal performance and those that do not. Significantly, 68% of all responding schools fell into the former category, a substantial majority. The most significant policy differences between the two groups were in ensemble and applied study participation, and paying for practice room access. Among schools that grant performance degrees, 44% require students to be admitted as music majors or minors in order to participate in applied study; among schools that do not grant performance degrees, only 16% have this policy. And while only a handful (8%) of schools granting performance degrees maintain the same policy with regard to ensemble participation, not a single school of the other type had this requirement. Regarding practice rooms, 17% of performance degree granting schools require students to pay a fee to use the practice rooms; among schools that do not grant such degrees, only 1 out of 55 had this policy. Additionally, performance degree granting schools were almost twice as likely to indicate that their practice rooms are frequently full to capacity (43% to 24%). Unexpectedly, the non-performance degree granting schools were slightly more likely to tightly monitor access to their practice rooms (24% to 19%). Complete data for both groups is included below as Appendix C.

Masters Degrees

Compared with the cumulative data, schools that grant masters degrees were only slightly more likely to hold the most restrictive policies, with many being 5 to 7 percentage points higher. The comparisons among schools based on the types of masters degrees granted offered little significant data. Schools that grant the Master of Arts (MA) to the exclusion of all other graduate degrees (Master of Music, Doctor of Musical Arts or Doctor of Philosophy) were noticeably more lenient with access to applied study but also were the most likely to tightly monitor access to their practice rooms. Complete data for schools that grant masters degrees is included below as Appendix D.

Doctoral Degrees

The statistics for schools that grant doctoral degrees were very similar to those for schools that grant masters degrees (some schools fell into both categories). When schools that grant any doctorate were compared only with schools that grant any masters but no doctorate, only practice room access was a concern, with substantially more doctorate granting schools requiring students to sign up ahead of time and reporting that their practice rooms are more frequently full to capacity. Appendix E includes complete data for schools that grant doctoral degrees; Appendix F includes additional comparisons with schools that grant masters degrees but no doctorates, and those that do not grant graduate degrees.

Undergraduate Versus Graduate Degrees

Compared with schools that do not grant graduate degrees, schools that grant masters degrees were more likely to have restrictive policies regarding access to applied study and practice facilities. Nearly identical percentages of each group (46% and 47%) offer applied study to any student by audition, but schools that grant masters degrees were also more likely to offer applied study only to music majors and minors (40% to 25%) and far less likely to offer it to any student without an audition (6% to 23%). They were also more likely to lock their practice rooms (34% to 18%), to charge students a fee for using the practice rooms (18% to 4%), and it is nearly twice as likely that their rooms will be frequently full to capacity (39% to 20%). Even when schools that grant doctoral degrees in addition to masters degrees are excluded, the numbers remained nearly constant.

Predictably, the sample size for schools that grant doctoral degrees in music was smaller than many of the other groups studied here, but it still provides an important comparison with the types of schools covered so far. Regarding access to applied study, the numbers for these schools were comparable to those for schools granting masters degrees, although not one doctoral granting school reported that they make applied study available to any student without an audition. Regarding ensemble participation, these schools were the only group in the study whose restrictions pose significant cause for concern, with 17% of schools reporting that ensemble participation is contingent upon enrollment in applied study. Furthermore, for schools that grant both doctorate degrees (DMA and PhD), this number was even higher (21%). In comparison with 8% of schools cumulatively in the study, 9% of NASM members, and only 3% of schools that do not grant graduate degrees, it can be concluded that doctoral programs represent a significant threat to the general student body's access to ensemble participation. The news is not much better regarding practice rooms: a majority of doctorate-granting schools do not allow access to the general student body or the public, 31% require users to sign up ahead of time (compared with 15% of schools that do not grant graduate degrees and 20% of schools cumulatively in the study), and nearly half report that their facilities are frequently full to capacity. Appendix F includes complete data for schools that do not grant graduate degrees as compared with schools that grant masters degrees but not doctorates, schools that grant any doctorate, and schools that grant both doctorates.

Other Degree Comparisons

No significant conclusions could be reached from any of the other degree comparisons made possible by the study. The numbers for schools that grant the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in music as their only undergraduate degree (28) and schools that grant the BA and the Bachelor of Music Education (BME) or similar degree exclusively (16) were not noteworthy. The sample sizes were insufficient to justify tabulating data from schools that grant only a minor in music (5) or from those that do not grant music degrees at all (2).

The Influence of NASM

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) is the accrediting organization for music departments and schools nationwide. A school seeks accreditation only when it is able to devote sufficient resources to its music program, and while NASM accredits and encourages schools with widely varying objectives, it stands to reason that NASM members as a group would have more restrictive policies than non-members as the latter group would include many schools that grant few music degrees or perhaps none at all. Interestingly, non-members were

more lenient with access to applied study but more restrictive with practice facilities: 37% of non-members make applied study available to all students compared to only 8% of members; 41% of members make applied study contingent upon concurrent enrollment in an ensemble compared to 26% of non-members; non-members were twice as likely to tightly monitor access to practice rooms (34% to 17%); they were also more likely to lock practice rooms at all times; access to the general student body and the public was roughly equal between the two groups. A complete comparison of data for NASM members and non-members appears in Appendix G, which also includes the cumulative data for all 179 responding schools.

Although these cumulative numbers do not necessarily represent a widespread problem, it stands to reason that NASM holds significant influence for the groups of schools that have been singled out for improvement elsewhere in the study, namely those that grant undergraduate degrees in performance and those that grant both doctorates. As the national accrediting body for both public and private music schools and departments in the United States, it is their responsibility to ensure that the development of conservatory-style music programs in public universities does not unduly restrict access to participation by the general student body and the public in accordance with the best interests of both classical music and society.

Cumulative Results

While the most significant conclusions of this study are drawn from comparisons among schools based on the degrees they grant, it will also be informative to look at the cumulative data of the study in order to gain a perspective on some more general trends among all institutions. Among the most troublesome statistics are the following: 34% of all schools offer applied study only to music majors and minors; 37% make applied study contingent upon concurrent enrollment in an ensemble; 21% tightly monitor practice room access and 53% loosely monitor it, leaving only 24% of all schools with no specific methods of monitoring access; and 32% indicated that their practice rooms are frequently full to capacity. While none of these numbers are staggering, they nevertheless represent significant barriers to tens of thousands of students and community members across the country, with about 1 in 3 schools maintaining the most restrictive policies allowed for in the survey in each of these areas. The news is not all bad, however. Among all responding schools, nearly 70% of all schools do not lock their practice room doors during normal building hours (excluding rooms that house valuable equipment) and few require users to sign up ahead of time.

Evaluating the Design of the Survey

While the questions on access to applied study yielded several of the most clearly identifiable trends in the data, many schools responded that none of the given possibilities accurately described their policies (7% in question A2, and 9% in question A3, the highest percentage of all questions in the survey). The only other question to receive as many similar responses was LIST D dealing with whether or not students must sign up ahead of time for use of practice facilities. Only 5% or fewer of all respondents chose this option for any other question with the exception of LIST A (6%), although the responses to this question were unusually evenly distributed anyway, precluding the drawing of any significant conclusions from the cumulative data alone.

The nomenclature used regarding degrees was inadequate or confusing in a few cases, particularly in relation to schools that grant bachelor of science degrees rather than the bachelor of

arts or bachelor of music. In most cases, respondents made clear indications of which degrees listed in the survey were analogous to the ones granted by their schools. Only 5 of 179 respondents indicated that none of the given choices accurately described their institution.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Access to applied study emerged as a primary concern. That schools were generally significantly more restrictive in this area as compared with access to ensemble participation should come as no surprise: applied study involves the lowest student-to-faculty ratio possible and is hence the most expensive. Even the most prestigious and well-funded public university music schools likely do not have the resources to simply open enrollment to the entire student body. However, that schools that grant graduate degrees would be more restrictive than those that do not signals cause for concern. Graduate teaching assistants are often specifically charged with teaching non-majors in addition to first-year students and perhaps some music majors not specializing in performance. Many applied TA's aspire to a full-time academic position and become frustrated when they are unable to gain valuable experience teaching at the college level. Schools that see sufficient demand for applied study from students outside the music department would be wise to relax their policies to address this demand in a way that is mutually beneficial.

The results regarding access to ensemble participation were substantially more encouraging. In contrast to applied study, this is the easiest and most common way for schools to address the demands of the general student body due to the high student-to-faculty ratio, and many schools provide at least one band, choir, and orchestra that do not require auditions to join. The conditions at schools that grant doctoral degrees provide the only caveat to this otherwise encouraging data, indicating that perhaps schools that choose to specialize in advanced training do so at the expense of broader access to their programs. It stands to reason that schools that grant doctoral degrees have a high overall enrollment compared to other types of schools examined in the study, making this issue somewhat more significant as it likely effects a large number of students.

The data on practice rooms is sprawled and somewhat inconclusive. Trends emerged occasionally among schools of similar objectives, indicating that allocation of resources to advanced training programs indeed poses a threat to broader access. However, few groups left cause for concern in more than two or three of the six questions, indicating that, while certain policies may be common purely in number, few schools hold all of the most restrictive policies simultaneously. Although the results were not indexed individually by school, this impression most certainly emerged during the tabulation of individual survey responses as well. Crime cannot be disregarded as a significant obstacle to increasing access to practice facilities, although with nearly three quarters of all respondents indicating that access is monitored in some way, one could easily question this explanation. Opening access to all students as well as the general public, if only on a limited basis, would be a prudent course of action; indeed, that only 14% of all public schools maintain this policy bodes poorly for the future of classical music and is symptomatic of the culture of privatization and social isolation that unduly dominates music in academia.

Extended Commentary

It is only proper that the university, which—significantly—has provided so many contemporary composers with their professional training and general education, should provide a home for the “complex,” “difficult,” and “problematical” in music. Indeed, the process has begun.¹

This statement by composer Milton Babbitt in 1958 is just one example of how American musicians of the second half of the twentieth century have increasingly looked to colleges and universities as a means of supporting, nurturing, and perpetuating Western art music in the face of declining support from virtually every other source. Indeed, the vast majority of today’s professional performers, educators, composers, and scholars hold some sort of academic musical credential, many from public institutions. Additionally, public schools with large, prestigious music programs present thousands of classical music performances nationwide each year, most of which are free and open to the public. For the most part, Babbitt’s call has been answered, not only with respect to composition (the specific topic he was addressing) but also classical music in general. As shepherds of the art, many public universities now can be counted on to bring conservatory-style training to students outside of the most select conservatories, and consequently, both during and after their academic careers, these students have the potential to bring more competent and frequent performances of classical music to areas of the country that otherwise would have very few.

The abolition of amateurism stems from the ambition of amateurs who wanted to compete with professionals. The result was extremely destructive to the art of music. The necessities of competition now forced rivals to use improper means in order to make a success, and what is even worse is that those who as amateurs had formerly been impartial and unselfish, and ready to support needy or unfortunate artists, promoters of the arts, were now in the market themselves. Instead of buying music, instead of attending concerts, instead of enjoying music, they themselves demanded support.²

Arnold Schoenberg was an old man by the time he wrote this seemingly unrelated commentary in 1948, a full decade before Babbitt’s article appeared. One must recall that it was not Babbitt but Schoenberg who was the first major figure to advocate for the voluntary withdrawal of the composer from public performances. But whereas one could have anticipated as a consequence of this “ivory tower” position a certain “abolition of amateurism” resulting from the irreparable alienation of the already small number of committed classical music listeners, Schoenberg is clearly referring to something very different, a result of changing social and economic circumstances upon which even a figure as musically influential as he was would be powerless to exert any meaningful effect. Indeed, many quasi-intellectual commentators now complain of musicians who selfishly create music only for themselves and other musicians; to state this differently, it does seem that, for whatever reason, a sizable portion of today’s audiences consider themselves to be colleagues rather than spectators.

In light of this, one must ask if would-be amateurs are merely competing with professionals for work as Schoenberg posited, or if they are actually would-be professionals that have been forced to support themselves by other means due to economic factors. My own experiences and observations lead me to believe that the latter is now the dominant trend and that there is at least some cause for concern. Many full-time professional performers develop contempt for those who dabble in paying musical work while working a non-musical “day job,”

but it is usually for financial rather than musical reasons, for the dabblers tend to display not a lack of musical training but an abundance of it. This is partly due to the fact that the number, size and scope of today's post-secondary music programs mean that a staggering number of graduates choose to specialize in performance only. Faced with a paucity of employment opportunities in their field, large numbers of these credentialed musicians are forced to find work elsewhere. In their spare time, they compete largely with each other for whatever scarce performing and teaching opportunities might be available with few succeeding in wresting enough work away from the others to quit their day jobs. At least one prominent writer has even observed that conservatory trained "amateurs" are beginning to crowd "real" amateurs out of community and civic ensembles.³

The explosion in the number of highly specialized degrees granted by public university music schools and departments cannot by itself be taken to signal some sort of renaissance or *zeitgeist* for classical music. Access to conservatory-style training has been greatly expanded, yet the criteria for admission to such degree programs have, on the whole, been relaxed significantly when compared with the more limited scope and smaller number of opportunities available to previous generations of music students through their institutions of higher education, among which the most exclusive conservatories comprised a greater percentage of available opportunities in music. The credential, in turn, signifies to the individual bearing the stamp that they are a professional and not an amateur regardless of the level of musical accomplishment that earned them the degree, even though this level, despite the best efforts of NASM and others, is, in practice, not effectively standardized. The significance of the "professional" label in the abstract is huge, both to the individual and to various social institutions; the impunity with which it is now distributed is the nail in the coffin of amateurism as Schoenberg and his generation knew it.

At this point, it is important to mention that the present situation is viewed by many to represent substantial progress. Indeed, it has carved out a larger niche for music in higher education, increased access to advanced musical training, and raised the overall level of performance, even among professionals, and especially in geographic areas that, with the exception of a university, lack the musical and cultural potency of a large urban area. It is also consistent with the American capitalist ideal of allowing every individual's success to be determined not just by innate ability but by work ethic and sheer force of will. How, one might argue, is this possible when only a set number of individuals are afforded the opportunity to pursue music as a career? Americans tend to scoff at educational systems that "track" students into careers rather than allowing each student freedom of choice. Such sentiments are often summed up as simply as this: "If someone wants to be a professional musician (or athlete or astronaut), who are you to deny them the mere opportunity to try?"

This is, again, a very capitalist (and particularly American) sentiment, and not one that I necessarily disagree with. First, let us not lose sight of the context of this discussion: it is not concerned with the totality of human (or even American) society, but with the American *public* education system. Nearly twice as many private post-secondary institutions grant bachelors degrees in the visual and performing arts compared with their public counterparts⁴, yet as long as the difference in cost between public and private schools remains substantial, it will be important for public schools to offer such programs. However, the heightened exclusion of the general student body is only one consequence of a university's music program growing to an unsustainable size and scope. Outside of a few prestigious programs scattered across the

country, most larger public schools simply cannot fill a sprawling conservatory-style program from top to bottom with conservatory-quality students. Cruel as it is to state so emphatically, it is nevertheless the case that whatever formal or informal national standardization exists regarding admission to, curriculum in, and graduation from post-secondary music programs is wholly ineffective in ensuring anything more than a tenuous competency barely worthy of the amateurs of Schoenberg's generation, yet today somehow worthy of the label "professional." In this study, I strongly advocate the necessity of the inclusion of all interested students in public university music programs, and yet if it is to be the mission of the occasional public school to specialize only in advanced performance training, then the program must truly be up to the task, and if making such training available at a lower cost is to be considered a justification for *public* schools taking up this cause, it is paramount that students do not simply get what they pay for.

Second, let us not absent-mindedly believe that the American public education system can simply decide which tenets of capitalism it will be affected by and which it will not. It has been profoundly affected by all of them, and in this case, particularly by the value imputed by capitalism to the generation of personal wealth. Schoenberg never goes so far as to offer a root cause for the "abolition of amateurism," but in hindsight, the answer is clear: amateurism, in the broadest abstract sense, is wholly unconcerned with money, and hence is, in theory, valued less by a capitalist society than a non-capitalist one which places less importance on the generation of private wealth. The events he observed were the result of individuals who understood the most basic, intrinsic value of art to society reacting to a society that acknowledged that value less and less. Despite an individual intuitive certainty of this value, when confronted with a mainstream of one's own society which is blind or even hostile to such sentiments, one is apt simply as a means of survival to inject an artificial value that the mainstream will acknowledge. The most visible example of this today is arts organizations that distribute grant money based on extra-artistic considerations such as cross-cultural or political activist content while making little or no attempt to reach even a subjective aesthetic opinion about the quality of the proposed project. In the case under discussion, musical amateurism has been injected with the potential to generate wealth; this, however, is a contradiction in terms, for amateurism is, by definition, a not-for-profit operation. The result has been a hybrid, the so-called "jobber," which encompasses both individuals who identify as amateurs yet dabble in paying musical work, and those whose identify as professionals yet cannot support themselves working only as musicians.

Could it be that it is this very dynamic that has created the present situation in academia? Could it be that post-secondary administrators seized on increasing enrollment⁵ and a perceived depreciation of the value of a four year undergraduate degree, now likened by some to a high school diploma? Could it be that they expanded their degree granting arts programs⁶ believing that increasing access to such programs would be considered progress if more individuals who in past generations may have been discouraged from making a career in the arts their only career were now not only able to claim this status but also to pursue a post-secondary degree in their chosen field? Could it be that this was viewed as necessary just to *maintain* the state of classical music circa the late twentieth century given the trends that emerged? And finally, could it be that these actions have only grown in scope since due to a capitalistic "abolition of amateurism" which has left it wholly up to the education system to foster interest in music for its own sake, yet forced it to do so under the veil of supposedly giving students a marketable skill that has the potential to generate wealth?

If this is indeed the case, it is not sustainable. The potential for a tremendous diversion of resources away from programs that involve the general student body in music towards those that grant specialized degrees to aspiring professionals is unacceptable. Unfortunately however, this study provides enough empirical evidence to indicate that this has already started to happen. Students majoring in instrumental performance take classes with the lowest instructor to student ratio possible, require practice space for many hours each day, and are recruited and offered scholarships by competing schools. They are something akin to student athletes, the important difference being that NCAA football and basketball bring in huge amounts of revenue whereas public university music departments are captive to some precarious combination of state and private funding. It appears that academia was charged, both by others and itself, with becoming the torch bearer for the survival of classical music without the resources to do the whole job, stealing from Peter to pay Paul, so to speak. While the quality of musical training now available at virtually any reputable public university can only be viewed as progress of a sort, it cannot simply be lauded as such without stopping to consider the price at which this quality has come. An institution that stonewalls the general student body in order to devote most all of its resources to its performance degree programs is actually doing a great disservice to music and to the community it serves. The general student body per se is the audience of their generation: despite eroding public secondary schools and a dearth of arts programs in them, large numbers of students still show up to college with a history of participation in music and many wish to continue in some capacity. Their dormitories typically have somewhere between zero and two practice rooms, and perhaps a lobby housing a decrepit upright piano that has been abused for decades by whoever passes through. Faced from the outset of their college careers with conditions that are hardly conducive to retaining their interest in participating in music, students who seek asylum in the music department only to find locked doors, red tape, and hidden fees develop contempt for music and musicians, which they come to see as elitists taking everything for themselves with no regard for anyone or anything not wholly devoted to professional development and academic research.

Concurrently, those who have been accepted by audition to such a sprawling public university music program now compete with literally hundreds of other students for practice space, ensemble placement, and financial assistance. They find that it is simply not possible to appropriate the conservatory structure without also acquiring the social dynamics. I would infer from my own undergraduate experience that the seemingly endless number of undergraduate performance degrees granted nationally each year nonetheless represents only a tiny fraction of those individuals who began their undergraduate careers as music majors. It bears mentioning that many of those that quit end up just as alienated as those non-majors who were denied access altogether; a school aiming to induce attrition (as many of them do) would be wise to do so through curriculum rather than through the more insidious means they tacitly embrace. Students' success or failure as performers ought to be determined solely by their ability and work ethic. That this is not always the case begs the question of whether the only supposed progress here (namely, increased access to professional training at a lower cost) is, in practice, really progress at all.

Simply put, the conservatory model is incompatible with the both the structure and the mandate of the public institution: it necessitates the exclusion of too many students from too many program offerings; it creates an unduly hostile social environment; its admission criteria select for skills possessed by very few individuals, meaning that, in practice, the standards are

relaxed and the training watered down simply to boost enrollment; credentials are handed out in greater number to less qualified individuals while highly qualified individuals miss out on a more rigorous course of study. The application of the conservatory model to the public institution, intended as a means of nurturing professionalism, has merely finished the job of abolishing amateurism. In practice, it serves the purposes of neither the amateur nor the professional, simply ignoring the former while trivializing the latter.

If public institutions are truly to become advocates for the continued vitality of classical music, they must do a better job of balancing advanced training and broader access, both *within* individual institutions and *among* institutions that serve a given geographic area. In extreme cases, this is to recommend that existing performance programs be pared down to a manageable and appropriate size, a course of action sure to be intensely unpopular with many who consider themselves arts and music advocates. Conversely, in the case of schools in close proximity to each other, it may very well be advantageous for one to escalate their conservatory-style program if the other is able to make up the difference.

The first step for those who wish to “save” classical music is to save amateurism, which means ensuring that as many people as possible are afforded the continued opportunity to participate. While this course of action may actually go beyond the mandate of most institutions, it is the most significant thing these often self-appointed guardians of classical music can do to fulfill their obligation if for no other reason than that no one else can do it for them. In addition to students and faculty from other departments and members of the public, this would undoubtedly also attract substantial numbers of professional musicians and recent graduates who, in the case of schools that maintain the most restrictive policies, may be no better off than any other member of the general public after receiving their degree and leaving school. Whether by these or any other means, only by investing in the many rather than the few will public institutions effect substantial and lasting change in classical music.

Notes

1. Milton Babbitt, "Who Cares if You Listen?," in *High Fidelity* VIII, no. 2 (February 1958), 38-40, 126-127. Reprinted in *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, ed. Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 1984) 533
2. Arnold Schoenberg, "The Blessing of the Dressing" (1948) in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1975) 383
3. Blair Tindall, *Mozart in the Jungle: Sex, Drugs, and Classical Music* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005)
4. The Digest of of Education Statistics prepared by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics states that, as of 2004 (the most recent available data), 463 public institutions of higher education granted bachelors degrees in the visual and performing arts compared to 865 private institutions. Conversely, 248 public schools granted master degrees and 67 granted doctorates, compared to 151 and 34 respectively for private schools. See National Center for Education Statistics 2005 Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures, Table 255 (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_255.asp).
5. From 1989-90 to 2003-04, total enrollment in degree granting institutions nationally increased about 28%. See National Center for Education Statistics 2005 Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures, Table 170 (http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_170.asp).
6. From 1989-90 to 2003-04, the total number of bachelors degrees conferred in the visual and performing arts went from 39,934 to 77,181, a 93% increase. Similar increases took place for master degrees (6,675 to 12,906) and doctoral degrees (621 to 1,282). See National Center for Education Statistics 2005 Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures, Table 294 (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_294.asp). Recall that during this same period, total enrollment in degree granting institutions nationally increased only about 28% (see previous citation).