

Talking about Classical Music: Radio as Public Musicology

In the spacious, public foyer of London's Southbank Centre, Europe's largest arts centre, a wall-sized advert trails the concerts of the venue's four resident orchestras with the slogan 'a classical music season exclusively for pretty much everyone.'¹ Orthodox marketing practice might well blanch at the use of 'exclusively' to describe classical music. Inclusivity and accessibility are the contemporary watchwords of a musical genre long dogged by cultural stereotypes, particularly surrounding (middle) class and (old) age. But the slogan's deliberate oxymoron is surely self-aware and provocative, aiming to stop readers in their tracks, to play on classical music's image problem, and ultimately, of course, to attract concertgoers. More broadly, then, the slogan underlines the importance of language to how classical music is perceived today, and the sensitivities that influence and regulate that association. As a marketing ploy, 'exclusively' here is both an invitation—the music these orchestras produce is for *you*, dear reader—and a qualified reminder of classical music's elite credentials. Potential concertgoers are invited to imagine a special or premier event, not one that is cliquish or exclusory.

How such language frames classical music is the central theme of this chapter. Language is used in myriad ways to contextualise and set expectations about classical music, but many such forms currently slip under musicology's radar, despite being essential to how the genre is perceived: from programme notes, liner notes, and reviews that steer audiences' experiences, to "bluffer's" guides and the efforts of marketers to promote and demystify classical music. Consider also the rise of social media, society's keen appropriation of classical music,² and oral media such as podcasts and radio, and the work required to understand how perceptions of classical music are shaped in the broadest sense becomes clear. To appreciate this argument is also to begin to make the case for *public musicology*, a bidirectional process that recognises and attaches greater significance to public-musicological artefacts (such as liner notes and radio) and considers how musicology can make music relevant and useful in the public sphere.

This nascent field is particularly pertinent to classical music, with its grand history and exclusive image. This chapter focusses on one of the most public forms of musicology to classify and critique how BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM speak about the music they broadcast. To survey the types and range of language they use is to reveal not only how the genre is portrayed on the radio today, but also the assumptions about what classical music is, and what it is supposed or presumed to do. In turn, the chapter will offer an account of how Radio 3 and Classic FM fulfil different but overlapping roles in today's classical music industry. Figures show that these stations reach 1.89 and 5.36 million listeners per quarter respectively, making radio by far the most popular way in which people access classical music.³ Radio is therefore a meaningful way to critique the dilemmas—crises, as some commentators would have it—classical music faces.

¹ The orchestras are the London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, London Sinfonietta, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

² In various forms and contexts, classical music is prevalent in society at large. Quite apart from the concert hall, consider its use in advertisements, new and "borrowed" film music, coffee shops, shopping malls, churches, and garden centres, and the popularity of classical "crossover" (further discussed later in this chapter). Tellingly, a grand catalogue (compiled and updated 1978–84) designed to help librarians and retailers identify classical works popularised by radio, television, advertisements, and films reached over 2,000 entries. See Phil Ranson, "*By Any Other Name*": *A Guide to the Popular Names and Nicknames of Classical Music, and to Theme Music in Films, Radio, Television and Broadcast Advertisements* (5th edn; Newcastle: Northern Library Library System, 1984).

³ These 2017 (Q1) figures are taken from http://www.rajar.co.uk/listening/quarterly_listening.php (accessed 21 June 2017).

Indeed, radio itself, and particularly Classic FM, has been criticised heavily over the years, as we shall see. Such views are historically engrained, but how credible or true are they today? Might radio, in fact, be less a symptom of certain parts of classical music's supposed malaise, and more a cure? Admittedly, examining radio as a conduit for musical understanding and enjoyment is challenging: the complete task would be as much philosophical and linguistic as cultural and musicological. This chapter is intended to be a midpoint that builds on recent musicology and sociology on both radio and the state of classical music, and which looks ahead to consider how public musicology might respond to the modern realities of classical music. A study of the vocabulary Radio 3 and Classic FM use to characterise classical music is therefore framed by two field-scoping sections: on public musicology itself and, first, on the intense debates that encircle the genre today.

Crisis? Which Crisis?

Classical music animates deep feelings among its advocates. Each week seems to be marked by a new think piece, blog, or interview ruminating on the genre's relevance and purpose in the twenty-first century. Social media is often the accelerant of such debates, which traverse territories old and new, from the perennial concerns of engaging audiences and arresting perceived decline, to more specific flashpoints contesting, for example, the significance of music notation or contemporary changes in music education.⁴ Taken together, such issues become existential. Most members of the classical music industry (including performers and composers), and most fans of the music itself, will surely have pondered how the genre should navigate its way through an unforgiving but revolutionary digital era, or how to achieve the future-proofing goal of retaining, growing, and diversifying its practitioners and audiences. As the Southbank Centre's slogan tacitly implies, many people regard classical music as a relic: stuffy, elitist (pejoratively so), and out of touch with societies that are increasingly pluralist.

Efforts to make classical music more accessible by embracing digital technology or informality in presentation, including those described elsewhere in this volume, are exciting but often controversial. They can even run the risk of entrenching opinion or reifying stereotypes: witness Classic FM, said to 'remove the guts of classical music, transforming it into a kind of fragrant security blanket', a quote to which we shall return.⁵ Many such debates have long troubled classical music but today come with a fresh face, as industry, education, and academia struggle to adjust to the modern realities of society, economics, and policy-making. Significantly, these debates are also typically divergent, for academia and industry rarely collaborate; with admirable exceptions, the relationship is mutually ridden with suspicion. Meanwhile, disciplines within

⁴ See, for example: Alejandro L. Madrid, 'Diversity, Tokenism, Non-Canonical Musics, and the Crisis of the Humanities in U.S. Academia', *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, 7/2 (2017), 124–29; Katy Wright, 'Teachers Blame EBacc for Decline in Music Student Numbers', *Music Teacher* (10 March 2017), http://www.rhinegold.co.uk/music_teacher/teachers-blame-ebacc-decline-music-student-numbers/ (accessed 20 March 2017), reporting on Ally Daubney and Duncan Mackrill, *Changes in Secondary Music Curriculum Provision Over Time 2012–16* (11 November 2016), <https://www.ism.org/images/files/Changes-in-Secondary-Music-Curriculum-Provision-Over-Time-Music-Mark-Conference.pdf> and <https://www.ism.org/professional-development/webinars/changes-in-secondary-music-provision> (accessed 23 March 2017); Alan Davey, 'Don't Apologise for Classical Music's Complexity – That's its Strength', *The Guardian* (8 May 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/may/08/dont-apologise-for-classical-music-complexity-alan-davey-radio-3> (accessed 9 May 2017); and Ian Pace, 'Response to Charlotte C. Gill Article on Music and Notation', (30 March 2017) <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/response-to-charlotte-c-gill-article-on-music-and-notation-full-list-of-signatories/> (accessed 1 April 2017).

⁵ Paul Morley, 'An Outsider at the RPS Awards', *Sinfini Music* (24 May 2013), <http://www.sinfinimusic.com/uk/features/series/paul-morley/paul-morley-on-the-rps-awards#> (accessed 15 May 2015).

academia are often isolated from one another, despite notionally overlapping as they each strive to preserve or scrutinise classical musical culture. For the purposes of this chapter, then, we can make sense of existing research in these areas by recognising that it possesses three main strands: work that has sought to defend classical music by describing its intrinsic aesthetic, historical, and cultural values; a more socio-musicological strand that focusses on classical music's contemporary practices, with special regard for the inherent imbalances of its organisational, systemic, and societal structures; and, finally, on the relationship between classical music and radio itself.

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The first strand comprises a body of opinion that generally accedes to the idea of a genre in crisis. Julian Johnson, for example, diagnoses a widespread 'legitimation crisis' and decries the 'devaluation' of classical music, an argument that goes on to implicate the role of the market and popular music in relativising musical taste.⁶ Joshua Fineberg expresses concern about the 'downward homogenizing of taste toward the lowest common denominator',⁷ but progressively challenges audiences to free themselves from 'a single listening style' and to shun the 'cult of celebrity'.⁸ Lamenting how 'elitism and esotericism [are] too often associated' with classical music,⁹ Lawrence Kramer has pursued a similar theme, although he would presumably welcome how some ensembles and promoters have responded to his call for a less formal, more interactive mode of presentation, aping the successes of the visitor-friendly museums he acclaims.¹⁰

Even so, the central question, or problem, regarding the extent of the public's engagement with and understanding of classical music remains, making Kramer's contribution to the debate the most pessimistic:

Caught out by a formidable rival [popular music] on one hand and a loss of participants on the other, classical music lost part of its emotional transparency as the [twentieth] century progressed. Music that once seemed utterly available now seemed to harbor secrets... The culture of classical music came to seem, not without justice, mandarin and out of touch, ripe for obsolescence.¹¹

This first strand of research has a strong sense of didacticism, advocating and valorising attentive (as opposed to passive) listening. By extension, it suggests how classical music is supposed to be heard, regarded, and defined—because from this perspective, the three are inextricable. To focus on classical music's structures, textures, or 'formal-coherence' as a means of recapturing 'emotional transparency' is to help defend the genre itself because these musical characteristics are implied, with some justification, to be the least straightforward to comprehend and appreciate.¹² The more contentious question is whether this challenge makes such characteristics somehow superior in themselves or peculiar to classical music. If the power or meaning of a symphony, say, resides in its movement-spanning teleology, as it often does, then it is natural to

⁶ Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3ff.

⁷ Joshua Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother? Hearing the World of Contemporary Culture Through a Composer's Ears* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 21.

⁸ Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother?*, 102, 51.

⁹ Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 5.

¹⁰ See Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, 13.

¹¹ Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, 15–16.

¹² Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother?*, 74.

seek to defend classical music by championing a nuanced understanding of structure. Such arguments, indeed, belong to a grand music-aesthetic tradition.¹³

At the same time, a truth rarely admitted is that certain classical genres have either attained, or always enjoyed, primacy over others, being valued more highly in culture or by musicologists. The two dominant examples, the symphony and opera, are both historically important “received” genres that were fundamental to how harmony and structure evolved—musical elements that, in turn, gave rise to the analytical concept of harmonic structure. Therefore, the histories of how classical music has been written, valued, and heard are highly persuasive and closely linked. But they do not necessarily account for or correspond with other forms of classical music (much less other musical genres), or with different modes of listening and understanding. The two oppositions set up to underlie many defences of classical music, namely passive/attentive listening and popular/classical music, are extremely useful to pedagogy and aesthetics, but they are not true dichotomies. Popular musicology (or popular music studies), still a relatively young discipline, is littered with analyses of that genre’s textural, structural, and harmonic diversity, while great swathes of classical music has the ‘immediacy’ Johnson envies in popular music.¹⁴

More fundamentally, many musical genres refuse to fall neatly into either category, particularly so-called hybrid forms that garner much airplay and dominate the classical charts. Radio, similarly, is a prime example of how the role of listening in this debate warrants a more rounded perspective. To be an attentive listener is not necessarily to be knowledgeable or consistently so, and in a society in which music is more available than ever to hear, to be passive much of the time is simply inevitable. Even in a classical concert setting, where usually audiences are aurally and literally confined, we typically provide programme notes, acknowledging that concertgoers may “tune out” to read them during the performance. Yet, this pragmatic notion of an attentive-passive spectrum feels almost heretical in the context of classical music, so potent are ideas, perceived or real, about the “correct” ways to understand, enjoy, and value such music.

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On the periphery of the same debate lies our second strand, for some authors have begun to process these ambiguities and to chart a way forward. Adams Krims, for example, sought not to prioritise, or hierarchise, listening styles, but endorsed a ‘historicising, rather than moralising, narrative’ to frame classical music, adding that “classical” has mutated.¹⁵ By acknowledging how classical music has ‘always involved a merging of older cultural practices with contemporary conditions’,¹⁶ Krims was less fatalistic than many scholars. Perhaps the closest parallel here is with Ruth Levitt and Ruth Rennie’s adage that ‘those who speak of a “crisis” in classical music are really describing the irrevocable demise of old, familiar attitudes, expectations and ways of working.’¹⁷ Studies belonging to this second strand of research range from investigating how diversely audiences feel about and interact with classical music, to asking why access to, and success within, classical music can remain stubbornly limited by personal factors such as class, age, and gender. The latter field is growing quickly to try to address such inequities

¹³ I have written about this elsewhere. See Christopher Dromey, ‘Hierarchical Organization’, *Music in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Encyclopedia*, ed. William Forde Thompson (London: SAGE, 2014), 551–53.

¹⁴ Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?*, 76.

¹⁵ Adam Krims, ‘Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording: An Alternative to Cultural Studies’, *Music Analysis* 20/3 (October, 2001), 355.

¹⁶ Krims, ‘Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording’, 351.

¹⁷ Ruth Levitt and Ruth Rennie, *Classical Music and Social Result* (London: Office for Public Management, 1999), 7.

through scholarship, activism, and collaboration.¹⁸ The former, meanwhile, has typically centred on audiences, for example young, first-time concertgoers (the holy grail for forward-looking promoters) to prove that lacking knowledge and experience of classical music, including concert-going etiquette and lexical understanding, is generally correlated to lower levels of enjoyment.¹⁹

Superficially, the finding may seem obvious, but authors Lucy Dearn and Stephanie Pitts draw an important further connection by describing how attenders with ‘existing classical music knowledge and vocabulary... *comply* with those expectations [i.e. surrounding musical enjoyment].’²⁰ In a similar vein, Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis has showed how participants in an experiment to test musical enjoyment ‘preferred excerpts [of various Beethoven quartets] that were preceded by no description’ and that ‘when [programme note-like] text of a structural or dramatic nature prefaced an excerpt, participants reported enjoying the music less.’²¹ Again, the power of discourses surrounding classical music—to ‘comply’, ‘moralise’, or intimidate—is seen to be emotionally strong. Hellmuth Margulis’s tentative proposal to explain her finding, that some listeners may prefer to be ‘swept away by the music, without explicit information of its constituent elements... [for] such awareness may interfere with their enjoyment’, need not be an argument for blissful ignorance, or trigger complaints about “dumbing down”.²² On the contrary, this type of listening is extremely common, does not yield to a simple choice between active or passive, attentive or inattentive, and reveals that languages associated with classical music can be unwittingly exclusory. These wider truths are, or should be, as important to defenders of classical music as they are to critics of its systemic structures.

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The third area of debate to chronicle is that of radio, a medium that spends several hours each day discussing and describing classical music, but which has also attracted much criticism because of this mediating role. BBC Radio 3 (f. 1946) and its younger rival Classic FM (f. 1992) devote the greatest daily amount of airplay to classical music in the United Kingdom. The definition is admittedly a little unwieldy, for Classic FM proudly calls itself the country’s ‘only 100% classical music radio station’,²³ which highlights Radio 3’s extra coverage of folk, jazz, and other non-classical music (as well as literature, philosophy, and other cultural forms). Nevertheless, the stations’ histories and identities invite comparison. Radio 3 is a public service broadcaster whose launch, as the Third Programme, was described by the then Director-General of the BBC as ‘directed to an audience that is not of one class but that is perceptive and intelligent.’²⁴ Related to the earlier establishment of the BBC itself,²⁵ this ethos continues to

¹⁸ See, for example: the work of the Chineke! Foundation (f. 2015) to increase representation of black and minority ethnic classical musicians; Christina Scharff’s pioneering work on *Equality and Diversity in the Classical Music Profession* (Economic and Social Research Council and King’s College London, 2015), <http://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/young-female-and-entrepreneurial/files/2014/02/Equality-and-Diversity-in-the-Classical-Music-Profession.pdf>; and Natalie Bleicher, *New Music Commissioning in the UK: Equality and Diversity in New Music Commissioning* (British Academy of Songwriters, Composers & Authors, 2016), https://basca.org.uk/newsletter/BASCA_Music-Commissioning.pdf.

¹⁹ See Lucy K. Dearn and Stephanie E. Pitts, ‘(Un)popular Music and Young Audiences: Exploring the Classical Chamber Music Concert from the Perspective of Young Adult Listeners’, *Journal of Popular Music Education*, 1/1 (March, 2017), 43–62.

²⁰ Dearn and Pitts, ‘(Un)popular Music and Young Audiences’, 52; emphasis added.

²¹ See Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis, ‘When Program Notes Don’t Help: Music Descriptions and Enjoyment’, *Psychology of Music*, 38/3 (July, 2010), 295.

²² Hellmuth Margulis, ‘When Program Notes Don’t Help’, 295.

²³ Tim Lihoreau, *The Classic FM Musical Treasury: A Curious Collection of New Meanings for Old Worlds* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2017), 217.

²⁴ William Haley, writing in the *Radio Times* (27 September 1946), and quoted in Caroline High, *For The Love of Classical Music* (Chichester: Summersdale, 2015), 179.

colour perceptions of Radio 3. Positioning the station as a dominant arbiter of taste, the aim morphed all too easily into other value-laden beliefs claimed for it, for example that ‘the whole point about Radio 3 was that it was aloof.’²⁶

However it is characterised, Radio 3’s ethos also calls for special and periodic justification, particularly when views on public subsidy are polarised. Owned by British media company Global, Classic FM would appear to encounter fewer such dangers, yet this commercial status has itself proved controversial. As Luke Howard observed a few years after Classic FM’s launch, the station quickly became associated with “crossover” classical music, in particular because it aided the commercial success of Henryk Górecki’s Third Symphony (1976, also known as *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*).²⁷ Still a poorly defined genre, so-called classical crossover has attracted criticism, albeit not always fairly: Górecki’s symphony contains ‘no element of genre-mixing or pandering to a pop audience’ and is crossover only insofar as it “crossed over” to the non-classical charts (on the British album charts, it peaked at #6 in February 1993).²⁸ Howard’s quote, indeed, discloses this loaded meaning (‘pandering’); again, the fear is that classical music will be trivialised, misappropriated, or both. But whether we recognise classical crossover musically or commercially, another fact stands out: that it predates Classic FM. When the genre’s modern history is written, it will surely trace its origins to the 1960s and its heyday to the late 1970s and early 1980s.²⁹

Criticism of Classic FM stems from a deeper fear, typified by Richard Barbrook’s complaint (made in the context of the station applying for a broadcasting licence) that ‘in the tenth year of [Margaret] Thatcher, classical music has been transformed from a spiritual experience into a format for attracting old and richer listeners.’³⁰ This argument, in turn, belongs to something of a radio-sceptic tradition in classical music: Arnold Schoenberg railed against radio’s ‘boundless surfeit’ of music;³¹ and it is small step to extend to radio Michael Chanan’s perceptive description of the ‘aesthetic antimony’ of classical music and television.³² Anyone who has strained to hear classical music on the go will understand how radio can be inimical to the genre’s ‘special kind

²⁵ See John Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924), 174.

²⁶ Paul Driver, ‘The Dying of the Light: Paul Driver Casts a Vote of No-Confidence in Contemporary Culture’, *Musical Times*, 134/1805 (July, 1993), 380.

²⁷ See Luke B. Howard, ‘Motherhood, *Billboard*, and the Holocaust: Perceptions and Receptions of Górecki’s Symphony No. 3’, *Musical Quarterly*, 82/1 (Spring, 1998), 131–59.

²⁸ Howard, ‘Motherhood, *Billboard*, and the Holocaust’, 148.

²⁹ In a modern sense, crossover classical can be traced back at least as far as Wendy Carlos’s debut album *Switched-On Bach* (1968, released as Walter Carlos). In the written history of the genre, literally hundreds of subsequent examples would follow, but in a similar vein to Carlos we might pick out Sam Fonteyn’s ‘Pop Looks Bach’ (1976, better known as the theme tune to the BBC’s “Ski Sunday”) and the eponymous albums of English/Australian instrumental rock group Sky (f. 1978), spearheaded by guitarist John Williams. The difficulty for anyone looking to codify crossover classical is that the runaway success of Nigel Kennedy’s 1989 recording of Antonio Vivaldi’s *Le quattro stagioni* (*The Four Seasons*) and The Three Tenors’ football-affiliated *Carreras Domingo Pavarotti in Concert* (1990) made them the genre’s best-known releases by far, yet they are so different to earlier blueprints, where musical hybridity and popularity *coincide*. Moreover, the fact that later examples, such as Tony Britten’s *Zadok the Priest*-aping ‘Champions League’ (1992), owe a cultural and musical debt to The Three Tenors shows how polysemous the term “classical crossover” has become.

³⁰ Richard Barbrook, ‘Melodies or Rhythms? The Competition for the Greater London FM Radio Licence’, *Popular Music*, 9/2 (April, 1990), 209.

³¹ Arnold Schoenberg, ‘The Radio: Reply to a Questionnaire [1930]’, in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, trans. Leo Black, ed. Leonard Stein (London, Faber: 1984), 147. Schoenberg’s warning itself resonates with a broader tradition epitomised by Theodor W. Adorno, who was highly critical of the supposed ill effects of the industrialisation of musical and cultural production. See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno, ‘A Social Critique of Radio Music’, *The Kenyon Review*, 7/2 (Spring, 1945), 208–17.

³² Michael Chanan, ‘Television’s Problem with (Classical) Music’, *Popular Music*, 21/3, “Music and Television” (October, 2002), 373.

of solace'.³³ This issue applies equally to Radio 3 and Classic FM, yet notice how the arguments we have chronicled so far *also* describe, characterise, and implicitly limit classical music, assuming it to be either 'aloof', 'spiritual', 'special', or 'solacing'. Even Schoenberg's pithy phrase betrays a fear of being unable to contain and, by extension, preserve the boundaries of classical music. This language is a form of cultural exceptionalism we will revisit; to rely on it is to underline its significance. The perceived problems of broadcasting classical music, be it radio stations' contrasting styles or the medium itself, only make these areas more fruitful to explore. Scrutiny of the relationship between classical music, radio, and language is overdue.

The Study

Appendix 1 chronicles the vocabulary that Radio 3 and Classic FM employ to contextualise the music they broadcast. Its "day in the life" survey encompasses every piece of verbal and accompanying online commentary heard or available to read on a random day in 2017. No single day of radio broadcast is truly typical, of course, and the fact that the selected day, March 1st, was also Ash Wednesday and St David's Day explains and inflates the daily use of adjectives such as 'penitential', 'appropriate', or 'special', and also accounts for the broadcast of certain pieces of music associated with Lent (i.e. Carlo Gesualdo's *Miserere* and Francis Poulenc's *Tristis est anima mea* on Radio 3; no such repertoire specifically attached to Ash Wednesday was heard on Classic FM) and with Wales (James James's 'Land of my Fathers', Karl Jenkins's *Over the Stone* and 'In paradisum' from the *Requiem*, and the traditional 'Men of Harlech' on Classic FM; William Mathias's *Serenade* and live performances by the Welsh ensemble 9Bach on Radio 3). Because the combined number of instances of highlighted vocabulary used across the day totals 906, these annual events do not distort the survey significantly. On the contrary, they usefully highlight how, through their choice of repertoire, the stations chose to mark these occasions in their own way.

Relatedly, Radio 3's schedule on the day in question included one of its twice-weekly live religious services (3.30pm–4.30pm, curtailing "Afternoon on 3"). This was the second of three omissions from Appendix 1: the others were the repeat of Donald Macleod's "Composer of the Week [Beethoven]" (6.30pm–7.30pm, first heard at midday) and Dr Simon Rennie's non-musical "The Essay: [Anthony] Burgess at 100" (10.45pm–11pm). Appendix 1 otherwise chronicles 24 hours of coverage on each station, from Sam Pittis's overnight programme (1am–6am) to Margherita Taylor's "Smooth Classics" (10pm–1am) on Classic FM, and from Catriona Young's "Through the Night" (12.30am–6.30am) to the Max Reinhardt-presented "Late Junction" (11pm–12.30am) on Radio 3. That Taylor's "Smooth Classics" was the second such titled programme of the day after John Brunning's "Smooth Classics at 7" (the third hour of "Classic FM Drive") points to one of the principal reasons for why Classic FM is so successful—and so polarising. The starkest contrast in the stations' use of language is in their respective use of 'relax', 'soothe', 'unwind', and their derivatives: thirty such instances on Classic FM; none on Radio 3. The comparison excludes the related use of 'smooth', repeated often as a pre-recorded link reminding listeners of the programmes' titles; the closest equivalent to 'smooth' on Radio 3 was Sean Rafferty's colourful description of alternative folk group 9Bach as 'mellifluous'.

At the same time, these thirty instances are atypical insofar as they do not usually describe individual pieces of music, instead tending to focus on the listener, and specifically the connection between the "persuading" presenter and the "bidden" listener: 'Light the fire and relax...'; 'I'll guarantee to keep you relaxed...'; '...sublime, relaxing music, designed to ease

³³ Chanan, 'Television's Problem with (Classical) Music', 373.

away the stresses and strains of the day.’ The “Smooth Classics” themselves are mostly slow in tempo, strings-led, memorable (that is, melodically repetitive), or a combination of the three, for example Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s cello *Nocturne*, the slow movement from Alessandro Marcello’s Oboe Concerto, and Robert Parsons’s *Ave Maria*. ‘Smooth’ literally, and figuratively, promises no “bumps” or “bitterness”.³⁴ Compiled and aired in this way, these pieces of music become part of a wider Classic FM canon that, superficially at least, puts the listener in charge and unapologetically eschews challenging or unpopular repertoire. As Darren Henley (Classic FM’s Managing Director) says: ‘We play very little of Schoenberg’s music on Classic FM because our listeners tell us they don’t like it.’³⁵

Indeed, the station’s musically and presentationally ‘friendly, accessible style’ surely accounts for its wide listenership.³⁶ This style has also prompted reactions that range from reasonable and objective, for example that the station often ‘present[s] classical music as an adjunct to functional activities [e.g. driving, relaxing]’,³⁷ to more contentious and aesthetically loaded remarks, for example that its ‘muzak has become a powerful source of cultural corruption’,³⁸ that it increases the ‘threat of narcosis’,³⁹ and, to complete our earlier description of the station, that:

Classic FM forensically removes the guts of classical music, transforming it into a kind of fragrant security blanket, rips great pieces of music out of context and history, and utilises presenters oozing with courtesy who are like dentists, soothingly telling you that there will be no pain, and everything will be all right.⁴⁰

This excoriating opinion from Paul Morley, a self-described recent convert to classical music (if not to Classic FM), is given succour by the type of vocabulary listed so far, which is generic in itself and generalising in its prevalence. Yet, radio—any radio—mediates and recontextualises the music it broadcasts, and the passage of time causes classical music—any music—to be repurposed, appropriated, and reinterpreted. These truths sustain any living musical genre. To single out Classic FM for removing classical music from its ‘context’ is illogical, unproven, and points to a subsequent truth that criticism of the station’s alleged mischaracterisation or stereotyping of classical music is itself stereotypical.⁴¹

Similarly, it is telling that criticisms of Classic FM are often paired with fears that it is a corruptive influence on Radio 3. It is natural that these stations should be compared, but perspectives that are dismissive, overprotective, or, worse, supercilious tend either to betray a narrow ideology or simply preach to the choir. Paul Driver’s longer argument, for example, is that the ‘aural medium of radio poses a much smaller threat of narcosis [compared with television], but Classic FM is doing its best to make up the odds; while the patness and have-

³⁴ ‘Smoothness’, it should be noted, is not exclusive to classical music. In recent history, it has been used to codify jazz (as a subgenre), then classical, and more generically still to include certain types of “middle of the road” (MOR), soul, and R&B music. Global, who own Classic FM, also own Smooth Radio.

³⁵ Darren Henley, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Classical Music* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2015), 182.

³⁶ Henley, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Classical Music*, ix.

³⁷ Alexandra Wilson, ‘Killing Time: Contemporary Representations of Opera in British Culture’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19/3 (November, 2007), 258.

³⁸ As a *Musical Times* editorial once thundered: ‘The problem now, as Classic FM has roundly demonstrated... is that, elevated by the market and technology, muzak has become a powerful source of cultural corruption. Blame for this must lie partly with the listener.’ ‘Editorial: Music or Muzak?’, *The Musical Times*, 141/1870 (Spring, 2000), 2.

³⁹ Driver, ‘The Dying of the Light’, 381.

⁴⁰ Morley, ‘An Outsider at the RPS Awards’.

⁴¹ Morley’s view is (ironically) crowd-pleasing, at least in certain circles.

nice-day-ness [*sic*] of pop... have been infiltrating Radio 3.’⁴² Although old, such arguments recur: they resurfaced in the early 2010s as Radio 3 began to implement the BBC’s cost-saving plan (*Delivering Quality First*, 2011) by broadcasting fewer orchestral and live lunchtime concerts, recording less contemporary music, and devoting more on-air time to interacting with listeners.⁴³ From the opposite perspective, Classic FM even joined the debate, criticising Radio 3 for allegedly aping its commercial competitor.⁴⁴

To return to Appendix 1, a more objective analysis might observe that *both* stations aired *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (Radio 3, in fact, programmed it twice) in order to compare Brunning’s solitary ‘glorious’ on Classic FM with Young’s explanation of musical “recycling” or Tom Redmond’s lengthier discussion of the music’s effect and historic significance. A fairer approach recognises that Redmond was speaking in the context of a live concert, so his oral programme note is more, if not perfectly, comparable to Jane Jones’s evening “Full Works Concert” on Classic FM. (Most of the latter “concerts” consist of studio recordings.) More carefully, we can tally 479 instances of descriptive or analytical language on Classic FM on the day in question, contextualising the music they broadcast by using 170 different words. In turn, we can describe how each station’s lexicon falls into different categories to compare them in greater detail. Compared with Classic FM, Radio 3 featured fewer instances of such language (422) but employed over a hundred *more* unique words (272). We can therefore expect the stations’ most commonly used words, their frequency, and their implications to be significantly varied.

It proves so. ‘Great’, coupled with ‘greatest’ or ‘greatness’, was heard thrice as often on Classic FM (24 vs. 8), typically to describe the music itself, its performers, or its interpretation, and once to explain how Italian composer Nino Rota was ‘inspired by great women’ during a look ahead to International Women’s Day. The next most common terms were ‘lovely’ (and its derivatives, used 18 times on Classic FM, 4 times on Radio 3), ‘wonderful’ (15 vs. 6), ‘favourite(s)’ (14 vs. 3), ‘classical’ (12 vs. 0, excluding the ubiquitous ‘classic’), ‘new’ (11 vs. 6, allowing ‘world-exclusive’, ‘premiere’, and ‘debut’), and ‘dedicate’ or ‘dedication’ (10 vs. 0). The statistical contrasts here are particularly stark because Classic FM’s presentational style has a strong self-promotional and chart-led tendency. ‘Favourite’ is often used self-reflexively (‘...the UK’s favourite classical music station...’) or to mark a piece of music said to be the ‘favourite’ of a particular presenter, celebrity, or performer. A similar personality-based approach explains how ‘dedication’ is used typically by or for the listeners, rather than to explain a piece’s original dedication, and a greater contrast still (16 vs. 0) is revealed by collating Classic FM’s day-long references to its annual “Hall of Fame”, for example ‘championing’, ‘promoting’, ‘voting’, ‘your choice’, and ‘countdown’.⁴⁵

This language, seemingly democratic and engaging, also inspires criticisms of Classic FM ‘presenting classical music as if it were pop... rank[ing] pieces into charts’.⁴⁶ It is true that an inevitable feature (or flaw) of the model is its circularity: the voted-for “classics” dominate the charts, which feed into future playlists, ergo the cycle continues. Radio 3 has no such explicitly

⁴² Driver, ‘The Dying of the Light’, 381.

⁴³ See, for example, Nicholas de Jongh, ‘Radio 3: Low-brow, Lightweight and Losing its Way?’, *The Independent* (10 January 2011), <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/radio-3-low-brow-lightweight-and-losing-its-way-2180201.html> (accessed 3 March 2017).

⁴⁴ See House of Commons, ‘Culture, Media and Sport Committee – Future of the BBC: Fourth Report of Session, 2014/15’ (February, 2015), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomeds/315/315.pdf> (accessed 3 March 2017).

⁴⁵ Voting begins every January; a #300-#1 countdown begins at Easter, revealing that year’s “Hall of Fame” (<http://www.classicfm.com/radio/hall-of-fame>).

⁴⁶ Wilson, ‘Killing Time’, 258.

commercial or hierarchical (that is, chart-led) equivalent to Classic FM, and makes fewer repetitions of the descriptive language it employs. Its most common terms have already been listed above, save for ‘beautiful’/‘beauty’ (8 times, vs. Classic FM’s 9), ‘celebrate’ and its derivatives (6 per station), ‘brilliant’, ‘fine’/‘finest’ (both 5 each), and ‘youthful’/‘student work’ (4 times; nil for Classic FM). Radio 3 shares with Classic FM a natural tendency to promote the music it broadcasts but places greater emphasis on the *quality* of its output, affirming classical music’s historicism or, implicitly at least, its superiority through language such as ‘ancestry’, ‘award-winning’, ‘genius’, ‘intellectual’, ‘luminaries’, ‘peerless’, and ‘revered’ (12 instances in total) to describe figures such as Arturo Toscanini, Edward Elgar, Gerald Finzi, Beethoven, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky.

Classic FM employed none of these particular valorising terms, instead describing performers, composers, or their music as ‘expert’, ‘famous’, ‘celebrity’, ‘leading’, and ‘legend’/‘legendary’, and doing so (for these more generic words) as often as Radio 3 (8 instances in total). Such a self-validating vocabulary endorses and, by extension, defends classical music, although to reflect on the findings of Dearn, Pitts, and Hellmuth Margulis, whether this emphasis helps or hinders (or engages or alienates) is open to question. It also represents what musicology recognises as *canonising* language, a category that was particularly noticeable on Radio 3 in two further ways. The positive, affirmatory set of terms ‘benchmark’, ‘distinguished’, ‘enduring’, ‘harbinger’, ‘historic’, ‘iconic’, ‘important’, ‘instrumental’ (as in ‘instrumental to’), and other sideways references to canonicism, for example ‘cornerstone of the repertoire’ and ‘High Church [of string-writing]’, were heard only on Radio 3 (14 instances in total).

Classic FM employed an alternative set of similar terms: the more colloquial, if still canonising, ‘prodigy’, ‘masterpiece’, and ‘masterly’, together with ‘appropriate’, ‘suitable’, and ‘proper’—usually to suggest music “hitting the spot”, and again therefore focussing on a listener experience presumed, and guided, to be emotionally satisfying (12 instances in total). A stereotyping subset of this same category, which either described composers as ‘mad’, or discussing their ‘mania’, or branded them or their music ‘obsessive’, ‘madcap’ or ‘unhinged’, was specific to Radio 3 (6 times in total). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Beethoven attracted half of these comments, his role as a founder of Romanticism still entwined with a “tortured genius” ideal we are increasingly likely today to see as a damaging correlation of creativity and illness.

The next category of language is distinguishable because it can be viewed as a discrete set of synonyms for classical music itself: words specific to Radio 3 such as ‘life-affirming’, ‘metaphysical’, ‘humanistic’, ‘spirituality [of the music]’, ‘magic’/‘magical’, ‘mystical’, ‘stellar’, ‘utopia’, and further references to its otherworldliness, for example ‘beyond reality’ and ‘another planet’ (13 occasions, if we count ‘High Church’ again). Classic FM used none of these oratorical flourishes, although it shared with Radio 3 comparable references to ‘heavenly’/‘celestial’, ‘sublime’, and ‘pure’ (5 occasions each in total). Collectively, these terms distance classical music from the “everyday”. The presentation of classical music as timeless, exemplary, or sublime is not new—philosophers and aestheticians have long admired and perpetuated its intangibility (or incorporeality)—and this category is conceptually connected to that of quality and canonisation.

At the same time, these terms point us towards a more technical category because they encroach on an aesthetic tradition that has often taken inspiration from the exceptionalism bestowed on classical music by describing it as, or simply having faith in it being, ‘sublime’ or ‘transcendental’. This category still endorses the genre but employs language such as ‘luminous’, ‘clean’, ‘colour’, ‘atmospheric’, ‘energy’/‘energise’/‘invigorating’, ‘flavour’, ‘dreamy’, and ‘[musically] economical’ (12 occasions on Radio 3, with ‘moody’ and ‘brooding’ the only

comparable terms on Classic FM) to communicate or “translate” the music’s design or effect for listeners. More specialist still are descriptions of certain works as ‘chromatic’, ‘contrapuntal’, ‘cyclical’, ‘develop[ing]’ (as in musical ‘development’), ‘[musical] dialogue’, ‘dissection’, ‘interwoven [texture]’, ‘[musical] recycling’, ‘atonal’, and an allusion to Mozart’s genre-hopping referentiality (11 occasions on Radio 3). Such language is also generally less metaphorical and abstract than our previous set’s ‘colour’ and ‘luminous’,⁴⁷ but the paradox is that as this new language nudges listeners towards a more tangible, analytical perspective on classical music, it undeniably becomes more arcane and puzzling to anyone without a basic grounding in music theory.

Classic FM, indeed, employed none of these terms—an important distinction that takes the study in two further directions. The first is to consider how the stations cover news or subjects that encompass the single-word descriptors classified so far but go further by dwelling on certain historical, topical or analytical themes. Radio 3 featured twice as many such instances as Classic FM on the day in question.⁴⁸ Radio 3, for example, discussed: the gender gap in classical music composition, airing guest Odaline de la Martinez’s ‘Song of the Rider’ from *Canciones*; the structure and genre of Elgar’s *Introduction and Allegro*; antiphony, texture, and referentiality in *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*; and a critic’s musicologically interesting verdict on Ryan Wigglesworth’s ‘old-fashioned atonality’ in his new opera *The Winter’s Tale*. Among other subjects, Classic FM hailed Carris Jones, the first full-time female chorister to be appointed in St Paul’s Cathedral’s long history, chronicled Luigi Boccherini’s life and career, and introduced listeners to British conductor-arranger John Wilson.

A final category of language we can identify focusses on how the stations “ready” their listeners; or, how each station approaches the idea that listening to classical music can require listeners to develop knowledge, exert effort, or at least keep an open mind. Neither station ventures into this contentious area often, perhaps shying away from a potentially off-putting tone, but their presentation is very different when they do. On Radio 3, language such as ‘baffling’, ‘brace yourself’, ‘complex’, ‘connoisseurs’, ‘contemporary’ (implied to be ‘progressivist’), ‘difficult’/‘challenging’/‘tricky’, ‘enigmatic’, ‘intense’, and ‘investigation’ (as in ‘investigative’) was heard 17 times. We could add to this category terms such as ‘authentic’, ‘heartfelt’, and ‘real [music]’ (7 instances), for while these value-laden adjectives, in truth, serve multiple purposes, a stark contrast with Classic FM is clear. Save for a single ‘intense’ (to describe Enya), the commercial station shared none of these terms with Radio 3. If we seek a Classic FM equivalent to Radio 3’s admission that classical music can ‘baffle’, ‘challenge’, and so forth, we find irreverent mentions of ‘boffins’, ‘pinch yourself’, and ‘*hors d’oeuvre*’, or mood-lightening puns such as: ‘[Next,] a bit of “Power” Grainger...’ (a play on children’s TV series *Power Rangers* to introduce music by Percy Grainger); ‘The only way is Elgar...’ (a pun on British “structured reality” series *The Only Way Is Essex*); and “...The Great Gate of Chicken Kiev...”, trailing the best-known movement from Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Again, while frivolities such as these can be (harshly) adjudged to trivialise classical music, the more fundamental conclusion concerns how Classic FM sees the genre, or rather what it implies and prescribes its modern-day purpose to be: popular and, by definition, memorable, or at least accessible. “Up next, your ‘first-cup-of-coffee-in-the-office piece’”; positive, *relatable* language abounds. Nevertheless, the argument that Radio 3 and Classic FM represent ‘opposing positions’

⁴⁷ ‘Chromatic’ derives from ‘colour’ (specifically, the Greek *krōhmat-*) but their respective technical and general use is typically dissimilar.

⁴⁸ While this category is therefore difficult to quantify, it was possible to identify 18 separate occasions on which Radio 3 presenters talked at length (that is, for more than a few seconds) on historical, topical or analytical themes, and 9 occasions on which Classic FM presenters did likewise.

is surely too black and white.⁴⁹ The vocabulary they employ suggests that their characterisation of classical music does differ in two main ways, although both are contentious: Classic FM places greater emphasis on its listeners and their experience of the music; Radio 3's presentational style and format generally lend themselves to greater understanding of the music it broadcasts, insofar as its vocabulary is wider and more analytical. Yet, musical understanding is not a singular concept. One definition of it (of many) is synonymous with the qualities—particularly accessibility and memorability—we can ascribe to Classic FM. Indeed, the station's boundless positivity is a less ambiguous third distinction. The commercial incentive of this outlook has its pitfalls. Rejecting *unpopular* composers is easier than rehabilitating their reputations or justifying their music. But it also permits a sanguine vision of classical music that is 'continuing to reinvent itself and to thrive',⁵⁰ and it invites listeners to join the special, open club of classical music, 'exclusively for pretty much for everyone.'

Postscript: Radio as Public Musicology

The operational contradictions of classical music are not unique to Classic FM. Radio 3, the Southbank Centre, and all mindful classical music organisations grapple with the risks, tensions, and paradoxes this chapter has encountered: a genre that is both "heritage" and alive; the over-optimistic outlook that risks complacency; the embattled or despairing position that understates the genre's modern problems or exaggerates claims for its universality; the language, even that which prizes understanding, that can alienate; and a genre often characterised, and valorised, as sublimely mystical and otherworldly, but which to survive must be functional and relatable to the everyday. The temptation to consider music configurationally, such as discussing how its elements complete patterns that characterise the whole, is analytically valuable and often revelatory. This form of musical understanding is also the most difficult, is neglected as a result, and belongs to a formalist tradition that explains both Morley's caustic comments and Driver's rose-tinted lament for an iteration of Radio 3 that was once 'concerned with no one in particular, only the subject matter itself.'⁵¹ In other words, it can too easily appear conservative, arcane, or simply off-putting. It is also one of several forms of musical understanding and enjoyment. Describing what music signifies, the emotions it inheres and inspires, the conditions that caused it to be, and more practical forms such as performance, also deserve recognition, however they are manifested.

Just as classical music's challenges should not be viewed in isolation from one another, forms of musical understanding interrelate. Scrutiny of these assumptions is surely central to the future of classical music. Charles Henry Purday, a pioneer of the modern concert programme note, wrote in 1836 that

...an important advantage would accrue to art and society in general, if some means were adopted to render musical performances as intellectual as they are sensual... The public are not to be blamed for taking little interest in what they do not understand... Consequently, performances, if listened to at all, are heard with indifference.⁵²

While these distinctions belong to a world without radio or programme notes, it is some comfort to recognise that entangled talk of disengagement, lack of understanding, and the vocabulary of

⁴⁹ Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?*, 75.

⁵⁰ Henley, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Classical Music*, 246.

⁵¹ Driver, 'The Dying of the Light', 380.

⁵² Charles Henry Purday, Letter to *Musical World* (11 November 1836), quoted in Basil Hogarth, 'The Programme Note: A Plea for Reform', *Musical Times*, 75/1099 (September, 1934), 795.

classical music is far from new. Purday's intrepidity led to the prevalence of programme note writing, albeit inconstantly styled as "prologue", "analytical" or "synoptical" notes. It is worth asking how such a public-musicological spirit could be rekindled in the twenty-first century.⁵³ Public musicology today would, and should, look different to its nineteenth- and even twentieth-century iterations; today's dilemmas concern *identity* (of classical music organisations, and of the evolution of classical music itself) as much as *access*, an industry buzzword since the late twentieth century. Moreover, this chapter's definition of public musicology as a bidirectional process is intended to imply not only that musicology should pay greater attention to public-musicological artefacts (as resources for study and as means of communication), but also that music, the classical music industry, and musicology itself would benefit from closer cooperation.

In some respects, the foundations are strong. Connections between industry and musicology already include outreach programmes, blogs,⁵⁴ pre-concert talks, new innovations in concert-giving described elsewhere in this volume,⁵⁵ a blossoming branch of musicology occasionally prefixed by "applied",⁵⁶ and, of course, radio—each area sustaining or improving classical music's relationship with the public. Such connections, however, are typically sporadic and loose, and classical music does not yet rival other subjects' more explicitly public modes of presentation. History, for example, has a well-understood strand of "public history", especially in North America.⁵⁷ Science, too, enjoys a high profile, aided by its Professors for Public Understanding and its comparably great exposure on television and social media. University-paired YouTube channels such as Numberphile make special effort to communicate mathematical discoveries to the public. (Classical music fans will recognise the stereotypes that beset public understanding of Mathematics: esoteric, irrelevant to everyday life, notated with indecipherable symbols.⁵⁸)

A largely untapped resource in musicology, radio occupies a unique position because it is such a potent form of public musicology itself. If public musicology is to be understood and pursued broadly (which, by definition, it must), then it should recognise and engage not only performers and composers, but also concert programmers, museum and archive curators, publishers, local historians, activists, those who collaborate and bridge disciplines (e.g. music export or tourism, music therapy, music supervisors), and, conceivably, any administrator or manager working in the classical music industry. Radio stations and musicologists do not currently look to reflect this professional and artistic breadth in their activities. Relatedly, it is striking that compared with classical music, disciplines such as History and Mathematics *relish* their perpetual search for new

⁵³ Two recent events have explored the theme: 'The Past, Present and Future of Public Musicology', 30 January–1 February 2015, organised by Eric Hung, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, Princeton, United States; and 'Public Musicology: An International Symposium', organised by the Society for Musicology in Ireland, The National Concert Hall, Dublin, Ireland, 26 April 2017. See also Alexandra Wilson, 'Public Musicology Today' (13 February 2017), <https://obertobrookes.com/2017/02/13/public-musicology-today-by-dr-alexandra-wilson/> (accessed 17 December 2017).

⁵⁴ Classical music bloggers such as Jessica Duchon, Alex Ross ('The Rest is Noise'), and Frances Wilson (a.k.a. The Cross-Eyed Pianist) were pioneering voices, and continue to share and host news, reviews and debates. See: <https://jessicamusic.blogspot.co.uk/>; <http://www.therestisnoise.com/>; <https://crosseyedpianist.com/> (each accessed 26 April 2017).

⁵⁵ For example, the Multi-Story Orchestra's "Living Programme Notes", discussed by Julia Haferkorn in 'Dancing to Another Tune: Classical Music in Nightclubs and Other Non-traditional Venues'.

⁵⁶ Applied musicology is an uncommon and therefore ill-defined moniker, ranging from exploration of how specific industry sectors and musicology relate, to scholars identifying as applied ethnomusicologists and seeking to bridge the gap between research and action.

⁵⁷ For example, the National Council on Public History (f. 1980); see <http://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field> (accessed 16 June 2017).

⁵⁸ See <https://www.youtube.com/user/numberphile> or <http://www.numberphile.com> (accessed 16 June 2017).

discoveries, theories, and interpretations, and seem to enjoy a less angst-ridden balance between subjectivity and objectivity as a result.

There are innumerable ways in which public musicology could follow suit, whether on the radio, in the concert hall, or in academia: giving a public platform to a new iteration of activist-musicology that is invigorating online debate (for example, the excellent www.musictheoryexamplesbywomen.com); broadcasting rehearsals to disclose how performances, and musical works themselves, are crafted;⁵⁹ acknowledging and appreciating classical music's inherent interconnections to other musical genres, film, and pursuits such as sport; not shying away from, being embarrassed by, or even attacking the genre's multivalency as an art form; and striving to debunk or at least understand the many clichés that cloud understanding of certain composers or styles (Schoenberg, for example, where arch-modernist memories of his accomplishments have had a marginalising and distorting effect).⁶⁰ Without public awareness and understanding, the influence of classical music is similarly undermined. Where classical music is hamstrung by the difficulties of describing or analysing it, introspective or objectivising approaches can too easily take the form of censure or self-pity. Instead, to guide public musicology and modernise perceptions of classical music, let us appreciate that many of classical music's "answers" remain up for grabs, being both available and to be decided; that this contradiction is one of many, for the characterisation of classical music can be difficult, diverse, but fascinating for it; and that whether motivated socially or musically, scholarship is confronting the artistic *and* professional realities of classical music and racing to catch up.

⁵⁹ Composer Jonathan Harvey once made a similar suggestion, describing how open rehearsals might serve listeners by acting as a wordless programme note. See Jonathan Harvey, 'Sounding Out the Inner Self: Jonathan Harvey's Quest for the Spiritual Core of New Music', *Musical Times*, 133/1798 (December, 1992), 614.

⁶⁰ Spotify made waves at the end of 2017 by curating a 382-"song" playlist entitled *The Sound of Serialism* (<https://open.spotify.com/user/thesoundsofspotify/playlist/6L5r0Dapop0UDxN5ple8pT>), which they chose alongside nine other 'biggest emerging[!] genres', including such dubious neologisms as trap latino, gamecore, chaotic black metal, chillhop, and vintage swoon. Unfortunately, Spotify's public-musicological act of endorsement was undermined by its inclusion of just three pieces by Schoenberg (*Verklärte Nacht*, the first of the *Drei Klavierstücke*, and an early tonal *Presto* string-quartet movement), of which none were actually conceived serially.