Restrung New Chamber Festival: 
An Exploration of Contemporary String Practice

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Keywords

New music, classical music, string music, hybrid arts, Brisbane, Queensland, festival, Restrung New Chamber Festival, creative industries, practice-led research
Abstract

The Restrung New Chamber Festival was a practice-led research project which explored the intricacies of musical relationships. Specifically, it investigated the nature of contemporary string practice, with “New music” at its core. For the purposes of this project, “New music” will be defined in terms of representing a “global sonorous space” (Nancy 2007:12), which Hulse describes as “a spectacular comingling of styles and an unprecedented explosion of creative possibilities” (Hulse n.d.:2). Approaches to staging such an event are contextualised through a comparative analysis with relevant Australian and European festivals. The Restrung model derived inspiration from both art music and popular music festival models, in several aspects. One strategy was to engage audiences through combinations of musical, visual and spatial features. Another strategy was to encourage interaction by audiences with installations, workshops and forums. Restrung represents a new and distinctive model which presented art music within an immersive environment.

This exegesis presents an evaluation framework which investigates the relationship between curatorial input and the experiential qualities of the festival. The context of an overview of trends in arts festival curation informs the discussion, as well as approaches to identifying new and receptive audiences. It is expected that the evaluation framework will provide a useful and practical guide for curators working in contemporary string practice, hybrid arts, experimental and cross-art form festival design.
Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature ____________________________________________

Date _____________
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Important Note to the Reader

The practice-led nature of this project has necessitated a large volume of appendices and support materials. The appendices are provided as a PDF document on Disk 1. To facilitate navigation, I have created a hyperlinked table of contents at the top of this document. Disks containing Restrung footage and relevant audio and visual materials are itemised in the *List of Supplementary Materials on Disk.*
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INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this exegesis is to explain the processes involved in the curation of Restrung New Chamber Festival, and to present the findings as they relate to questions that underpin this project. The festival, held at the Brisbane Powerhouse (28 February-2 March 2008), comprised 17 diverse groups including a number of local ensembles and bands, the Brodsky Quartet, Topology, Wood, Fourplay and CODA (See Appendix D.1 – Restrung brochure; and Appendix D.7 – Restrung website files). The Restrung New Chamber Festival was a practice-led research project which explored the intricacies of musical relationships, in particular, investigating the nature of contemporary string practice, with “New music” at its core. For the purposes of this project, New music will be defined in terms of representing a “global sonorous space” (Nancy 2007:12), which Hulse describes as “a spectacular comingling of styles and an unprecedented explosion of creative possibilities” (n.d.:2). It formed the core for Restrung as the project was inspired by the objective of developing a sustainable audience base for New music. Further, New music is characterised by syncretism, an attribute it holds in common with contemporary string music.

Restrung was a distinctive model that presented New music, pop-oriented and syncretic musical genres within an immersive environment. Restrung brought together approaches used in both contemporary classical and popular music festivals, by engaging audiences through musical, visual and spatial aspects. Interactivity was encouraged with video and sound installations, a workshop and forum.

The project followed processes of practice-led research similar to that described by Carole Gray:

1 Quotation marks have been included up to this point to identify “New music” as a phrase pertaining to a
Firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners (Gray 1996:3).

To this end, the research emerged from observations I have made as a curator-musician: firstly, through the identification and examination of problems relating to promoting, programming and staging contemporary string music, and secondly, in seeking to recognise the potential for a festival that explores the spectrum of contemporary string practice. The Restrung model represents a methodology for examining these propositions, and through practical application, it was possible to analyse and critique its validity.

Two research questions guided the project:

- What are defining features of contemporary string practice?
- What strategies promote audience access to innovative musical practices?

The outcomes of this research project include, firstly, an explorative study of the Restrung New Chamber Festival, filtered through a multiple lens perspective. Secondly, the research process guided the development of the Restrung evaluation framework. Restrung was evaluated through the process of correlating curatorial input with the festival’s experiential qualities. Curatorial input refers to the creative processes underlying Restrung’s conceptual design. This was achieved through an analysis of audience, performer and curator experiences at Restrung, and a comparative analysis of other similar festivals, such as Gaudeamus Music Week, the Dartington International Summer School and This Is Not Art.

Whilst Restrung was not conceived through a Deleuzian lens, many of its key features are akin to a Deleuzian exploration. Such an approach has served to elucidate many aspects
of my research, as will be discussed in Chapter 1. For this, I am indebted to Dr Sally Macarthur, who provided a Deleuzian analysis of Restrung in her book *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music* (2010). This study uses creative success, rather than financial success, as a more important determinant for measuring success, bearing in mind, however, that without funding, such an important event would not be possible. It is imagined, in the Deleuzian sense, that by focusing on creative, rather than fiscal matters, strategies will be developed which ensure New music’s development into the future (Macarthur 2010:225), for “de-emphasising money opens up the power of the virtual” (Macarthur 2010:226). This theory is built on the premise that un-ticketed concerts encourage the attendance of new listeners. In this way, New music is opened up to new audiences. The Brisbane Powerhouse’s design also assisted in this process. Multiple audiences were in attendance, comprising the Powerhouse Theatre audience, restaurant visitors, and people who came specifically for the free music programme.

Through the process of data analysis, four evaluation categories for measuring creative success emerged. These categories form the basis of the Restrung evaluation framework:

- Marketing
- Programming and staging
- Social aspects

It is expected that the Restrung evaluation framework, which is presented in full in Chapter 5, will provide a useful and practical guide for curators working in contemporary string practice, hybrid arts, experimental and cross-art form festival design.
**Researcher’s perspective**

This research depends upon views informed by my experiences in the field. I am a classically-trained cellist with extensive experience working in multiple areas of music including orchestral, chamber music, New music, experimental, improvised, Brazilian, electronic, jazz, folk, popular and rock music. I have worked in numerous performance contexts including the concert hall, large capacity entertainment centres and stadiums, pubs and nightclubs, intimate recital halls and venues, recording studios, radio broadcasts, weddings and functions, popular music festivals, classical music festivals and New music festivals. The diversity of musical genre, performance context and audience with which I am familiar prompted me to imagine the development of a festival model which promotes contemporary string practice in a way that enhances accessibility beyond the established classical and New music audiences. This was facilitated by my experience in establishing and operating Bentley’s Agency, a small business providing string ensembles for weddings and functions. Further, in 2002, I founded hybrid arts ensemble Collusion, and in 2005, staged the *Australian Music for Strings Weekend* for Rockhampton City Council. Entrepreneurial skills were also developed through the process of completing a Masters degree in Creative Industries – Arts Management and Creative Enterprise (QUT, graduated 2006).

**Chapter Outline**

**Chapter 1** outlines the literature drawn upon to situate my research questions. This is achieved through a discussion of the defining features of contemporary string practice, and through an exploration of festival theory and audience reception to New music. Firstly, I present the curatorial concepts, specifically the notion of curating Restrung as akin to creating an immersive artwork inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). Secondly, I explain how the project draws upon ethnomusicological methods through the adoption of a participant observation case study approach (Jorgensen 1989; Cook and Clarke 2004:9); and through its examination of contemporary string practice
from an anthropological perspective (Merriam 1964; Tenzer 2006). Thirdly, I canvass the
genre-bending and syncretic characteristics of New music as it relates to contemporary
string practice. I argue that Restrung represented a radical de-hierarchisation of New
music through placing it within a broad spectrum of hybrid styles. Fourthly, audience
reception for New music is explored. A profile for Restrung’s target audience is
developed which identifies potential festival-goers as having omnivorous taste, and
exhibiting tendencies described by Florida as typifying the “creative class” (Florida
2007). The second part of this chapter explores festival theory in terms of the role of the
contemporary festival, notions of community, the experiential qualities of the festival
form, contemporary festival model development, and the festival as marketing tool. An
overview of the Brisbane festival context is then presented, followed by a discussion of
curatorial festival theory. This section defines and explores the qualities with which
successful festivals can be seen to be endowed, described hereon as festivalesque
qualities. These include innovation and risk-taking, excess and accessibility. It then
explores notions of audience engagement, the festival form’s connection to place, and the
use of venue space in terms of both performance context and as virtual space (for
example, the inclusion of video installations).

**Chapter 2** presents a comparative analysis of six relevant festivals: iF (London),
Gaudeamus New music Week (Amsterdam), Aurora/ISCM World New Music Days
(Sydney), the Dartington International Summer School (England), Straight Out Of
Brisbane (Brisbane) and This Is Not Art (Newcastle). These festivals were selected on the
basis of strategies they employed to promote audience access to innovative artistic
practice. The festivals were reviewed through interviews with festival directors, analyses
of marketing materials and programming and, where possible, fieldwork. The chapter
provides an overview of each festival and interviewee, and a statement of each festival’s
relevance to the Restrung project. This is followed by an analysis guided by the
evaluation framework categories. The conclusion lists features which may enhance a
contemporary string practice festival, as identified through the comparative analysis.
Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed as it relates to the research questions. As a practice-led project, Restrung is situated within a performative research paradigm. Research was conducted through the development of a conceptual design, accompanied by participant observation case study methods. Firstly, I outline previous arts festival evaluation literature, and argue for the validation of evaluating the social and cultural impacts of festivals. I discuss how constructivist evaluation was used as a guiding framework for Restrung; and the appropriateness, advantages and disadvantages of using a participant observation case study methodology. Secondly, I present the conceptual design which incorporates a pilot study (Australian Music for Strings Weekend), a prototype (Hothouse Festival), and a detailed description of the Restrung conceptual design and programme. Thirdly, the qualitative features of the project are explained. These include approaches used in pre- and post-festival interviews and focus groups, observation data, and cross-checking strategies.

Chapter 4 addresses the research questions through an exploration of festival-goers’ perceptions of the Restrung programme, and through its examination of the festival’s success in promoting audience access to innovative musical practices. I present the research outcomes of the Restrung project, as guided by the evaluation framework categories. Data is drawn from Restrung focus groups, interviews and fieldwork. I analyse the outcomes of pre-Restrung market research focus groups, the success of marketing strategies, feedback on programming, staging and social aspects. Throughout this process of evaluation, I refer to Macarthur’s Deleuzian analysis of the Restrung festival concept.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I present a summary of the project’s outcomes, and list the research findings under each evaluation framework category. This is accompanied by a list of recommendations formulated from data analysis. The exegesis concludes with a diagrammatic representation of the evaluation framework, which can be applied to comparable hybrid arts festivals seeking to develop new audiences through inclusive, accessible, innovative and risk-taking curatorial strategies.
CHAPTER ONE – RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The Restrung project focused on answering two research questions:

- What are defining features of contemporary string practice?
- What strategies promote audience access to innovative musical practices?

The literature review informs these questions through an examination of the areas of practice drawn upon in designing the project. Firstly, I discuss the curatorial concepts which underpin the design. These centre around the notion of approaching curation as akin to creating a festivalesque immersive artwork. Secondly, I provide an overview of empirical methodology and ethnomusicology, as it relates to the investigation of contemporary string practice at Restrung. Thirdly, I consider the nature of contemporary string practice, particularly in relation to New music. New music, a rather ambiguous term, is a widely used description for a collection of genres. Its definition, as it relates to contemporary string practice, will be explored in Section 1.4 below. Further, I discuss notions of hybridity and syncretism in contemporary string practice and audience reception for New music. Fourthly, a background to festival theory reviews the role of the contemporary festival, notions of community, the festivalesque experience, festival model theory and a brief history of Brisbane’s festival culture. Fifthly, key concepts of curatorial festival theory are detailed. This includes how successful festivals embody innovative practice, notions of accessibility, and the use of context and video art at Restrung.
1.2 Curatorial Concepts

1.2.1 Festival as Artwork

Belfiore and Bennett, in their discussion of re-evaluating the social impact of the arts, believe that the arts have the capacity to “fulfill” our time (2006:89-91). They state that, “An alternative way of articulating the pleasure derived from the arts is represented by the view according to which the value of the arts resides in our complete commitment and absorption when creating or enjoying a work of art” (2006:89). Drawing from Gadamer’s “The Relevance of the Beautiful” (1986), they illustrate how the arts affect our experience of time. Our “normal, pragmatic experience of time” can be seen to fall on a spectrum which runs from “bustle” to “boredom”: “These two extremes of bustle and boredom both represent time in the same way: we fill our time with something or we have nothing to do. Either way time is not experienced in its own right, but as something that has to be ‘spent’” (Gadamer in Belfiore and Bennett 2006:89-90). In addition to this type of time experience, Gadamer identifies a “totally different experience of time” which is “profoundly related to the kind of time characteristic of both the festival and the work of art”:

It is of the nature of the festival that it should proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry. That is what festive celebration means. The calculating way in which we normally manage and dispose of our time is, as it were, brought to a standstill. It is easy to make a transition from such temporal experiences of life to the work of art (1986:41).

Gadamer refers to the temporal quality manifested through the festival or work of art as “fulfilled” or “autonomous” time (1986:41). Further, he uses the temporal dimension of the festival as a “paradigm for the enjoyment of the arts” (1986:41). He suggests that the successful manifestation of fulfilled time through a festival or work of art is contingent upon all the constituent parts working to make a compelling whole (1986:41). Guided by
this notion of festival-as-artwork, each element of Restrung – musical, visual, interactive, discursive and educational – was designed to create a cohesive yet diverse picture of contemporary string practice. In order to do this, the design incorporated qualities of immersivity and was conceptually guided by Lewis Caroll’s *Alice In Wonderland* (1865). These concepts will now be discussed.

### 1.2.2 The Immersive Artwork

The term “immersive artwork” is most commonly used in Virtual Reality (VR) and networked art. The concepts of VR and immersion, however, preceded the development of digital technologies. Grau explains that “the idea of transposing the audience into an enclosed, illusionary visual space … is grounded in a solid tradition within art history. Its core idea, which reaches back to antiquity, has been revived and expanded in the VR art of the current age” (1999:365). Grau notes that pre-digital VR “excludes the sensation of being alienated by the image and surrounds the observer in an illusory setting where time and space are one. At the very least, it fulfils the concept of total perspective” (1999:365). Bartlem asserts that immersion implies being “…enclosed and embraced by the audio-visual space of the work, and transported into another realm or state of perception.” One is “…drawn into an intimate and embodied relationship with a virtual and physical architecture, whether this immersive affect is generated by a VR system, the cinema, a panorama or another medium” (2005).

Drawing on Deleuze, Ndalianis (2000) argues that contemporary entertainment forms and amusement park attractions are reliant on a “Baroque perceptual regime”. She draws analogies between the Baroque “collapse of the frame” which “situates the viewer in a spatial relationship to the representation” and “new entertainment experiences concerned with spectacle, multimedia formations, and active audience address and participation” (2000). The audience is immersed in the spectacle in “invasive, spatial, and theatrical terms, producing a participatory, thrilling experience” (2000). Ndalianis compares this total unity of the arts with Deleuze’s concept of the fold: “…like the fluid media and figural transformations of Cortona's Barberini ceiling, one space extends into another,
one medium into the next, the spectator into the spectacle, and the spectacle into the spectator” (2000). The addition of multimedia technologies has introduced “motion, sound, and other sensorial encounters to visual spectacle”, thus, “…the contemporary baroque articulates the perceptual collapse of the frame more powerfully, and in ways not witnessed before” (2000). Envisioning Restrung as an immersive artwork I incorporated visual, aural, tactile, interactive and educational elements (See Chapter 3 for description of conceptual design), collectively designed to break down the barriers between audience and stage, the music and the art. Through creating a participatory experience in this way, the festival design opened up possibilities for the festival-goers’ relationships to performers and performance. The Violinarium, an interactive sound sculpture (see Appendices C.13, C.14 and H.2) for example, enabled participants to cross the boundary between audience to stage, and from spectator to performer. Video art installations acted as sensorial encounters for festival-goers as they moved throughout the space (See Appendices C.13 and H.3). Thus the creation of a festivalesque immersive artwork is akin to designing a temporal and spatial experience through selection and placement of audio, visual and interactive elements within the site.

1.2.3 Alice In Wonderland

Whilst Restrung was not conceived through a Deleuzian lens, many of its key features are akin to a Deleuzian exploration. Deleuze’s notions of becoming, immanence and virtuality can be applied to the Restrung model in several aspects, as will be discussed presently.² This includes how Lewis Carroll’s Alice In Wonderland (1865) was used as a conceptual influence. It was imagined that the festival-as-immersive-artwork was endowed with otherworldliness of Wonderland. This concept manifested itself in three ways, each relating to the ideas of exploration, discovery and liminality. The first way was stylistic diversity: the programme leads audiences on a journey through multifarious musical terrains positioned within a variety of contexts. The second was a curatorial design which invited exploration of the space through the placement of installation works. The third was a distortion of perspective and size: the Violinarium had the effect

² For a Deleuzian analysis of Restrung, see Macarthur 2010:219-232.
of altering one’s perspective of size and space, an experience analogous to Alice’s encounter with the bottle labelled DRINK ME. Directly after drinking its contents, she begins to shrink: “‘What a curious feeling!’ said Alice, ‘I must be shutting up like a telescope!’ And so it was indeed: she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through the little door into that lovely garden” (1980:31-32). A Deleuzian analysis of Alice’s experience reveals that her change in stature prompts us to question our preconceived or common sense relationships with time and space. Deleuze writes:

> When I say ‘Alice becomes larger,’ I mean that she becomes larger than she was. By the same token, however, she becomes smaller than she is now. Certainly, she is not bigger and smaller at the same time. She is larger now; she was smaller before. But it is at the same moment that one becomes larger than one was and smaller than one becomes (1990:1).

Alice’s predicament can be seen to embody Deleuze’s theory of “becoming” (1990:1). Carfoot explains that in Deleuzian theory, “Rather than seeing the subject as a stable being, set apart from the world, whose experience of the world gives rise to the knowable, Deleuze insists on the subject as a process of becoming. There is life, the flow of experience that exists prior to determinable perceivers or subjects” (Carfoot 2004:16). In this way, becoming opens the way to the virtual, to an imagined and unknown future. Macarthur, drawing on the work of Grosz, suggests that:

> Virtuality opens up the question of futurity…the virtual provides a way to think about the future such that it is not imagined as a pre-determined thing but as an idea of something that is always in the process of becoming. We cannot know, for example, how music will sound and how we will engage with it in the future (Macarthur 2010:18-19).
Music that embodies these qualities of the virtual, of opening up possibilities, then, can be seen as becoming-music, a “drift away from the dominant music” (Macarthur 2010:206).

Deleuze writes that Alice’s predicament constitutes a “simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once: Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa” (1990:1). Common sense, he continues, “affirms that in all things there is a determinable sense or direction (sens)” (1990:1). Alice’s situation is paradoxical as it is “the affirmation of both senses or directions at the same time (1990:1).

Restrung reflected this through programming multiple kinds of music that exist contemporaneously, including New music, classical and contemporary popular genres. In doing so, I aimed to move away from conceptions of music as “past” (classical) “present” (popular/New music) and “future” (the imagined/the unknown), and recontextualise them within a space of immanence, a Deleuzian term referring to the outlook in which: “To think is not to represent life but to transform and act upon life” (Colebrook:xxiv). Restrung sought to transform conceptions of music through the act of curation. The Violinarium, then, can be seen to be a philosophical representation of the festival’s ambitions.

Another aspect of curation that can be viewed through a Deleuzian lens was the use of live mixed video art to accompany performances. This feature opened up relational possibilities between art and music, and emphasised the immanence of the virtual experience (to be discussed in more detail later in the chapter). Virtuality, in the Deleuzian sense, describes an outlook which transforms life “…beyond what it actually is to what it might become (Colebrook 2002:xxx). Thus, to use Macarthur’s example (2010:16-18), Beethoven’s 9th Symphony exists as an actual object: as a score or recording. However, in the virtual sense, there are numerous possibilities which
“…translate into a multiplicity of sensory experiences of the work” (Macarthur 2010:17). Some such possibilities include the ever-changing listener’s perspective, the performers, the performance itself, the context and the medium of performance. Macarthur explains:

While the actual and the virtual are linked by the real in Deleuzian philosophy, the virtuality of the musical work is its capacity for difference brought about by action or thought. It differs dramatically in every sensory experience of it. Virtuality exists in its infinite multiplicity through our senses which, in turn, are mediated and influenced by what we know and what we have experienced in the past (2010:17).

In this way, the Restrung programme aimed to explore the virtuality of live performance, aurally and visually, and to create a “global sonorous space” (Nancy 2007:12) exhibiting a multitude of musical styles from our perceived past, present and future. This was achieved through recontextualising classical and New music into an immersive environment which explored musical, spatial, interactive and visual possibilities of the festival form. Macarthur, drawing on the work of Hulse (2009a), suggests that through “…incorporating music which crosses styles, aesthetics and genres”, Restrung aimed to “…break down some of the barriers between different kinds of music: there is a sense in which the creation of [Bentley’s] immersive artwork, enabled by the festival design, will open up a sonorous space, that…is a musical-becoming of sensibility” (2010:224).

1.3 Empirical Musicology

Empirical musicology refers to research which grows “out of a desire to ground theories on empirical observation and to construct theories on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of such observations” (Honing 2006:2). Whilst empirical musicology often draws on computational musicology, it can also draw on ethnomusicological methods – including participant observation – in order to be aware of, and account for, “the social

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3 Merriam’s definition of ethnomusicology, “the study of music as culture” (1964:319) can be extended to include all music – not just non-Western music, with which ethnomusicology is most commonly associated (Williams 2001:103).
and cultural context in which music functions” (Honing 2006:1). As Cook and Clarke explain, “a great deal can be learnt by studying any kind of music from within its own cultural practices” (2004:9). Contemporary musicologists are increasingly using ethnomusicological methods to assist with gaining access to sociological and cultural meanings of music: “There is a clear trend in studying music in a scientific way with a focus on music as a process in which the performer, the listener, and music as an observable entity play a central role” (Honing 2006:4). Through the use of ethnographic methods – such as participant observation, field recordings, focus groups and interviews – music can be studied within the context in which it is made. This context involves a great number of processes, including social, financial, technological and organisational (Cook and Clarke 2004:9). Such an approach has “the potential to confront a researcher with an enormous mass, and wide variety, of data” (Cook and Clarke 2004:9).

This project uses an empirical musicological framework in two ways: firstly, through adopting an ethnomusicological methodology: the participant observation case study4 (Jorgensen 1989; Cook and Clarke 2004:9); secondly, through examining the hybrid nature of contemporary string practice from an anthropological perspective, through participant observation, focus group and interview data and the contextual review5 (Merriam 1964; Tenzer 2006).

1.4 Situating Contemporary String Practice

1.4.1 Introduction

Restrung presented a programme of contemporary string practice with New music at its core. The model was informed by an interest in finding ways to improve accessibility to New music through presentation and promotion;6 and exploring the diversity of contemporary string practice, which extends through classical, New music, popular, jazz, rock and cross-genre idioms.

4 Refer to Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion of how participant observation informed the research design.
5 See also Chapter 4 for analysis of Restrung participants’ responses to programming.
6 See Chapters 2 and 4 for data analysis.
This section provides an anthropological perspective on the genre-bending characteristics of New music – as it relates to contemporary string practice. This “global sonorous space” (Hulse n.d.) can be seen as an opening for musical exploration and experimentation. Further, it allows for a “radical de-hierarchisation” (Macarthur 2010) of musical genre through programming, promotion and performance context. This in turn informs notions surrounding audience reception for New music, and the types of audiences who come to the festival.

1.4.2 Syncretism in Contemporary String Practice: a Global Sonorous Space

Restrung focused on contemporary string practice with New music at its core. To ground the study, I briefly outline the characteristics of New music, which provides perspective on New music’s – and more specifically – contemporary string music’s qualities of syncretism. According to Merriam, “Syncretism is specifically that process through which elements of two or more cultures are blended together; this involves both changes of value and form” (1964:314). The project considers Restrung’s programme as representing a “becoming-music” (Macarthur 2010:228). Through placing New music within a broad spectrum of hybrid styles, the programme was intended to transform and open up possibilities for New music’s future (Macarthur 2010:228).

The terms New music, contemporary string practice and becoming-music will now be explored.

1.4.3 Disambiguation: What is New music?

In classical music nomenclature, “New music” – in its most general sense – is considered an almost interchangeable term with “contemporary classical” and “contemporary art music”. Each term also refers to specific movements within the recent evolution of the classical music tradition.\(^7\) Since Restrung was an exploration of musical hybridity and

\(^7\) See, for example, Griffiths 1995; Morgan 1991; Whittall 1999; Cook 2004.
syncretism, it did not represent a pure New music festival in the way that say, Gaudeamus Music Week or World New Music Days does. Rather, New music formed part of a programme which represented a broad range of hybrid styles emanating from numerous musical idioms, each with contemporary string practice as a major focus. For this reason, I use the term New music in its broadest sense: contemporary composition stemming from the classical tradition. It formed the core for Restrung as the project was inspired by the objective of developing a sustainable audience base for New music. Further, New music is characterised by syncretism, an attribute it holds in common with contemporary string music.

New music does not yield easily to definitions, as its practitioners hold closely to resisting classification. However, there are several key attributes which distinguish it from other musical genres. Drawing on many aspects from the Western classical music tradition, New music is characterised by experimentation, innovation, individuality and technical development. Over time, New music practitioners have actively sought out, and absorbed into their music, influences and sounds from other cultures, musical genres and periods, and nonmusical sources. Some composers use “extended techniques” to broaden the palette of instrumental colour. For example, objects may be attached to parts of an instrument to change its sound, or unconventional playing methods used to create different textures and effects. New music is scored music; however, scoring styles may be unorthodox, and improvisatory sections are common. Classical instrumentation is predominantly used, although electronic elements and non-classical instruments also feature.

New music can be seen to occupy a spectrum with complexity at one end and accessibility at the other. Its development has been documented and summarised by many scholars. (See, for example, Cook 2004; Griffiths 1995; Chatham 1990.) Its history will not be retold here, except to highlight that innovations such as atonality, serialism and indeterminacy were viewed by some as alienating some listeners (Palestrant 1998; Chatham 1990). Composers’ motivations vary greatly: some believe that writing for an audience can impede the development of the music. These composers, whose work was
most prevalent in the mid-twentieth century, viewed music as “research” rather than entertainment (Babbitt 1954; Palestrant 1998; Chatham 1990). Babbitt argues this position in his well known, controversially titled article “Who Cares If You Listen”.\(^8\) “I am aware that ‘tradition’ has it that the lay listener, by virtue of some undefined, transcendental faculty, always is able to arrive at a musical judgment absolute in its wisdom if not always permanent in its validity. I regret my inability to accord this declaration of faith the respect due its advanced age” (1958:246). Others view music making as a two-way communication system between the listener and the performers:\(^9\) “A composer must be humble. Without both a medium and a listener, they are like an incomplete circuit: the energy has been spent, but it has no effect. Compromise is not unprofessional in a composer, as [Babbitt] suggests, but essential to the art” (Palestrant 1998:126). However, despite criticisms of the music-as-research approach, these experiments opened the way to unprecedented exploration of New musical terrains.

Restrung aimed to avoid categorisation of New music according to perceived accessibility and presented contemporary string music from a wide stylistic spectrum. The conceptual design addressed this through incorporating formal and informal performance contexts, educational and interactive activities (see Chapter 3). The inclusion of informal contexts and a multitude of cross-genre musical forms can be seen as opening up possibilities for musical syncretism, or even to a broader understanding of what New music is. Macarthur observes that the majority of New music composers are trained to compose for the concert hall setting. This is problematic as there are so few opportunities for these types of works to be played (2010:67). Further, Macarthur posits that New music has been caught in a “closed system” (2010:67) of post-serial and atonal aesthetics: that “atonal music is maintained because of its polarisation in the system of hierarchical thought against tonal music” (2010:210). This situation has arisen from the way in which composers are taught in conservatoriums, which focuses on the concert hall tradition:

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\(^8\) Originally titled “The Composer as Specialist”.

\(^9\) For examples of these debates, see: Small 1977; Palestrant 1998.
The closed system I am describing can be summarised accordingly: the dominant music produces the composer; and the composer produces the dominant music, endlessly. The circular model of training in which the autonomous composer is produced is geared to the concert hall: it ignores the fact that the concert tradition can only support a very limited number of composers (2010:67).

Macarthur suggests that we imagine the possibilities for New music if it were destined for somewhere other than the concert hall: “What happens to ‘new’ music when it is hybridised, composed from another genre and style outside the art music tradition that I have been discussing? How might such music if it began life as electronic dance music or as a popular song, transform the practices and conventions of classically-derived ‘new’ music?” (2010:210). It is this conceptual space which Restrung explores: improving access to, and opening up creative possibilities for New music and contemporary string practice through performance context and programming, and giving priority to audience experience.

1.4.4 Contemporary String Practice: Perspectives on Syncretism

This section outlines scholarly appraisals of musical syncretism from musicological and anthropological perspectives, leading finally to Macarthur’s description of Restrung programming as representing “becoming-music” and a “radical de-hierarchisation” of musical genre.

Anthropologist Alan Merriam suggests that the “study of the dynamics of music change is among the most potentially rewarding activities in ethnomusicology” (1964:319). He contends that the “challenge of ethnomusicology today lies not so much in understanding what has been done in the past as in blazing the way in the future toward a better understanding of the study of music in culture” (1964:319). Examining the nature of contemporary string practice illustrates this point: it is an area of music making defined by syncretism, reflecting trends present in the broader musical and cultural landscape. To understand these trends, Ethnomusicologist Michael Tenzer suggests that in years to
come, musicians and musicologists will want a “world music theory”, the purpose of which would be to “start making sense of our complex cross-cultural musical selves and perceptions. We are often told of the world’s vast and rapid changes but rarely advised on how to make sense of them as musicians” (2006:33-34). Tenzer believes that current experience is characterised by “multi- or panmusicality” – in the form of cross-genre and multi-genre performance and composition. This panmusicality is also reflected in listening practices: “the iPod shuffle mode compresses infinite musics, cultures, eras, and locales for listeners with consummate effortlessness” (2006:34).

This notion is mirrored in Nancy’s observation that early 21st century experience is a “global sonorous space”, endowed with an “extraordinarily mixed nature – popular and refined, religious and profane, coming from all continents at once…” (2007:12). Hulse draws on this concept in his paper “Of Genre, System, and Process: Music Theory in a ‘Global Sonorous Space’” (n.d.). Hulse suggests that whilst, to a degree, we have always lived in a global sonorous space, the rapid technological advances which occurred over the past century extensively changed the nature of that space, and have challenged our perceptions of what we think music to be:

If the global sonorous space is something new, something unique to the present then it is as a radical de-hierarchisation in our exposure to and experience of music caused by extraordinary changes in technology; resulting in a spectacular comingling of styles and an unprecedented explosion of creative possibilities. This situation puts into question notions of closed cultural contexts or self-contained musical systems and their theoretic models (Hulse n.d.:2).

In a global sonorous space, “genres resound all together – announcing their individuality and their plurality at once”. They “belong to a pan-global environment or eco-system in which the connections and separations run along pathways too jumbled and multifarious to be understood in terms of structural positions or identities – for these imply a centre or a frame from whose point of reference all relations are determined” (Hulse n.d.:2). Hulse argues that this panmusicality derives from the unstable nature of genres, which he
describes as “exceedingly porous, ready to spin off or to colonize onto other genres as well as to be colonized, or to become hybridized” (n.d.:3).

1.4.5 Stylistic Pluralism

Benitez, in “Avant-Garde or Experimental? Classifying Contemporary Music”, provides a similar perspective, with specific reference to New music. He argues that we live in a time of “stylistic pluralism”, and whilst there is value in categorising the “-isms and tendencies” of New music (1978:53), this approach does not appreciate the diverse, fluctuating nature of the overall art music spectrum. Benitez draws on Leonard B. Meyer’s notion of musical stasis, meaning a vast number of styles exist simultaneously. Meyer states:

For if there is a stasis in which a number of relatively discrete and independent styles coexist without cumulative trends or developments, there would be no periods having definable stages, such as a beginning, middle, and end. There would instead be a succession of changes in which first one and then another of the existing styles in one or another of the arts be the focus of aesthetic interest and creative activity (cited in Benitez, 1978:54).

Benitez draws on Meyer’s work to create a system that identifies characteristics common to all types of art music. He argues that New music has three main tendencies, and emphasises that the aesthetic attitudes towards composition is the common thread. The three tendencies are (i) that “chronological periodisation during a time of stasis is impossible”; (ii) that “stylistic innovation will not lead to one new main style”; and (iii) that the “aesthetic attitudes of composers are more important than the techniques or materials they use. Only these aesthetic attitudes can give us a clue to a general perspective of contemporary music” (1978:54-55).

The perception of New music as exhibiting the characteristics of a “global sonorous space”, and tendencies of syncretism, stylistic pluralism and panmusicality, were echoed
in interviews with festival curators. I asked each respondent for their definition of New music, and received the following responses:

- “The blurring of genres” (Heuvelmans, interview, 05 September 2008)
- “The boundaries of New music are melting” (Wiegold, interview, 28 August 2008)
- “There is a dissolve going on in music making” (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008).

Swinnen, juror for the Gaudeamus Prize, goes further, stating that it is misleading to describe New music as situated within the “classical” idiom, because the term “classical” refers to a heritage tradition. He defines New music in terms of diversity and uniqueness. In determining the worth of a piece, he looks for “composers with an interesting voice” (interview, 05 September 2008). Similarly, Wiegold believes that New music is no longer about finding new sounds, but finding new paradigms. He speaks of a “Third Way” (interview, 28 August 2008) which transcends fusion: its aim is to develop new paradigms through cross-cultural and cross-genre collaborations. Wiegold’s manifesto for iF, his London-based experimental music festival, reflects this. The programme experiments with “new ways of putting music together” by asking “What if…”; “What if we put you with you, what would you do?” or “What will happen if we put you in this space?” (interview, 28 August 2008). In this way, Wiegold facilitates collaborations between musicians from different backgrounds. He believes that each event at a New music festival should “…open a door more widely, or open a door on the other side of the room…but the audience doesn’t know which door the music is going to come from” (interview, 28 August 2008).
1.4.6 A Becoming-Music

Drawing on the ideas outlined above, I developed a definition of contemporary string practice which situates it as a multifaceted contemporary voice, growing out of, but not confined to, the parameters of classical traditions. I argue that Restrung artists derive sounds from the same palette of colours, but the colours they select, the quantity they use, and the way they mix these colours, is very different. New music styles, and artists who incorporate elements derived from art music, are linked, if only minimally, by classical influences of some description. It is this notion which guided the Restrung programming of contemporary string chamber ensembles and bands.

Macarthur’s Deleuzian analysis of Restrung suggests that the programme represented a becoming-music. Drawing on the work of Bogue (2004:72-73), she defines a becoming-music as, “Any music (composed by men or women), which disrupts the value-laden binary oppositions that regulate the social codes, is a becoming-music, a drift away from the dominant music, ‘a passage between things, a decoding that proceeds via a mutative interaction with the stigmatized term of the binary power relation’” (2010:206). A becoming-music opens up possibilities for different ways of approaching art music. As noted above, this may involve, for example, composing art music from the perspective of a genre or style situated outside the Western art music tradition (Macarthur 2010:12). Macarthur provides a case study of Katharine Nelligan’s practice-led honours project, which explores the idea of composing from the perspective of electronic dance music (EDM). Nelligan decides to “decompose” the EDM genre through “manipulating the formulas and clichés of the music” (Macarthur 2010:214). Through the process of dismantling the EDM genre, Nelligan discovers she has composed music which defies categorisation (Macarthur 2010:216):

[Nelligan’s] music occupies a sonic-space which is in-between, something between ‘new’ art music and something else. It no longer belongs in any particular genre or style, and it has eliminated the characteristic aesthetic markers of electronic dance
music. Nelligan has opened her music up to difference. It is a becoming-music, a becoming-other as a movement away from the dominant form of the music (Macarthur 2010:216).

This case study illustrates how the boundaries of New music are often blurred – sometimes to the point where it is arguable whether a composition belongs more to New music than to one of its derivative genres. Where does New music start and end? Does it recognise borders at all? Restrung sought to explore this notion through programming contemporary string groups which are situated at various points within this spectrum. Drawing once again on Hulse (nd:2) and Nancy (2007:12), Macarthur describes this process as the opening of a sonorous space that is a “musical-becoming of sensibility”:

Incorporating music which crosses styles, aesthetics and genres, Bentley’s event aims to break down some of the barriers between different kinds of music: there is a sense in which the creation of her immersive artwork, enabled by the festival design, will open up a sonorous space that...is a musical-becoming of sensibility – in which the ‘classical’ and ‘popular’ traditions co-mingle – ‘announcing their individuality and plurality at once’. Or, in Nancy’s conception, we might imagine it as ‘global-becoming of musicality’ (Macarthur 2010:224).

Through this process a “radical de-hierarchisation” of music is envisioned through the placement of New music within a broad spectrum of hybrid styles. Further, Macarthur suggests that through focusing on participant experience as the paramount objective, Restrung could lead to the creation of a “becoming-music” through envisioning “a new audience for a new kind of ‘new’ music” (2010:228). This approach does come with risk as the “new” audience cannot be determined in advance (Macarthur 2010:228). However, an audience profile for Restrung was created through a study of audience reception to New music, and Florida’s creative class theory (2003), as the next section illustrates.
1.4.7 Audience Reception for New Music

Restrung strove to address some of the audience reception issues associated with New music. The solution sought was to contextualise New music grounded in contemporary string practice with other genres of contemporary string practice. The section provides an overview of New music audience reception theory in order to provide a background to this curatorial approach. I then provide a profile of current New music audiences in Brisbane, and argue that by positioning New music within a broader musical, and immersive, context, it would be possible to attract a wider audience comprising members of the “creative class” (Florida 2003). Finally, I propose that this approach resulted in a mixed audience at Restrung, which Macarthur refers to as a “becoming-audience” (2010:226).

There is clearly a longstanding rift between supporters of classical music and contemporary art music (Dusman 2005:131; Frey 2003:84; Beaumont 1998:93; Guldberg 1987:191). Whilst there is some overlap in the audience base, research indicates that followers of New music are more likely to favour contemporary dance over ballet, or new theatre over opera (Burgess, 2004:50; Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008). Dusman argues that New music’s lack of popularity with classical audiences is due to its “otherness” (1994:131). She posits that the Western cultural context dictates that one must be familiar with music in order to appreciate it. The familiarity of the traditional canon as a known quantity reassures the listener. Dusman proposes an approach to New music reception in which the listener is not expected to necessarily “understand” the music. She states, “Perhaps if we could accept the inevitability of misunderstanding New music and its performance, we could be free of the sense of betrayal and disappointment to which our culture is currently committed” (1994:143). Stubbs iterates a similar sentiment, suggesting that modern music requires “the virtue of tolerance in the listener” and “openness to alternative ideas and other cultures” (2009:128):

What is considered distressing about modern music to some isn’t the tyranny it attempts to impose but the very opposite – its openness, its erasure of boundaries
and outmoded, arbitrary strictures and hierarchies. Some find this freedom disorienting but for many others, it represents the infinity of opportunity (Stubbs 2009:119).

Audiences who enjoy experimental arts are more likely to embrace this approach. These audiences are also more likely to attend smaller, independent productions in which curators have greater freedom with unconventional programming (Frey 2003:82). Major performing arts companies tend to be restricted in programming choices because of heavy reliance on subscribers and government funding (Frey 2003:82). It has been observed that as festivals become more established, they are increasingly dependent on these stakeholder groups for survival (Frey 2003:84; Terracini 2004:48). Essentially, subscribers are funding agents. This empowers them with considerable influence over programming, and they tend to favour the traditional canon over contemporary works (Hopp, interview, 10 September 2008; Frey, 2003:82). Frey writes that, “Holders of season tickets with mostly conservative taste are, moreover, strongly interested in what is presented and form a powerful lobby, which can exert a considerable pressure on the managers and the subsidy-giving politicians if they are dissatisfied with ‘their’ opera house or orchestras” (2003:82). This phenomenon greatly hinders the directors’ artistic conceptions of originality (2003:82). By contrast, continues Frey, “independently organised festivals provide a possibility of exhibiting artistic creativity. Festivals may well specialise in an audience honouring unorthodoxy, excellence and special tastes” (2003:82). The Queensland Symphony Orchestra provides a salient example of this. Between 1990 and 2000, the orchestra included, on average, only 2.2 Australian works per year, and has never included more than 10% Australian works in any given year (Munro 2004:9).

Beaumont argues that whilst some classical concert-goers are open-minded, many are predisposed to dislike New music: “The expectations of such an audience will include at one end of the spectrum the anticipation of enjoyment, pleasure or intellectual stimulation and at the other an almost inbuilt resolve to dislike, hate and resist, together of course, with almost every position in between” (1998:93). Guldberg supports this notion in the
Australia Council report *The Australian Music Industry: An Economic Evaluation*. He believes that, “…classical music audiences do not generally like or understand contemporary music styles, and a small, informed and consistent supportive audience must be developed as a minimum requirement” (1987:191).

Terracini (Artistic Director of the Queensland Festival of Music, 2001-2005) (2004:48) and journalist/composer Gordon Kerry (2009:2) acknowledge that it is difficult to attract the general public to New music concerts. Kerry recalls: “The small audience for a hard-edged contemporary show might just include a composer who is inspired by the music, an administrator who goes in to bat for it, a critic who will try eloquently to interpret the music” (2009:2). Kerry describes most contemporary music events as uninviting: “You head out on a cold evening early in the week arriving at some theatre which is free that night, or maybe a church with furniture designed to keep Calvinist backs straight”, and at interval, “you’ll be lucky if you can find a cube of stale cheese and a plastic cup of warm white wine” (2009:1-2).

Terracini has suggested that New music practitioners need to address these issues of accessibility and performance context in order to build up a sustainable audience base. He suggested staging free New music events in informal venues to introduce new audiences, and break down the cultural barriers of perceived elitism:

> For too long we have assumed a position that excludes the general public from New music. And the music being written and played reflects that position. It’s time to move on and engage the public in the fascination of new Australian music…If we want to see a significant increase in the amount of Australian New music at major festivals, then we need to change our philosophy and the music is already starting to do this (2004:49).

Restrung represented one possible approach to these issues of improving the accessibility of New music to new audiences, through providing informal and free performances. Further, it reflected current musical trends, highlighted in Terracini’s quote, which aim to
engage with audiences, not alienate them. Within the context, both complex and accessible musical performances took place, in an immersive, interactive environment. This approach to curation – which combined popular and New music idioms – was not without its drawbacks. However, there were many positive outcomes, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

**1.4.8 Audience Profile Development**

According to Vanessa Tomlinson (Clocked Out Duo) (interview, 18 May 2005) and Robert Davidson (Topology) (interview, 20 May 2005), the current audience base for New music ensembles in Queensland are musicians, visual artists, persons in academia, and students. Jean Burgess conducted a detailed study of Topology’s audience base, which identifies most members as being between the ages of 25-45, 66% of which are musicians (2004:53). Burgess’ studies revealed that Topology’s audience base exhibit an eclecticism which crosses the high-popular divide (2004:53). She states, “What distinguishes Topology’s core audiences from ‘traditional’ arts audiences (i.e. lovers of “fine music”) is a particular mode of engagement with culture that is organised, not only around learned taste, but perhaps even more so around curiosity, risk, and openness” (2004:53). Further, Burgess divides the audience base into three groups: “those who are also performers or composers of contemporary art music; the ‘arts supporters’ and chamber music lovers who value Topology as innovators within a secure tradition; and the culturally competent adventurers with broad and eclectic tastes from both sides of the high-popular divide. While the first two groups represent traditional audiences for high culture, this last group arguably represents a newly dominant class of cultural consumption” (2004:55). This class, identified by Florida as the “creative class” (2003), has been subject to much research in recent years. Typified by “omnivorous” taste (Peterson 1992:75), these young professionals tend to have broad ranging interests that defy the old-fashioned class conventions of “high-brow” and “low-brow” culture. In line with this, Burgess describes Brisbane’s contemporary chamber music scene as standing between these two cultural formations which she describes as “…firstly, the elitist and stale traditions of middle-class high culture (the “parent” culture) as represented by
institutionalised classical music; and secondly, an imagined “mainstream” metonymically represented by the global popular music industry” (Burgess 2004:69). Topology, a Restrung act, has “worked across many genre boundaries, collaborating with pop, jazz, comedy and techno artists while maintaining their original chamber-music-inspired approaches” (Topology 2011), and the omnivorous quality of their audience base is no doubt a reflection of this. Similarly, Restrung’s hybrid programming was designed for participants with a wide-ranging and open-minded perspective on musical experience. Further, interactive elements were used to enhance participant experience. This was in response to the contemporary trend for audiences wishing to be actively involved in their leisure activities, as the following section explains.

1.4.9 The Creative Class: The performative audience

Florida asserts that creative class audiences “prefer more active, authentic and participatory experiences, which they can have a hand in structuring” (2002:167). He describes the creative class as:

A fast-growing, highly educated, and well-paid segment of the workforce on whose efforts corporate profits and economic growth increasingly depend. Members of the creative class do a wide variety of work in a wide variety of industries – from technology to entertainment, journalism to finance, high-end manufacturing to the arts. They do not consciously think of themselves as a class. Yet they share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit (2001).

Burgess believes that Brisbane’s New music audience fits within this category. She states that:

Topology’s audience, through their embodied knowledge of the creative city, their participation in the concerts, and through talking about and evaluating the music, validate their identities as creative people: maintaining their identities as contemporary cultural citizens, and adding to their stock of eclectic creative
experiences, much as Richard Florida’s “creative class” does. Creativity, experience and urban citizenship, and not straightforward class aspirations, are therefore the organising forces in their participation” (2004:66).

In accordance with this, marketing campaigns have shifted focus to the experience of a product, not just its physical features: “Experiences are replacing goods and services because they stimulate our creative faculties and enhance our creative capacities. This active, experiential lifestyle is spreading and becoming more prevalent in society as the structures and institutions of the Creative Economy spread” (Florida 2003:168).

The creative class value lifestyle: They tend to migrate to cities that are open to difference and diversity, and that offer a wide range of cultural activities. Florida believes that these cities attract the most skilled creative workers. On this basis, he argues that cultural production is integral to a city’s prosperity and growth. Singer (in Carlson 1996:16) proposes that, “a culture articulates its self-image through cultural … performances and thereby represents and exhibits itself to its own members as well as to outsiders”. This theory has influenced policy-making in cities and regions all over the world, including Brisbane.¹⁰

Florida’s assertion about modern audiences preferring interactive events was affirmed by qualitative data collection:

The ideal, as a number of my subjects succinctly put it, is to ‘live the life’ – a creative life packed full of intense, high-quality, multidimensional experiences. And the kinds of experiences they crave reflect and reinforce their identities as creative people. My interviews and focus groups indicate that they favour active, participatory recreation over passive spectator sports (2003:166).

¹⁰ See Brisbane City Council 2007.
Florida attributes this demand for interactivity as a reaction to a decrease in “real life” interactions. This resonates with Prendergast’s study on the performative audience in which she argues that live arts provide audiences and performers with a shared experience, enabling authentic, meaningful interactions (2007:232). “Live performance forms”, she states, “… provide a crucial counterbalance to the prevailing forms of film, television, and other mass media forms of performance. These performing arts audiences are generally more challenged – aesthetically, affectively and cognitively – in their reception and interpretation of live performance” (2007:232).

1.4.10 A Becoming-Audience

Burgess’ studies identify that Brisbane’s New music audiences – as represented at Topology’s concerts – could be seen as members of the creative class, a class typified by omnivorous taste and active, participatory experiences. Restrung aimed not only to attract this group of people, but also students and participants in other musical scenes. This mixed audience comprised “several audiences of multiple listeners” (Macarthur 2010:226) within the Turbine Hall. Firstly, there were audiences for the Powerhouse Theatre programme, which featured ticketed concerts for art music ensembles such as the Brodsky Quartet, Topology and Wood. This audience encountered Turbine Platform performances before and after concerts, and were encouraged to stay and listen. Secondly, there were audiences who came to see one or more of the Turbine Platform performances, comprising diverse bands and art ensembles specialising in contemporary string practice. Thirdly, there were regular patrons for the Powerhouse bars and restaurants who come to socialise, see what was happening on the Turbine Platform, and view visual exhibitions. Fourthly, local sound artists and devotees came to perform and listen to the Violinarium. In this way, the model aimed to maximise the potential for new audiences to gain access to the various musics within the space. Macarthur likens this mixed audience to a “becoming-audience”, comprising “new audiences of ‘new’ art music, and new audiences for popular music and cross-over art-forms” (Macarthur 2010:226).
1.5 Background to Festival Theory

1.5.1 Introduction: Defining the role of the contemporary festival

The festival form has adapted itself to all historical societal shifts, and has been adopted for countless political and cultural purposes.\(^{11}\) It acts as a reflection of a city’s community and culture, and offers participants a liminal experience away from their day-to-day existence. Seffrin accounts for the longevity of the festival form in terms of:

Its ability to engage with dichotomous impulses in culture, embracing the new or the traditional, the common ground or the unique. It is a form that evokes tradition, or disrupts it. The festival is at times the vision of one individual, provided for many, or it functions as a celebratory or even revolutionary communal voice” (2006:67).

Jankovich adds that, with specific reference to arts festivals, the “character of festivity” may make them “interesting even to the audience that does not normally enjoy that field of culture and art” (2006:11). Further, festivals “possess a twofold meaning: they give support to development of creativity (by validating) and to reception of these creative efforts (by popularising the event in the broad public)” (2006:11).

Aldskogius (1993:69) notes that festivals provide their local area with numerous economic, social, cultural and “place-boosting effects”. He lists several benefits provided by festivals to the local region including image creation, community development and cultural tourism. These benefits strengthen and broaden an area’s economic base, and increase the locality’s competitive edge. Alskogius suggests that festivals give us an opportunity to study the conditions under which live music is produced, presented and received today, particularly in terms of the impact of venue and environment (1993:96).

\(^{11}\) For a succinct historical overview of the festival form, see Seffrin 2006:306-348.
The defining features of the contemporary festival, which will be explored presently, can be summarised as follows. Festivals:

- Reflect communities
- Are imbued with liminal experiential qualities
- Are the creation of one curator or co-authored by participants
- Can provide support to the creation and reception of traditional and innovative creative works through strategies designed to increase accessibility
- Provide “place-boosting” effects
- Provide a vehicle for studying live music production, presentation and reception.

### 1.5.2 Key Festival Research Resources

Contemporary festival model development is an emerging area of research. Queensland University of Technology (QUT), represented by scholars such as Rod Wissler, Jacqueline Martin and Georgia Seffrin, has been active in recognising its importance.¹² Seffrin (2006) provides an analysis of historical and conceptual components of festival culture, identifies contemporary models, and situates the festival form within the Creative Industries discourse: “Festivals are a key cultural form that exemplify key Creative Industries ideas, in terms of model management and philosophical engagement, and most particularly in terms of consumption, globalisation and community” (Seffrin 2006:24).

Another key source is the European Festival Research Project (EFRP), which provides access to key papers, lectures and reports by festival curators and researchers. The EFRP was established in response to the need for research into festival phenomena (Klaic 2007b:3). It “…seeks to address the artistic, cultural, economic, social and educational impact of festivals, to study their programming, politics, governance, management and finances (Klaic 2007b:3).

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¹² See Martin, Seffrin and Wissler 2004.
Other key resources for the literature review include collections of essays and papers edited by Picard and Robinson (2006a), Robertson and Frew (2008), Hauptfleisch, Lev-Aladgem, Martin, Sauter, and Schoenmakers (2005), and Ali-Knight, Robertson and Fyall (2009). There are numerous studies on the economic impact and tourism-related aspects of festivals (Ali-Knight 2009; Allen et al.; Aldoskogius 1993; Smith and Forest 2006; Getz 2005; Formica 1998).

Examples of relevant festival evaluation literature are presented in Chapter 3.

1.5.3 Community

1.5.3.1 Postmodern Community Festivals

Festivals are inherently community-oriented. Communities, no longer confined by geographical restraints, have been constructed around specific forms of cultural expression. The new notion of community refers, Seffrin suggests, to people “connecting with a particular aspect of their lives, rather than requiring the kind of totality of commitment that a traditional sense of community evokes” (2006:254). The festival form has adapted itself in order to cater to these translocal and virtual communities.

Macleod, a tourism scholar, posits that although contemporary society laments the loss of traditional community identity, this is balanced by a belief in the authenticity of our lived experiences. She opines that:

As individuals we may regret a loss of community, of an idealised, often ruralised existence and the ‘depth’ of place knowledge experienced by our ancestors. At the same time, we positively feel our lives, relationships, culture and tourism experiences to be ‘real’. In this sense, the virtual, highly mediated and staged image becomes part of our lived experience and part of our contemporary authenticity (2006:222-223).
Macleod believes that the postmodern festival – which caters for translocal communities – provides place and identity to contemporary visitors who “carry their world with them” (Macleod 2006:231). Thus community festivals “are no longer considered as unique and interesting emanations of local culture but as opportunities for convivial consumption in an international ‘placeless’ atmosphere” (Macleod 2006:235). Like Macleod, Seffrin recognises the important role that festivals play for postmodern communities. To do this effectively, the festival must understand the needs of, and engage with, its audiences:

This issue of re-connection, even a sense of longing for aspects of a perceived past world order, is bound up with the problematisation of community, a term which is becoming increasingly difficult to define because of the rapidity of shifting social and cultural forces. In light of this, the festival’s ability to engage with audiences, especially in a contemporary context, is crucial to the form’s potency (2006:32).

Therefore the postmodern festival must actively seek input from its stakeholders throughout the planning phase, at the festival itself, and as part of evaluation processes. This was achieved at Restrung through the incorporation of two pre-festival market research focus groups, participant observation strategies, surveys at the festival, and post-festival reception studies with audience, performers and the curatorial team. Further, the curatorial process was evaluated through comparative analysis with approaches used in relevant festivals in Europe and Australia.

\[1.5.3.2\] Music Community Festivals

Dowd, Liddle and Nelson identify that music festivals are “components of broader music scenes that simultaneously exist on local, translocal, and virtual levels” (2004:149). In line with Macleod’s notion of tourists who “carry their world with them”, Dowd et al. liken the act of going to a music festival to a pilgrimage, and “as with a pilgrimage, the

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13 See Chapter 3: Methodology for details of the research design.
14 See Chapter 2: Festival Landscape
experience of being temporarily immersed in festival culture can profoundly transform attendees… Festivals provide fertile ground for creating, mobilising and rejuvenating both performers and audience” (Dowd et al. 2004:150). They provide a place for debate and the exchange of ideas, as well as for the promotion of a cause. To illustrate this, Dowd et al. used a case study of the Yaddo Festival (United States). From 1932-1952, the Yaddo Festival provided performance and discussion spaces for composers, performers and listeners of avant-garde music. Practitioners were relieved to perform for an audience that was “receptive and knowledgeable – a far cry from the negative outbursts (for example, booing) that avant-garde music inspired elsewhere” (Dowd et al. 2004:152). The authors note that Yaddo brought attention to composers; lead to the establishment of supporting agencies; and expanded the range of avant-garde musical output (Dowd et al. 2004:153-154). This example illustrates that the limited timeframe of the festival format does not detract from its ability to have far-reaching effects for its community. Rather, effective festivals act as incubators for creativity, and as support mechanisms for the communities they represent. Festivals achieve “significance as a temporary moment which stands out from the ‘everyday’ – but this does not necessarily reduce the importance of moments in which new perspectives and possibilities are experienced, as a catalyst for new explorations and collaborations” (Fincher and Iveson 2008:174).


…implies relations among persons, activities, and the world as well as to tangential communities such as other festivals, music organisations, the music industry and the local community in which the festival in question is being arranged. By telling its own story to the attendees, the festival also produces its own future, thereby continuously making and remaking itself. This story-telling might be understood as

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15 The term avant-garde gained currency in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and refers to arts that value experimentalism and innovation over tradition (Beard and Gloag 2005:23).
a kind of reflexivity, keeping the community’s knowledge about itself alive, and transferring it to the next generation of participants (Karlsen 2007:45).

Viewed in this way, the festival is seen to be a focal gathering point for a community of likeminded people, much like the notion of the music scene described by Dowd et al. (2004:149). Further, as well as being a product of the local community, festivals are an important mechanism for wider relations between musicians, artists and listeners, sponsors, managers and industry workers.

The festival form, then, plays an important role for postmodern communities through:

• Providing a space for translocal groups, organisations and individuals to connect with one another
• Providing a space for distribution, creative work, discussion, performance and collaboration
• Adapting itself to the needs of its stakeholders through processes of reflexivity
• Providing support, and enabling growth, through telling community stories and history
• Promoting innovation and risk-taking work in accessible ways.

The Restrung model’s efficacy in fulfilling these roles, and its contribution to the broader field of contemporary string practice in Australia, is evaluated in Chapter 4.

1.5.4 Festivals as Experience

Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner speculated that festivals were “liminal” time periods “betwixt and between” the structures of everyday life (Turner n.d.:1). Historically speaking, festivals were periods of time when those in power allowed the common people to celebrate a brief taste of freedom. It is theorised that through the magnanimous act of temporarily rescinding the law, festivals helped to maintain the status quo (Turner 1988:41). From the perspective of participants, festivals allowed a brief escape from the
mundanity and constraints of everyday life. Seffrin, drawing on the work of Turner, suggests that “transformation via liminality is a vital element, serv[ing] to reinforce social balance (2006:14). Further, festival participants are transformed into a group called “communitas” (Turner n.d:1-3) in which “social roles and social bonds are relatively unstructured, undifferentiated, and non-hierarchal… ‘normal’ social roles are reversed or turned upside down, thereby creating an ‘antistructure’ capable of ‘redressing’ the injustices and oppressions of everyday life” (Kendall 2006:9). Similarly, in Rabelais and His World, Bakhtin describes the notion of the carnivalesque as encapsulating a utopian urge. The carnival displaced and inverted normal social hierarchy through celebrating “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions” (1984:10).

In the contemporary urban world, the festival continues to be a place where the marginalised celebrate togetherness, and where communities break routine to gather in celebration. According to Fincher and Iveson, “Through participation in festive or carnivalesque moments, urban participants could produce a more authentic form of being together against the taken-for-granted rhythms and routines of everyday life” (2008:173). Seffrin describes the “purest vision” of festivals which embodies a “…collective feeling of flow and communitas, people enjoying local life as festival event” (2005:239). A successful festival therefore has temporal-spatial qualities which alter the way participants experience reality within the festival space:

The focal point for a festival visitor is constituted not necessarily by the single performances attended, but by the flow of participation, of being part of an event, which exceeds the individual experience. Aspects such as community, collectivity, identity seemed to be equally important for both performing artists and participating spectators (Sauter 2005:238).

16 See, for example, Kendall 2006.
The festival form, then, can be seen as an effective and appropriate platform for the performance and reception of marginalised musics – such as contemporary art music and avant-garde genres. Further, through the de-hierarchisation process described earlier, which positions art music bands and ensembles on an equal playing field, Restrung subverted the traditional musical hierarchy. The mixed audience – or in Macarthur’s words, the becoming-audience – created by this musical de-hierarchisation exhibits the qualities of communitas, where normal social roles and bonds are shed in favour of festivity and togetherness. This concept was further amplified through participatory music-making in the form of the Fourplay workshop (see Appendix C.3) and Violinarium (see Appendix C.13), enabling audience members to take on performative roles.

1.5.5 Festival Models

Seffrin’s work on contemporary festival practice identifies two major models: the high arts and community arts festivals. From these two main models, a new hybrid model has emerged which she calls the “boutique festival” (2006). The high arts festival – which Seffrin refers to as the Department Store model – encompasses “…the best of what has been said and done” (2006:15) and aims to cast “as wide an audience net as possible” (2006:8). In Australia, these festivals act as flagships for a state’s cultural prestige. They showcase a broad range of visual and performing arts in indoor, outdoor, formal and informal venues. The artistic director makes programming decisions, with limited consultation with the target audience. Examples include the Brisbane Festival and Queensland Music Festival.

By contrast, the community model focuses on validating a sense of community – often for those “disenfranchised by mainstream festival culture” (2006:15). Community festivals celebrate a group’s “uniqueness, its local history, its survival” (2006:16), and typically involve the audience throughout the development and implementation stages.

17 Seffrin’s dissertation focuses on the development of festivals at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). Specifically, she uses QPAC’s Out of the Box and Stage X as case studies in her formulation of the boutique model theory.
The focus is not on excellence and prestige, but rather on the festival’s function “as a means for that community to articulate its plight in a public manner” (Seffrin 2006:16).

Seffrin posits that as the notion of community diversifies, festivals are morphing into hybrid community/high arts models (2006). Take, for example, the 2009 Melbourne International Arts Festival (Melbourne Festival). Melbourne Festival presented an international programme through a highly localised lens. This was achieved through highlighting Melbourne’s community, architecture and urban spaces. Sheehy advocated accessibility, affordability and inclusivity through providing a broad range of free and ticketed events. The Melbourne community’s “ownership” of the festival was emphasised throughout the campaign (Sheehy 2009a). Melbourne is representative of the high arts model; however, it can be seen that elements of the more inclusive and accessible community festival doctrine are being adopted.

Unlike the community model, the boutique model does not focus on a particular local or socially marginalised group, but it does have specific target audiences (Seffrin 2006:183). Seffrin borrowed the term “boutique” from the 1960s London fashion scene, where “the process of provision and consumption of goods was enacted as a conversation between designer, retailer and customer” (2006:174). These retailers offered original, innovative designs created in consultation with consumers. In a similar way, the boutique festival can be “categorised as one which caters for a particular audience and is produced by those with particular knowledge and insight regarding this audience, as opposed to major arts festivals in which programming usually aims to cast as wide an aesthetic net as possible” (Seffrin 2005:68). Whereas the High Arts festival provides an experience more akin to department store shopping, the boutique approach actively forges a relationship between the target audience, the curator and the venue: “Just as the retail boutique is located between the high (aesthetic) and popular (cost) end of consumer taste, so too is the boutique festival located between the department store model of arts festival production, with audiences purchasing tickets for a range of often avant-garde and dazzling international aesthetic experiences, and the community event, in which the focus is on the experience of the participant, and not focused on the dazzling work” (2006:181).
This is achieved through consultation with the audience in all stages of the festival-making process, and by providing opportunities for festival-goers to author their own experiences through interactive and educational activities (2005:73-74). Issues of “connection, diversity and quality” define the boutique model’s *modus operandi* (2006:182), and its programming is exemplified by being “accessible and challenging, innovative and of quality, supportive of the local but contextualised within global trends” (2006:182). Seffrin notes, however, that one of the boutique model’s limitations is that it does not “engage with a wider sense of community” like a festival such as Warana\(^\text{18}\) did (2006:196). Rather, its focus is on a specific target community.

Restrung can be seen to exhibit the qualities of the boutique model in the following ways:

- The high arts and boutique models both feature diversity in high quality and innovative content. In line with this, Restrung programming offered “…audiences the unfamiliar and unpredictable [and] the avant-garde” (Seffrin, 2006:185) (see Appendices C.3 and C.13)

- Whereas the directors of high arts festivals generally adopt a stance of “omnipotence” (Seffrin, 2006:183), Restrung connected with stakeholders through consultation strategies such as focus groups, surveys and interviews (see Chapter 3)

- The festival focuses on a specific target audience: participants interested in, or involved with, contemporary string practice

- Inclusion of interactive and educational content provided festival-goers with the opportunity to author their own experiences.\(^\text{19}\) Strategies included: Restrung Forum, Fourplay workshop and the Violinarium

\(^{18}\) Warana was Brisbane’s first major festival. It was established in 1961 as a community arts event. See Section 1.5.8 for discussion.

\(^{19}\) For further discussion of authoring experiences at the boutique festival, see Seffrin 2005.
• A balance between accessible and challenging programming, ranging from bands situated within popular idioms through to New music, and the dissonant experience of the Violinarium
• Local practitioners were situated within a programme also comprising interstate and international composers and performers. This approach connected practitioners and audience members with local and global trends.

1.5.6 Festival as Marketing Tool

Note: A description and analysis of marketing strategies and their effectiveness in reaching target audiences is discussed in Chapters 2 and 4.

Restrung marketing was designed to attract a wide range of audiences defined by arts-mindedness and omnivorous taste (as discussed previously). As Chapter 4 will explain, this required a dynamic marketing design which aimed to capture a broad range of audiences. Ken Nielsen (Director of Sydney’s Pinchgut Opera) proposes that contemporary performance should be marketed with confidence, not wrapped “in sugar coating…put just before interval with Mozart in the second half” (2003:21). Nielsen suggests a better approach would be for arts companies to build trust in their audience:

It would be interesting to see a marketing campaign along the lines of ‘We are different. We are adventurous. Come with us on a journey of discovery. We promise that you will be moved and excited and will discover places that you did not know existed. You will be a different person at the end of the season. Are you game to come?’(2003:21).

Anthony Steel (previously Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival and Brisbane Bienniale) suggests that this approach is difficult for year-round arts organisations such as orchestras, theatres and dance companies. In the ongoing fight for survival, these organisations “have to try to some extent to appeal to a fairly wide cross section of the community in which they operate” (2003:7-8). This means programming traditional and
well-known works which will guarantee attendance of at least a core of regular subscribers. By contrast, festivals provide audiences with an event-experience: “People love events and the arts festival is in many ways the ultimate event” (2003:7-8). This makes the festival form an “excellent marketing tool”, as it entices audiences “to dip their toes in entirely untested and unfamiliar waters … It is festivals which should be in the best position to pursue the shock of the new with no holds barred” (Steel 2003:7-8).

Following this mode of thought, Restrung was conceived of as a festival – rather than a concert series – in order to provide an experience for participants which would enhance accessibility to hard-edged elements of the programme.

1.5.7 The Brisbane Context

Brisbane’s growth as a “creative city” (Brisbane City Council 2007) can only be understood in the light of the State’s political history, especially during the extended reign of Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen (1968-1987) – an era described by Fitzgerald and Szulakowska as being characterised by repression, corruption, police misconduct and media manipulation (Szulakowska 1987:15; Fitzgerald 1984). Under Bjelke-Peterson’s rule, any cultural activity considered by his government to be subversive was crushed (Fitzgerald 1984:597-600; Szulakowska 1987:15). He also encouraged wide-scale demolition of culturally significant heritage buildings (Fitzgerald 1984:447-449; Gygar 2004; Gill 2010a). Police used brute force to halt protest marches against Bjelke-Petersen’s government (Fitzgerald 1984:242-243 and 572-584). Bjelke-Peterson’s actions gained national press coverage. According to Gill, residents of Melbourne and Sydney, who regarded themselves as Australia’s cultural elite, thus obtained ammunition to deride Brisbane as a cultural wasteland (Gill 2010a). Nevertheless, the Bjelke-Petersen government contributed handsomely, as least in an architectural sense, to Brisbane’s cultural community. Bjelke-Petersen’s government provided infrastructure for the State’s subsequent cultural renaissance with the construction of the Queensland Cultural Centre. Comprising the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, the Queensland Museum, the State Library and the Queensland Art Gallery, the complex provided a magnificent monument
to the arts, even if the beneficiaries would be mainly international performers and artists, and State-funded mainstream and heritage entities such as the Queensland Symphony, Opera Queensland and The Queensland Ballet.

The 1982 Commonwealth Games and Expo 88 helped Brisbane to reinvent itself as an Australian “events capital” (Gill 2010a). Since 1989 successive arts-friendly Labor State governments and culturally-minded Lord Mayors have overseen the renovation of cultural spaces in the South Bank precinct and the opening of contemporary arts venues including the Gallery of Modern Art, the Brisbane Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre. Brisbane’s profile as a “creative city” (Brisbane City Council 2007) has taken a further boost through the current State government’s funding of such significant international shows as the Paris Opera Ballet (2009), the Cuban Ballet (2010), and the Valentino (2010) and the American Impression and Realism (2009) exhibitions. All of the last-mentioned were exclusive to Brisbane. These initiatives and others stimulated exponential growth in Brisbane arts participation and cultural tourism (Gill 2010a).

What distinguishes Brisbane from its Southern counterparts is the newness of its creative impulse. In Melbourne and Sydney, the arts have long been deeply imbedded in the historical fibre, but Brisbane’s culture is that of a contemporary and fast evolving city. This vigour finds expression as much in the arts as in the development of road infrastructure, apartment blocks and office buildings. According to the Queensland Department of Public Works, more than 1500 people relocate to South East Queensland every week (2010). Not all of these newcomers are culturally inclined, but at least a proportion of them bring fresh input to the cultural fabric. The burgeoning complexity of roads, bridges and skyscrapers that marks modern Brisbane could be seen as a metaphor for the city’s cultural awakening. A unique mix of population growth, government-funded opportunity and openness to ideas has made Brisbane fertile ground for the experimental arts.
1.5.8 Brisbane’s Festivals

Brisbane has a strong festival culture that reflects its growth as a culturally diverse city. Warana, Brisbane’s first major festival, was established in 1961 as a community arts event. As Brisbane’s population increased and diversified, Warana’s content shifted accordingly, with the introduction of more high arts and cultural events. In 1996, the Brisbane Festival replaced Warana. Through replacing a community festival with a high arts model, Brisbane was announcing its intention to come up to par with Australia’s major capital cities. Seffrin likens Warana to a “barometer” of Brisbane’s social and cultural change (2006:250). Queensland’s other major arts festival, the Brisbane Biennial Festival of Music, was established in 1990. It was renamed the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music from 1999-2003, to reflect its programme which is staged throughout the state. Since 2004, it has been known as the Queensland Music Festival.

Artistic Director Robyn Archer (Adelaide Festival, Melbourne Festival) viewed the birth of the Brisbane Festival with scepticism. She, amongst other curators such as Anthony Steel (Adelaide Festival) and Jonathan Mills (Edinburgh Festival), believe that the international multi-genre festival model lacks the innovative and risk-taking characteristics of generically specific festivals. Archer posits: “Brisbane couldn’t resist the temptation eventually to have its own international festival … the fact is that generically specific festivals do much better, their audience comprised of devotees who need less persuading and are all up for the excess factor and the absolute saturation point” (Archer 2006).

A multitude of suburban-centred, special interest, multicultural and arts-based festivals have started up over recent years, and continue to proliferate in Brisbane. Brisbane audiences also flock to the Woodford Folk Festival, and to its former incarnation as the Maleny Folk festival. Seffrin suggests that: “The exploration of the festival over a period

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20 For a detailed history of Brisbane’s festival culture, see Seffrin 2006:66-101.
21 See Section 1.6 for discussion of the concepts of “excess” and “saturation point”.
of time crystallises the growth in Brisbane’s acknowledgement, celebration and exploration of its identity. This connection between festival and city is a deeply imbedded one” (2006:67). The diversity present in Brisbane’s festivals testifies to the multitude of communities that co-exist. As Jacobs explains, “A city’s very wholeness in bringing people together with communities of interest is one of its greatest assets, probably the greatest” (1994:119). Festivals play an important role in this process, through bringing communities of interest together in a celebratory forum. Further, in light of the city’s political history, Brisbane’s strong festival culture can be seen as an outcome of the city’s aim to become Australia’s new “cultural capital” (Bligh in Gill 2010b).

1.6 Curatorial Festival Theory

This section builds upon the earlier parts of the chapter by describing curatorial concepts which were drawn upon to devise the Restrung conceptual model. Specifically, it looks at how Restrung promoted accessibility to innovative practice.

1.6.1 Innovation and Risk Taking

Curators including Mills, Archer and Ten Cate (Dutch avant-garde theatre producer and installation artist) agree that the success of an arts festival is contingent upon its ability to present an innovative and risk-taking programme. Thundering Hooves (AEA Consulting 2006), an evaluation report prepared for the Edinburgh Festival, concludes that “cultural programmes must be curatorially focused and continually innovating; investment in innovation is a prerequisite of sustainability” (2006:10). Further, in order to maintain “international pre-eminence”, they recommend “the commissioning, development and presentation of work that is new to their target audiences or is interpreted and presented in new ways” (AEA Consulting 2006:10). In addition, Mills believes that festivals “are one of the few remaining entities in the artistic sector which can take substantial risk” (Mills 2006:9).
Ten Cate and Archer express concern that the current trend for formulaic festival models – the ubiquitous multi-arts festival in every major Australian and European city – will detract from the festival form’s risk-taking qualities (Archer 2006:35; Ten Cate 1997:2). Ten Cate predicted that:

> With the exception of a lucky few, festivals will have ceased to exist as an identifiable activity in the near future. Whatever a festival is will have been folded into a much larger marketing scheme. It will exist only as one function among many instruments which serve what is known as the Tourism and Heritage Industry (1997:2).

In order to avoid this phenomenon, Archer argues for specialised innovative festivals which provide participants with an “excess” of exposure to a particular art form (2006:27-28). That said, she notes that generically specific events – such as jazz and comedy festivals – are now in dangerous oversupply (Archer 2006:35): “Why would any place simply want to copy what someone else is already doing? It’s a lazy quick-fix approach, and greater rewards will always accrue to those with the energy to give form to new reasons for celebration” (Archer 2006:35). Consequently, Ten Cate and Archer stress that successful festival curators are characterised by their unique creative vision and “heartfelt intent” (Archer 2006:22). Further, explains Cremona, the artistic director is fundamental to the festivalising process as “his/her input may effectively mark not only the selection and choice of performances, but also the way they are shown as well as establish the ways they are to be apprehended” (Cremona 2005:7). As the public face of the festival, the artistic director is identified as the person responsible for the “type of communication processes that the festival engages with” (Cremona 2005:7).

Ten Cate describes successful curators as being “totally obsessed” with their central idea: “You have to be light on your feet and versatile. You need a strange mix of stamina and generosity. You must have the willingness to invest deeply in the creative talents you’ll use to realize your idea of a festive meeting place” (1997:10). Further, he stresses the need for privileging the local inhabitants so that “they feel a real ‘pride of place’ in your
festival”. A lack of originality must be avoided at all costs: “Copy someone else’s idea, and you’re lost before you begin. Repeat yourself, and you’re on extremely dangerous ground. And you absolutely must realize that only you can be the key to what you make. Nobody, but NOBODY can tell you about the festival of the future. It won’t exist if you yourself are not reinventing it” (1997:10).

Strategies that encourage revitalisation, risk-taking and innovation prevent festivals becoming stagnant with age. Major arts festivals and organisations tend to be influenced by their subscribers and corporate sponsors. This typically leads to conservative programming as the artistic director seeks to satisfy the interests of established audiences (Frey 2003:84). Maughan’s studies on the festival lifecycle also reflect this phenomenon (2006). To avoid this, the Thundering Hooves report recommends that Edinburgh Festival programmes works outside the interests of their established target audience. The report indicates that innovation remains the key to global competitiveness and continued artistic, cultural, and economic success (2006:10).

The Restrung model incorporates a number of strategies to assist with maintaining innovative programming. Firstly, the in-built evaluation framework enables multiple-lens participant input for programme development. Secondly, the programme seeks to showcase specifically innovative and risk-taking contemporary string practice. Thirdly, through the festivalising process, new works are incubated and generated through participant networks in the space. Fourthly, the unorthodox musical juxtaposition of bands and New music ensembles within the one programme opens the way for new perspectives on hybridity and syncretism in New music. It can also be seen as potentially creating pathways for marginalised music. Drawing on Hulse, Macarthur likens the Turbine Platform to a “mini-unstable system within a larger stable system which comprises ‘new’ music concerts in the main auditorium.” (2010:231). She states: “The unstable environment in and around the Turbine Platform is a machinic assembly, in the Deleuzian sense, made up of composers, music, food, drink, performing musicians, popular culture, ‘high-brow’ culture, installation art, sculptures, other visual and aural components, and much else” (2010:231). Such an unstable system, Macarthur argues, has
the potential to create openings for marginalised musics, such as the works of women composers (2010:231-232).

1.6.2 Excess

Drawing on the notions of liminality and the Carnivalesque, Archer describes festivals as spaces for “getting out of it”: “My instinct tells me that the one thing the majority of these celebrations had, and in some cases, still have, is the need for people to ‘get out of themselves’ from time to time, in order to go on living with themselves” (2006:3). Archer believes that the defining characteristic of a great festival is excess: “The more one indulges excessively in any festival, the more one gets close to ‘getting out of it’: the more you get into it the more you get out of it” (2006:27-28). In a similar vein, Cremona identifies that the sheer quantity of content at a festival differentiates it from single events:

The foregrounding principle of any festival is the wide range of aesthetic and artistic possibilities it offers. It is this possibility of selection that makes attendance at a festival different from going to a single performative experience, because even if persons decide to attend simply one event, they are aware of the variety of other possibilities that they deliberately choose to ignore (2005:5).

Mills describes this quality as the “reciprocal relationship between the setting and the substance that exists at the core of a true festival experience; the buzz that emanates from having so many things happening at once … The festival is a sensual, visceral assault” (2006:2). This notion of excess is embodied in the curatorial concepts for Restrung: the model embraced immersivity and was envisioned as multi-sensory, interactive artwork.
1.6.3 Accessibility

Tusa (Director of the Barbican Centre), in his “Ten Commandments for the Arts”, pronounces, “Thou shalt make the arts as accessible as you can, because you want everyone to enjoy them; but if becoming accessible means dumbing down, thou shalt forget it” (2002). This quote highlights the contemporary concern that the nature of art is being compromised for survival and commercial viability. Tusa continues: “All the current emphasis on ‘access’ and ‘outreach’ reveals not a belief that there is a need for the arts which must be met; but rather a belief that because demand for the arts is weak, they should transform themselves into forms that the public will find attractive and acceptable” (2002). Tusa suggests that instead, the arts needs to “persuade and involve an indifferent, sceptical and fully diverted public if they are to survive” (2002).

Amongst others, Curator Robyn Archer (2006) and Sociologist Frank Furedi (2005) support this understanding of accessibility: that it is not about “dumbing down” the arts, but finding alternative ways to engage with audiences. Archer believes that the populist agenda tends to further increase the gap between “high art” and “low art”. The attempts of arts festivals to “connect with the host population ... often leads to spurious and careless attempts to connect – simply bread and circuses for the masses whilst still reserving challenge, innovation and beauty for those who can afford it” (2006). Similarly, Furedi criticises policy which values culture only insofar as it “advances the populist agenda of inclusion, participation and access”: “The question is not whether a particular institution or cultural artefact is good, bad, beautiful or ugly, inspiring or uninspiring, but whether it is relevant, accessible or inclusive” (Furedi 2005:21).

An example of a commercially-driven contemporary string project in Brisbane is Deep Blue (see Appendix G.34). With accessibility at its core, it combines a string orchestra with digital technologies, electronics and theatre. Performances are choreographed, and accompanied by video. The repertoire comprises popular music cover versions, original works and abridged traditional classical works with pre-recorded backing tracks:
The performance is charged with emotion and engagement. It’s fun, dynamic, entertaining and rule breaking. There is no conductor, no music stands and no stuffy traditions. You don’t have to know when to clap and when to be quiet ... you can just enjoy it (2011).

Deep Blue is “interactive”, “immersive” and “audience driven” (2011). According to Director Andy Arthurs, the concept is a response to audience demands: “this project explores new product development models in music which link the development of new repertoire in a responsive strategy to expressed audience needs and desires, guaranteeing a sustainable product” (2006:3). Deep Blue was designed for commercial viability. It openly criticises concert hall etiquette in order to appeal to a broader market which finds such etiquette alienating or confusing (discussed below). Further, Deep Blue aims to be accessible through offering “community engagement” and “audience development” strategies such as the Young Blue schools’ programme, which incorporates workshops and performance opportunities (see Appendix G.34).

Whilst there are elements in common with Restrung, for example, immersivity, interactivity and a strong focus on audience experience, these elements are approached in different ways. The Restrung design included a traditional concert hall setting, and recognised the value that a quiet listening space provides. The informal space provided accessibility to new audiences through its physical location and social atmosphere. In common with Deep Blue, Restrung incorporated educational elements which allowed audience members to become performers. The musical approach, however, is very different. The majority of Deep Blue’s repertoire comprises modified traditional classics and pop songs. By contrast, Restrung reflects current trends in contemporary string practice with a focus on original work, exploring both hard-edged and easy-listening terrains. This approach sought to open up the burgeoning area of interplay between high-brow and low-brow cultures within the festival space. New music, according to Burgess (2004:81), is defined by this interplay. It has a quality of “liminality, in the tensions between the market and the academy, between modernism and postmodernism, between
intellectualisation and accessibility that it embodies” (2004:82). Further, as Davidson has noted, cultural diversity is important for artistic growth. By silencing the voices of experimental, non-commercial artists, one will effectively “dumb down” the entire musical ecosystem (interview, May 18 2005).

1.6.4 Audience Engagement

Restrung sought to utilise the social and immersive characteristics of the music festival form to engage new audiences with New music. Duffy et al. (2007:1-2) describe music as being an integral part of facilitating social interactions, emotional responses, and cultural understandings at community festivals. They describe this phenomenon as being in the groove: a feeling of community and togetherness. Drawing on this work, Fincher and Iveson use the festival form as a case study for urban encounters. They contend that festivals which effectively sustain “an atmosphere conducive to encounter” not only interrupt “everyday rhythms and routines”, but also create a temporary “festival rhythm” (2008:183-184). This rhythm, or groove, facilitates situations in which participants can “step out of their conventional stances towards each other, enabling fleeting moments of encounter based on their shared status as participants in a festival” (2008:183-184). Conversely, in a festival with no groove, “participants are likely to remain distant witnesses to events, emotionally unengaged from the event” (2008:183-184). Fincher and Iveson suggest that a degree of “stage managing” is “crucial to the success of a festival as a time-space encounter” (2008:183-184). Strategies used to encourage encounters at Restrung included interactive and educational activities, and access to food and beverages throughout Turbine Hall performances. Further, continuous programming facilitated a sense of community within the space, and increased the chances of “fleeting moments of encounter” (2008:183-184).

23 Duffy et al. draw the notion of “being in the groove” from Keil and Feld 1994.
1.6.5 Place and Contexts

1.6.5.1 Connection to Place

Restrung was a site-specific festival designed for the Powerhouse venue. The focus of the Turbine Hall programme was on local performers and artists. Archer believes that this approach – which takes inspiration from the local context – is the best way to create a unique, specialised festival: “If you take on the need for specialisation – to do something that’s not just a copy of someone else’s cultural plan, someone else’s bid for local tourism, someone else’s blueprint for regeneration through culture, then your greatest clue is right in front of you. You fashion your festival according to place” (Archer 2006:37). The uniqueness of place, combined with a unique curatorial vision provides “the best possible palette on which to mix art and artists if you want to attract attention and be different and special” (Archer 2006:41). Similarly, Mills describes the festival as embodying a “special form of synergy in which the nature of the programme reinforces or reflects the uniqueness of its setting. It is simultaneously defined by an elusive mixture of artistic rarity and urban specificity” (Mills 2006:1).

Mills concludes that the diversity of events that occur at an arts festival create something that is “incongruous, sometimes even subversive” (Mills 2006:1). Restrung can be seen to embody these qualities of urban specificity, incongruity and subversion through its de-hierarchisation of bands and art music ensembles, and the prominence of local acts. Furthermore, the layout of the festival was dictated by the spaces available at the Powerhouse. The approach to curating these spaces – visually and musically – was unique to the Restrung model.

1.6.5.2 Performance context

Bontinck describes music reception as the interaction between audience, performers and environment: “In the course of a musical event the musical work reaches the listener
through the intermediary activity of the performers; this process of communication can vary according to the social function and social environment of the event” (Bontinck 1992:73). The challenge with informal settings is to create a listening environment which is conducive to sociality. By sociality I am not referring to verbal exchanges, but rather to shared experience. The informality of the Turbine Hall makes it a comfortable environment, and audience members can come and go as they please. The Powerhouse Theatre, on the other hand, works as a traditional concert hall setting does. Audience members are expected to listen attentively, not to talk or move from their seats during the performance. The etiquette in this setting dictates appropriate times to clap. Such an environment can be unsettling for those not familiar with it. There is little room for physical movement, and assumed knowledge of etiquette can be intimidating (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008; Davidson, interview, 27 March 2009), as the Deep Blue example in the previous section illustrates. However, for regular concert-goers, it is this very etiquette which creates a sense of belonging: “These behaviours – gestures, styles of deportment, and other communicative or goal-directed actions like finding a seat, applauding and chatting – dynamically reinforce and are reinforced by the performances of the musicians on stage, establishing the audience and musicians as competent in the performance of the concert ritual, and creating a naturalised sense of belonging” (Burgess 2005:62).

Henderson compares these cultural competencies to the etiquette of a football match: “Every culture has its own language and set of rules. People not familiar with the classical concert format may feel perfectly comfortable at a football game, and vice versa” (interview, 25 August 2008). For concert-goers, the silence of the audience is not disengagement but engagement with the music. As Small explains, once the performance begins, even those attending with friends become as strangers:

Those attending [the] symphony concert come as strangers to one another and seem content to remain so. Even those who have come with friends sit, once the performance begins, still and silent in their seats, each individual alone with his or her own experience, avoiding so much as eye contact with others. Whatever may be
the nature of the performance, they experience it, and expect to experience it, in isolation, as solitary individuals (Small 1998:41).

By virtue of its design – graffitied walls and intimate size – the Powerhouse Theatre exhibits less formality than most concert halls, without the standards of etiquette of the classical recital. At Restrung, it was used for chamber recitals, and its efficacy is explored in Chapter 4. The Turbine Hall is an informal performance setting in which audience members can enter and leave at will, drink and eat. The space has an established culture of listening, which assists with audience behaviour; although it is an open space, audience members tend to be respectful and not disrupt performers. A quiet audience is not a given in informal venues.

Topology has experimented with performing in various settings including Ric’s Bar in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane.24 These experiments often proved to be unsuccessful because “The musicians felt that the venue gave the audience the ‘wrong’ cues – in other words, they treated the music as a soundtrack to their evening, periodically tuning in and out, breaking into conversation, getting up for a drink” (Burgess 2004:72). Thus, whilst informal contexts are not always appropriate for the performance of art music, the Turbine Hall proved to be a suitable venue. Due to the openness of the space, and because the programme was unticketed, the Turbine Hall provided new audiences with the opportunity to see music usually confined to enclosed concert hall spaces. In addition, for those who may be daunted by the concert hall experience, it provided easy and comfortable access to contemporary art music performance.

1.6.5.3 Virtual Space: Video Art Installations

Contemporary observers such as David Stubbs (2009) and Dan Fox (2007) note that contemporary art has tended to align itself with popular music culture rather than avant-garde music. Despite continual attempts throughout the twentieth century for New music

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24 Ric’s is a small venue featuring independent bands and DJs. It is located in the heart of Brisbane’s entertainment district, Fortitude Valley. See website: http://www.ricsbar.com.au/
and avant-garde art to “find common ground, common purpose,” says Stubbs, the “fortunes of the two avant-gardes remain polarised” (2009:109). Fox explains that this is in part to do with popular music’s strong visual component:

> Popular music is also as much about a visual culture – the coding of, say, sleeve design or the nuances of subcultural fashion – as it is one of sound. It’s an element that’s not as tightly woven into the fabric of contemporary ‘classical’ music’s culture (2007).

In a comparable way, VJing is most commonly associated with sound art and electronic dance music. Video art has similar properties to music: it is a fleeting experience that takes on the quality of a music recording or, in the case of VJing, is akin to the work of the DJ. Both use a bank of pre-recorded materials which are selected and blended during the live performance.

There is, however, a long-standing tradition for video artists to work with avant-garde musicians. Video art emerged during the late 1950s in the United States and Europe (Meigh-Andrews 2006:2). Composer John Cage, noise musician/multimedia artist Wolf Vostell and experimental artist/musician Nam June Paik are cited as being major influences on its development (Meigh-Andrews 2006:10). Meigh-Andrews writes that “in this period of dynamic social, economic and cultural change, much new art was formally and politically radical” (2006:2). Video art exhibited diverse cultural influences and its artists were highly influenced by “movements and ideas from Fluxism, performance art, Body Art, Conceptual art, avant-garde music, experimental film, contemporary dance and theatre and a diverse range of other cross-disciplinary cultural activities and theoretical discourses” (Meigh-Andrews 2006:2).

It has been suggested that video art, unlike film, has a close relationship with music recording, as its technical origins are derived from sound recording principles (Meigh-Andrews 2006:89; Viola in de Meredieu 2005:60). One of the first major advances made in live-mixed video technology was the oscilloscope, which visualises sound and tracks.
“changes in volume and frequency in the form of oscillations (de Meredieu 2005:61). This was a “profound influence” on the work of video art pioneer Woody Vasulka: “By causing a sound to pass from the realm of the invisible into the realm of the visible, we are entering a new universe (de Meredieu 2005:61).

The emergence of video installations in the late 1970s was spearheaded by Paik’s “archetypal installation”, Video Fish, which featured “five aquaria twinned with five television sets” (de Meredieu 2005:64). De Meredieu explains installations cause the “real space” of the venue to become a “representative space, allowing the viewer to experience virtual objects or people, absent or invented, and to interact with them” (de Meredieu 2005:61).

Building on this tradition, the inclusion of video art installations at Restrung was designed to enhance the virtuality of the venue. For example, one installation, which was situated under a stairwell (See Appendix H.3), featured a woman swimming in circles, projected on cloth. It gave the illusion of depth, human movement and water, within the context of a dark industrial space. Live-mixed video art25 presented the artist’s interpretations of the musical performances (See Appendix H.4). The performances, then, had multiple levels of sensory engagement: aural, the visual element of watching the performers, and the live-mixed projections. The relationship between video art and contemporary string practice at Restrung was considered exploratory in nature. The outcomes of this experiment were generated through participant observation and feedback from participants (See Chapter 4).

1.7 Conclusion

The process of creating this contextual review was a dynamic process requiring a review of the literature and the festival context. This research was integrated into the festival design, and informed the evaluation framework. Restrung – conceptualised as an

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25 Initial plans included positioning an oscilloscope behind the Turbine Platform. As will be explained in Chapter 4, the oscilloscope was replaced with live-mixed video art.
immersive artwork – combined interactive, visual and musical features. Drawing on *Alice In Wonderland* (Carroll 1865), the festival incorporated these aesthetic features in a way which was intended to immerse the audience in the festival experience, and lead them on a journey into the nature of contemporary string practice. In a Deleuzian sense, it can be considered as a “becoming-space” through its open-ended exploration of social and contextual possibilities for contemporary string practice (Macarthur 2010:29).

Contemporary string practice – as considered from an ethnomusicological perspective – is revealed to exhibit hybrid tendencies spanning popular, classical and avant-garde tendencies. It can be seen as a “global sonorous space” (Nancy 2007:12) exhibiting a multitude of musical styles from our perceived past, present and future. The model mirrors the syncretic nature of the musical programme: it provides multiple musics for multiple audiences within multiple contexts. In this way, it proposed to open up possibilities for contemporary string practice – particularly New music – through innovative and relevant performance strategies which encouraged participation, accessibility and sociality. This was achieved through the incorporation of discursive and educational forum and workshop events; the interactive and performative Violinarium; the use of formal and informal contexts; and through providing an unticketed programme within a public area. Further, video installations and multiple venues were intended to encourage festival-goers to move through the space on a journey of discovery. These strategies presuppose that Restrung’s target audience comprised omnivorous and arts-minded professionals and students who favour active experience over passive spectatorship.

The festival format is ideal for such an experiment. It is a form identified by its experiential qualities, and a focus on community engagement. In particular, the Boutique model (Seffrin 2006) exhibits similar tendencies to Restrung, in its focus on audience input and reception. Such a model actively engages with its target audience in order to create a festival experience which reflects its needs. Further, the festival form’s ability to be innovative and take risks facilitates positive audience reception to challenging works. Brisbane’s current cultural climate also assists this endeavour. In response to the “cultural
backwater reputation” garnered under Bjelke-Peterson’s reign, successive Labor governments have steadily built up the State’s arts infrastructure and events culture, with a focus on new and emerging artistic forms (Gill 2010a). Leading curators such as Archer (2006) and Mills (2006) support this approach: supporting new, challenging and emerging art forms is essential for society’s cultural health. Further, such strategies are essential to the health of the arts festival form, which is typified by its ability to present unusual and unorthodox works.

The next chapter further builds upon the contextual review presented here through an evaluation of six festivals with comparable characteristics to the Restrung project.
CHAPTER 2 – THE FESTIVAL LANDSCAPE

2.1 Introduction

In order to situate the Restrung project within the broader festival landscape, I reviewed six similar festivals before and after Restrung took place. This chapter addresses the second research question through a discussion and analysis of the strategies used by others to promote audience access to innovative musical and artistic practices. The data is evaluated in terms of its relationship with the project’s four evaluation framework categories:

1. Marketing
2. Staging and programming
3. Social aspects

Data was collected through interviews with festival directors and industry specialists; an analysis of marketing materials; and participant observation fieldwork (see Chapter 3 for methodology). Section 2.2 briefly describes the festivals’ programming, outlines a typical day, and explains the events’ relevance to this project. Section 2.3 discusses the attributes of these festivals as they relate to the evaluation framework. Through this process, I intend to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses in existing evaluation systems, as well as identify important attributes of a sustainable, innovative and self-evaluating festival model.
2.2 Introduction to Festivals and Interviewees

2.2.1 Introduction

Six festivals were reviewed for this project, including three New music festivals:

- Gaudeamus New music Week, Amsterdam, centres on its international young composers’ competition
- iF, a London-based practitioner-run New music festival
- The 2010 Aurora/ISCM World New Music Days, Sydney: a collaborative event combining the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) conference and annual festival with Western Sydney’s Aurora Festival.

The three other festivals exhibit relevant attributes such as mixed programming, a participatory ethos and strong community focus:

- The Dartington International Summer School (DISS), England, has a history steeped in classical performance and composition, but in recent years has increased its programming of other musical genres
- This Is Not Art (TINA), Newcastle, incorporates five intersecting festival programmes which explore new, emerging, experimental and hybrid arts
- Straight Out of Brisbane (SOOB), aimed to provide exposure for local and emerging artists working in non-conventional ways.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FESTIVAL</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>INTERVIEWEES</th>
<th>PROGRAMMING STYLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaudeamus Music Week</td>
<td>New music; Competition</td>
<td>Annual since 1940s; August/September; 7 days</td>
<td>Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ, Bimhuis Amsterdam Conservatorium, Paradiso</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>H. Heuvelmans: Festival Director; P. Swinnen: Gaudeamus Prize juror</td>
<td>Continuous, multi-venue, within walking distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iF</td>
<td>New music</td>
<td>2005-2006: iF:05: February; iF:06: February-April. iF was the relaunch of Isleworth Festival which ran 1996-2004</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>P. Wiegold: Festival Director</td>
<td>Concert series, multi-venue throughout London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Festival/WNMD</td>
<td>New music</td>
<td>Aurora: Biennial since 2006; April/May; 7 days WNMD: in Australia 2010 only</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Sydney CBD and Western suburbs</td>
<td>M. Hindson: Festival Director; B. Saunders: Audience member</td>
<td>Concert series, multi-venue over a number of suburbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dartington International Summer School</td>
<td>Western Classical music performance school</td>
<td>Annual since 1948; July/August; 5 weeks of one week courses</td>
<td>Dartington Hall</td>
<td>Dartington Estate, South Devon, UK</td>
<td>G. Henderson: Festival Director</td>
<td>Continuous, site-specific; live-in</td>
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<td>This Is Not Art Incorporates 4 festivals</td>
<td>• Electrofringe: new media  • National Young Writers' Festival  • Sound Summit: Independent Music  • Critical Animals Research Symposium</td>
<td>Annual since 1998; 5 days in late September/early October</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Newcastle CBD, NSW</td>
<td>M. Westbury: Festival Founder</td>
<td>Continuous, multi-venue, within walking distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight Out Of Brisbane</td>
<td>Independent cultural production, emergent arts</td>
<td>Held in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006; 5 days in August</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Fortitude Valley CBD, QLD</td>
<td>B. Eltham: Festival Director</td>
<td>Continuous, multi-venue within Fortitude Valley and CBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>FESTIVAL</td>
<td>POSITION</td>
<td>Date of interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davis, John</td>
<td>World New Music Days 2010</td>
<td>President ISCM, CEO Australian Music Centre</td>
<td>14/05/10</td>
<td>Davis has been CEO of the Australian Music Centre since 1995. He is President of the ISCM Executive Committee and Vice-President of the International Association of Music Information Centres (IAMIC).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eltham, Benjamin</td>
<td>Straight Out of Brisbane</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>07/02/07</td>
<td>Eltham is a writer, musician and producer. He is currently pursuing a PhD in cultural policy at the University of Western Sydney, and is a Fellow of the Centre for Policy Development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engstrom, Andreas (informal interview)</td>
<td>World New Music Days 2010</td>
<td>Editor, <em>World New music Magazine</em>; Editor, <em>Nutida Musik</em></td>
<td>15/05/10</td>
<td>Engstrom is a New music critic and editor based in Berlin and Stockholm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henderson, Gavin</td>
<td>Dartington International Summer School</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>25/08/08</td>
<td>Henderson was the Director of the DISS from 1985-2009, and has been Principal of the Central School of Speech and Drama in London since 2007. He holds a CBE, and has previously been Chief Executive of the New Philharmonia Orchestra, artistic director of the Brighton Festival, and principal of Trinity College of Music. His interest in audience engagement and participation in music-making are particularly relevant to my research (Gorb 2007).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heuvelmans, Henk</td>
<td>Gaudeamus Music Week</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>05/09/08</td>
<td>Heuvelmans has been Director of the Gaudeamus Foundation and the International Gaudeamus Music Week in Amsterdam for over 26 years (interview, 5 September 2008).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindson, Matthew</td>
<td>Aurora Festival</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>13/02/07</td>
<td>Hindson established the Aurora Festival for living composers in 2006. In 2007 it was awarded the <em>Most Outstanding Contribution by an Organisation</em> at the Classical Music Awards. Hindson is an Australian composer whose works exhibit influences from popular and classical traditions. He is Chair of the Australia Council Music Board and Chair of the Arts Music Unit, Sydney Conservatorium (Hindson 2010).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saunders, Barry (informal interview)</td>
<td>World New Music Days 2010</td>
<td>Audience member</td>
<td>18/05/10</td>
<td>Saunders is a User Experience Architect at Sputnik Agency (advertising). He is also an online/social media producer, academic/policy researcher and audio-visual editor, and has worked in media and communications research, strategy and implementation for NGOs, environmental organisations, independent publications and universities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swinnen, Peter (informal interview)</td>
<td>Gaudeamus Music Week</td>
<td>Gaudeamus Prize Juror</td>
<td>03/09/08</td>
<td>Swinnen was a juror for the 2008 Gaudeamus Prize and is currently Vice-President of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). The annual <em>ISCM World Music Days</em> was held in Sydney in 2010 in conjunction with Aurora Festival. Swinnen is a Belgian composer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westbury, Marcus</td>
<td>This Is Not Art</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>14/11/08</td>
<td>Westbury is a broadcaster, writer, media maker and festival director. His most recent project <em>Renew Newcastle</em> is a “DIY urban renewal scheme that has brokered access to 25 empty buildings for creative enterprises, artists and cultural projects” in Newcastle (Marcus Westbury: My Life. On The Nets 2009).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiegold, Peter</td>
<td>iF</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>29/08/08</td>
<td>Wiegold is a composer, teacher, director and conductor. He co-directed iF with Colin Riley. Currently, Wiegold is the Head of Music Research at Brunel University. As well as ongoing engagements with the London Symphonietta, he performs and writes for <em>notes inegales</em> – an ensemble co-created with David Purser – which specialises in both improvised and written new works. Wiegold is a leading exponent of combining improvisatory and compositional skills, and collaborates extensively with non-Western musicians. Much of his work comprises teaching improvisatory skills to both amateur and professional musicians (Wiegold n.d.).</td>
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2.2.2 Gaudeamus Music Week 2008

2.2.2.1 Overview

The Gaudeamus Foundation, founded in 1945, is dedicated to the promotion of Dutch contemporary composers. In 2008, the foundation was merged into the Netherlands’ professional music body, Music Center The Netherlands (MCN). Throughout the year, the foundation hosts New music events, concert series and competitions. The Gaudeamus Music Week, held annually in Amsterdam, is the foundation’s international New music festival (see Appendices G.1 to G.7). At its core is the Gaudeamus Prize, an international competition for young composers. There are three categories: orchestral, chamber and electronic music. The winner is presented with a cash prize and commissioned to compose a work for the following year. This is a popular and prestigious competition: for the 2010 round, 21 compositions were selected out of a pool of over 400.

The festival explores international trends in New music and sound art, and promotes Dutch composers. Fieldwork observations suggest that the audience was predominantly 35 years and under (see also Woolf 2000), many of whom were also practitioners. In addition, night-time concert hall events also attracted patrons 35 and over.

In 2008, Gaudeamus used four main venues, each of which had a distinctly different character and audience base. Heuvelmans attributes the diversity of venues available in Amsterdam to “generous government funding and good infrastructure”. This enables venues to “develop their own artistic image and find an audience that fits” (interview, 05 September 2008). Venues included:

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26 From 2011, the festival is to be held in Utrecht, and from 2012 will become independent from MCN. The responsibilities set for MCN by the Dutch government were deemed not to correlate with those of the Gaudeamus Foundation, and the MCN decided to discontinue its support of the festival on 7 December 2010 (Music Center the Netherlands 2011). The city of Utrecht will financially support the festival from 2012.
• Bimhuis\(^{27}\) – a purpose-built multi-genre improvised music venue with an intimate 200-seat recital theatre situated in the Muziekgebouw

• Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ\(^{28}\) concert hall – a 725-seat venue designed for contemporary classical chamber performance

• Amsterdam Conservatorium\(^{29}\) orchestral rehearsal space which enabled performance in-the-round. Approximately 50 seats were provided.

• Paradiso\(^{30}\) – a live bands/electronic music venue housed in a converted church. Capacity is approximately 1500.

Venues were within walking distance, and concerts took place throughout the day and evening. A programme of social events, lectures and composer meetings ran concurrently with the music programme. These provided educational and networking opportunities for festival participants. Three events ran ancillary to the main programme:

• The *Night of The Unexpected* was a one-night festival at Paradiso which explored intersections between electronica, performance art and New music (see Appendix G.3)

• *Festival Klanken aan ’t IJ*, a sound sculpture festival, comprised five installations exhibited at the Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ, the Central Library Amsterdam and at the Pakhuis de Zijliger (see Appendix G.4)

• *Eurekafoon!* was a secondary school instrument invention competition, the finals of which took place at the Muziekgebouw concert hall\(^{31}\) (see Appendix G.5).

\(^{27}\) See Bimhuis website: http://bimhuis.com/home

\(^{28}\) See Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ website: http://www.muziekgebouw.nl/

\(^{29}\) See Conservatorium van Amsterdam website: http://www.ahk.nl/en/conservatorium/the-conservatory/the-building/


\(^{31}\) 65 entries from 13 schools were received for the competition. Designs were assessed against four criteria: originality, feasibility, design and type of sound. In the second round, students were guided in constructing their inventions by experts at the Technical University of Delft (Montessori Lyceum Rotterdam 2008). Information retrieved from the MCN website: http://www.muziekcentrumnederland.nl/en/contemporary/home-hedendaags/: from the Gaudeamus New music Week programme 2008 (Music Center the Nederlands); and from interview with Heuvelmans (05 September 2008).
2.2.2.2 Relevance to the Project

Like Restrung, Gaudeamus represents a diverse range of New music styles spanning acoustic, electronic and audio-visual genres, installation works and collaborative projects. One of the main differences in musical programming at Gaudeamus was the domination of electronic composition and atonal, post-serial aesthetics.

The Night of the Unexpected exhibited marked similarities to Restrung through its exploration of genre and immersive space. The programme comprised performance art, composed works, DJs, electronica and video art. Each act took place in a different part of the venue. Sometimes the performers were on stage, and at other times positioned within the audience area. Lighting was used to enhance the effect of performers disappearing whilst others appeared elsewhere.
Similarly to Restrung, Gaudeamus promotes local practitioners within an international programme, ensuring an international audience for local ensembles and composers. This has contributed to the festival’s status as an important meeting place for composers competing for the Gaudeamus Prize. As will be discussed later in this chapter,\(^{32}\) it is suggested that Restrung would benefit from a composition competition. Such a strategy provides performance and networking opportunities for composers and performers.

Of interest to the development of the evaluation framework is festival director Henk Heuvelmans’ approach to maintaining innovative curatorial content. Heuvelmans describes Gaudeamus as a showcase for international trends – not a manifestation of his “vision” as artistic director. As will be discussed, his curatorial strategy includes a system to prevent programming becoming “stagnant” by ensuring numerous voices contribute to the process (interview, 05 September 2008). The input of the Gaudeamus Prize jury and guest international ensembles is integral to maintaining this approach.

Gaudeamus successfully attracts similar target demographics to Restrung through marketing and programming strategies. Marketing materials are carefully designed and disseminated in order to reach audiences under 35 and followers of New music. Programming is diverse and competitions assist in attracting young practitioners. Gaudeamus has three distinct advantages over Restrung: it has been operating for over 65 years, is generously funded, and takes place within a city which is strongly supportive of New music (Heuvelmans, interview, 05 September 2008).

\(^{32}\) See also Chapter 5.
2.2.3 iF

2.2.3.1 Overview

iF was initially established as the biannual Isleworth Festival of Contemporary Music in 1996 (see Appendices G.8 to G.12). After five successful seasons at Isleworth, the festival moved to central London in 2005 and was relaunched as iF Festival of Contemporary Music. The relocation and re-branding signalled a bid to be more accessible to wider audiences (2006a). iF:05 comprised six concerts and a composition competition. iF:06 included eight performances and a one-day conference. Both events featured approximately one or two events per week, spread over a period of four to six weeks. The name iF has a twofold meaning: firstly, it is an acronym for Isleworth Festival, and secondly, it asks “What if …?” (Wiegold, interview 29 August 2008). This question represents the crux of the festival’s modus operandi: iF was exploratory and experimental in nature. Curators Riley and Wiegold describe the event as a “place for enquiry and exploration about the direction and development of New music in the 21st century” (iF Festival 2006b). The festival sought to stimulate “new thinking” (iF Festival 2006b), collaborative works and industry support. Music Orbit, a collective launched at iF:05, was designed to bring these objectives to fruition through “network[ing] practitioners and groups with an interest in collaboration from across a wide range of disciplines” (iF Festival 2005). Music Orbit was a successful venture, and has outlived the parent festival (Music Orbit 2010). iF took place in a number of classical and multi-genre venues throughout London including the Bush Hall, The Spitz, Royal Festival Hall and LSO St Lukes.33

33 See websites for more information: Bush Hall: http://www.bushhallmusic.co.uk; The Spitz: http://www.spitz.co.uk/; Royal Festival Hall: http://www.royalfestivalhall.org.uk/; and LSO St Lukes: http://lso.co.uk/page/3124/Venue+Hire.
2.2.3.2 Relevance

iF, like Restrung, sought to explore New music’s hybridity. The relocation from Isleworth to London included a re-focus of ambition which saw the festival open up to New music emanating from multiple contemporary genres. Wiegold and Riley contended that the majority of funding and performance opportunities for New music favoured projects situated within the classical paradigm. iF was a reaction against this:

As well as a desire to offer contemporary music a platform, the move was also a reaction against the established New music and commissioning structures, with the intention of being more open in curating work and offering opportunities to a more diverse range of creators of New music, encompassing contemporary, jazz, electronic music and rock/pop crossover” (iF 2006a).

Like Restrung, iF promoted emerging and established New musicians from a range of backgrounds. iF was created for and by practitioners, but with less focus on audience

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**Examples of performances at iF**

iF programmed only one or two events per week, therefore a sample of concerts is provided rather than a “typical day”.

*The Homemade Orchestra* melds jazz, classical, electronica and other styles to create a unique sound. Their repertoire includes “off-the-wall” arrangements of famous English songs (iF 2006a). *Close*, a work commissioned for iF:05, combined theatre, visuals and music. The performance featured soprano (Claron McFadden), multimedia/video design (Howie Bailey) and New music ensemble MOOV (amplified violin, amplified cello, electric guitar, bass guitar, percussion, loops and voice) (iF 2006a).

The finale of the 2005 programme *Platform:21* featured five contrasting groups selected through a competition. Through this process, iF aimed to increase the accessibility of contemporary classical music by opening its doors “to the streets” of London (*Festival Conducts Hunt for New Faces 2004*). The concert showcased five diverse ensembles exhibiting “different perspectives”, particularly in terms of “the line between composer/performer and between written/improvised music.” (iF 2006a). See Appendix G.9 for 2006 programme.
involvement than within the Restrung model. As will be discussed, the multi-venue approach and considerable time lapse between concerts detracted from iF’s capacity to build a sense of festivity and sociality. The programme did, however, include a number of networking opportunities for practitioners such as the Platform:21 competition (iF:05), Interactive Electronics conference (iF:06), Speed dating for choreographers and composers (iF:05 and iF:06), Music Orbit (iF:05 and iF:06). These events will be considered in second section of this chapter. Like Restrung, iF aimed to question and challenge the nature of New music, and to explore hybridity and cross-genre experimentation.

2.2.4 AURORA/ISCM World New Music Days

2.2.4.1 Overview

Aurora is a seven-day biennial festival established in 2006 by composer Matthew Hindson. The festival is held in concert halls and churches throughout Sydney’s Western suburbs including Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith and Campbelltown (see Appendix G.13). Hindson believes that this approach “democratises” New music’s availability to a broader public, since New music events are generally confined to central Sydney (interview, 13 February 2007). The festival focuses on living composers, and generates a large number of commissions and premieres. The programme includes concerts, forums, sound installations and radiophonic works broadcast on ABC Classic FM and ABC Digital Radio.

In 2010, Aurora provided its infrastructure for the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) festival, ISCM World New Music Days (hereon abbreviated as WNMD), held in a different country each year since 1923 (see Appendices G.14 to G.18). In order to accommodate this, the programme was extended to CBD venues including Angel Place, the ABC Centre’s Eugene Goossens Hall and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Recital Hall.34 The ISCM and IAMIC (International Association of Music

34 See websites for more information:
Information Centres) sponsor the festival’s Young Composer Award, open to all featured composers aged 35 and under.\(^{35}\)

![Image](image90x363.png)

### Examples of Performances at Aurora/WNMD 2010

Due to the distance between venues, each day at the festival provided a different geographical experience. Hindson aimed to include both accessible and challenging content in the programme (interview, Davis, 14 May 2010) as well as at least one composition from each ISCM region. Some examples:

Topology’s *The Pulse of Power Pt.1, Music and Politics* explored recent Australian political trends through sound bites, electronic media, piano, violin, viola, double bass and video (ISCM 2010). On Tuesday 4 May, the lunchtime concert *Momentary Pleasures* included 21 works by 21 composers performed by 21 different pianists. The composers were limited to one day and two pages of manuscript. The result was an eclectic range of miniature works. Eva Rotenberg’s *A Perfect Pitch* stood out for its originality. A pianist throws ping-pong balls into the piano. The sounds they make and the unknown quality and quantity of the bounce and trajectory in the piano and around the stage create the work differently each time it is performed (WNMD 2010:42). On Wednesday 5 May, Sydney’s Chronology Arts *Arise* concert featured new compositions combining chamber ensemble and rock instruments. On Friday 7 May, the NZTrio presented a programme focused on neo-Romantic New Zealand works. The penultimate day of the festival included Goldner Quartet’s *Four for Australia* programme comprising Australian string quartets by Peter Sculthorpe, Ian Munro, Carl Vine and Ross Edwards. That evening, Belgium’s Spectra Ensemble presented a concert of Spectralist compositions. See Appendix G.15 for programme.

#### 2.2.4.2 Relevance

Aurora, like Restrung, is an Australian practitioner-run New music event. Whilst some of Aurora’s objectives are aligned with Restrung’s, it represents a very different approach to New music presentation, and does not focus specifically on contemporary string practice. Hindson’s main objectives are audience development and the promotion of living composers. Three main strategies are employed to this effect. Firstly, Hindson aims to

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\(^{35}\) The winning piece for 2010 was Australian composer Katia Beaugeais’ *Sound Box*. Beaugeais received a cash prize and a commission opportunity from the University of Sydney.

Angel Place: http://www.cityrecitalhall.com/
Eugene Goossens Hall: http://www.abc.net.au/abcresourcehire/txt/s1546971.htm
Sydney Conservatorium of Music Recital Hall:
capture new markets through staging Aurora in areas with limited accessibility to New music (Hindson 2006). The 2010 Aurora/WNMD spread across a number of suburbs, some of which were approximately one hour’s drive from the CBD (for example, Penrith, Glenbrook, Campbelltown). This approach to audience development is markedly different to Restrung, which used a single venue and continuous programming in order to enable a crossover of audiences and to facilitate sociality. Secondly, like Restrung, the programme included free and ticketed events, facilitating access to lower income earners and curious newcomers. Thirdly, concerts reached a national audience through ABC radio broadcasts.

Social aspects of Aurora/WNMD included the opening night party, a reception on the last evening of the festival and informal social interaction at interval, and pre- and post-performances. The festival’s close affiliations with the Sydney Conservatorium provided numerous performance opportunities for emerging artists, for example, the Sydney Conservatorium Saxophone Orchestra and Sydney Conservatorium Modern Music Ensemble.

The programme was comprised solely of New music. WNMD is guided by policy requiring that a work be performed for each of the 53 regions represented by ISCM. At the same time, “the host nation has some flexibility in determining the individual themes that drive the programming of the festival” (WNMD, 2010:116). At Aurora/WNMD 2010, the majority of the regular audience comprised ISCM delegates. Davis commented that he and Hindson were disappointed in the small number of Australian representatives (interview, 14 May 2010). This highlights the fractionalised nature of Australia’s New music community\(^\text{36}\) and the need for Aurora/WNMD to improve their marketing strategies.

\(^{36}\) Discussed further throughout this chapter.
2.2.5 Dartington International Summer School (DISS)

2.2.5.1 Overview

The DISS was established in 1948 at Bryanston in response to the lack of tuition available at the Edinburgh Festival. In 1953 it moved to its current home, the Dartington Hall Estate in South Devon, England. Historically, the school has been an important meeting ground for those interested in the composition and performance of contemporary works. It has also played a significant part in the reinvigoration of neglected areas of music-making, such as early music (Dartington International Summer School 2008b).

When Henderson was appointed Director in 1985, some radical changes were made to the programme. This included the introduction of dance, film and theatre, as well as music courses in non-classical genres. To reflect these changes, Henderson amended the name from Summer School of Music to the Dartington International Summer School (see Appendices G.19 to G.22).

The programme, held annually in July and August, comprises five one-week stints with approximately 40 courses per week. Within this structure there is flexibility to stay for longer or shorter periods of time. Courses are provided in numerous disciplines and genres for all levels of musicianship. The summer school provides tutelage in classical music, jazz, rock, pop, salsa, tango and other world music genres (depending on the year). Courses are run by esteemed artists-in-residence and include composition, conducting, vocal, choral, instrumental, chamber and orchestral content. Students participate in workshops, rehearsals and performances. The school also provides a lecture series and recital programme. The DISS encourages an egalitarian atmosphere through various activities which facilitate “participatory music making” (interview, Henderson, 25 August 2008). This philosophy, espoused by composers including Holst, Cage and Wiegold (Laycock 2005), focuses on creating performance opportunities for untrained and amateur instrumentalists, and reflects “a belief in the rights of all people to have access to creative artistic experience” (Laycock 2005:25). Some examples of its implementation at DISS include:
• Students and professional musicians performing together
• The choir, a popular part of the school’s social fabric, is open to everyone regardless of age and ability
• Students and tutors live together and eat communally in the dining hall (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008).

A Typical Day at Dartington International Summer School
A typical day at the festival will comprise workshops, lessons and rehearsals during the day. From around 3pm, a number of performances transpire. Take for example the programme for Thursday 28 August 2008 (DISS 2008a:57-58). At 3.30, the Tea-time Gig took place on the Great Lawn. This comprised the Rockshop Big Band and Rockshop Choir collaborating to present a swing music programme by artists including Count Basie, Ellington, Stevie Wonder and Elvis. The performance was accompanied by a jitterbug contest. At 5pm, David Bedford’s specially commissioned piece Wake into the Sun was performed in the Dartington Hall Gardens. This site-specific work commenced with processions of musicians moving from different directions towards the central part of the Estate. Soloists improvise over the orchestra, and the piece concludes with a canon. At 7.30, the Dartington Festival Orchestra and students from the opera course combined to perform Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin in the Great Hall. At 8.15, Maxwell Davies’ The Lighthouse, a music theatre piece, was performed in the Barn Theatre with singers from the Royal Academy of Music and instrumentalists from the California Institute of the Arts. Finally, at 10.30pm, tango students presented Tango Ball: the culminating performance of the tango course for that week. See Appendix G.21 for programme excerpts.

2.2.5.2 Relevance

The inherent values of the DISS and Restrung are similar in two ways. Firstly, the DISS emphasises an egalitarian and participatory outlook for music making. The range of musicians, ages and abilities within the setting promotes a rich learning environment. A strong sense of community is established through living arrangements and shared meal times. Since the students and tutors constitute the core of the audience, barriers are broken down between audience, students, professional and amateur players. Educational and participatory experiences were integral to the Restrung conceptual design, although financial limitations affected its ability to deliver substantially in this regard (see Chapter 4 for discussion). Future incarnations of Restrung may include a schools programme
and/or a student conference for the performance and discussion of New music. It has also been mooted to include jam sessions and informal performance opportunities (these ideas will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).

Secondly, Henderson’s addition of courses in contemporary and world music genres, film, dance and theatre, reflects the hybridity of the current musical landscape. Henderson recognises that many contemporary musicians have multiple practices and interests. Programming continues to diversify each year as the DISS attracts more practitioners from non-classical genres (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008). In this way, the DISS stimulates discussion and facilitates collaboration between musical paradigms and across art forms. Through its commissions programme, the DISS has contributed substantially to the production of new works.

2.2.6 This Is Not Art (TINA)

2.2.6.1 Overview

TINA comprised five simultaneous festivals focusing on sound, theatre, visual and new media, writing and research (see Appendices G.23 to G.27). There are strong linkages between the programmes, with artists often participating in more than one. The inaugural event, founded by Marcus Westbury, took place in 1998, and comprised the National Young Writers’ Festival and National Student Media Conference. In 1999 Electrofringe was added, followed in 2000 by Sound Summit and the Independent Radio Conference. The name TINA was coined to collectivise these events. TINA continued to diversify and grow as events were added or changed each year (TINA 2010b).

Westbury created TINA in order to provide a platform for artists “whose work did not fit into the agenda of major arts festivals” (Westbury, interview, 14 November 2008). The festival pays particular attention to practitioners who embrace a DIY aesthetic. The programme features exhibitions, screenings, performances, panels, workshops, talks,
gigs, interventions, live art and special events, with a focus on new, emerging, independent artists, musicians, researchers and thinkers (This Is Not Art 2010). The festival typically hosts approximately 400 local, national and international artists and takes place in venues throughout Newcastle city. Most of these spaces are unused shopfronts and buildings. The massive influx of artists during TINA transforms Newcastle city into something resembling a temporary artist colony. The festival also provides a camping ground.

2.2.6.2 Festival Descriptions (see also Appendix G.24)

- **Electrofringe** is a festival of experimental electronic, digital and media arts and culture (Yahoo Groups 2010). The festival aims to support emerging artists and art forms and enable collaboration and discussion between new and established practitioners (Electrofringe 2010).

- The **National Young Writers’ Festival (NYWF)** prioritises content which is not represented at standard writers’ festivals. This includes “zines, comics, blogging, screenwriting, poetry, spoken word, hip hop music, journalism, autobiography, comedy, songwriting and prose” (National Young Writers’ Festival 2010). NYWF presents a programme of panels, readings, forums, round table discussions, workshops, launches, performances and readings.

- **Sound Summit** is a festival of independent and innovative music, focusing predominantly on electronic music and hip hop. The festival includes gigs, discussions and panels and explores relationships between music, creativity and commerce (Sound Summit 2010).

- **Critical Animals Research Symposium** is a 3-day event designed for postgraduate students and practice-led researchers. It includes paper presentations, panels, forums and artist presentations. The key areas for research include: “gender, performance, contemporary poetics, and the intersection of arts practice with the personal and everyday, with lived experience: pop culture, community, trauma” (Critical Animals 2010).
• Crack Theatre Festival, established in 2009, celebrates experimental, fringe, cross-artform theatre and performance through a programme of performances, workshops and forums (Crack Theatre Festival 2011).

A Typical Day at TINA
A typical day might include watching panel discussions about independent music production and the relationships between art and life. One might attend a spoken word event, contemplate an exhibition of experimental knitting or cartooning, visit a zine shop, and watch a new theatre performance. In the evenings, various gigs – predominantly electronic music – take place throughout the city.

As a practitioner, I have been to TINA twice (2008/2009), and contributed to the NYWF and Critical Animals Research Symposium (See Appendix F.10). My presentations included an appearance as a spoken word artist/cellist; participating in a round table discussion and panel for festival curation; speaking on a panel about the relationship between art and affect; and performing on an experimental panel. The experimental panel – part of NYWF – comprised six artists working on their art form in a public space. I played cello; others wrote poetry, took photos, worked on a thesis; recorded and manipulated sounds within the space. Members of the public moved freely throughout the room. The panel ended with a 10-minute discussion of the artists’ experiences. The artists agreed that – besides the aural component of music – it was not obvious a panel was in progress. Those working on laptops felt that they did not contribute much to the overall “vibe” of the space. See Appendix G.24 to G.26 for programme excerpts.

2.2.6.3 Relevance

TINA is a festival of independent and emerging art and thought. By supporting that which cannot be easily categorised, and by promoting discussion on issues surrounding alternative artistic practice, TINA has become an important event for the sustainability of Australian experimental arts. The community that gathers in Newcastle represents diverse artistic interests. They are unified by virtue of working outside the parameters of mainstream culture. In these ways, TINA presents a similar modus operandi to Restrung. Both festivals promote marginalised art forms and emerging artists, and bring together geographically disparate but likeminded communities. TINA is a multi-venue festival; however the enormous influx of festival-goers into Newcastle creates the feeling that the city is the festival. TINA is built around a participatory core in which festival-goers act in both spectatorial and performative roles. This is facilitated through the extensive programming of forums, panels, readings and so forth. Like TINA, Restrung encouraged
direct participation by practitioners, students and audience members through discursive, educational and interactive activities. When applying to participate at TINA, artists are invited to contribute to pre-organised events and/or to submit original project proposals. This creates a highly participatory curatorial environment in which artists as well as artistic directors govern festival content. Such an approach is recommended for future incarnations of Restrung (see Chapter 5).

2.2.7 Straight Out of Brisbane (SOOB)

2.2.7.1 Overview

SOOB was an independent arts festival held over five days in August in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006 (see Appendices G.28 to G.32). The festival took place in indoor and outdoor locations throughout Fortitude Valley and the Brisbane CBD. SOOB defines independent art and culture as that which is “not produced for profit, is created outside of the framework of multinational corporate enterprise or large-scale government-funded arts organisations, is promoting and fostering DIY aesthetics or is excluded from mainstream public debate” (Straight Out of Brisbane 2003). The festival was established by a group of “artistic peers” (Straight Out of Brisbane 2006d) who felt Brisbane was “institutionalised and hostile to emerging artists” (Straight Out of Brisbane 2006a). Like TINA and iF, SOOB aimed to support those practitioners whose work was not being represented by the major festivals, and/or whose work did not fit the criteria set by government and corporate funding bodies. SOOB incorporated a number of streams including ideas, music, screen, performance, visual arts, new media, game design, writing and urban theory (SOOB 2003). SOOB also ran events throughout the year. Future, but unrealised, plans included founding an artist-run not-for-profit space that would assist independent artists to build sustainable careers (Straight Out of Brisbane 2003; 2006a).

The 2003 and 2004 SOOB festivals were the second largest festivals in Queensland in their respective years (in terms of the number of events and participating artists). SOOB
2004 had approximately 30,000 visitors (including website visitors), 207 events and 2,000 artists (SOOB 2006a). In 2006, the festival ran at an enormous loss, and after failing to obtain Arts Queensland funding for 2007, is now defunct. Eltham attributed this financial failure to two factors. Firstly, the massive exodus of the festival’s target market to Melbourne and abroad (interview 07 February 2007). This phenomenon, which is nothing new to Brisbane, is something that SOOB was attempting to counteract through providing creative opportunities within the local context (2006c). Secondly, the main losses were made on poorly attended ticketed events: the 2006 SOOB was much more ambitious than previous incarnations in terms of programming and expenditure. This was unfortunate given that – if Eltham is correct – the size of the target market had dwindled (interview, 07 February 2007).

### Typical Day at SOOB

A day at SOOB 2006 might have included a visit to the Juggler’s Market Day to see and purchase art, wares, zines and so forth. One could contemplate an art or photographic exhibition, swap tomes at the SOOB book exchange, or sit in on a panel discussion about politics or freedom in the media. Numerous workshops took place in which one could, for example, experiment with digital music software or garner hints on how to get started in the fashion industry. Evening gigs featured an eclectic range of independent groups from Brisbane, interstate and abroad. Many gigs were themed by genre, and featured several acts working in, for example, hip hop, metal, experimental electronica or folk. See Appendix G.31 for programme excerpt.

### 2.2.7.2 Relevance

Like Restrung, SOOB aimed to provide a place for young, emerging Brisbane artists whose work lies outside the mainstream. Regular festivals for experimental and emerging arts, such as SOOB and TINA, contribute to a city’s cultural identity. Further, they have the potential to substantially increase a city’s cultural output by providing exhibition and performance opportunities (Hartley and Haseman 2000:28-29). In a way, Restrung aimed to fill the gap left by SOOB’s departure. Whilst the Restrung programme focused on contemporary string practice, and was smaller in size and scope, there were many overlaps in modus operandi. Both festivals focused on Brisbane artists within an
interstate and international context. Both included participatory and social activities, such as forums, panels and interactive installations. Both were artist-run initiatives with the long-term goal of supporting and developing Brisbane’s creative networks.

2.3 Festival Comparative Analysis

This section evaluates some of the strategies used by curators to improve market development and increase creative success. A review of marketing strategies reveals a number of issues regarding the efficacy of campaigns in reaching new audiences. Analysis of data collected from observational work and interviews illuminates the value of innovative staging and programming, and socially-focused curation. The final section discusses the festivals’ evaluation strategies.

2.3.1 Marketing

In this section, I describe the target audiences for the festivals, and modes of dissemination for marketing materials. Secondly, I critique the text and imagery. Thirdly, I explore some of the issues which detract from the success of marketing campaigns, specifically with regard to New music festivals.

2.3.1.1 Marketing Channels

It is beyond the scope of this exegesis to provide detailed marketing plans. What is of interest is how effectively these festivals communicate their identities, particularly through imagery, text and the methods selected to disseminate information. The reviewed festivals all employed a mixture of email and mail outs, radio and press coverage, posters and flyers, online news feeds, venue advertising, social media and press releases. In addition, SOOB and TINA incorporated “guerrilla” marketing techniques such as chalked messages on pavements and stencilled advertisements (Levinson 2007). TINA relies heavily on low-budget tactics such as word-of-mouth advertising and the call for submissions: almost every festival-goer is a programme participant (Westbury, interview 14 November 2008). Similarly, the call for enrolments for DISS acts as the main
marketing channel, with the website serving as an information portal for prospective and enrolled students.

As multi-arts festivals, SOOB and TINA have a distinct advantage over specialised New music festivals: their wide spectrum of content is more likely to attract a broader range of audiences. The New music specialisation of Gaudeamus, Aurora and iF, by contrast, tends to diminish a festival’s potential to draw in diverse audiences. It is often assumed to be inaccessible to those not versed in classical traditions.\(^{37}\) The analysis of marketing materials below also suggests that it is rarely promoted effectively to attract new audiences. Furthermore, the programmes tend to be practitioner-oriented, rather than audience-focused. Nonetheless, curators rate market development high on their agenda. As Riley, co-curator of iF comments, “There is a big divide between what is regarded as high culture, and popular culture … I don’t think those are useful categories. I don’t want to join a team. Everyone should enjoy all kinds of music” (Brunel University 2004:1). The implementation of strategies which fulfilled this aim, however, appear limited. iF was mainly promoted through the website, email lists and mail-outs. Practitioner-focused events at iF:06 included an ensemble competition designed to promote the festival and uncover emerging New musicians. This was one of a number of strategies used to “take contemporary classical music into the streets, to make it accessible to all” (Brunel University 2004:1). Another strategy was the establishment of Music Orbit, a New music initiative designed to facilitate cross-artform collaborations. Music Orbit provided iF with greater potential to attract practitioners and audiences for experimental dance, theatre and the visual arts. Whilst these strategies assist with creative growth and industry development, their focus on praxis diminishes the likelihood of attracting sizeable new audiences.

Budget and timeframe are also serious considerations. The expensive and time-consuming assignment of hosting international delegates for Aurora/WNMD 2010 seriously affected the festival’s capacity to market itself effectively (Davis, interview, 14 May 2010). The festival relied on word-of-mouth, and advertising through industry

\(^{37}\) See discussion in Chapter 1.
channels such as tertiary music departments and partnerships with ABC Classic FM and the Australian Music Centre. Concerts were, however, moderately- to well-attended by ISCM delegates, practitioners and industry specialists. The representation of non-practising listeners was small. For Hindson, this is balanced out by radio audiences for live broadcasts which substantially increased remote attendance at the festival (interview, 13 February 2007).

A festival’s age is an important factor (Maughan 2006). Gaudeamus and DISS rely on an audience base and reputation that has grown steadily over many decades (Heuvelmans, interview, 05 September 2008). DISS’s firmly established international reputation means that courses are usually booked out well in advance of the festival. The festival is mainly marketed through tertiary institutions, music associations and word-of-mouth. The Gaudeamus Week’s competitions programme is marketed along similar lines, and contributes substantially to attracting practitioners and lending the festival prestige. In addition, younger listeners are reached through social media, flyers and posters. For the evening concert programme, which also attracts older patrons (over 35), Heuvelmans concentrates on mail-outs (interview, 05 September 2008).

The following section discusses the effectiveness of marketing materials in communicating programme content to both established and new audiences.

2.3.1.2 Marketing the Festival Identity: Who is the Audience?

“Festival labels” – the festival name, motto, imagery and so forth – set the tone for the event, and are crucial to attracting the attention of target audiences (Cremona 2005:6). For example, mixed programming at Gaudeamus and iF was designed to attract a broader audience base. How effectively did their marketing materials convey this? Were they successful in their intentions? Increasingly, New music festivals are choosing to use non-musical imagery. This approach de-emphasises classical connotations in order to bring attention to contemporary artistic diversity. For example, the 2008 Gaudeamus emblem (see Appendix G.1) features brightly coloured stylised fern fronds. In the centre of each
furl a small target-like circle features the letter M – denoting Muziekweek. In a spore-like fashion, these targets appear to float from the fern in all directions around the programme cover. The image conveys experimentation, growth, fertility and expectation. The 2010 Gaudeamus motif (see Appendix G.7) comprises a diamond with hand-drawn bunny ears. The ears are different in colour and design, and they appear to have grown out of dirt-patches on the bunny’s head. The right one has tendrils that reach into the sky. Multi-coloured bubbles rise from the ears, and the M target-sign features as the bunny’s nose. Like the 2008 image, this depiction conveys sentiments associated with imagination and growth. The bunny image also denotes playfulness and – by virtue of the diamond – suggests quality.

The website and programme text, however, are rather utilitarian in tone, and may not be particularly helpful for New music newcomers. The website directly introduces the Gaudeamus Prize jury and lists the nominated compositions (see appendix G.6). Similarly, the programme provides brief introductions to the Music Centre of the Netherlands, the International Gaudeamus Week and then the nominated works (see appendix G.2). There is no advertising spiel as such, making it unlikely that these materials would draw new audiences to the event. Nevertheless, Heuvelmans explained that there is a good awareness of New music in Amsterdam, and a sizeable audience has built up over the past 25 years (interview, 05 September 2008). My observations at the festival support this. Whilst this phenomenon could be used as evidence that less explanatory text is needed, such an approach still limits the festival’s capacity to attract new audiences. To counteract this, Gaudeamus has incorporated a one-night event Night of the Unexpected, which is targeted towards a younger audience. Heuvelmans hopes that this audience – who come to see experimental electronica and video art – “will be drawn to the main concert programme” (interview, 05 September 2008). The main image for Night of the Unexpected 2008 (see Appendix G.3) comprised a black background with the event name in a font resembling light bulbs, surrounded by floating M target signs. The blurb promised a “focus on new developments in contemporary music”, and a programme which spans “styles and genres: experimental beats to composed repertoire” (translated from the Dutch) (Music Center the Nederlands 2008:c). The flyer’s simple
and mysterious design created a sense that this would be an unusual and diverse programme. The event attracted a mixed audience of New music and electronica enthusiasts.

With similar intent, Davis stated that WNMD has also avoided classical music imagery in recent years (personal conversation, 6 May 2010). The 2010 programme cover (see Appendix G.14) features unfurling ribbons in vibrant blue, pink and yellow on a white background. The programme masthead is red with lighter red and white lettering. Simplicity, movement and celebration are conveyed through the choice of colours and the ribbons motif. In honour of Aurora, WNMD 2010 was subtitled Living Music, Aurora’s motto (see Appendix G.13). The website and programme text reads academically, and is targeted towards practitioners and New music enthusiasts (see Appendices G.16 and G.17). Due to narrow marketing and limited distribution – for which a budget deficit was largely responsible – the festival was attended predominantly by the ISCM delegates, a small representation of local practitioners and even fewer general listeners. It became evident – from numerous informal conversations and observations – that very few people, beyond the cognoscenti, were aware that the festival was taking place. Davis also commented on the festival’s “lack of visibility” (interview, 14 May 2010).

iF refrains from using classical imagery and from mentioning music in its title (Appendix G.11). The subtitle explains the festival’s mission: New music/new thinking (Appendix G.12). The website’s splash page uses a purple, white and tan colour scheme, with the festival’s motif appearing in Flash: a simple graphic design featuring small circles (Appendix G.11). The digital aesthetic suggests that the festival will have computer-generated and perhaps experimental content. The first clue that classical instrumentation is included in the programme is a small photo on the home page in which a cellist can be spotted amongst a group of what look like rock guitarists (Appendix G.12). Behind the stage, there is a large video art projection featuring repetitive images of eyes and faces – indicating a visual aspect to programming. The website text explains that iF is a “celebration of New music in London. An exploration about the direction and

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38 Flash is a computer application that enables animation on websites.
development of New music in the 21st century” (2006b). The visitor is asked to ponder a number of questions:

Where is New music heading? What are the new currents and the latest sounds? Who are the creators of tomorrow – and how are they working? What binds the vast array of styles and approaches to creating music today? What pushes them apart? (iF 2006b).

iF’s manifesto, the imagery and text, combined to create a picture of cross-genre multimedia experimental performance. Programming was predominantly practitioner-focused, as evidenced by initiatives such as Music Orbit, Speed Dating for Composers and Choreographers, the Platform:21 competition, and the conference (discussed further in the Staging and Programming and Social Aspects sections). Wiegold observed that there is a small, but strong, New music community in London. Within this community, however, there is a substantial percentage of members who “watch what is going on” rather than regularly attend events (interview, 29 August 2008). Wiegold and Riley aimed to increase the participation of this community and hoped also to attract dance, sound and visual artists, and musicians working in other genres, through fostering inter-arts collaborations. Unfortunately, iF folded in 2006 due to financial problems.

The Dartington International Summer School – by virtue of an extensive and reputable history – requires only basic marketing. Visual components of the website and programme are predominantly photos of classical instruments, students, tutors and performers, taken within the Dartington Estate (see appendix G.19 to G.22). The overall impression evokes the Western Classical music tradition. However, the inclusion of photos depicting world music, children’s courses, amateur and professional players, young and elderly performers, provides a sense of inclusivity and variety. The text provides essential information such as enrolment requirements, accommodation options, course descriptions and so forth. Dartington’s marketing materials reflect a festival which is firmly established, traditional yet open-minded, reputable, diverse and community-driven.
By contrast, TINA and SOOB’s marketing targets young audiences with activist and artistic interests. The programme cover for the TINA 2009 (Appendix G.23), for example, depicts two casually dressed human figures with animal heads. In the background a collage of dilapidated buildings creates a dark apocalyptic setting. Hand-drawn geometric patterns, resembling a futuristic cityscape, emerge from the skyline. Similar shapes hang upside down from the top of the masthead. Besides the striped red socks worn by the female figure, and the green jacket worn by the male, the colours are mostly muted greys, blacks and whites. There is a hint of blue-green ocean on the left side of the picture. This artful blend of mismatched images conveys the questionable vestiges of human progress: decay, waste, but also development and metamorphosis.

Both TINA and SOOB are collective-run ventures with ample government funding secured at local, state and federal levels. The two festivals balance their DIY ideology with government policy requirements in order to procure financial assistance. For example, TINA’s festival descriptions are objectives-focused, with generous use of terms denoting innovation and excellence. These include “skills development”, “emergent forms” and “innovative independent music”. An ethos of radicalism is conjured through such means as referring to participants as “trouble-makers”, “DIY culture makers”, and “quasi-intellectuals”. Furthermore, the egalitarian and highly participatory nature of TINA is emphasised through phrases such as: “meet and collaborate with fellow creatives”; “a conversation between equals”; “an exchange between emerging and established artists” (This is Not Art 2010a).

SOOB used a similar approach, couching the festival within the parameters necessary to be accountable for government funding, and to convey a sense of artistic anarchy. SOOB’s 2006 website (Appendix G.28) includes a hand-painted, vibrantly coloured masthead denoting a festival of lively creative content. The white lettering, angled diagonally, bleeds into the background, and to the left an orange-yellow abstraction of the text depicts a fiery, rapidly falling SOOB. Like TINA and Gaudeamus, there are visual hints of fertility and new growth, in this case symbolised by what appear to be green
seedlings reaching for the sky. Differently from TINA, SOOB’s masthead uses exclusively bright pigments. Rather than depicting decay through dark imagery, it uses the powerful colours of fire and flowers to render the life/death cycle.

SOOB’s manifesto (2006c) both acknowledges accountability for government support and conveys SOOB’s anti-establishment ideology. The former aim is captured in pertinent phrases such as: “showcasing and development opportunities”; “new and emerging artforms”; and “infrastructure for the independent sector” (2006a). The latter aim is evident in SOOB’s impassioned account of its raison d’être: to provide exhibition and performance opportunities for Brisbane’s burgeoning population of underground artists. SOOB refers to this “rich folk culture of participation” as “bedroom art”:

Last year we came up with a rather pithy name to sum up this brand of arts practice: bedroom art. It seemed funny at the time. But the more we think about it, the more it makes sense and seems prescient. Most art is created in bedrooms nowadays because the spaces to bring it to greater attention aren't there, and neither is the infrastructure to support emerging communities (SOOB 2006c).

The festival endeavoured to alleviate Brisbane’s “cultural cringe” by empowering artists and audiences to appreciate the quality of their own creative product (2006c).

Restrung had similar intentions to SOOB, in terms of providing “a new form of community cultural development, whose community of focus is a particularly disadvantaged and disempowered community – our own” (2006c). SOOB’s celebration of Brisbane’s extensive history in experimental and underground arts is comparable to Restrung’s celebration of the Brisbane contemporary string practice scene. Whilst such sentiments were not spelt out in Restrung marketing materials, they formed the core of its modus operandi. Pursuing a more politically charged approach could possibly improve Restrung’s capacity to attract the target audiences of SOOB and TINA.
2.3.1.3 Issues Associated with Marketing New music

There are a number of issues affecting effective promotion of New music festivals. Through comparing the literature review and the festivals outlined in this chapter, a number of these issues have been illuminated. Firstly, in a general sense, New music organisations, as with other members of the small to medium size arts sector, suffer from insufficient funding opportunities to allow long-term sustainable growth. Further, all arts companies – especially in the heritage arts – struggle to attract younger audiences (Davis, interview 14 May 2010). Davis commented that due to the lack of marketing budget, Aurora/WNMD was hoping to secure the sponsorship of a major organisation, specifically the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO): “If we had managed to get one major organization on board, it may have made things slightly different”. Unfortunately the SSO was not interested in the proposal, thus decreasing Aurora/WNMD’s capacity to penetrate further into the market. Secondly, many of the problems associated with marketing New music stem from its unstable identity. It is often presented as an offshoot from the classical tradition. However, from a traditional classical audience perspective, New music is often considered “difficult” (see Chapter 1). Thirdly, marketing materials tend to assume that the reader is knowledgeable about new and/or classical music. Such positioning potentially alienates, or simply may not pique the interest of new audiences.

To verify the accuracy of these observations, I conducted an informal interview with non-practitioner, Barry Saunders. Saunders has limited knowledge of new and classical music, but a very good knowledge of experimental pop and rock genres and digital arts. He attended three performances at Aurora/WNMD: Chronology Arts’ Arise, NZ Trio’s Triple Helix and David Pereira and Timothy Young’s Bliss and Transfiguration (see appendix G.15). Saunders proposed that, “like any artform, New music is referential, and will appeal to dedicated fans on a deeper level” (interview, 18 May 2010). Saunders revealed that he felt unable to truly appreciate New music due to “a lack of familiarity with the classical vocabulary”. However, he was able to recognise many non-classical elements in the works due to his knowledge of noise art and industrial music. He

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39 In terms of visibility, market penetration and marketing opportunities.
commented that, “If you pull New music out of the ‘bleeding edge’ classical, and re-contextualise it, it would fit well in other genres – noise art … avant-garde noise music … you can even draw connections with industrial” (interview, 18 May 2010). Further, Saunders observed that “social posturing” in a concert scenario is far more “difficult” than at an art gallery. Modern art has a social aspect: one can discuss the works with colleagues over a glass of wine. Concerts, however, require silence, lessening opportunities for musical discussion. Saunders’ observations confirm some of the audience reception issues identified in this project. They also highlight the proposed solutions. New music’s accessibility may be enhanced through:

- Using more inclusive language in marketing materials, which gives equal emphasis to classical and non-classical elements of the programme
- Incorporating participatory and educational events in order to increase involvement with, and awareness of, musical content
- Enhancing the social aspects of festivals through strategies such as continuous programming and the use of informal venues.

Another pertinent issue lies within the New music fraternity itself. According to Davis (interview, 14 May 2010), the sheer diversity of New music, and the accompanying political stratification, are directly responsible for difficulties in publicising efforts. Daryl Buckley opined that the community is so fractionalised it has “a) little ability to perceive or apprehend itself, and, therefore, b) no possibility to organise, or c) make claims on behalf of itself as a cultural activity to the government, other institutions or Australian society” (1993:9). According to Davis, New music can be divided into four broad areas: “contemporary classical, non-score based practice, sound art and experimental streams”. Whilst the streams feed into each other, each produces work with different political motivations. Davis observes that practitioners, particularly in Australia, divide into “silos of practice” and tend not to support the work of the other streams. For example, Ensemble Offspring’s collaboration with SCM Electronics at Aurora/WNMD attracted very few sound artists: “There is a resistance from those people to engage even if the work is relevant because [they feel] that their individual political stance might be
undermined by developing a collaboration or cross-over” (interview, 14 May 2010). This reflects the separation between the concert hall scene – dominated by contemporary classical practitioners – and the underground sound and noise scenes which reside “on the fringes”, in small and semi-legal venues (interview, 14 May 2010). Underground practitioners can rarely promote their work widely due to government licensing restrictions. Hence, the most experimental events are often unable to fit funding scheme requirements. Festivals such as SOOB and TINA successfully tread the line between compliance to government policy requirements and maintaining a sense of artistic rebellion. This is achieved through adherence to the prescribed rhetoric for grant applications and acquittals, and offset by a strong ethos supporting marginalised and DIY culture. TINA 2009, for example, included a roundtable discussion in which entrepreneurial DIY practitioners described their underground – and often illegal – events (Appendix G.26).

The Restrung model can be seen to be more aligned with TINA and SOOB than Aurora/WNMD. It used formal and informal performance contexts and hybrid programming in order to mix audiences and performers within the festival space. An additional and highly important benefit of the festival form is that the pooling of resources can assist with staging underground acts which may otherwise be ineligible for government funding. Through this hybrid approach, the model was intended to open up ways for developing, experiencing and thinking about New music.

2.3.2 Staging and Programming

Festivals provide a unique space for market development through programming (Steel 2003:7-8). This quality is optimised in models which incorporate strategies to increase the likelihood of festival-goers encountering new experiences. Such strategies include mixed and/or continuous programming, educational and participatory events, free

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40 For discussions about how the language required for government grant applications affects cultural output and New music’s public image, see Macarthur 2010 and Kalantzis and Cope 1994.
performances and festival passes. This section explores some of the programming and staging methods used by the six festivals under review.

2.3.2.1 Approaches to programming

Events such as Restrung, Wordless Music (New York City) (see Appendix G.33), and Gaudeamus’ Night of the Unexpected, have experimented with positioning New music within non-classical programmes. As noted in Chapter 1, New music is more often presented within a classical music programme. Given the rift between classical and New music supporters (Dusman 2005:131; Frey 2003:84; Beaumont 1998:93; Guldberg 1987:191), some organisations – particularly orchestral companies – appear almost apologetic about its inclusion in their programmes (Nielsen 2003:21). Instead, as Nielsen suggests, New music would benefit from marketing and programming strategies which work to build the audience’s trust by upholding innovation as a major selling point (2003:21).

SOOB and TINA adopt this approach in their programmes of emergent and experimental arts. The combination of free and ticketed events and mixed programming – featuring participatory, discursive, educational, hybrid and genre-specific interpretations of multiple art forms – encourages festival-goers to encounter and engage with new experiences. Courses held within the festival timeframe generate new works as the festivals progress. For example, the Crack Cracked Cracking Laboratory: Table For Two invites solo and group theatre artists to collaborate daily in the creation of a “national performance” improvised experimental piece (TINA 2008:20). These programming strategies attract an audience resembling Restrung’s target market: young arts-minded professionals and students with omnivorous taste. At SOOB, for example, 90% of festival-goers identified as artists (Fallu and Eltham, 2003:2), 63% were aged between 18 and 35, and 92% were under 35 (Fallu and Eltham, 2003:1).

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41 Wordless Music is an ongoing concert series which programmes New music ensembles and alternative/experimental rock, pop and cross-genre bands. Since it is not a festival, an evaluation has not been included in this chapter. However, given its relevance to the Restrung project, it will be discussed in Chapter 4.
Like SOOB and TINA, DISS can be seen to exhibit participatory, inclusive and educational features, albeit steeped within the traditions of Western Classical music. Although the programme does not centre on emergent and experimental arts, the school has a strong compositional tradition, and an extensive New music component. Accessibility to events is facilitated through the payment of a one-off fee for food, accommodation, concerts and tuition, enabling complete freedom once within the festival space. Mixed and continuous programming situates classical music alongside contemporary and world genres, which, like Restrung, has the effect of musical de-hierarchisation. Further, it provides opportunities for musicians of all ages and abilities, courses for non-musicians (for example, dance courses), and encourages participants to learn new genres. In these ways, it promotes accessibility and egalitarianism in music-making. This egalitarian approach is reflected in all aspects of the model: no distinction is made between professional musicians, students and spectators in the Dining Hall, where everyone is required to wait in line for food, and sit at communal tables (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008). Strategies such as these encourage a social environment, which in turn lead to discussions and musical collaborations which would be less likely to occur outside an immersive festival space.

By contrast, the Aurora/WNMD programme followed a traditional concert hall style: there was very little in the way of interactive and participatory programming. The festival solely featured the work of living composers. It attracted an audience comprising almost exclusively professional practitioners, making it more akin to an academic or professional conference. Artistic Director Hindson did, however, incorporate strategies designed to enhance accessibility to new audiences. These included live radio broadcasts; a festival pass offer providing a substantial discount for regular concert-goers; and staging performances throughout central and Western Sydney.

Whilst the festival historically tends to centre on New music stemming from the classical tradition, the 2010 Aurora/WNMD festival included a number of cross-genre performances incorporating popular influences. For example, the Electric Trio’s *Future of Music?* concert featured New music works rearranged for electric guitar, bass guitar
and drum kit; and Chronology Arts’ concert *Arise*, comprised commissioned works for combined chamber ensemble and rock band. Informal discussions with Andreas Engstrom (editor of *World New Music Magazine* and founder/editor of *Nutida Musik*)\(^{42}\) indicated that a number of international delegates deemed these performances “out of keeping” (interview, 15 May 2010) with the WNMD ethos, which tends to focus on atonal, minimalist and Spectralist aesthetics. Delegates were also critical of the high proportion of neo-romantic works performed by the NZTrio (New Zealand) and Goldner Quartet (Australia). These criticisms illustrate how the style of festival, and the audience it attracts, affects reception to the music. On the other hand, Davis reported that the ISCM General Assembly was generally “impressed” by Hindson’s eclectic approach to programming (interview, 14 May 2010).

Davis noted that WNMD’s identification within an historical lineage of “old guard Euro-focused” festivals (interview, 14 May 2010) means that it is unlikely to attract audiences beyond the contemporary classical community. He believes that the festival would benefit from increasing its representation of diverse contemporary styles. The 2012 WNMD appears to be doing just this. It is to be held in Belgium, where New music streams – in sound art, composition and improvisation – tend to be mutually supportive (Davis, interview, 14 May 2010). By contrast, Davis opined that the phenomenon of “silos of practice” in Australia tends to limit cross-genre experimentation and cooperative support, as evidenced by the poor attendance rate of Australian practitioners at Aurora/WNMD. Davis believes that there is enormous potential for engagement between the different New music streams as well as with mainstream practitioners: \(^{43}\)

This is a challenge generally in our scene: how do we overcome these silos of practice? I understand perfectly the need for people with different approaches, different political, aesthetic and artistic views to separate themselves … But politically it seems impossible to find a way to connect

\(^{42}\) *World New Music Magazine* is the official annual publication of the ISCM. *Nutida Musik* is a quarterly New music magazine based in Sweden.

\(^{43}\) These issues will be further explored in the Social Aspects section.
these groups. The Australian Music Centre has been struggling with this for years (Davis, interview, 14 May 2010).

This comment highlights the need to find new support mechanisms for Australian New music practitioners.

In terms of reaching new audiences, Hindson noted ABC Classic FM broadcasts as the most effective strategy (interview, 13 February 2007). However, Davis found the “friendly, informative” approach used by radio announcers to be “feeble”, and unlikely to pique the interest of experimental arts audiences. Rather, it seemed to aim at making New music palatable to classical listeners:

If you are a classical FM listener, you may be able to stomach it. If you are a music practitioner you cringe, but you understand the need for it. If you are in the experimental arts scene – a potential new audience – it just wouldn’t register. It comes back to a communication issue and how you bridge this gap (interview, 14 May 2010).

Since Hindson counts radio listenership as the most important audience (due to its size), this element of staging is integral to the festival’s ability to grow. It may be beneficial to reconsider how commentary is delivered as this is crucial to its reception. In terms of physical staging, Aurora/WNMD may benefit from the inclusion of informal venues which have an established audience base for experimental music and art. This would be appropriate for performers who incorporate aspects derived from popular music idioms into their work. These staging strategies could potentially open the programme to a wider audience base.

Gaudeamus used this approach for staging the Night of the Unexpected, which incorporates composed music, installation works, video art, DJs, experimental dance music/electronica, performance art and immersive techniques. The one-night event takes place at Paradiso, a famous 1500-capacity venue which hosts folk, soul, country, reggae,
blues, electronica and popular artists (Paradiso 2010). Through using an informal venue with an established audience base for popular idioms, Heuvelmans hopes to find new, younger audiences who will then be attracted “to the main concert programme” at the Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ (interview, 05 September 2008).

Similarly to Gaudeamus, iF positioned itself firmly within the New music paradigm – with no overt references to classical music in marketing materials. Concerts were presented over approximately four to six weeks, in different venues and on different days, making it more akin to a concert series. Performance contexts, however, were chosen to attract both classical audiences – e.g., LSO St Luke’s and Royal Festival Hall – and popular music audiences – e.g., the Bush Hall and The Spitz. The programme presented an in-depth exploration of merging genres: a “mixed programme round a core of new/experimental music” (iF 2006b). There was a high content of improvised music and electronica; visual/musical collaborations; and groups inspired by the folk, pop and rock traditions.

iF was intended to encourage the production and promotion of New music. The question is whether it could have incorporated more strategies to improve accessibility. The festival used informal and formal venues, and presented an eclectic programme of music exhibiting New music, popular and experimental tendencies. According to Wiegold, there is a strong audience base in London to support this kind of festival: “there is a contemporary music village in London ... people who go to new theatre, new plays ... they are not a classical audience … [it] borders on a jazz audience” (interview, 29 August 2008). Whilst iF was moderately well-attended by this audience, the festival’s marketing materials and website suggest that its ability to draw in new audiences could be improved. Indeed, Wiegold remarked that “it would be good if [the audience for New music] crossed more strata” (interview, 29 August).

I have identified a number of strategies which could potentially address this issue. Firstly, participatory elements of iF’s programme were practitioner-oriented, for example, the conference and Music Orbit initiative. The addition of interactive activities for non-
practitioners may have encouraged greater involvement. Secondly, the press release for iF (Brunel University 2004) indicates Riley and Wiegold’s ambition to encourage the attendance of curious new listeners. The text used on the website, however, appears to assume that its readership is knowledgeable about the nature of New music. The website could be improved through providing more accessible text and layout in order to reach broader audiences. Thirdly, alternative staging strategies could be considered. For example, it may have been beneficial to programme concerts in closer succession, or to include continuous programming, in order to facilitate a cross-pollination of audiences. It may have been helpful to choose venues in closer proximity, and which have an established audience base for experimental arts. These strategies could potentially facilitate audience development through enhancing educational, participatory and social aspects of the festival.

2.3.3 Social Aspects

2.3.3.1 Introduction

This section evaluates how effectively the six festivals create socially-focused educational and creative opportunities for both practitioners and non-practitioners. Social, participatory activities encourage involvement with:

- Programme content
- Discussion of important issues relevant to the festival’s focus
- Development of professional and/or hobby skills
- Interaction between audience and artists.

Given the range of festival models presented here, there are a number of different approaches to be discussed.


**Practitioner-focused Festivals**

All the festivals under review attract a high proportion of creative practitioners. TINA and SOOB’s focus on emergent art forms draws a young, creative audience from multiple arts and media disciplines. As a school, DISS is almost exclusively attended by participating amateur, student and professional musicians. The three New music festivals attract New music composers and performers. Each festival features discursive and collaborative activities designed to enhance practitioners’ social and participatory experiences. This aspect of programming is less evident, for example, at major popular music festivals such as Big Day Out or Livid. Whilst Livid performers meet backstage, engage in conversation and attend social events, the emphasis is on the stage: there is little emphasis on the conversations surrounding the performances. Further, at such festivals, there is very little direct contact between performers and the audience, and the majority of festival-goers are unlikely to be practising musicians.

2.3.3.2 Discussion

At Aurora/WNMD, Davis noted that the Campbelltown Arts Centre worked the hardest to involve the local community on a social level. Campbelltown catered for both the Opening Night and Closing Night celebrations. The Opening Night’s Piano Burning event\(^{44}\) attracted a sizeable audience including families and children. Piano Burning, created by Annea Lockwood in the 1960s, still elicits strong reactions, and fuelled heated discussion amongst spectators. One did not need musical knowledge to understand it, yet it inspired the audience to ask questions central to New music’s core: “What is this? What is the point? How is it art? Why is it music? What’s it doing in a music festival?” (Davis, interview, 14 May 2010). Some onlookers were unsettled by the performance. The piano was still in working order: Why was it being burned when it could be donated to a retirement home? (Davis, interview, 14 May 2010). The high attendance rate and ensuing discussions stimulated by this event provide an interesting example of how non-practitioners can be attracted to and involved in a New music festival. The inclusion of more accessible events could raise Aurora’s profile, particularly given the largely untapped markets within the suburbs where the festival is held. There is an opportunity to present locale-specific programming (for example, locally-produced or locally-inspired

\(^{44}\) Piano Burning is literally what its title suggests: the burning of a piano.
works), informal performances, family-friendly and educational events.

Given that the majority of the audience for Aurora/WNMD 2010 was not local to the venues, most festival-goers were required to embark on lengthy journeys between concerts. A number of ISCM delegates commented that travel time and the four-hour gap between performances made the days tiring. Potentially, the time lapse between performances could have been used for discursive or educational events such as forums and workshops. Considering the lack of scheduled activities outside the concert programme, these initiatives could provide an attractive supplementation which may encourage the involvement of students, amateur performers and new audiences at the festival. Further, if we presume that Davis is correct in his observation that the limited attendance of practitioners is symptomatic of the fractionalised New music scene, then it is not the music, but rather the clashing of political agendas, that creates fortress walls. Is it possible that through more inclusive programming and better social opportunities for practitioners, these silos of practice might be breached? Perhaps then, a strategically designed festival is in a position to bring new audiences, students and practitioners together to debate, to perform, and perhaps to unite in difference.

As an illustration of the above point, Gaudeamus successfully combines eclectic programming with discussion-oriented practitioner activities. Infrastructure such as the daily composer meetings encourages knowledge-sharing and ideological debate, and by choosing multiplicity over specificity in programming, the Gaudeamus model allows a range of practitioners to benefit through pooled resources. Heuvelmans’ strategy to ensure diversity in the programme is achieved by enabling numerous inputs into the curatorial process:

To prevent stagnancy, one third of the programme is jury selection and two thirds is based on geographic and stylistic [variation]. Also, visiting international ensembles provide their own programmes ... [Gaudeamus is a] showcase of [everything that] is happening as compared with other festivals where the artistic director has a vision’’ (interview, 05 September 2008).
This approach assists in the development of a social scene which is inclusive of, and encourages connections between, many types of New music practitioner.

The choice of venues for Gaudeamus also assists in this process. Each has a different established clientele and artistic leaning, enhancing the possibility of audience cross-pollination. As discussed, the Night of the Unexpected was created specifically for this purpose. Similarly, Eurekafoon! encouraged the attendance of teenagers and their families through actively involving them in the programme, and through facilitating marketing throughout school communities. As with Restrung, the social aspects of Gaudeamus could be further enhanced through the inclusion of more participatory activities for non-practitioners. Further, continuous programming within a single venue would assist in mixing audiences for events and creating a festivalesque atmosphere.

Continuous programming was also absent from iF:06, and whilst it catered well for practitioners, there was very little participatory programming for the audience. Social aspects were further negated by the time lapse between concerts (up to a week) and the distance between venues. This markedly decreased the opportunity for a cross-fertilisation of audiences within the space. Like Gaudeamus, the festival acted as a meeting place for New music practitioners, and an incubator for new creative works. As previously noted, Wiegold and Riley incorporated four initiatives to encourage these aspects: Platform:21, MusicOrbit, Speed Dating for Choreographers and Composers, and the Interactive Electronics and Performance conference. These schemes manifest the festival’s purpose in providing a place for experimentation and dialogue between art forms and musical genres: “At its core is a desire not just to be a base for the creation of new work, but also to be a place for enquiry and exploration about the direction and development of New music in the 21st century” (iF 2006: 2006b). Speed dating for choreographers and composers was intended to facilitate cross-art form collaborations: “This unique opportunity will allow creators from the worlds of music and dance (of any age or genre) to meet, discuss their work, share ideas, and hopefully spark ideas for collaborations in the future” (iF 2005: 2005). Similarly, Music Orbit is a collective
designed to “network practitioners and groups with an interest in collaboration from across a wide range of disciplines” (iF 2005: 2005). This reflects a growing trend for collaborative projects between New musicians and musicians or artists from other fields. Cross-art form and cross-genre collaborations were presented in all the festival programmes under review.45 Innovative festivals provide an important service in facilitating this process by bringing artists together in a social environment. However, where iF excels as a practitioner-focused event, a lack of participatory programming for non-practitioners, visibility issues due to marketing strategies used, and its concert series-like schedule, detracts from this model’s ability to develop new audiences. This is unfortunate as audience development is a high priority for iF’s curators.

In fact, Wiegold is best known for his work with participatory improvisatory methods. He has developed a system of improvisation pedagogy which enables players “to find their own improvisatory voice” (interview, 29 August 2008). Wiegold works with children, teenagers, students, professional orchestral players and non-musicians. These workshops, said Wiegold, “cross people boundaries, musical boundaries, age and cultural boundaries”. In a similar fashion to DISS, non-musicians work with musicians; professionals work with children; an Indian musician (for example) works with a classically trained violist. Workshops are inclusive, exploratory and participatory, allowing for the development of individual expression and unique group dynamics (Wiegold, interview, 29 August 2008). Such a programme would make an interesting addition to iF by providing audience members with participatory and educational opportunities.

The DISS represents an entirely different approach. The school has a tradition spanning back to the 1940s, with education and participation at its heart. Like Restrung, it uses continuous programming within a single venue. In comparison, the focus is on education, and participants live on the festival grounds for the duration of their stay. Henderson observes that the DISS’s participatory approach forms the core of its success: connections

45 In Brisbane, groups such as Topology and Collusion regularly perform and commission collaborative musical, dance, visual or literary works.
are formed through work, social and group activities as well as through unexpected encounters within the space. He likens it to a “big party”:

Is it a festival? Is it a school? I think the spirit of the DISS is like that of an immense gathering … a big party. People work incredibly hard but they also play hard. And there are lots of [surprise collisions] because of the variety of courses, classes and performances (interview, 25 August 2008).

Through its participatory ethos and non-hierarchical structure, the DISS fosters creative growth on a number of levels. It provides for practitioners of all ages and abilities, and for a multitude of musical persuasions: “Everyone has come to play, compose, sing ... they are joined in the experience of making music regardless of race or creed, age, level or experience” (interview, 25 August 2008). In this way, it can act as a catalyst for new and unorthodox collaborations. The communal eating hall – which Henderson regards as symbolic of the festival’s egalitarianism – has no hierarchy: everyone must stand in the same line-up for food, and search the room for an empty seat (interview, 25 August 2008).

DISS brings together a myriad of practitioners to share in a wide range of educational events, performances and discussion forums. Such an approach facilitates the creation of new projects both in preparation for, and during, the festival period. Through the recent inclusion of genres outside the Western classical tradition, a move which was considered controversial by Henderson’s directorial predecessors (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008), it proposes a de-hierarchisation of musical genre, in a similar fashion to Restrung.

Similarly to DISS, the majority of TINA festival-goers are practitioners, and most patrons travel to, and stay in, the host town for the duration of the festival. Both TINA and DISS act as annual meeting grounds for artistic communities, and both facilitate collaborations and discussions through social events, workshops, forums and performances. Where TINA differs dramatically is in programme content. TINA was built as an alternative platform to existing mainstream festival models for new and emerging arts. The DISS,
however, has emerged from the relatively conservative tradition of Western Classical music. Perhaps the changes that have manifested at DISS exemplify a growing trend for traditional festival models to diversify, in order to cater for practitioners and listeners with multiple performance interests. As Heuvelmans (Gaudeamus) suggests, practitioners “come from different backgrounds now ... musicians have not restricted themselves to pure classical music training ... they have played in pop bands or they play different genres, so genres are becoming blurred” (interview, 05 September 2008).

SOOB, like TINA, represented marginalised and alternative arts, but focused on the local Brisbane scene. One distinct difference – which TINA has turned to its advantage – is TINA’s location in a regional area. This augments the festival’s position as a truly national festival, as it holds no alliances with specific capital cities. Further, the influx of festival artists into this usually quiet town has a very obvious physical impact. Brisbane, on the other hand, has a high population density and existing infrastructure for alternative arts. Hence SOOB’s visual impact – particularly given that it was a multi-venue event spread throughout Fortitude Valley and the CBD – was less apparent than that of TINA. This visual aspect is important as it denotes that an event is in progress and adds to the sense of festivity surrounding it. In this way, it can enhance a festival’s vibrancy, and strengthen sociality amongst festival-goers. This was achieved at some of SOOB’s venues including the SOOB Festival Club, Metro Arts and Juggler’s Art Space. What lent these venues the sense of festivity was continuous and participatory programming.

According to Eltham, the final SOOB ran at a loss because many members of its audience had “moved down South” (interview, 07 February 2007). This is a common-enough gripe amongst the younger generation of Brisbane-dwellers, as evidenced by the film *All my Friends are Leaving Brisbane* (Vagg 2007). On the SOOB website, this phenomenon was noted as one of the reasons SOOB was created:

And despite all our efforts, Brisbane still remains gripped in its own cultural cringe. Talented people still leave town for Melbourne or London. Queensland still does not receive its fair share per capita of the Australia Council pie. Employment in the
creative industries fell for under 35’s in Brisbane in the last census period. Many here still find it hard to believe in the quality of their own local art (SOOB 2006c).

Eltham, who himself has relocated to Melbourne in recent years, believes that concert cover charges may have also contributed to poor attendance. SOOB attracted a high percentage of students, who are less likely to pay for individual tickets, particularly if they are not familiar with the group performing (Baker 2002). By contrast, nearly every event at TINA was free-of-charge. This provides almost unlimited choice for the spectator, and ticketed events do not have to compete with free events, a problem which occurred at Restrung. Finding a balance between free and ticketed performances is integral to a festival’s success in developing new audiences, satisfying budgetary requirements and attracting enough patrons to create a social and festive space.

2.3.4 Measuring Creative Success: Evaluation and Development strategies

2.3.4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this study, creative success is measured in terms of the success of audience development strategies as implemented through marketing, staging and programming and social aspects. This section discusses:

- Audience feedback mechanisms
- Curators’ approaches to innovative practice in order to build on creative success
- The findings in this chapter as they relate to the development of the Restrung model.

2.3.4.2 Audience Feedback Mechanisms

Of the six festivals reviewed, three incorporated formalised systems – such as surveys and focus groups – to collect audience and performer feedback. These were the most community-oriented festivals: DISS, TINA and SOOB. Gaudeamus, Aurora/WNMD and
iF curators assessed qualitative aspects through informal and intuitive means such as personal observations, conversations with patrons and performers, and unsolicited emails and letters. These approaches are limited in terms of their capacity to collect a sufficient quantity of data, and to collate a multiple lens picture of the festival experience. Instead, to evaluate success, the festivals relied almost exclusively on quantitative data such as box office sales and audience numbers.

Qualitative data collection from festival participants was an integral part of the Restrung model. It empowered participants to shape future festivals by enabling forums for commentary and suggestions. Cross-examination of feedback data revealed some unexpected findings which have helped to improve the model (see Chapter 4). Further, focus groups and surveys facilitate the collection of quantitative data such as respondents’ demographics and interests. Seffrin proposes that qualitative feedback mechanisms – put in place before, during and/or after the festival – enable participants to author their own experiences (2006:181). This is a fundamental characteristic of the Boutique festival model which “operates as an arts-driven event or series of events over a designated period of time, for a specific audience group, in which audiences have been actively involved in either the creation or direction of programming, and in which events are highly interactive” (Seffrin, 2006:181).

This is a distinctly different approach from that used in a traditional major arts festival in which the Artistic Director plays a role of “omnipotent” leadership (Seffrin, 2006:183). Moreover, major arts festivals and organisations tend to be influenced by their subscribers and corporate sponsors (Frey 2003; AEA Consulting 2006). This typically leads to conservative programming as the artistic director seeks to satisfy the interests of established audiences. Notwithstanding its innovative content, Aurora/WNMD displayed similar hallmarks to that of a major arts festival: programming was decided by one artistic director, and was designed to appeal to the festival’s subscribers – the international delegates. There was little in the way of programming and marketing which

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46 Interviews with Hindson, 13 February 2007; Wiegold, 29 August 2008; email communication with Arthur van der Drift (Senior Project Manager – Contemporary Music, MCN), 19 August 2010.
actively sought new audiences, and formal feedback was limited to a discussion at the ISCM annual congress (which was not publicly announced on the programme).

By contrast, innovative festivals such as DISS, SOOB and TINA strive to expand and diversify their audience base. These festivals incorporate rich channels for direct audience feedback including surveys, focus groups and forums. The line between audience member and performer is often blurred in this group of festivals, creating a highly participatory curatorial environment. A subsidiary effect is that this data is useful for funding and sponsorship applications. TINA emphasises the importance of feedback in its call for survey respondents. The organisers explain that feedback is “valuable for reflection” and “helps us to keep the festival (mostly) FREE!” (This Is Not Art 2009).

iF did not incorporate formal feedback mechanisms, even though it strived to embrace new audiences. The capacity for iF to grow could have been enhanced by the incorporation of qualitative data collection in order to identify attendees from outside the New music community: it would help to ascertain the reasons why they came, and what their experiences were. This information could be absorbed into marketing plans and programme design in order to attract a broader clientele.

Gaudeamus Music Week does not incorporate qualitative feedback mechanisms due to its “small size” (van der Drift, personal communication, 19 August 2010). Furthermore, due to its absorption into the MCN in 2007, and its move in 2011 to Utrecht, it is unlikely to consider incorporating surveys in the near future (van der Drift, personal communication, 19 August 2010). This highlights that the expense and time involved with collecting qualitative data can be a major drawback for festivals on a tight budget.

The following section outlines some of the data collection methods used at SOOB, DISS and TINA.
2.3.4.3 Data Collection Strategies

1. Audience Surveys

SOOB, DISS and TINA use surveys to collect information about participants. The DISS has compulsory feedback surveys which participants are required to complete at the end of their stay. These surveys collect basic information about participants’ demographics and experiences at the school. From time to time, in-depth surveys are circulated which gauge respondents’ ideas about future programming (Morse-Privette, Assistant Producer, DISS, personal communication, 14 August 2010). TINA distributes feedback forms via email (see Appendix G.27). The form includes both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. It aims to ascertain demographics; data useful for market research; behaviour at the festival and within Newcastle; opinions about festival content and quality; the festival’s contribution to professional/artistic development; and modes of participation (for example, audience member, emerging or established artist). The SOOB 2003 survey has fewer open-ended questions than TINA. It covers demographic information; market research; data relating to general behaviour in terms of arts and entertainment consumption; SOOB’s contribution to personal professional development; behaviour at the festival; and satisfaction with programme content (see Appendix G.32).

SOOB is the only festival for which I was given access to survey results. The value of this data lies in its analysis of festival-goers’ demographics and behaviour, and the success of participatory activities. Audience surveys from the 2003 SOOB (Fallu and Eltham 2003) revealed important information such as:

- 92% of the festival population were under 35
- There was a fairly even gender balance with 49.6% females, 45.6% males and 4.8% missing/other
- 90% of the audience considered themselves artists, and 75% considered themselves creative industries professionals
- 62.1% of respondents indicated they would like to participate as artists in the
2004 festival

- 51.2% considered the festival “inexpensive” and 29.4% “very inexpensive”, indicating that the majority of festival-goers (80.6%) found the festival to be affordable
- 24.6% indicated interest in attending SOOB 2004 as an organiser.

Fallu and Eltham comment that this last point “underlines the participatory ethos of SOOB’s audience, and is an interesting measure of the willingness of the festival’s audience to invest their ‘social capital’ back into the festival through organising and volunteering” (2003:np). Such information is key to measuring SOOB’s success as both a creative and participatory venture.

2. Focus Groups and Forums

SOOB and TINA create discursive environments through their programme of forums, panels, debates and roundtables. In my experience, it was not unusual for the festivals themselves to become the topic of conversation, particularly on panels relating to curation and DIY culture. TINA 2009 included a roundtable discussion *TINA: Past, Present and Future Thinking*, in which participants were invited to “brainstorm TINA” with a panel of previous and current festival directors. This inclusive context allowed the festival to evaluate itself in action with the direct input of audience members, performers and management. Since the majority of festival-goers identify with at least two of these roles, an intensely participatory environment is created. The *Restrung Artist Forum* provided a similar function.

SOOB was the only festival reviewed which conducted focus groups. Eltham described the sessions as “pure gold” in terms of finding out what people wanted to see on the programme; how much they were willing to pay; and how they found out about events (interview, 07 February 2007).
2.3.4.4 Methods for Sustaining Innovative Curatorial Design

In order to sustain a culture of innovation, a festival model must continually reinvent itself by setting and reflecting emergent trends (see Chapter 1). Various curatorial approaches are used to achieve this. Westbury explained that the creative content of TINA is kept fresh through a number of features built into the festival model. Firstly, TINA caters exclusively for artists whose “work does not fit into the major arts festival programmes” (interview, 14 November 2008). This focus on new, underground, DIY, experimental and emerging media and arts ensures diversity in the programme. Secondly, a high rotation of directors ensures new perspectives on programming each year. The regular turnover of directors, said Westbury, is a consequence of the low pay and large workload associated with directors’ positions. Thirdly, given that there are five festivals running simultaneously at TINA, and most programmes have two or three directors, there is a significant level of combined creative input forming the final product. Each director is “briefed to seek new territory”, and in this way, the festival “renews” itself organically each year (Westbury, interview, 14 November 2008). The festival is further diversified through the submissions process, which invites potential participants to suggest events and projects to incorporate into the programme.

Westbury identified Melbourne’s Next Wave festival as an exemplar of effective, risk-taking curatorial strategy. Next Wave actively seeks to attract a different audience each year through appointing a new director annually. The new director is challenged to create a 50% new audience base. This strategy ensures that Next Wave maintains its innovative edge, and is directly opposed to the approach used by conservative festival models:

Most festivals require that you DON’T lose existing audience and for me that creates a fairly unimaginative feedback loop ... Most festivals are influenced by the communities that surround them, and of course, the larger the community, the more
influential that community, and the larger the audience, the harder that is to turn around (Westbury, interview, 14 November 2008).

Such risk-taking strategies are key to an experimental arts festival’s continuing creative success. As Mills opines, “In a world which is increasingly subjected to audits of every kind, where everything must be endlessly measured, festivals are one of the few remaining entities in the artistic sector which can take substantial risk” (2006:9). Research also suggests that festivals which provide challenging, innovative content are more likely to draw audiences (see, for example, AEA Consulting 2006; Archer 2006; Mills 2006; Sheehy 2009a).

Gaudeamus Director Henk Heuvelmans ensures innovative programming “not through steering change, but by offering a platform to what goes on” (interview, 5 September 2008). As discussed earlier, the Gaudeamus programme is created with multiple inputs: the Gaudeamus Prize jury, the ensembles-in-residence and Heuvelmans himself. This is comparable to the approaches used by TINA and SOOB, as Heuvelmans aims to showcase diversity, rather than to present one director’s curatorial vision. The festival has also diversified over the years through the addition of programmes such as Night of the Unexpected and Eurekafoon!, which are designed to attract new audiences to the festival. Unfortunately, due to funding issues, Eurekafoon! only took place in 2008.

DISS director Gavin Henderson also noted financial restrictions as playing a role in stifling innovative programming. To some extent, innovative practice can be affected by the “pressure to deliver something that delivers financially … but with art, you can't measure what hasn’t happened” (interview, 25 August 2008). Henderson believes that a good festival director is one who “knows what the public want before they know what they want” (interview, 25 August 2008). This is a similar sentiment to Heuvelmans’ notion that one “builds the venue and then seeks out the audience” (interview 05 September 2008). The emphasis is on the creation of art, rather than the creation of a financially-motivated programme to fit a specific target audience.47 Henderson believes

47 See for, example, the Deep Blue project discussed in Chapter 1.
that programming cannot be taught; “you can only try to encourage a sense of enquiry … open mindedness and a hunger for finding something new”. However, he suggests that “we can overplay the sense of the new” and prefers a programme which explores both traditional and innovative practice:

There’s a lot of historical practice and established work that gets put by the wayside, and I think rediscovery is as important as the absolutely groundbreaking new … maybe that’s to do with the comfort of finding things you feel familiar with, whilst moving into completely unfamiliar territory can be quite unsettling, but I think it is the job of art to be … an unsettling process (Henderson, interview, 25 August 2008).

By contrast, iF concentrated entirely on new and exploratory programming. Through the curatorial notion of asking “What if …?”, Wiegold envisioned the festival as one “big picture … ideally each event opens a door more widely or opens a door on the other side of the room and you don’t know which door the music is going to come from” (interview, 29 August 2008). This was achieved through unorthodox musical pairings; providing a platform for emerging artists; creating opportunities for musical and cross-art form collaborations; affording numerous discursive activities; and incorporating an extensive commissions programme.

2.4 Conclusions

Innovative festival models seek out audiences who expect new and controversial programming. These audiences tend to include a high percentage of practitioners, and the festivals invariably include a strongly participatory programme. Highly specialised models, such as Aurora/WNMD and iF, are burdened with the problem of attracting audiences from outside the New music community. This issue is further problematised by the difficulties associated with the funding and marketing of rather rarefied programmes. Gaudeamus has successfully addressed these issues: on its side is a long tradition of
positive reception to New music in Amsterdam – which, according to Heuvelmans, reflects the perseverance of the Gaudeamus Foundation and local New music ensembles – and generous government funding. At the festival’s core is a highly regarded composition competition which lends prestige and an international presence. Further, in recent years, the inclusion of events such as Night of the Unexpected reflects the festival’s ability to diversify, take risks and re-invent itself and its audience.

TINA, DISS and SOOB represent diverse, strongly discursive and participatory programmes which attract a wide range of practitioners inclusive of students, amateurs and professionals. This approach informed the Restrung model: participatory, risk-tasking and inclusive mixed programming which attracts a broad cross-section of arts-minded audiences. These festivals – each in their own way – reinforce a sense of community amongst festival-goers and practitioners, and provide a platform for learning, discussion and presentation of ideas, music and art. They share a common ethos of inclusivity and diversity, and exhibit awareness and effective response to changes in the cultural climate. Furthermore, whilst SOOB and Restrung represent intrinsically different programmes, a common ethos is present in terms of locality, diversity, experimentation and participation. SOOB provided Brisbane-based practitioners with a much-needed alternative arts festival, a gap which Restrung has the potential to fill.

Through the literature review and comparative analysis of festivals, I have identified a number of integral components which may enhance a contemporary string practice festival:

- The necessity for a well-developed marketing campaign to communicate to audiences beyond the classical and New music communities
- Participatory and interactive activities to assist in the creation of a social, discursive, inclusive and educating space
- Continuous and mixed programming to assist in keeping audiences at the festival, and facilitates mixing audiences for different performances
- Free performances to encourage new audiences
• A combination of formal and informal contexts to assist with audience development
• The inclusion of non-musical elements and cross-art form collaborations to encourage the attendance of audiences and practitioners from other disciplines
• Commissions and competitions to motivate the creation of new work both for the festival and beyond
• Competitions to add prestige to an event, and work as marketing tools
• Social events to provide networking opportunities which encourage artistic collaborations
• Audience and performer feedback to benefit a festival’s creative and financial growth
• Constant re-evaluation of programming and identity in order to maintain the innovative approach and risk-taking edge.
CHAPTER 3 – APPROACHES TO METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed to create and analyse Restrung New Chamber Festival. To begin, I will reiterate the research questions that are the focus of this project:

- What are defining features of contemporary string practice?
- What strategies promote audience access to innovative musical practices?

Restrung was a practice-led research project incorporating a conceptual design\(^{48}\) (Kurtoglu et al. 2010:49; Deng 2002:343) and qualitative research design that draws mainly on participant observation techniques (Jorgensen 1989). The following text explains how Restrung sits within the performative research paradigm (Haseman 2006a; 2006b; 2007), and provides a rationale and description of how research methods were selected and employed. Further, it describes how the conceptual design and qualitative methods worked together to create a democratic, constructivist evaluation framework (Dahler-Larsen 2001; Davies and Dart 2005) for measuring the experiential and curatorial aspects of Restrung.

3.2 Selecting an Appropriate Methodology

The methodology for this undertaking is positioned within the performative research paradigm (Haseman, 2006a; 2006b; 2007), and incorporates practice-led research and qualitative methods (Gray 2005; Barrett 2007; Haseman 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Jorgensen, 1989, Dahler-Larsen 2001).

\(^{48}\) A term most often used in engineering and computational design. Defined as “a vital part of the design process during which designers first envision new ideas and then synthesize them into physical configurations that meet certain design specifications” (Kurtoglu et al., 2010).
3.2.1 Performative Research Paradigm

The Restrung project is firmly positioned within the performative research paradigm, as it incorporates practice-led research with a multi-method approach borrowing from qualitative research paradigms. Haseman explains that the main distinguishing characteristic of performative research – compared to qualitative and quantitative research – is that research outcomes are “made as presentational forms”:

… while findings are expressed in non-numeric data they present as symbolic forms other than in the words of discursive text … they deploy symbolic data in the material forms of practice; forms of still and moving images; forms of music and sound; forms of live action and digital code” (2007:151).

This data is crystallised with a multi-method approach which borrows from qualitative and/or quantitative domains. Practice-led researchers will “scavenge methods as their practice demands and are little troubled that they are not using the entire apparatus” (Haseman, 2007:152). The Restrung project followed this trajectory by employing a practice-led methodology, enhanced with the incorporation of qualitative methods drawn primarily from participant observation methodology (Jorgensen 1989). These methods serve to inform and test the outcomes generated by the practice-led process.

Haseman describes performative research as emergent (2007:154, 156), due to the diversity of approaches drawn on by practitioners to suit the needs of individual research projects. This emergent quality endows performative research with great promise, as its fluid nature makes it highly transferable between disciplines. Haseman suggests it may be adopted by non-creative disciplines, such as cultural tourism and business-to-consumer

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49 For other examples of this approach, see: Fenton 2007; Cunnington 2002; Filardo 2009; Verdaasdonk 2007.
50 Richardson and St. Pierre propose that the crystal is more analogous to the qualitative researcher’s approach than the triangle (triangulation). The image of the crystal suggests multidimensionalities and “angles of approach” (2005:963). Crystals are “prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose – not triangulation, but rather crystallisation” (2005:963).
interaction, for it is “aligned with the processes of testing and prototyping so common in user-led and end-user research” (2007:157). Further, it “promises to raise the level of critical practice and theorising around practice in a more rigorous and open way than professional practice alone is able to achieve” (2007:156). In these ways, performative research is valuable for projects – such as this one – which value commercialisation and impact (2007:157); prefer a democratic approach to data collection that privileges participant experience; and provide transferable outcomes for other researchers and commercial contexts (2007:156). One example of this approach is Verdaasdonk’s PhD project, Living Lens: Exploring Interdependencies Between Performing Bodies, Visual and Sonic Media in Immersive Installation (2007). Verdaasdonk combines practice-led research with participant observation methodology. Outcomes are generated through the creative process, with formal and informal interviews, and email feedback mechanisms. These strategies assist with crystallisation of data from audience members and collaborators. Verdaasdonk values commercialisation and transferability, and suggests that the project outcomes offer “practical and conceptual insights and solutions, to be adopted, adapted or applied tangentially, by other practitioners and researchers working in the domains of body movement practices, visual and sonic arts and human communication technologies” (2007:ii).

3.2.2 Conceptual Design as Research Reporting

Restrung’s conceptual design, as seen through the lens of the performative research paradigm, is in and of itself a form of research reporting. As Haseman states, “Central to the argument for an alternative methodology for the Creative Arts is an insistence by practice-led researchers, that research outputs and claims to knowledge be reported through symbolic language and forms specific to their practice” (2007:148). In this case, the conceptual design incorporated a programme delivering an investigation into the nature of contemporary string playing within a festival format designed to mirror the multiplicity of its musical content (through incorporating a number of different performance contexts). Furthermore, the model privileges participant experience as the
main mode for evaluation. Thus, the conceptual design can be seen to form the methodological core for the project.

### 3.2.3 The Research Timetable

The Restrung model was developed through iterative cycles of research. Zimmerman explains that this approach is “based on the cyclic process of prototyping, testing, analysing and refining a work in progress. In iterative design, interaction with the designed system is used as a form of research for informing and evolving the project as successive versions or iterations of a design are completed (2003:118).

The following outlines the practice-led and qualitative methods employed throughout the research process to collect and analyse data, and ascertain the model’s success in terms of its creative output, its capacity for audience development and the quality of participant experience. Using a participant observation case study framework (Jorgensen 1989), the study incorporates a mixed method approach involving interviews, focus groups, surveys and an extensive contextual review. The festival review (see Chapter 2) provides an analysis of programming, staging, marketing, evaluation and audience development strategies used by six comparable festivals in Australia and Europe. Data was collected through formal and informal interviews with festival directors and industry specialists; analysis of marketing materials; and participant observation. The methods employed for data collection and analysis served to contextualise my observations and experiences with those of others, allowing the data to be crystallised. This multiple lens perspective provided the opportunity to create a rich, layered depiction of the festival experience, and assisted with the process of self-reflexivity through contrasting and comparing my participant experiences against other data forms.

Qualitative methods were selected which suited the research needs of the project as it developed. Table 3 summarises the development stages and the methods and tools employed throughout the project.
Table 3: Summary of Research Timetable and Methods Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Research Stage</th>
<th>Methods Employed</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February-June 2005</td>
<td>Pilot Study: Australian Music for Strings Weekend (Masters research project) – 16-17 April 2005. Sponsor: Rockhampton City Council Arts Services</td>
<td>Practice-led research project; Researcher’s journal; Evaluation report.</td>
<td>Roles: curator, musician, teacher, researcher, administrator. Skills development: • Marketing plans • Project management • Management and personnel communication • Arts development in regional areas • Management in regional areas • Organisational politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2006-January 2007</td>
<td>Prototype development: Hothouse Festival, Gabba Village</td>
<td>Conceptual design development</td>
<td>Skills development: • Negotiation with landowners • Creative design with assistance from illumination artist Beh Wattenberg • Licensing • Logistics • Prototype for programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>07 February</td>
<td>Pre-festival market research</td>
<td>2 semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>• 07/02/07 – Ben Eltham, SOOB</td>
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<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 March 2007</td>
<td>Pre-festival market research</td>
<td>2 Focus groups with target audience</td>
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</table>
| 15 March-20 December 2007 | Conceptual design development                  | • Literature review  
• Grant applications  
• Sound sculpture design  
• Commissions programme  
• Video artist/musician liaison  
• Budget  
• Programming  
• Work placement: Brisbane  
• Two Australia Council grants awarded  
• Artist Sketches for sound sculptures  
• 2 commissions from Brisbane composers Sallie Campbell and Tom Adeney  
• Sound sculpture and video art commissions: Crossbow Series  
• Liaising between video artists and... |
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<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>05 January-27 February 2008</td>
<td>Marketing, PR</td>
<td>Brisbane Powerhouse work placement: Marketing, Promotions, PR</td>
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<td>• Press interviews</td>
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<td>• Website text</td>
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<td>• Brochure text</td>
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<td>• Press releases</td>
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<td>28 February-2 March 2008</td>
<td>Participant observation at the festival</td>
<td>Participant observation case study framework: Jorgensen (1987)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Roles: curator, performer, stage manager, researcher</td>
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<td>• Photos</td>
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<td>• Video footage</td>
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<td>• Sound recordings</td>
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<td>28 February-2 March 2008</td>
<td>Gathering participant responses at Restrung</td>
<td>Market research surveys</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Available throughout festival period</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 48 surveys completed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demographics and marketing data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 February-10 March 2008</td>
<td>Participant observations</td>
<td>Researcher’s journal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Documentation of observations and experiences</td>
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<td>20 August-</td>
<td>Contextual Review:</td>
<td>Fieldwork at 2 festivals</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Participant observation at Gaudeamus</td>
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<td>Date Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 October 2008</td>
<td>European research trip</td>
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<td>20 August - 01 October 2008</td>
<td>Contextual Review: European research trip</td>
<td>3 Semi-structured interviews with festival curators</td>
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<td>14 November 2008 and 14 May 2010</td>
<td>Contextual review: Australian festivals</td>
<td>2 Semi-structured interviews with festival experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 January - 20 February 2009</td>
<td>Post-festival reception studies</td>
<td>Focus groups informed by Most Significant Change (MSC) technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
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</table>
| 27 March 2009         | Post-festival reception studies               | Semi-structured interview with curatorial team – informed by MSC technique   | • Andrew Ross and Robert Davidson  
• Interview approx. 60 minutes duration                                                 |
| January-June 2010     | Data analysis                                 | • Content analysis  
• Crystallisation of focus group, interview and observation data             | • Tabularised data to facilitate analysis process                                  |
| January-February 2010 | Festival evaluation framework                 | • Content analysis  
• Constructivist evaluation                                                   | Crystallisation of data collected from Restrung, interviews, focus groups, literature review and festival contextual review. Themes that emerged:  
• Marketing  
• Staging and programming  
• Social aspects  
• Measuring and building on creative success |
<p>| January-February 2010 | Analysis of marketing materials               | Comparative analysis of text and imagery                                      | Comparing visual design and text of marketing materials for Restrung, Gaudeamus, DISS, TINA, iF and World New Music Days. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
| 1-10 May 2010    | Contextual Review: ISCM World New Music Days/Aurora Festival, Sydney | Fieldwork                                   | • Participant observation  
• Researcher’s journal                                                  |
| 1-10 May 2010    | Contextual Review: ISCM World New Music Days/Aurora Festival | Semi-structured interviews                 | • 14/05/10: John Davis, President of ISCM; CEO of Australian Music Centre.  
• 18/05/10: Barry Saunders, audience member.                              |
| January-June 2010| Cross-checking of data analysis                | Negative case analysis, crystallisation     | • Tabularised data to facilitate analysis process                      |
3.3 The Appropriateness of the Interpretive Paradigm

The core business of the project is evaluating the relationship between curatorial input and experiential qualities of the festival. Given this focus on qualitative aspects, a performative research approach, combined with a participant observation case study methodology, provide an appropriate framework for this study. This section describes:

- The current status of arts festival evaluation
- The argument for validating evaluation of social and cultural impacts of festivals
- Examples of previous academic forays into this area of evaluation
- A discussion of constructivist evaluation as a guiding framework for Restrung
- The appropriateness of using a participant observation case study methodology
- The general advantages and disadvantages of the chosen paradigms.

3.3.1 Arts Festival Evaluation

Festival evaluation is an emerging area of research. A review of the literature reveals a marked paucity in festival evaluation methods, particularly in arts festivals. This is a striking phenomenon considering the sizeable public expenditure on arts festivals internationally. Williams and Bowdin state that, “although evaluation has been discussed in events management texts, and published evaluation research has tended to focus on impacts, there are few published studies that identify how arts festivals evaluate or what evaluation methods are actually used” (86:2008). The Australian and international event impact study conducted by Carslen, Getz and Soutar concluded that “a standardised model has not been produced despite there being a clear need for this” (in Williams and Bowdin 2008:88).

Similarly, the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) has advised that “in spite of the great many approaches at producing evaluation instruments that measure not just the realisation of goals set and promises given, but also the social, economic and other
impacts of festivals, no really successful and internationally advisable tools are at hand (EFRP 2008b:2).

Bodies such as the EFRP are leading the way in terms of generating information about artistic festivals. Further, in the last few years a number of studies have appeared on festival evaluation processes (Robertson and Frew 2008; Williams and Bowdin 2008; Ali-Knight 2009). To date, however, festival scholarship has focused mainly on cultural tourism, regional, economic and environmental impacts (EFRP 2008; Williams and Bowdin 2008:87). Rolfe (1992) and Getz (2005) identify audience numbers as being the primary tool for festivals to measure success. This, together with “breaking even”, were the main measures used by interviewees Eltham and Hindson. Certainly, ticket sales, audience numbers and tourism impacts are of integral importance to evaluating a festival. Within this relatively small band of festival evaluation literature, there is little focus on social, cultural and curatorial aspects – aspects which are of main concern in the Restrung evaluation framework. However, there is growing interest in this area, as the value of qualitative analysis is recognised. Williams and Bowdin list the following benefits of social, curatorial and cultural evaluation of festivals:

- “To improve practice during a project and to show what happened as a result of a project” (Williams and Bowdin 2008:89)
- “Evidence, causation, different perspectives, reflection and learning” (Williams and Bowdin 2008:89)
- “The need to: identify and solve problems; find ways to improve management; determine the worth of the event; measure success or failure; identify costs and benefits; identify and measure impacts; satisfy sponsors and authorities (accountability) and gain acceptance, credibility and support.” (Williams and Bowdin 2008:90).

Further, Getz identifies the important role that arts festival evaluation plays in directing marketing and planning functions, enabling an organisation to improve its managerial and programming systems (in Williams and Bowdin 2008:90). A review of these aspects may
assist the festival’s overall success – financially, creatively, and socially – which could potentially improve the festival’s longevity and quality of innovative programming.

3.3.2 Highlighting the Need to Evaluate Social, Curatorial and Cultural Impacts

In response to the trend for governments to require quantitative proof of commercial viability and sustainability in the arts, many practitioners and researchers are arguing for the validation of art in terms of its social and cultural impacts. Researchers such as Florida (2003) have spawned new ways of thinking about the creative industries by arguing that cultural product indirectly (and sometimes directly), encourages economic growth. Further, Belfiore and Bennett argue that it is necessary to reevaluate our way of thinking about the role and functions of the arts in society today through investigating its role throughout history. They suggest that:

By taking up the challenge of finding new and rigorous ways to discuss issues of cultural value in the XXI century, the humanities can offer a useful contribution to the understanding of the ways in which the general public experiences the arts and might be affected by them, while at the same time facilitating the construction of a strong and coherent theoretical framework for the elaboration of more rigorous arts impacts evaluation methods (Belfiore and Bennett 2006:184).

In a similar vein, Thundering Hooves, an evaluation report prepared for the Edinburgh Festival, emphasises that the importance of social, curatorial and cultural impacts are often overlooked in favour of quantifiable aspects such as ticket sales and audience numbers. The report argues that the continuing success of the festival is contingent upon its ability to provide innovative and original content, and its capacity to integrate local and international creativity:

The current tools of evaluation are still pre-occupied primarily with the quantifiable and the economic. Despite the developing prominence of issues that inform the debate about social inclusion and multiculturalism, when it comes down to the key
criteria against which to assess large festivals, the combined attributes of linking the local with international contexts, discovery, scholarship, risk, invention, imagination and integration remain under-valued in terms of arguments for increased support (AEA Consulting 2006:18).

The key criteria listed here indicate the linkages between creativity (“discovery, scholarship, risk, invention, imagination”), multiculturalism and social inclusion, on local, national and international levels. These types of linkages are unique to the festival format, and thus should be taken into serious account in the evaluation process.

### 3.3.3 Previous Academic Studies on Evaluating Social and Cultural Aspects of Festivals

Seffrin’s qualitative PhD study (2006) has similarities with the Restrung project in terms of its context, Brisbane, and for its study of festival model development. Seffrin’s focus lies in evaluating the role and attributes of what she coins the “Boutique” festival model, as produced by QPAC, within an historical and contemporary context, and through an exploration of the meanings of community at the festival. She describes the Boutique model as one that positions “the audience as both producer and consumer” (2006 Abstract). Like Restrung, the Boutique model actively involves participants in the production and evaluation phases. This thesis was one of the few studies I was able to locate which provided real-life examples of measuring social, cultural and curatorial impacts of non-residential arts festivals.\(^{51}\)

There are several case studies which examine outdoor festivals at which participants camp on site for several days or weeks. Examples include Gardner’s ‘Welcome home’: *Performing place, community, and identity in the New West bluegrass music revival* (2004) and Thomas’ *Music in the mountains: Music and community in western North Carolina* (2004). The focus here is on alternative communities, participants’ aspirations for self-discovery, and escape from contemporary urban life.

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\(^{51}\) Other examples include: Karlsen 2007 and 2009; Macleod 2006; Martin, Seffrin and Wissler 2004.
None, however, tracks the evolution of an arts festival designed specifically as a research project. It is hoped that Restrung will contribute to festival evaluation literature through providing insights into model development, and through the creation of the evaluation framework for measuring social and curatorial aspects.

### 3.3.4 Using Constructivist Evaluation

The core business of the project is evaluation of the conceptual design through participant observation, in context of relevant festivals and curatorial approaches. A constructivist perspective is adopted as it favours evaluation of qualitative phenomena using a multiple lens perspective. Denzin and Lincoln describe constructivists as being “oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world” (2005:184). The focus of the research is the experiential and creative qualities of the festival. The constructivist approach values these qualities, thus making it the most appropriate viewpoint. In this instance, the researcher’s observations are crystallised with participants’ responses, and contextualised within the broader field of festival curation. In this way, a thick, value-laden picture of Restrung emerges, and is situated within the context of its practice.

A constructivist perspective on evaluation acknowledges that a programme’s success or failure, strengths and weaknesses are inexorably linked to the context in which it operates. Dahler-Larsen proposes that a constructivist approach to programme theory – “a plausible and sensible model of how a public programme is supposed to function” (2001:331) – will reveal that ‘truth values’ do “not reside in the programme theory but depends on the ongoing social construction of the programme context” (2001:333). In other words, within real world contexts there are variables which affect the programme outcomes. The variables, or moderators, can sometimes be manipulated in order to improve the theory’s implementation; or the variables may change – with no intervention from the facilitator – during the programme’s implementation, causing either a negative or positive effect on the programme’s outcomes (Dahler-Larsen 2001). Through acknowledging that there are reality-based factors outside the programme theory which
affect project outcomes, the evaluation process is capable of greater transparency in its findings.

3.3.5 Participant Observation Case Study

Jorgensen defines the methodology of participant observation as aiming to “generate practical and theoretical truths about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence” (1989:14). I have chosen to use a participant observation case study approach as it facilitates research in a real life situation from a multiple lens perspective. Its focus on human experience and existence, and mixed methodology approach, makes it ideal for fulfilling the objectives of this project. Jorgensen describes participant observation in terms of seven key features:

1. a special interest in human meaning and interaction as viewed from the perspective of people who are insiders or members of particular situations and settings;
2. location in the here and now of everyday life situations and settings as the foundation of enquiry and method;
3. a form of theory and theorizing stressing interpretation and understanding of human existence;
4. a logic and process of enquiry that is open-ended, flexible, opportunistic, and requires constant redefinition of what is problematic, based on facts gathered in concrete settings of human existence;
5. an in-depth, qualitative, case study approach and design;
6. the performance of a participant role or roles that involves establishing and maintaining relationships with natives in the field; and
7. the use of direct observation along with other methods of gathering information (Jorgensen 1989:13-14).
The study focuses on “human meaning and interaction” (1989:13-14) within a naturalistic setting. It also documents my journey as a musician-curato...
festival. In these ways, it is hoped the limitations – imposed by time and place – are overcome.

The exegesis also serves an important purpose in validating the creative work as meaningful research. Barrett describes the exegesis as a “meme”. She states:

… the cultural artefact – the tune, painting, poem, for example – is not the meme itself, but is a vehicle by which the meme, an idea or internal representation is externalised. Within this context, the exegesis may be viewed both as a replication or re-versioning of the completed artistic work as well as a reflective discourse on significant moments in the process of unfolding and revealing. As ‘meme’ it operates both as a noun – an artefact in its own right, and a verb – a re-enactment of the artefact as process. As such, it has the potential to reflect and map the logic from which a particular model of representation has emerged. Through this double articulation, the exegesis becomes a vehicle for validating the process of studio enquiry and elaborating the value of its outcomes (Barrett 2007:159-160).

In these ways, the exegesis illustrates the processes and outcomes of Restrung, how these outcomes contribute to the world of knowledge, and the transparency and transferability of this knowledge.

3.3.6.2 Constructivist Evaluation

A constructivist approach takes into account the context, actors, and changes in circumstances which may affect a programme implementation – for implementation does not exist outside the real world. Dahler-Larsen explains:

Reality is complex and many forces are at work at the same time. Programmes depend not only on raw materials and money, but on communication, coordination, attention, goodwill, legitimacy, commitment, trust, conviction, images and visions. Self-understandings among programme people and among target
groups, influenced by identity-bestowing effects of discourses and institutions, play key roles in sensitizing subjects in different ways (Dahler-Larsen 2001:342).

This provides the evaluation process with greater transparency, as findings are situated within the context in which they arose. Further, by taking into account the motivations and perspectives of the actors involved, the evaluator can more readily be drawn away from the “preoccupation with whether the programme being evaluated is simply true or not” (Dahler-Larsen 2001:346). Instead, evaluation is more layered, transparent and complex. This complexity can be construed as the negative side of constructivist evaluation. It problematises programme theory because of its acknowledgement of the effect that moderators have on outcomes. Dahler-Larsen suggests that “a neglect of moderators is understandable as without them, it is easier to maintain an aura of technical and methodological objectivity around theory-based evaluation” (2001: 347). In addition, critics of the method (Pawson and Tilley 1997) suggest that the constructivist emphasis on the variables in context, and motivations of the actors, makes case-based evaluations less transferable to other contexts. Dahler-Larsen refutes this: constructivists are acutely aware of “variations in the regulative, normative and cognitive dimensions of institutionalisation processes” (2001:335), hence are “in a good position to pinpoint the crucial factors which influence how (ideas of) programmes can travel from one context to another” (2001:335).

3.3.6.3 Participant Observation Case Study

The participant observation approach allows the researcher to “access to the insiders’ world of meaning” (Jorgensen 1989:15). Valuable information is made available which would not be easily accessible, or not accessible at all, to researchers approaching a setting from the “outside”. The methodology also facilitates emergent theory: as the researcher becomes more familiar with the setting and the participants, themes emerge or are disproved, and established meanings confirmed or deepened. Jorgensen posits that:
The methodology of participant observation seeks to uncover, make accessible and reveal the meaning (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives. In placing the meaning of everyday life first, the methodology of participant observation differs from approaches that begin with concepts defined by way of existing theories and hypotheses” (Jorgensen 1989:15).

The researcher is privileged with a deep insider’s perspective, a position which has both positive and negative aspects. It enables stronger relationships to be built with both participants and setting, but can also burden the researcher with unchecked subjective, and emotionally-charged views. Dillon suggests that, “this position is one of advantage and unlimited access and knowledge of the site and the people in it. It is also a position that is fraught with critical issues of value-laden reporting that could affect methodology, data reconstruction, and analysis and interpretation” (2001:95). It was important to be aware of how my presence as a researcher, and my role as an instrument of research, might affect data collection. A number of cross-checking strategies were put in place to counteract this. These included negative case analysis and utilising a multiple-lens perspective involving crystallisation of multiple data forms collected through interviews, observation data and focus groups (see Section 3.8, and Appendix F.7 for sample of data analysis enabling crystallisation). Further, I debriefed at the end of each day with my research assistant, Dr Sarah Collins (See Appendix F.11 for CV). Dr Collins provided me the opportunity to discuss and analyse my observations.

Jorgensen identifies four participant observer roles: complete observer, participant-as-observer (more observer than participant), observer-as-participant and complete participant (1989:55). At Restrung, my role was almost completely that of participant. Jorgensen states that although complete participation can be thought to be a threat to objectivity, “accurate (objective and truthful) findings are more rather than less likely as the researcher becomes involved directly, personally, and existentially with people in daily life” (1989:56). It also offers the researcher direct access to multiple perspectives of the phenomenon through developing relationships with different people (1989:61).
One issue predicted to arise was that feedback from acquaintances may err on the positive side: they were more likely to give responses they thought I wanted to hear, and might shy away from providing criticism. One must question the circumstances:

What guarantee did I have that [respondents], when interviewed, would not simply needs tell me what they thought I wanted to hear? … or act how they perceived I would like them to act in observation? How could I see what was not already familiar to me? How could I check that my data reconstruction and analysis were not driven by my preconceptions about what I hoped to find? (Dillon 2001:81-82).

This is countered by the idea that acquaintances are more likely to give their time and thoughts to the project, and can be encouraged to feel comfortable about being as honest and transparent as possible. Interview and focus group data was taken at “face value” (Csikszentmihalyi 1996), as will be discussed in Section 3.6.2. Data indicated that responses were honest as both positive and negative feedback was present. A number of additional methods were used to address these possible issues. The multiple lens perspective and multiple data collection strategies allowed me to cross-check findings. Data was collated in a number of media including text, audio, video and photographs. I was conscious of looking for the negative as well as the positive. The strategies I employed to enable this are described in Section 3.8.

### 3.4 Conceptual Design Pilot Study and Prototype

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

The premise of this study is to analyse how the conceptual design for Restrung worked in practice. This section leads through the development stages and final design of the festival model. It provides a rationale for creative and practical decisions made. An evaluation and critique of the festival itself will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5.
3.4.2 Pilot Study: Australian Music for Strings Weekend (see Appendix A)

3.4.2.1 Overview

The Australian Music for Strings Weekend (AMSW) – which took place in Rockhampton on 16-17 April 2005 – was the practical component for my QUT Masters in Creative Industries research project (see Appendix A.1 – AMSW Workplace Report). The festival introduced school-age students from Rockhampton and surrounding areas to a selection of contemporary Australian repertoire for chamber groups and string orchestra. Students participated in a series of workshops, masterclasses and concerts, held at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre. In order to ensure accessibility, two performance streams were available: junior and advanced (see Appendix A.2 – AMSW Schedule). The programme was created in consultation with string teachers and the festival’s sponsor, Rockhampton City Council Arts Services. As part of my three-week work placement with Rockhampton City Council, I was responsible for:

• Designing marketing materials
• Curating the programme
• Liaising with Council representatives and members of the local music community
• Taking bookings for the event
• Leading masterclasses and workshops
• Conducting the orchestra
• Performance and interview on local ABC radio.

3.4.2.2 Outcomes of the Australian Music for Strings Weekend

The event ran smoothly, and was successful in introducing contemporary Australian music to Rockhampton students. This was achieved through the process of:
• Learning about the composers
• Learning new string playing techniques
• Rehearsing music in small and large groups
• Performing in a concert to friends, family and teachers.

Positive feedback was received from Council representatives and the Manager of Arts Services, Sue Smith (see appendix A.3 – Letter from Sue Smith, Rockhampton City Council). There was a strong sense of community created at the festival. This was an important aspect of the event: to create an opportunity for students in remote areas to learn and perform music together. Given the limited number of string teachers in the Rockhampton region, the weekend played an important role on the area’s musical calendar.

This was my first foray into festival curation. It provided valuable experience for managing a multi-faceted event which required me to perform in a number of roles: curator, stage manager, teacher, performer, administrator, promoter and researcher. This skill development was crucial to the orchestration of Restrung, a considerably larger and more complex project. Like Restrung, the programme focused on contemporary string performance. AMSW introduced students to new ways of playing their instrument through an intensive programme of Australian repertoire. The event was highly participatory, as the students were required to learn, rehearse and perform the festival repertoire. Through providing three performance streams, it was accessible to students of all levels.

By liaising with local teachers and Council, I was able to create a programme which was relevant and useful to the string community. Further, I performed three free recitals in the lead-up to the festival, as well as an interview and performance on ABC Radio. These processes facilitated my exposure to and communication with the local community. In turn, this assisted with attendance at the festival.
Overall, the project provided me with valuable positive and negative experiences and insights (see Appendix A) including:

- Basic curatorial skills: programming
- Event management skills: overseeing timetabling, logistics and administration
- The opportunity to create a marketing plan for Rockhampton Art Gallery
- The opportunity to create a regional, participatory and educational event with Australian contemporary string playing at its core
- Insights into organisational culture. Staff members were dissatisfied with internal communications and financial and organisational management of Rockhampton Arts Services. This did not directly affect my project.
- The ability to coordinate a number of roles. I participated as a curator, administrative officer, performer, promoter and teacher.
- Attention to detail: The application form did not ask what instrument the applicants played which caused issues with sending out practice parts. Phone calls to each of the applicants fixed the problem. Neither did the brochure clearly state that masterclasses were for cellists only, resulting in a number of violinists enrolling.
- Local violin teachers assisted with the running of masterclasses and rehearsals. This contributed significantly to the success of the weekend, as my musical skill set is strongest as a cellist and conductor.
- A lower age limit of eight should have been set as some of the younger students were unable to participate in a meaningful way.
3.4.3 Prototype: Hothouse Festival, Gabba Village (see Appendix B)

3.4.3.1 Overview

Hothouse Festival was the initial conceptual design for my PhD research. Like Restrung, programming was to focus on contemporary string practice through staging bands, chamber ensembles and multimedia works within a continuous programme.

In December 2005, Bruce Roberts, a landowner from the Gabba Village, proposed I use the precinct as the festival venue (see Appendix B.1). The Gabba Village is a heritage precinct in inner city Brisbane (see Appendix B.2 – map of precinct; Appendix B.4 – photos). It comprises a closed-off street with central parking, with historic buildings on both sides. Shopfronts are predominantly cafes and antique stores. Hothouse was designed as a street festival. Bands and main acts would perform in the street area, with more intimate indoor spaces to be used for chamber ensembles, workshops and installations.

On 22 June 2006 I presented the concept at a Gabba Village Association meeting (see Appendix B.3 – Gabba Village meeting minutes). The Association was planning extensive renovations and restorations during 2007. It was suggested that the festival coincide with the precinct’s official re-opening in January 2008. Areas offered for the festival included the entire cul-de-sac street area, and numerous spaces within the precinct’s buildings. A rooftop cinema was to be created using the Moreton Rubber building wall as a screen for projections. With the assistance of illumination artist Beh Wattenberg (see Appendix C.18 for CV), I created layout plans for positioning installation works, stages, amenities and market stalls. In early January 2007, I met with the real estate agent for Gabba Central, a large shopping precinct that was being constructed on the opposite side of Ipswich Road. He provided me with a list of possible local business sponsors. During February 2007, I worked extensively on developing the festival, but soon realised that the event was unviable for a number of reasons:
• Three of the building owners reneged their offers to provide performance areas. This included the rooftop cinema area. In addition, the Association’s renovation plans had been postponed due to financial problems. As a result, spaces initially offered were deemed unsafe due to the dilapidated state of the buildings.

• Sound bleed from the main outdoor stage into the indoor music venues would be problematic, particularly given that indoor areas would be used for quieter, acoustic performances.

• Weather conditions in January are not ideal for stringed instruments.

• All equipment and facilities – such as generators, lighting and staging, toilets – would need to be brought in.

• Ticketing and liquor licensing necessitated costly security and fencing.

• Three expensive licences were required to close the street, set up markets and sell food and beverages.

• Public liability insurance costs were unviable.

3.4.3.2 Outcomes

This prototype was a useful exercise in learning about the expense, licensing requirements and logistics associated with outdoor festivals. Although it was an unviable model, the process of designing the layout and programme provided the backbone for developing Restrung. The conceptual design for each model is similar, with both:

• Using continuous programming in multiple spaces. This layout is akin to a dance party or rock festival format, rather than the typical classical music concert hall setting.

• Being site-specific. The layout of each model takes advantage of the availability of walls and spaces for video and interactive installation works.

• Incorporating a programme of diverse bands and ensembles, connected through the contemporary string practice theme.

• Including participatory events such as workshops and forums.

• Guided by the Wonderland theme. Both are designed as immersive, exploratory,
social, participatory experiences.

- Designed to break down the performer-audience barrier through creating a social, yet musically sensitive environment.

### 3.5 Restrung New Chamber Festival (see Appendix C)

#### 3.5.1 Background

In March 2007, I met with Andrew Ross, Director of the Brisbane Powerhouse, and Luke Harriman, Brisbane Powerhouse Producer, to discuss the possibility of staging Restrung at the Powerhouse (see Appendix C.1 – Proposal to Brisbane Powerhouse; Appendix C.2 – Email from Harriman). Conceptually, the Restrung project aligned with the Six Pack concert series, scheduled for February/March 2008. Six Pack – curated by Andrew Ross and Robert Davidson – comprised a series of performances featuring the Brodsky Quartet (UK) and a number of Australian contemporary music ensembles: Topology, Clocked Out, Continuum Sax, Wood and The David Chesworth Ensemble (see Appendix C.3 Performer descriptions). The Brodsky Quartet presented two recitals of traditional and twentieth century works. Six Pack Symphony comprised five works – one commissioned from each Australian group – composed for the combination of all six ensembles (listen to Disk 12 – Six Pack Symphony recording). The final Six Pack concert – the Sunday Session – featured the five Australian groups performing in sequence (see Appendix C.3).

It was proposed that I present a Turbine Platform programme concurrently with the concert series in the Powerhouse Theatre. The two events would be mutually supportive, with audience base, marketing costs and schedule shared. The Powerhouse agreed to provide venues, technical equipment and staff, front-of-house staff, marketing and promotional support (see Appendices C.4 and C.5 for evidence of support). These arrangements were to be formalised once I secured funding for artist fees and installation works. In October 2007, the Australia Council confirmed provision of a Promotion and Presentation grant and New Work grant (see Appendices C.6 and C.7).
Initially, the festival was named Crossbow: “Cross” to indicate cross-genre content, and “bow” to indicate stringed instruments. In October 2007, Harriman suggested that Crossbow is misleading because of its symbolic relationship to folk culture. The festival was renamed Restrung New Chamber Festival.

3.5.2 Description of the Site

(Refer to Appendix C.8 – Brisbane Powerhouse venue information and Appendix C.9 – Turbine Hall floor plan and photos)

The Brisbane Powerhouse is a former power station, renovated and re-opened as a multi-arts venue in 2000. The venue is characterised by its industrial feel. Years of disuse led to a proliferation of graffiti in and outside the building, most of which has been preserved. On the ground floor, Watt Restaurant overlooks the river. Inside, there is a gallery space, the Visy Theatre and Turbine Rehearsal Room. The main entrance is situated on the 1st floor. Visitors directly enter the Turbine Hall – a large space with a three-storey ceiling. Entrance to the Powerhouse Theatre is on this level. Bar Alto, the Machine Room and Graffiti Room are located on the river-side of this level. Staff and management offices are on levels two and three. There are approximately 26 staff, and three executive managers within the areas of Finance, Box Office, Functions and Events, Marketing, Operations and Programming (Brisbane Powerhouse 2008). Three spaces are available for hire on levels two and three: the Park Mezzanine, Riverbend and Rooftop Terraces.

3.5.3 Overview of Conceptual Design

The key underpinning concepts for Restrung were the notions of the immersive artwork, accessibility, and contemporary string practice. These terms will now be defined, as they relate to the conceptual design. A summary of logistical and financial issues that affected the curatorial process concludes this section.
3.5.3.1 Immersive Artwork and Alice in Wonderland

Restrung’s layout – conceived as an immersive artwork or Wonderland – incorporated musical, visual, tactile and interactive features. Immersivity was encouraged through engaging participants through multiple senses, particularly aural, visual and spatial. The curatorial design set out to maximise the potential of the Powerhouse layout and facilities to achieve this effect.

Strategies for immersion included:

- Continuous programming featured in multiple venues, encouraging participants to explore the space (see Appendix C.12 – Restrung Schedule)
- Audiences could move to and from venues without lengthy breaks
- Participatory events such as the FourPlay Workshop and Artist Forum provided educational spaces for exploring music through words and performance (see Appendix C.12 – Restrung Schedule)
- The Violinarium, an interactive sound installation, provided an interactive, tactile and performativ experience (see: Appendix C.13 – Descriptions of ongoing exhibits; Appendix C.14 – artist sketches of Violinarium; Appendix C.15 – Crossbow Sound Sculpture proposal; Appendix H.2 – photos; listen to: Disk 13 – Violinarium mp3)
- Visual exhibits provided supplementary or alternative stimulus to musical performances. The random placement of installations was intended to encourage participants to explore the space, and seek out more surprises (see Appendix H.3 – photos).
- Restaurant and bar areas were available for those wishing to take a break.

As described in Chapter 1, the Wonderland concept manifested itself in three ways in the immersive artwork:

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53 Refer to Chapter 1 for an explanation of these concepts.
• The music programme comprised exploratory and surprising repertoire
• Installations were exhibited throughout the space to encourage festival-goers to explore and discover the unexpected
• The immensity of the Violinarium was intended to alter one’s perspective of size and space, an experience analogous to Alice’s encounter with the bottle labelled DRINK ME (Carroll 1980:31-32).

3.5.3.2 Accessibility

The Restrung model incorporated a number of strategies to create an accessible environment within which to engage audiences. The definition of accessibility in this case refers to accessibility for different age groups, income brackets, musical preferences and new audiences. Strategies included:

• The free Turbine Platform programme ensured that Restrung was available to those on lower incomes
• The free programme encouraged the attendance of new audiences. This was particularly beneficial to emerging artists who were establishing an audience base, for example, Area4 (from Saint Laurence’s Secondary College) and Zhivago (see Appendix C.3 – performer descriptions).
• Continuous programming featuring a range of different musical styles encouraged a mixed audience within the space. This increased the possibility of groups being exposed to new audiences and vice-versa.
• By including Area4 on the programme, the festival attracted an audience of young adults and their families
• The Turbine Hall is a child-friendly space, encouraging parents to bring their children
• The Violinarium was available for performance by all festival-goers of school-age and above.
The Restrung programme was composed of cross-genre styles (see Appendix C.3 for performer descriptions), with New music at its core. Musically, its primary aim was to showcase the diversity of contemporary string performance. In this way, stylistically different bands and ensembles were thematically linked. By using the string theme to create a cohesive programme, it was possible to explore the intricacies of musical relationships. Stringed instruments are traditionally associated with classical and folk music – Restrung set out to explore ways in which strings have come to the fore in contemporary genres such as contemporary art music, New music, popular music, rock, electronic and cross-genre disciplines. The eclectic nature of the programme ensured that a variety of audiences would attend. There are “several audiences of multiple listeners” (Macarthur 2010:226) as the programme facilitates the cross-fertilisation “between one kind of music and another kind and one kind of venue and another” (Macarthur 2010:228). These premises – of multiplicity in style and audience – were reflected in many aspects of the festival design. There were a variety of audience participation modes to suit the heterogeneous programme. The Powerhouse Theatre provided a recital hall setting, whilst the Turbine Platform was informal and social. The Violinarium offered an interactive performance experience, enabling audience members to become performers. The workshop and forum were participatory and educational, and encouraged a discursive environment. Visual aspects of the festival drew on electronic dance music (EDM) culture: Miss Random – whose creative domain is rave parties – created video installations and live-mixed visuals for the Turbine Platform acts. In this way, the cross-genre concept was extended to the festival’s video exhibits. It was intended that by employing EDM specialists to create work for non-EDM genres, a fresh perspective would take form (see Disk 14 – Miss Random show reel).
3.5.3.4 String Community Support

The Restrung model incorporated a number of strategies designed to enhance performers’ experiences, and create opportunities for creative development. The festival format is ideal for community-building and collaborative opportunities, providing its programming caters for this. Strategies included:

- Commissions programme. As noted earlier, the Six Pack Symphony comprised five specially commissioned compositions. Two new works by Brisbane composers were commissioned for the Turbine Platform: Sallie Campbell’s Speed of Love (see Disk 8: Zhivago) and Tom Adeney’s Lute-style Concerto for Guitar and String Trio (see Disk 4: Crossbow). Restrung also included an installation commissions programme, as will be detailed in Section 3.77.
- Community-building. Restrung brought together a host of practitioners from Brisbane, interstate and abroad, enabling a rare opportunity for social and creative exchange. Informal settings, such as Bar Alto, facilitated networking and socialising. The Restrung Forum provided a formal context for performers and festival-goers to discuss musical concepts and industry issues.
- Audio-visual collaborations. I facilitated collaborations between Turbine Platform performers and visual artists to create unique visual backdrops to live performances (see Appendix C.16 – sample email for audio-visual collaborations).

3.5.3.5 Logistics and Finance

Logistical and financial aspects of events management set parameters that shape curatorial decisions. These included:

- Lead time for grant applications to ensure funds are available when needed
Adhering to guidelines specified by subsidising bodies in terms of the allocation of funds

Availability and performance fees of artists

The number of performance timeslots available

Sound-check times: Performance order was to some degree dictated by the technical requirements of the bands. When sound-check time was limited, bands and ensembles with similar requirements were programmed in succession.

Predicted popularity of the event: When is it feasible to programme more than one event in any given timeslot? Which groups are likely to attract a large enough audience to justify ticketing the event?

Venue design: Factors to be considered included sound bleed, and the suitability of the performer to the space.

Time needed to build installation works

Venue dressing and lighting: Costs, staff and technical requirements for furnishings, lighting rigs, etc.

Technical equipment: Availability and cost of hiring technical equipment such as projectors and PA systems

Marketing and publicity budget: Ticketed events are privileged over free events.

3.5.4 Criteria for Selecting Musical Performances

The selection process took into account a number of considerations, including the limitations imposed by budget, the number of timeslots available, and artist availability. The criteria below outline the artistic objectives of the festival.

Each group:

- Privileges stringed instruments in their line up
- Performs original and/or Australian content
The overall festival programme:

- Exhibits a balance of challenging and accessible content
- Provides performance opportunities for emerging and established artists
- Includes local, interstate and international acts, but privileging local performers
- Delivers a programme which showcases the multiplicity of contemporary string performance trends
- Includes repertoire from contemporary classical/New music/contemporary art music genres.

3.5.5 Music Programme: Diversity in contemporary string practice

The daily schedule was designed on a simple premise: to commence with chamber recitals, and progress through to bands. The Turbine Platform programme was built around the Six Pack Concert Series. This provided exposure to Turbine Hall performers by capturing theatre audiences before and after the shows. It also provided emerging and local artists with the opportunity to work alongside established artists, such as the Brodsky Quartet and Topology.

(Appendix C.3 provides a programme description. It endeavours to portray the musical styles of Restrung artists. Through this process, the quintessential diversity of contemporary string practice emerges. To assist this descriptive undertaking, I have integrated Restrung marketing materials, artist quotes, and excerpts from reviews and official websites. See Appendix H.4 – photos; and Disks 2-11, which provide film footage of Turbine Hall performers at Restrung.)
3.5.6 Ongoing Exhibits (see Appendix C.13)

As an immersive artwork,\textsuperscript{54} the Restrung model incorporated visual, tactile and interactive features. The challenge was to combine these elements with musical performances in a cohesive, aesthetic way. Visual artists were briefed to create works that reflected the concept of Wonderland through imaginative use of the venue. In this way, festival-goers would encounter surprising curios as they moved throughout the space. The visual exhibits comprised Miss Random’s video installations (see Appendix H.3 – photos; Appendix C.17 – Miss Random biography), the Violinarium (see Appendix H.2 – photos; listen to Disk 13), and part of the proposed Crossbow Sound Sculpture series created by Beh Wattenberg and Joel Stern (see Appendix C.14 – Artist sketches of Crossbow Sound Sculpture series; Appendix C.18 – Beh Wattenberg CV; Appendix C.19 Joel Stern CV).

3.5.7 Marketing to a cross-section of audiences

(Refer to Appendix D – Marketing Materials and Appendix E – Restrung Press.)

Marketing, promotions and public relations were coordinated by the Brisbane Powerhouse, in consultation with myself. The Powerhouse decided for financial reasons to prioritise ticketed events, which mainly comprised contemporary classical ensembles. This focus meant that Restrung bands were not highly visible in press releases and marketing materials (with the exception of the website), which affected communication of the festival’s diverse programme. A full analysis of the campaign’s efficacy is discussed in Chapter 4.

The strategies decided upon were:

- Imagery (See Appendix D.6): The main images featured a cellist in Victorian apparel posed against a graffitied or industrial background (See Appendix D.1 –

\textsuperscript{54} See Chapter 1 for definition
Brochure and D.2 – Poster). The cello and Victorian dress clearly indicate to the viewer that Restrung has a classical focus. The graffitied wall and industrial backdrop connote grunginess and contemporary underground culture. Together with the name Restrung, this combination indicates a “reframing of music in some way” (Simon, advertising executive).\textsuperscript{55} See Chapter 4 for analysis

- Text: Publicity materials focused mainly on ticketed events which were predominantly “contemporary chamber music” ensembles (see Appendix D.1 – Brochure; Appendix E.2 – press releases). However, the website text, which I composed, provided detailed information about both free and ticketed events (see Appendix D.7 – Restrung website). Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the outcomes of this approach
- Press: Feature articles (Appendix E.1), advertisements (Appendix E.3) and event listings (Appendix E.4) were printed in a range of publications targeted towards diverse audiences. These included: New Farm’s local community magazine Village News (front cover), Brisbane News, City News, Courier Mail, The Australian and street press publications including Rave, Time Off and MX
- Radio: Andrew Ross was interviewed on ABC Classic FM\textsuperscript{56}
- Website: Provided full details for all events (See Appendix D.7)
- Programme flyers: Sent to Powerhouse mailing list, and disseminated through cafés and bars in the Brisbane area. The flyer listed all events, but focused primarily on ticketed events (Appendix D.1)
- Posters: Placed in and outside the Powerhouse, and throughout the Brisbane area (see Appendix D.2 – Restrung poster; Appendix D.3 – distribution report)
- E-flyers: Sent through Powerhouse and artists’ mailing lists
- Brisbane Powerhouse Quarterly programme. Restrung was provided with a five page spread, with focus on the ticketed programme (Appendix D.4)
- See also Appendix D.5 – Powerhouse Marketing overview and Promotions task list.

\textsuperscript{55} Post-reception studies focus group participant: audience member.
\textsuperscript{56} Australian Broadcasting Corporation: Australia’s national public broadcaster.
3.6 Qualitative Features of the Research Design

3.6.1 Introduction

This section outlines how qualitative methods were selected, how this relates to the research agenda, and what strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and transparency of data collection and analysis. The basic premise behind the evaluation processes was to examine the relationship between curatorial input – the conceptual design – and the experiential qualities of the festival. As I explored in the first section of this chapter, this practice-led approach incorporates a mixed methodology that lends from both the performative and qualitative paradigms. The conceptual design forms the performative methodology. This is supported by qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, guided mainly by the participant observation methodology espoused by Jorgensen (1989). Further, participation in a number of relevant festivals, and interviews with Australian and European festival directors, provided contextual information regarding approaches to evaluating, marketing, curating and staging non-mainstream contemporary performance.

3.6.2 Interviews and Focus Groups

Two semi-structured interviews with festival curators (see Appendix F.1 – Sample transcript and questions) and two focus groups with the target audience (see Appendix F.2 – Sample questions, notes and debriefing) were conducted in the lead-up to Restrung. These interviews and focus groups focused on market research. In the post-festival period, a further six semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F.3) were conducted with festival curators in relation to approaches to curation and festival evaluation. Post-festival reception studies were conducted through two focus group sessions: one with Restrung performers (see Appendix F.4), and another with audience members (see Appendix F.5). A semi-structured interview took place with the curatorial team, Andrew Ross and Robert Davidson (see Appendix F.6). Interviews in both phases followed the methodology outlined below. However, pre- and post-festival focus groups were structured differently.
Pre-festival sessions were guided by market research techniques (Greenbaum 2003; Evmorfopoulou n.d.; Gibbs 1997; MacNamara 2006), whilst post-festival sessions were informed by the Most Significant Change technique (Davies and Dart 2005) (see post-festival reception studies, section 3.6.2.5). Data collected at focus groups and interviews aided the crystallisation of fieldwork data, through providing a multiple-lens perspective that democratised the research process and ensured stakeholders’ voices were heard (see Appendix F.7 – Samples of data analysis).

3.6.2.1 Overview of Approach to Interviews

Eight semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from festival curators and industry specialists introduced in Chapter 2 (see Appendices F.1 and F.3). These interviews focused on approaches to festival curation and respondents’ understandings of contemporary art music. The focus of the festival case studies was to examine the approaches used by curators to manage and evaluate audience experience, thus providing data within which to contextualise my own curatorial experiences. Hence, interviews were conducted with curators, not members of the audience. Although there would have been value in incorporating audience interviews, this would be well beyond the project’s scope in terms of both timeframe and content. Audience reception studies were appropriate for Restrung, however, as they allowed me to gauge how successfully my curatorial strategies were implemented, as perceived by festival-goers. This enabled me to contextualise my own experiences as a curator-musician in a democratic fashion.

Semi-structured interviews allow for “flexibility balanced by structure” (Gillham 2005:70), enabling me to adjust the line of questioning as deemed appropriate at the time. Before each interview, I reviewed and tailored the questions to suit each respondent. Interviews were deemed the best method of data collection from festival curators as they allowed me access to their professional and personal experience (Silverman and Marvasti 2008:69). Baker describes interviews as data “making” rather than data “collection” as the information collected is guided by questions generated by the interviewer, and the respondent’s answers are “accounts” of reality rather than reports (2004:163). Similarly,
the nature of rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, and the analytic position the researcher takes when analysing the data, affects the nature of the content. Silverman and Marvasti state, “the assembly of narratives in interviews (or conversations) is always a two-way process. Therefore, we must treat the interviewer’s questions not as (possibly distorted) gateways to the authentic account but as part of the process through which a narrative is collectively assembled” (2008:68). Miller and Glassner identify a strength of qualitative interviewing as an opportunity “to collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of social worlds” (Miller and Glassner: 137).

As previously mentioned, an identified issue was that Restrung respondents may withhold criticism because of my deep involvement. Similarly, curators may tend to provide an overly positive reading of their festivals. However, rather than read deeply into respondents’ commentary, I have chosen to treat interview data at “face value” (Csikszentmihalyi 1996:16). This approach draws on the work of Csikszentmihalyi, who contends that, “Instead of suspecting these stories of being self-serving fabrications, I accept them at face value – provided they are not contradicted by other facts about the person or by internal evidence” (1996:16). Additional methods used to establish trustworthiness and authenticity include crystallisation and cross-checking data sources, as data analysis in Chapter 2 and 4 illustrate (see also Appendix F.7 – Sample festival data analysis).

3.6.2.2 Interview Structure

The eight interviews were approximately 45-60 minutes in length.

a) Sampling Selection Procedures

Curators were selected based on their festival programmes, specifically, curators of festivals which have a contemporary arts or contemporary art music focus. Further, festivals such as DISS, TINA and SOOB have a strong social/community component, which was of particular importance to this project. A more extensive description of the
festivals’ relevance is presented in Chapter 2. Another consideration is the timeline: In Europe I was limited to visiting festivals that took place during my visit (20 August-01 October 2008).

b) Respondents were introduced in Chapter 2. Table 4 provides a summary of interview details.

Table 4: Interview Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Eltham, Curator: SOOB</td>
<td>Melbourne Hotel, West End, Brisbane</td>
<td>07/02/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Hindson, Curator: Aurora and WNMD 2010</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>13/02/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavin Henderson, Curator: DISS</td>
<td>DISS</td>
<td>25/08/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Wiegold, Curator: iF</td>
<td>King’s Cross, London</td>
<td>29/08/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Swinnen, Gaudeamus Prize Juror</td>
<td>Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam</td>
<td>03/09/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henk Heuvelmans, Curator: Gaudeamus New music Week</td>
<td>Music Center The Netherlands, Amsterdam</td>
<td>05/09/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Westbury, Founder: TINA</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>14/11/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Davis, CEO: Australian Music Centre</td>
<td>Australian Music Centre, The Rocks, Sydney</td>
<td>14/05/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) Interview Questions

*See Appendices F.1 and F.3*

d) Interview Data Analysis

*Please note: The interview with Robert Davidson and Andrew Ross (conducted 27/03/09) will be considered separately in the post-festival reception studies section, as it relates directly to Restrung, not the contextual review.*

Transcripts were firstly read to identify concerns that arose frequently amongst respondents, or were particular to individuals. This assisted with identifying four major categories that permeate all interviews:

- Social aspects
- Programming and staging
- Marketing and new audiences
- Festival building: financial and creative value

Although these categories are related to the line of questioning, I was careful to search for the emergence of other categories within the data. Once this process was complete, I created a table that outlined the themes within these four categories, as specific to each festival. The table lists important quotes and research notes (see Appendix F.7 – Sample festival data analysis). This table was used in conjunction with readings, personal observations and festival marketing materials to create a multiple-lens exploration of current trends in contemporary arts festival curation, as Chapter 2 illustrates. This “Realist” approach to data analysis incorporates crystallisation, and serves to secure a fit between my “interpretations and some external reality” (Silverman and Marvasti 2008:195). It assisted in the process of highlighting recurring themes that permeate the
research project; to ascertain any discrepancies within the data; and to identify possible biases on the part of the interviewee (Silverman and Marvasti 2008:195).

3.6.2.3 Overview of Focus Group Methodology

Focus groups were an integral part of the research design. Initial market research with members of Restrung’s target market assisted with programme design and uncovered unexpected themes. Post-festival focus groups provided the opportunity to gather valuable information from participants about their Restrung experiences.

Macnaghten and Myers state that focus groups work best for topics which people could talk about in their everyday lives, but don’t (2004:65) – focus groups designed to foster interactions that are not likely to take place in everyday life. Macnaghten and Myers describe them as:

Going to an unfamiliar place, at the same time as others, with no aim of one’s own, and being led through a discussion on topics one does not normally talk about by a stranger. But they are persuasive because they are seen to be slices of modified ordinary conversation. One task of interpretation is to trace that modification, while also accounting for that sense of ordinariness (2004:76).

An obvious benefit of the focus group as a data collection method is that they allow for a great deal of data to be collected at one time (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990:16). Wilkinson (2004) lists several advantages that focus groups have over interviews. The group situation can encourage sharing thoughts and opinions (2004:180), and allows themes to be explored, argued over, and understandings and misunderstandings to surface (2004:180). Macnaghten and Myers identify that focus groups “can stand for wider discussions, real or potential, just as these participants can stand for wider groups” (2004:75). In addition, Macnaghten and Myers posit that, “The strength of focus group research is that it can get at people’s attitudes in all their complexity … Focus groups allow us to account for the situation – the interaction of the researcher and participants,
the treatment of topics in conversation, the conventions of various forms of group
discussions – in a way that other methods, such as surveys and ethnographies, do not”

Focus groups can elucidate for the researcher the most important themes for the
participants, and the researcher has limited control over the discussions thus allowing for
a more “egalitarian” approach to data collection (Wilkinson 2004:181). Particularly
pertinent to my focus groups with audience members was their use of language in
describing the festival. There is an acknowledged difficulty (Fineberg 2006:x-xiii) in
describing what New music is to non-practitioners.

Possible disadvantages of focus groups include the possibility of limited transferability of
data from a small sample of respondents; the moderator may bias results through how
questions are phrased; a dominant member of the group may take over. I attempted to
limit these disadvantages from arising by, firstly, selecting respondents from a broad
range of backgrounds; secondly, by not moderating the sessions myself; and thirdly, the
moderator for each session was careful to ensure that everyone had a chance to speak and
that no one individual dominated the conversation.

Both Fineberg (2006:146) and Tusa (2002:np) believe that focus groups are not useful for
arts programming as they only serve to re-affirm the known. Tusa states, “You mean, do I
believe that where five or six are gathered together we should grant their request? No. We
can’t ask for what we do not know. On this basis, the arts would never have advanced
from the known or the familiar” (2002:np). In contrast to this, I posit that with a careful
sampling procedure, one can attract arts-minded participants who are specifically
interested in innovative and unfamiliar praxis. In this way, focus groups can be used
effectively to gather data and ideas which can enrich a festival programme.
3.6.2.4 Pre-festival Market Research Focus Groups

a) Rationale

Pre-festival focus groups were primarily a market research device designed to ascertain the needs and wants of the Restrung target audience. Two 90-minute sessions were held in early March 2007. At this early stage, the festival was called Hothouse. It was intended that programming would be themed along the lines of “old and new”, for example, performing New music on old instruments in a new format in old venues. This theme was inspired by the original venue, the Gabba Village historical precinct. I was assisted in finding participants, taking notes and discussing findings by Wayne Jennings, a fellow musician.

b) Sampling Selection Procedure

The target audience was loosely defined as “young arts-minded professionals”. An email to ascertain interest was directed to acquaintances of Wayne Jennings and mine, and consequently forwarded to numerous acquaintances of initial respondents. We attempted to have a fairly even distribution of males and females in each group. There were six participants in session one, and five in session two. Four invitees cancelled immediately before the second session due to other commitments. Focus Group participants included:

c) Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Music student and teacher</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Composer/music teacher</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathie</td>
<td>Employment consultant</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meg</td>
<td>Public servant</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>IT</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Pre-festival Focus Group 1 Participants, 04 March 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
<td>Visual merchandiser</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody</td>
<td>Freelance writer /salesperson</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Pre-festival Focus Group 2 Participants, 12 March 2007

d) Agenda (see Appendix F.2 for focus group agenda and example survey)

As a guide to managing the focus groups, I borrowed the methodology set out for the Madame Project at the University of Sheffield (Evmorfopoulos n.d.). After a brief period of small talk, participants were asked to read and sign a participant consent form, and complete a brief survey which asked general questions about demographics and cultural interests. Then I formally commenced proceedings with a review of the agenda, and a description of the proposed festival model. Wayne Jennings assumed a limited role as moderator, meaning that he kept involvement to a bare minimum. I introduced topics, and then encouraged participants to interact and stimulate conversation on the topic amongst each other. Seven questions were developed to guide discussions on the topic. Note that
after the first focus group, I made some minor changes to the questions and the order of questioning. This was to facilitate a smoother flow. The questions posed in the second session can be found in Appendix F.2.

After approximately 90 minutes, the meeting was formally ended. Unfortunately, on both occasions, the voice recorder did not work. Fortunately, however, Mr Jennings took notes during each session (see Appendix F.2 – Pre-festival focus group questions, notes and debriefing). Afterwards, we made detailed notes of what we deemed to be the most relevant and important content. Macnaghten and Myers state that one can rely on notes and memory for a “feeling of interaction” if the main purpose of the focus group is to establish themes (2004:73). Jennings and I then completed a series of debriefing questions, and discussed the outcomes of the session (see Appendix F.2 – Pre-festival focus group questions, notes and debriefing). The debriefing questions were those suggested by Evmorfopoulos:

- What are the most important themes or ideas discussed?
- How did this differ from what moderators expected?
- How did these differ from what occurred in earlier focus groups?
- What points need to be included in the written report?
- What quotes should be remembered and possibly included in the report?
- Were there any unexpected or anticipated findings? (Evmorfopoulos n.d.)

e) Analysis

Content analysis, which focuses on identifying recurring themes in the focus group data (Wilkinson 2004:183), was used to identify elements that stood out for participants, in either a positive or negative way. This was used in both pre- and post-focus groups, but was the primary analytic method used for pre-festival sessions.

The debriefing questions proved to be useful as content analysis tools, as they provided a range of different viewpoints from which to reflect on the data. Data from both sessions
was compared and thematised. Since the aim of these focus groups was market research, this data was contextualised with relevant literature and market research studies. The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.5 Post-festival Reception Studies: Focus Groups and Interview

Post-festival focus groups, and the interview with Davidson and Ross, were intended as forums in which to gain insight into participants’ experiences, identify prevailing themes, and identify aspects of the festival that left a strong impression with participants. Three sessions took place, each comprising members of a different stakeholder group: Restrung artists, audience members and the curatorial team (Ross and Davidson). Each session was approximately 60 minutes in length. The sessions took place ten months after the festival. This was not problematic as I was not searching for detailed recollection of events. Rather, I wanted to identify what aspects of the festival participants recalled with the most vigour: their stand-out moments and overall experience of Restrung. Drawing on Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of treating data at “face value”, Dillon explains that:

The notion of taking interviews at face value is one that acknowledges that the interviews do not constitute truth but that the participants chose retrospective recollections of those moments that made up their story. It is what the participants choose to relate that is important, and this reveals what the participant perceives as valuable and meaningful. Indeed the act of memory itself says something about its significance and the values placed upon the recollection (2007:45).

Thus, exactitude of detail is not as important as the significance of a memory. The focus was on what was remembered as significant, a concept espoused by the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies and Dart 2005).

Whilst I did not adopt the MSC technique, the process of identifying significance to participants informed data collection at focus groups. This constructivist approach democratised the research process and ensured stakeholders’ voices were heard.
Respondents were asked to tell their stories about what they considered to be the most significant moment they experienced at the festival. Similarly to an MSC project, focus group questioning tended to focus on positive change, as the domains were dictated by research objectives. To encourage both positive and negative feedback, I incorporated an “‘open window’ domain” (Davies and Dart, 2005:18) which allowed participants to write about changes in areas not covered by the established domains. Focus groups were moderated by Dr Jodie Taylor (see Appendix F.8 – CV), and took place in the boardroom at Irish Bentley Lawyers, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. Each session was approximately 60 minutes in length (see Appendix F.5 for sample transcription).

3.6.2.5.1 Performers’ Focus Group – 02 February 2009

a) Sampling Selection Procedure

I invited representatives from all local ensembles. Respondents were chosen based on their participation in the Restrung Festival, and on their availability to attend the focus group meeting. There were seven participants comprising Turbine Hall performers and visual artists.

b) Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Restrung participation</th>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tara Simmons</td>
<td>Tara Simmons Quintet</td>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Cadell</td>
<td>Zhivago</td>
<td>25-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beh Wattenberg</td>
<td>Violinarium</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenie Costello-Shaw</td>
<td>Speed of Purple</td>
<td>35-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greta Kelly</td>
<td>Golden Circles</td>
<td>35-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Bernal</td>
<td>Crossbow Ensemble</td>
<td>35-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Lunde</td>
<td>Miss Random video art</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) Agenda

After a brief period of small talk, participants were asked to read and sign a participant consent form, and complete a brief survey which asked general questions about their experiences at Restrung (see Appendix F.4 – Performer focus group survey). Dr Taylor then formally commenced proceedings with a review of the agenda, and a description of the proposed festival model. Dr Taylor assumed a limited role as moderator, meaning that she kept involvement to a bare minimum. She introduced topics, and then encouraged participants to interact and stimulate conversation on the topic amongst each other. Nine questions were developed to guide discussions on the topic (see Appendix F.4 – Performer focus group agenda). At the end of the session, respondents were asked to write down any thoughts they had that they either did not get a chance to voice, or that they thought were particularly pertinent (see Appendix F.4 – Performers’ focus group comments).

d) Findings: The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.5.2 Audience Focus Group – 03 February 2009

a) Sampling Selection Procedure

I initially invited fifteen audience members to attend the session. I attempted to cover a broad range of ages and was careful to ensure that some respondents were not overly familiar with contemporary art music. This was to aid in evaluating the Restrung model’s efficacy in appealing to new audiences. Fortuitously, within the group of six respondents who were available to attend, there were respondents who followed rock music, classical music and New music. Respondents covered age demographics between 20 and 70.
b) Participants

Table 8: Audience Focus Group Participants, 03 February 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Advertising executive</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>Retired TV producer</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Public servant</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Agenda

The agenda was the same as for the performer focus group; however the questions were different (see Appendix F.5 – Audience Focus Group agenda).

d) Findings: The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.5.3 Interview with Curatorial Team – Andrew Ross and Robert Davidson – 27 March 2009 (see Appendix F.6 for transcription)

Dr Robert Davidson and Andrew Ross were interviewed in order to discuss the experiential qualities of Restrung, and programming and financial aspects.

Note: Davidson and Ross are both deep insiders, which may have potentially produced subjective opinions. However, they both appeared to be candid about positive and negative aspects. As deep insiders they are privy to knowledge I could not source elsewhere.

a) Participants

- Robert Davidson is a composer, academic and bassist. His works are performed regularly with Topology, an art music ensemble that “works across genres in
order to explore new territories in music” (Topology 2009).

- Andrew Ross is the Artistic Director of the Brisbane Powerhouse for the Arts.

b) Agenda

The interview took place at Bar Alto, Brisbane Powerhouse, and took approximately 60 minutes. See Appendix F.6 for interview questions.

c) Findings: The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.5.4 Post-festival Reception Studies Data Analysis

Analysis incorporated a combination of ethnographic and content analysis. Ethnographic analysis was used in order to gain insight into participants’ perspectives of the Restrung experience. Wilkinson states that an ethnographic approach is used in “studies which aim to provide contextual, interpretive accounts of their participants’ social worlds” (2004:187), and which “ground interpretation in participants’ views of ‘what is going on’, rather than the analyst’s view” (2004:183).

I adopted a Realist approach to analysing focus group data. The interview with Davidson and Ross was considered alongside focus group data, as it concerned Restrung, and was informed by the MSC technique. As would be expected, data collected from each stakeholder group differed in perspective and content. However, I was able to code all data into four main categories:

- Social aspects
- Programming and staging
- Marketing and new audiences
- Festival building: financial and creative value
These four categories were also identified in data analysis for curator interviews. The analysis table (see Appendix F.7 – Restrung evaluation analysis table) categorises data under these headings, from the audience, performer and curator perspectives of audience, and – like the festival data analysis table – provides space for the themes within each category, quotes and a notes section which I used for analysis notes, and to identify links with the contextual review and within the categories. Silverman and Marvasti note that coding can be restrictive as it can create a “grid” from which it is “difficult to escape” (2008:225). They suggest that a good coding scheme must make room for “un-categorised activities” as well (2008:225). Coffey and Atkinson describe the practice of coding as a “mixture of data reduction and data complication” (2004:30). They state that:

Coding is much more than simply giving categories to data; it is also about conceptualising the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers about the relationships among and within the data, and discovering the data … Coding is thus about breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data (2004:31).

The tabular format facilitated this process. Further, the act of writing the analysis illuminated connections I had not previously made due to my personal proximity to the research topic. For example, patrons tended to perceive Restrung as a classical festival, whereas the curatorial team viewed it as a contemporary festival with a classical “twist” (see Chapter 4).

Focus group data was used in conjunction with interview data, readings, observation data and material evidence to collate a multiple-lens perspective of the Restrung project.
3.6.3 Observation Data

3.6.3.1 Observation at Restrung

At the festival I performed multiple roles, enabling multiple perspectives. As a performer, I was able to observe the audience from the stage; and as an audience member, I was able to watch performances. As a stage manager, I ensured that performers were in the right place at the right time. As a deep insider, and one who was very active in running the festival, there was little opportunity to keep a detailed research journal throughout the day. However, important insights were recorded during the following week. These insights were used in conjunction with focus group data, survey results and audio-visual materials for establishing the research outcomes (see Chapter 4).

3.6.3.2 Observation of Other Festivals

My role at European festivals was that of a complete observer or “outsider” (Jorgensen 1989:56). Outsider roles generally provide an overview of the setting which is not accessible for participants. Jorgensen states:

As an outsider looking in, you can overview a scene, noting major and distinctive features, relationships, patterns, and events. This is extremely important, because insiders do not view their world from this standpoint, and once you have become even somewhat familiar with the setting, its initial newness and strangeness also will be lost (1989:56).

The outsider role is most effective in public settings which are accessible to “anyone willing to spend sufficient time hanging around and observing to gain a sense of what transpires” (Jorgensen 1989:59). An identified problem with outsider roles is that people may respond to you as a researcher (Jorgensen 1989:58). This was not problematic for me as most people saw me as a participant musician, rather than a researcher. Further, my
area of interest was observing the festivals from an audience perspective, thus I was not affecting the nature of the performances, the performer-audience relationship, nor people’s interaction with each other during social occasions.

At TINA, my role was as a participant observer. I was an audience member, I performed cello and spoken word, and I participated on two panels to discuss festival curation, and one panel to discuss the ‘affect of art’ (see Appendix F.10 for details). Observations at the festival were covert. I participated as an audience member for most of the festival, and did not actively interrogate other participants. Again, my interest was in the festival experience.

WNMD provided a different perspective. I attended as a “VIP”, not as a performer. Thus, I grew to know performers, composers and international delegates. These interactions provided insights into the political machinations of the international New music scene, as I explored in Chapter 2.

A research journal was kept during travels in Europe. This was used to document impressions and questions about contemporary art music and festival formats. Observations were also used to inform interview questions. These observations assisted with writing the contextual review, through refreshing my memory about festival experiences.

3.7 Surveys (see Appendix F.9)

Brief surveys were available in the Turbine Hall. The surveys were used to collect demographic information and marketing data, to see which/how many performances respondents had attended, and to collect comments on their overall experience. Only 48 surveys were completed, and some of those showed obvious inaccuracies. For example, a number of respondents indicated they only saw ticketed events. Since the surveys were stationed in the free music area it is highly likely these patrons saw more than one event but didn’t tick the box (perhaps they were unsure of the ensembles’ names). Further,
some respondents’ comments referred to acts that they had not ticked as having attended. In a couple of instances the day ticked did not correspond to the performance seen. In light of this, the data is not reliable. However, with reference to personal observations and focus group data, some basic trends can be identified, particularly in terms of who came to the festival and how they found out about it, and the comments indicated that the festival format worked well for new audiences. These issues are explored in Chapter 4.

3.8 Cross-checking Data

A number of measures were implemented to cross-check data analysis. I was vigilant about recognising personal influence on analysis, and not just seeing what I wanted to see.

3.8.1 Emergent Trustworthiness and Authenticity

The multiple lens perspective was constructed through incorporating a number of media and methods aided the process of cross-checking evidence. To assist with self-checking, personal observations were correlated with other data in order to identify and analyse biases. For example, this journal entry from 05 March 2008:

My favourite part was the Violinarium. It was so exciting to watch other people’s excitement when they entered the room and saw how enormous it is. And then, to see children and adults alike climbing up the ladder and playing it. The sounds it made were incredible. Maybe a bit too loud for some (Joel had to put up a sign to warn people). It was great also to see sound artists come in over the festival period and experiment with different sounds, and different bows: bass bows, violin bows and bows made from rubber.

Focus group comments articulated similar sentiments, indicating that the Violinarium provided effective social and interactive stimulus:
“I was blown away by the Violinarium … At the festival, I kept running upstairs and grabbing people to come look at it. Restrung was a very very positive event” (Simon). Further, Greta, a performer, said: “I liked the Violinarium … I spoke to lots of people down there. If you were just going in and out of the theatre you wouldn't have had this opportunity to chat. There were lots of musicians and photographers.”

3.8.2 Negative Case Analysis

Focus group participants were encouraged to speak about negative and positive experiences. Prompting was sometimes necessary in order to lessen respondents’ concerns about relating criticism. The major concerns for performers were poor sound quality, and “rude” or “unhelpful” staff in the Turbine Hall. These staff members were not part of the Powerhouse team. Instead, they were hired externally. Eugenie Costello commented that:

The first Speed of Purple performance was great with sound etcetera. On the second day, though, with Tommy's piece the sound guy and stage manager were really rude, and we were not able to finish the last movement of Tommy's piece. This was highly upsetting – I’ve never experienced anything like that in my life. So rude. But that night was really positive again. The Golden Circles said they had terrible sound as well (Eugenie Costello, Speed of Purple).

Tara Simmons (Tara Simmons Quintet) concurred: “There were lots of sound issues, and the sound guy struggled”.

Through seeking out negative experiences, I was able to put my own value-laden views into perspective. This approach also assists with improving the festival model: by identifying issues, solutions can be found. For example, the sound issue can be fixed through ensuring that staff hired in are specialists with string sound production, and are

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58 Tom Adeney’s *Lute Style Concerto* ran overtime, and the sound crew interrupted the performance.
aware of classical music festival etiquette, i.e., that performances are never interrupted mid-piece, even if running over-time.

3.8.3 Seeking a Number of Lenses on a Phenomena

A number of data collection devices were used to create as detailed and thick a description as possible of the festival site. These included focus groups, interview data, surveys, research journal, audio-visual materials and photos. Multiple methods helped to maximise the amount and types of data collected within the limited project timeframe. This was particularly important as I was so actively involved at the festival that I had very limited time to write observational notes. I also debriefed at the end of each day with my research assistant, Dr Sarah Collins (see Appendix F.11 for CV). Dr Collins provided me with the opportunity to discuss and analyse my observations.

3.9 Conclusion

Performative research practitioners custom-build their research design to suit the needs of their project. The methods they choose must be able to support their practice-led research through enabling the crystallisation of data and the presentation of an exegesis which provides written justification for the creative work’s contribution to knowledge.

I believe that the combination of the contextual review, conceptual design and participant observation methodology have enabled a clear articulation of how the research agenda relates to the research outcomes. The multiple lens perspective employed by participant observation techniques contributed substantially to evaluation, through enabling stakeholders’ voices to be heard throughout the creative and evaluative processes.

Further, qualitative data analysis enabled categorisation, which assisted the assessment of findings across and through various domains: the literature review, contextual review, focus group and interview data, personal observations and marketing materials.
Through documentation of curatorial processes and evaluation of the conceptual design, a festival model has emerged which is self-reflecting and responsive to stakeholder input. This type of model has potential for commercialisation, as it is responsive to the needs and wants of its target market, and is adaptable to change.
CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH OUTCOMES

4.1 Introduction

Restrung addressed the research questions through its presentation of a programme which explored the nature of contemporary string practice; and through the implementation of strategic approaches to marketing, programming and staging designed to maximise the festival’s capacity to develop new audiences for contemporary string practice. In order to evaluate participants’ experiences of the festival, data was collected through interviews, informal conversations, focus groups, surveys and participant observation techniques (as detailed in Chapter 3).

In this chapter I summarise, firstly, the key themes of pre-festival market research focus groups. These sessions were designed to garner feedback on the Restrung concept, and to collect suggestions for the festival design. Secondly, I evaluate how effectively the Restrung marketing materials reflected the festival concept. This is approached through an analysis of focus group and interview commentary, and marketing imagery and text. A brief analysis of survey data is also presented which examines the efficacy of marketing strategies in reaching various audience segments. Thirdly, I evaluate the success of Restrung programming and staging in terms of enhancing accessibility to contemporary string practice. This includes a discussion of the Restrung installation works comprising Miss Random’s video art and the Violinarium. Finally, I present feedback on the social aspects of the festival and explain how the programme – by virtue of its diverse content – created a “becoming-audience” within the space (Macarthur 2010:226; see Chapter 1 for discussion).

The following table indicates collection dates for data referred to in this chapter (full details provided in Chapter 3):
Table 9: Data Collection Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-festival market research focus groups</td>
<td>04 and 12 March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>28 February-02 March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Journal</td>
<td>28 February-10 March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer Focus Group</td>
<td>02 February 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Focus Group</td>
<td>05 February 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Ross and Davidson</td>
<td>27 March 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Pre-Restrung Market Research Focus Groups

In early March 2007, two focus groups were held with members of the target audience, loosely defined as young arts-minded professionals (see Chapter 3 for methodology). I actively sought out respondents interested in experimental art forms such as new theatre and contemporary art. The sessions provided a forum for discussing the Restrung concept within the context of Brisbane festivals and arts. The main themes that emerged from these focus groups can be summarised as follows (see Appendix F.2 for details):

- Respondents wanted something “new” and “different”, “quirky” and “surprising”
- “High quality” and “intriguing” marketing materials were more likely to pique interest in an event
- “Guerrilla marketing” tactics – such as stencil art and chalked advertisements on pavements – are effective (Levinson 2007)
- Participants liked the feeling of being part of the “cultural elite” for knowing about a project
- Respondents find out about events via “email lists”, “emails from friends”, “excited friends”, “street press” and “MySpace bulletins”\(^{59}\)

\(^{59}\) Had the sessions been held more recently, Facebook would have been a likely addition to this list.
• Participants liked events where they “feel at home” as this facilitates being able to “express their true selves”. The comments “Fly your freak flag” and “This looks like the inside of my head” referred to one respondent’s idea of the optimum festival environment. He considered a good festival to be a place where one can be oneself amongst like-minded festival-goers.

• There was strong interest in interactive art, workshops and seminars. People want to “be involved” and “enjoy the sense of community” that this fosters. One respondent commented that she “might as well stay at home” if she is going to be confined to a seat for the duration of a performance.

• “Hybrid arts” and “multimedia” were popular suggestions for the programme

• There was strong interest in “street theatre” and informal “off-stage entertainment”

• Many participants expressed dislike for “big events”, “overcrowded venues” and “queuing”

• Respondents enjoyed and felt “empowered” by participating in the focus groups.

The individuals who participated in focus groups could arguably be classified as members of the “creative class” (see Chapter 1), who “prefer more active, authentic and participatory experiences which they can have a hand in structuring” (Florida 2003:167). This is evidenced by strong interest in interactive and participatory activities, as well as the respondents’ enthusiasm to be involved in the market research process. As will be discussed later, strong interest in interactive and participatory events also emerged in post-Restrung focus groups. Such performative interests are intrinsically linked to the festival’s role as a post-modern community space (see Chapter 1). Theorists including Macleod (2006:222-237), and Fincher and Iveson (2008:173) identify that successful festivals play an important role for translocal communities. This is engendered by a collective “feeling of flow” (Seffrin 2005:239) and “flow of participation” (Sauter 2005b:238) which connects the people within the space, or as one focus group participant

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60 See Chapter 1 for discussion.
described, makes participants “feel at home”. Eltham believes that “the more elements a festival programme includes to cultivate this sense of community and participation, the more successful it will be” (interview, 7 February 2007).

The marketing tools identified by respondents – email, word-of-mouth, guerrilla marketing and MySpace – indicate that they prefer to find out about things through personal and online community networks. One can glean that these individuals value their independence from mainstream culture. They find out about events – not through popular media – but through friends and personalised news feeds. Eltham agreed with this assertion: market research for SOOB found street press to be a “waste of time” (interview, 7 February 2007). Such a phenomenon is confirmed in previous studies. For example, the How Much? project funded by the Arts Council of England identified carefully targeted marketing materials and word-of-mouth as the most effective modes of communication (Baker 2002). This resonates with Florida’s FIY (Find It Yourself) theory: the creative class enjoy discovering underground and niche events on their own (2002:182-185).

**4.3 Marketing: Evaluating the Creation of Expectation**

Comparing participants’ expectations of Restrung with their actual experiences was an important part of evaluating marketing, staging and programming. In this section, I firstly summarise the channels through which people found out about Restrung. Secondly, I explore how participants’ perceptions of Restrung were shaped by the expectations communicated through marketing. I examine how these perceptions varied between audience members, curators and performers. Through this process, I identify strengths and weaknesses in the marketing plan, and suggest potential improvements.
4.3.1 Marketing Channels: Survey Results

In order to attract a diverse range of audiences, the Brisbane Powerhouse deployed a broad approach to marketing placement. This included advertorials and advertisements in street press, local and interstate media; flyer and poster distribution around Brisbane; snail mail and email flyers (see Appendix D and E). Table 4.1 below identifies the number and percentage of the 48 respondents in terms of age:

Table 4.1: Percentage of Survey Respondents as Identified by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 and under</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-65</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 and over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey data collected at Restrung suggests that word-of-mouth was the most efficient form of advertising. Note that some respondents indicated more than one form of advertising, therefore there is a total of 56 responses.

Table 11: Most Effective Form of Advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers/programme</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail-out</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email List</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Festival of Chamber Music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk In</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t remember</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When categorised according to respondents’ ages, it appears that word-of-mouth, flyers and email lists are most effective for reaching persons aged 35 and under. For those aged 46 and over, mail-outs also rank highly.

Note: the numbers in brackets refer to the number of respondents.

Table 12: Most Effective Marketing Channels by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>25 and Under (11)</th>
<th>26-35 (19)</th>
<th>36-45 (2)</th>
<th>46-65 (19)</th>
<th>66 and Over (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>47.38%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>21.06%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail-out</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email List</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCM advertisement 61</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk In</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t remember</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surveys provided useful feedback for marketing purposes. Although there were not enough surveys completed to provide rich quantitative data – particularly for the 36-45 age group – some basic assumptions can be made:

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61 Australian Festival of Chamber Music
• Multiple marketing channels successfully reached a broad range of audiences
• Those aged 46 and over were more likely to be reached via mail-outs and email lists than younger age groups
• Flyers and word-of-mouth were the most effective means of dissemination across age groups
• As suggested by pre-festival focus group data, word-of-mouth and the website were popular channels amongst those aged 35 and under
• Survey and observational data suggests that the audience comprised a fairly even distribution of people aged under-35 and over-46.\(^\text{62}\) This phenomenon is likely to be the result of the mixed programmes in the Powerhouse Theatre and Turbine Hall, attracting a combined audience for classical, New music and popular music genres.

In the next section, a combined analysis of survey results, interview and focus group data indicates that certain changes to programming and marketing could potentially attract more audiences and increase Restrung’s financial viability.

4.3.2 Marketing Imagery and Language

4.3.2.1 Context

Cremona refers to a festival’s name and theme as “festival labels” (2005:6). She argues that these labels are crucial to marketing and curation as they “dictate creation and selection of performances” and describe “the type of encounter between artist and spectator, as well as the type of spectator who will be attracted to the festival” (2005:6). By contrast, Tusa (Barbican Centre, London) has suggested that “elevating” marketing to a high level of importance is “a snare and a delusion” (2002). He believes that marketing tends to confuse “form and image with substance and reality” (2002). Any campaign must balance image and reality: this is the nature of the marketing world. The challenge

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\(^{62}\) The demographics for the Turbine Hall and Theatre programmes are explored in more detail later in this chapter.
lies in the effective use of festival labels to provide an attractive and realistic depiction of  
the proposed festival experience. Individuals’ experiences of the festival cannot be  
known in advance, but marketing can assist in creating a “vibe” around the event, and for  
targeting specific interest groups. Further, it is important for arts companies to create a  
compelling public image in order to attract new audiences.

This section evaluates how effectivelyRestrung’s festival labels reflected its conceptual  
design. Following on from observations presented in Chapters 1 and 2, I suggest that  
Restrung’s marketing campaign might be improved through augmented emphasis on the  
programme’s hybridity. This could be achieved through lessening the focus on classical  
aspects, and increasing priority for popular, New music, visual and interactive features.  
Such an approach may incorporate a careful balance of classical/non-classical and  
musical/non-musical images and text in order to draw attention to the programme’s  
diversity. In this way, the marketing campaign opens itself up to multiple audiences for  
multiple artistic disciplines.

This strategy is becoming increasingly common in New music promotional materials.  
Both WNMD and Gaudeamus use non-musical marketing images in order to steer away  
from associations with specific genre (see discussion in Chapter 2). New York’s  
Wordless Music concert series uses a similar approach. By programming New music  
chamber groups with avant-garde rock bands and electronica, Wordless Music has been  
credited for “attracting the hip, intellectually curious (but new to classical) 20-something  
segment that marketers are invariably trying and often failing to reach” (Schweitzer  
2007:A1). The website uses a simple black and white striped design (see Appendix  
G.33). Posters, commissioned from artists for each event, generally do not incorporate  
musical imagery. The few that do use highly stylised depictions reflecting the  
organisation’s contemporary outlook and hybrid programming. For example, a grand  
piano with keys replaced by a computer keyboard (see Appendix G.33). The title  
“Wordless Music” is genre non-specific, and suggests to the reader that the music will  
speak on its own terms. Website text is informative and to the point. Their mission is  
clearly stated: “Wordless Music seeks to demonstrate that the various boundaries and
genre distinctions segregating music today – popular and classical; uptown and downtown; high art and low – are artificial constructions in need of dismantling” (Wordless Music 2010). These marketing strategies – which effectively communicate the hybridity and innovative approaches used in concert programming – have successfully drawn new audiences to contemporary classical music.

4.3.2.2 Restrung

Restrung focus group feedback indicated that the name Restrung New Chamber Festival and accompanying imagery effectively communicated the theme. The main images featured a cellist in Victorian apparel posed against a graffitied or industrial background (See Appendix D.1 – Brochure and D.2 – Poster). The cello and Victorian dress clearly indicate to the viewer that Restrung has a classical focus. The graffitied wall and industrial backdrop connote grunginess and contemporary underground culture. Combined with the name Restrung, this indicates a “reframing of music in some way” (Simon, advertising executive). This theme is further emphasised with the addition of the phrase new chamber festival. The word chamber is generally associated with classical music, although it is increasingly seen in reference to other types of music, especially jazz. In the Restrung context, its usage proposed that bands be considered alongside classical ensembles as chamber music. In doing so, it articulates the de-hierarchisation of classical and non-classical art music in the Restrung programme. The risk with this approach is that it is not immediately obvious to the reader that the programme features diverse and cross-genre content. The possibility of this misreading was increased by the emphasis on classical components in the advertising blurb (see Appendix D.1 – brochure cover; Appendix D.2 – poster):

Some of the world’s finest music ensembles come together to celebrate the best of contemporary chamber music. Featuring concerts, workshops, free events and string-inspired art.

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63 Post-reception studies focus group participant: audience member.
This blurb gives no indication that the programme included bands, video art and interactive installation works. The inside pages of the brochure dispensed more detailed information about the overall programme. However, the text concentrates on descriptions of the ticketed (classical) performances, the workshop, forum and installations. The Turbine Platform free music programme received minimum coverage: it was presented in a schedule format with no descriptors. Free events were also poorly represented in media releases. This situation resulted from the Powerhouse’s financial imperative: the Powerhouse needed to make money from ticketed concerts in order to support my event. Powerhouse staff indicated that intensive marketing for free events was unnecessary because they are generally well attended. They were correct in this respect: attendance at Turbine Platform performances was fairly good, averaging between 70 and 150 people.\textsuperscript{64} However, the limited marketing provided for Restrung bands potentially limited the festival’s ability to draw new audiences for contemporary string practice. Although the website made up for this to an extent – detailed information was available for all performances – it is less likely that new audiences would refer to the website if initial marketing did not pique their interest (see Appendix D.7: Restrung website).

This situation, which I had not anticipated, negatively affected my conceptual plan. Restrung was intended to present an equal focus on classical, New music, cross-genre and popular genres. Instead, marketing indicated that the festival was predominantly of contemporary classical content. A possible solution for the future could be to evenly divide classical ensembles and bands between ticketed and free streams. In this way, it would be economically viable to advertise multiple components of the programme. Alternatively, a festival pass – which provided entry to all events at one price – would enable a more equal weighting to classical and non-classical groups, visual and interactive features. To accompany these strategies, the advertising blurb would be rewritten to capture the programme’s diversity. Such an approach may enable Restrung marketing to become more evocative of the hybrid nature of contemporary string practice.

\textsuperscript{64} The Platform was configured in “casual mode”, which provides 72 seats plus substantial standing space. See appendices C.8 and C.9 for more information about the venue.
In the next section, a detailed exploration of participants’ perceptions of Restrung reveals some interesting assumptions made by audience members, performers and the Powerhouse Theatre curators. These assumptions affirm that the classical leaning of the marketing materials did indeed affect audience perceptions.

**4.3.3 Restrung: Classical or Contemporary?**

The Brisbane Powerhouse programmes a wide range of performing and visual arts. Whilst events such as the comedy festival, Live Spark and Live Wire act as “cash cows” due to their popular appeal, said Ross, the venue’s focus is on the contemporary, the avant-garde and quality emerging dance, theatre, music and art. Given the venue’s clientele and reputation in this regard, Restrung could be seen as a vehicle which presents classical music to audiences who tend towards contemporary and experimental art forms. Post-festival focus group moderator Dr Jodie Taylor commented that “Given the space, I would say Restrung brought more classical music to an audience who is used to contemporary music” (Focus group, 02 February 2009). Ross and Davidson agree. Davidson asserts that at standard classical festivals, such as the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, contemporary music takes a back seat to traditional classical repertoire, and tends not to be received with much enthusiasm by audiences (see Chapter 1). It is “almost the opposite in [Restrung’s] case”, believes Davidson, “where the audience comprises people who are used to fresh experimental repertoire … who almost have to be pushed into the classics”.

Davidson emphasised the importance of maintaining traditional concert hall etiquette in the Powerhouse Theatre. For example, during the Brodsky Quartet’s performance of the Schubert Quintet (with Davidson as guest double bassist), some members of the audience clapped between the first and second movements. Daniel Rowland (First Violin, Brodsky Quartet) signalled them to cease, albeit in a “friendly” way. Davidson regarded this as an important moment in defining what the festival was about: “Restrung was definitely

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65 See website for more information: http://www.brisbanepowerhouse.org
about breaking down the barriers of rituals which people often find forbidding about going to classical music concerts. However, there wasn’t any dumbing down or pandering at all”. Davidson championed the inclusion of “non-dumbed down classics” in the programme, staged “without any apology or self-consciousness”. To Davidson, this approach communicates the musicians’ affection for the classical tradition: “We love it and you’ll love it. You don’t have to be scared of our funny little rituals. They’re not that funny. We’re not going to pretend it is something that it is not. We’re not going to put a backing track behind it or something!” Davidson’s observations indicate that he perceived the majority of Restrung’s audiences to be newcomers to classical repertoire. Ross views this as a potential strength of the festival: its capacity to draw people who are not necessarily “chamber music buffs”.

Both Ross and Davidson appear to identify Restrung as a contemporary music festival, with classical repertoire thrown into the mix. By contrast, most members of the audience focus group regarded Restrung as a classical music festival “with a twist” (Simon, 40, advertising executive). From this perspective, expectations of the festival are different. Production features typical of a pop or rock festival – such as continuous programming, video art and bands – are not expected. Judith (public servant, 50) attends classical music concerts regularly. She commented that, “audiences [for classical festivals] expect you come to a venue, see a concert and go. You don’t expect continuity of programming”. Malcolm (retired TV Producer, 65) viewed the Restrung concept as “revitalising the image of chamber music”. The mixed programming made it “a festival of absolutely contemporary music of any kind”.

Simon (advertising executive, 40) and Renee (student, 20) found out about Restrung through performers at the festival. Simon, a regular Powerhouse patron, noted that the challenge with marketing Restrung lies in its ability to draw audiences from outside the classical music scene: “The challenge is how to tease people who don’t know about

Peter Sculthorpe, composer, once explained to me in an informal conversation that he is “excited” when there is clapping between movements. This indicates the presence of new audiences for his music.
chamber music to come along. I know a lot of people who would have loved the event”. Simon himself was unaware of chamber music before attending Restrung, but recalled that on seeing the brochure, he was curious as to what it was about:

[The name Restrung indicated that] there would be a reframing of music in some way but I wasn’t sure how. I liked the subheading new chamber festival. It made me think, ‘Ah … I wonder what this is about’… not that I would have known what a traditional chamber festival would have been! But I liked that it was new (Simon, advertising executive, 40).

Whilst Simon was not aware of chamber music, he was drawn to the event for its innovative content. However, he may not have attended if he had not known a Restrung performer. Renee, an indie rock fan, noted that it would be “great to market it to people who haven’t been exposed to chamber music, not just that little box of people who already know about it”. Simon and Renee’s comments indicate that the marketing campaign could be more effective in reaching new audiences, perhaps through less emphasis on “chamber music” and more emphasis on innovative and independent content. Whilst Restrung successfully introduced audiences to New music through mixed programming, focus group, survey and observation data indicates that marketing materials were mostly effective in reaching only classical and New music audiences. Audiences for the non-classical programme were likely to have been drawn through word-of-mouth and bands’ individual mailing lists.

The performers’ focus group session provided a different perspective on Restrung’s mixed programme. As canvassed earlier, the Restrung concept was difficult to communicate to non-practitioners: there is a tendency for classical and popular musics to be considered in binary opposition. To complicate matters further, traditional classical audiences are often not predisposed towards New music. For contemporary string practitioners, these genre relationships are innately understood through direct practice. Therefore, they have an implicit understanding of what Restrung set out to achieve. Hence, performers’ discussions centred on the programme’s musical syncretism and
diversity. Focus group surveys indicated that the interests and experiences of performers crossed many genres (see Appendix F.4). For example, Tara Simmons describes her compositions as “indie pop with elements of folk, electronica and experimentalism”; Adam Cadell (Zhivago) writes that his performance interests are “Classical/Gypsy/Rock (experimentalism)”. For Greta Kelly of the Golden Circles, her practices lie in the domain of “World music, lo-fi and hi-fi orchestral playing”. For Restrung musicians, there is nothing new about crossing the divide between classical, New music and popular idioms. Restrung aimed to explore this phenomenon through its provision of a dedicated platform for contemporary string music, incorporating both informal and concert hall settings. It acted as a meeting place for contemporary string practitioners to perform, discuss and collaborate. Ross observed that:

Restrung worked both as a performance festival and as a gathering of musicians. I think that was the real strength of it: having all those people in the same place at the same time. If we tried to do it again, we’d exploit that aspect more.67

Restrung performers, Ross and Davidson, clearly perceived Restrung as an implicitly contemporary and syncretic musical event, with a small portion of traditional classical music. The classical bias of marketing was not remarked upon. By contrast, to non-practising festival-goers, Restrung represented a classical music focus: a conclusion gleaned from marketing materials.

4.3.4 Marketing Strategies Conclusion

Despite approximately half the programme being non-classical, the classical/New music events were the most heavily promoted. The marketing materials are likely to have triggered preconceptions associated with classical music: the concert hall setting, silent listening and serious music (see Chapter 1 for discussion). This accounts for non-practitioners’ surprise in encountering a diverse array of performers and an informal, social atmosphere. Whilst the element of surprise worked positively, the overtly classical

67 Social aspects will be explored in Section 4.5.
focus in marketing materials may have detracted from the campaign’s efficacy in drawing new audiences. Festival-goers who were not classical music followers were predominantly Powerhouse regulars or had come to see specific bands. In this sense, the festival’s success in drawing new audiences came mostly from interactions within the festival space. It is highly possible that the independent marketing efforts of the various ensembles and bands contributed as much to audience development as, if not more than, the venue’s own marketing efforts. Further, classical and New music enthusiasts were potentially introduced to bands they may not have encountered on their usual concert hall circuit.

4.4 Feedback on Programme and Accessibility

Restrung presented a programme of contemporary string practice within an interactive, immersive environment. This section explores how audiences, performers and curators perceived this approach to curation, and the success of strategies used to enhance accessibility to contemporary string practice. These strategies can be summarised as:

- Continuity of programming
- Free music
- Use of space to increase accessibility
- Use of visual aspects
- Interactive elements of the festival design.

4.4.1 Continuity of Programming

Restrung incorporated continuous programming in order to:

- Create a sense of community through facilitating social encounters
- Attract audiences to free shows before and after Powerhouse Theatre concerts, encouraging audiences to arrive early or stay longer in the festival space
- Encourage audiences who came to see a specific act to stay on at the venue.
Continuous programming is standard practice at pop, rock, folk and related site-specific festivals. Access to these festivals usually requires the purchase of a single festival pass which covers entry to all events, thus encouraging the audience to listen to bands with which they were not previously familiar. In contrast, New music and classical festivals tend to use a multiple venue approach, with concerts programmed intermittently throughout the day and/or night. This approach to programming decreases the likelihood of “bumping” into colleagues; striking up a conversation with a stranger; and of serendipitously encountering an unfamiliar musical act. Restrung provided a mix of free and ticketed events, and offered a festival pass which significantly discounted Powerhouse Theatre entry fees. These strategies were designed to increase accessibility to performances. Greta (Golden Circles) commented that she “loved the way there were free and ticketed events so you could make a whole day of it”.

Continuous programming helps to engender a social atmosphere. As performers, artists and audience members move throughout the space, opportunities arise for “fleeting moments of encounter based on their shared status as participants in a festival” (Fincher and Iveson 2008:183-184). In this way, continuous programming can promote a sense of festivity. Ross notes that: “The festival is both a collection of work and a meeting of artists and audience. It’s a creative gallery not just a block programme that happens to be on at the same time”. The power of a festival, posits Ross, is its ability to make people feel “like they are a part of something. People go for the music but they also go to be part of a scene. They want to be part of an event. They want to be there with other people. They go there for the vibe and for the act of being at a festival”. These social aspects will be explored in detail in Section 4.5.

Interviewed performers and audience members agreed that Restrung’s continuous programming was successful, with survey comments indicating approval of the fees structure and mixed programming:

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68 From hereon, I shall refer to this umbrella of festivals as “pop festivals”.

203
• “A fantastic evening, lots of amazing things to see and hear, a great concept. The Sixpack Symphony was amazing, great night! More contemporary music events are needed in Brisbane.”

• “Absolutely fantastic – the most wonderful musical long weekend experience I have ever experienced. THANKYOU!!!”

• “Great value. Well done getting the Brodsky Quartet in a terrific (smallish) venue and so reasonably priced for the whole festival. If I had time I’d have attended more. I like the theme over several days. Terrific!”

Eugenie (Speed of Purple) noted that her stand out moment at the festival was just “being there”, with “so much music going on that could appeal to all sorts of people from the famous Brodsky Quartet to a local original ensemble, so one could go to a free or ticketed event”. Performers particularly enjoyed the mix of emerging and established acts.

Whilst respondents indicated that they enjoyed all aspects of the programme, there were many suggestions by performers as to how it could be improved. Opinions as to what form this should take varied considerably from person to person. Suggestions for future programming generally aligned with respondents’ performance interests. For example, Kelly (Golden Circles) and Davidson suggested the inclusion of more world music. Sarah Collins, my research assistant, agreed with me that the programme would have benefited from more New music. Tara Simmons recommended more popular music, and inter-arts collaborations. Ross said he would like to make it more “eclectic”, and include comedy: “It would be all about music that’s at a high level of playing skill and invention but could include someone like Tim Minchin so that there is comedy as part of a music festival”.

Almost all respondents agreed that the programme would benefit from more interactive, educational, visual arts and inter-arts events. For future Restrung festivals,69 it has also been mooted to replace the mix of free and ticketed events with a festival pass system. This will be discussed in the next section.

69 The second Restrung New Chamber Festival is proposed for May 2012. Plans are for the festival to tour from Brisbane Powerhouse to the University of New England, Australian National Academy of Music and Melbourne Recital Centre.
4.4.2 Free Music

The Turbine Hall programme was designed to increase accessibility to contemporary string practice in a number of ways. Firstly, Restrung aimed to provide a free, comfortable setting for those who dislike or shy away from attending concert hall performances (see Chapter 1). In this way, curious festival-goers were encouraged to attend a variety of performances in an informal environment. This facilitated entry to unfamiliar music, and since there was no financial cost to the audience, there was little risk involved. Over time, these audiences might become established, paying patrons.

As mentioned in the previous section, a festival pass system may increase the model’s longevity through improving financial income. Further, it would increase access to all aspects of the programme including the Powerhouse Theatre programme. However, such a system may affect accessibility to the festival by lower income earners and new audiences. This said, the Arts Council of England’s report How Much? (Baker 2002) suggested that even though young people cite financial constraints as the main deterrent to going to the theatre, they do have disposable income. Respondents indicated a willingness to pay a high price to see well-known or esteemed productions (Baker 2002:1). The report revealed that lack of attendance is more to do with unfamiliarity or lack of interest. Thus, unless marketing and programming successfully attract new audiences, it is less likely that a festival pass system will open up contemporary string practice to as many unknown, potential audiences as a free programme.

For example, Renee (student, 20) noted that there are “pros and cons” for each ticketing approach: “for rock/pop festivals, you buy one ticket and you can see it all, and this way, at [Restrung], you only pay for things you want to see plus free events”. Renee came to Restrung to see her friend perform with Zhivago on Thursday and Friday nights. She stayed on after the shows because she was “really enjoying” the festival. However, as someone who had not been exposed to much chamber music previously, she said she would not have come if her friend had not been performing. Further, as she was
unfamiliar with the programme, it is unlikely she would have stayed on if she had had to
buy tickets. In this way, the free programme provided exposure to new audiences who did
not have the depth of knowledge to justify ticket purchase.

Secondly, the free programme enabled Restrung to capitalise on the Powerhouse’s
established audience base. Regular patrons include those who come to see art exhibitions
(the Nikon Walkley Photographic Awards exhibition was on display at the time), and
those who come to dine and drink at the bars and restaurants. On Sunday, the regular
Live Wire and Live Spark events attract between 200 and 500 audience members, the
majority of whom tend to be aged 35 and under. One survey respondent – who
“accidentally” came to Restrung on the Friday night – wrote: “Fantastic! Made my week
– really lifted my spirits. Thank you for organising this.”

Thirdly, the free programme was designed to capture audiences before and after the
ticketed events. Malcolm (retired, 65) came to see Brodsky Quartet. He stayed after the
concert, and “saw music [he] wouldn’t usually go to”, because he “enjoyed the whole
atmosphere of the place”. The Turbine Platform performers appreciated this design, and
emphasised the important opportunity it afforded them to meet and play to members of
the Brodsky Quartet. Adam (Zhivago) explained that this boosted his confidence as a
performer and that it was “great to see people like the Brodsky Quartet checking out what
you play”. In this way, the Restrung design broke down barriers between local and
international performers.
4.4.3 Use of the Space

The Powerhouse is a popular venue for small festivals due to the layout of the space and its ethos for supporting emerging artists and niche events. Ross stated that the “different culture and different popular perception” of the Powerhouse makes it an advantageous venue for attempting to “popularise” New music: “There’s nothing wrong with going to QPAC or the Con Theatre with its beautiful acoustics, but there is an advantage in bringing this music into a space like the Powerhouse”. Ross believes the Powerhouse is a context in which you can “build an audience beyond the aficionados”. The venue has multiple performance spaces (see Appendix C.8) that facilitate the simultaneous staging of multiple events and exhibitions. Beh Wattenberg, who built the Violinarium, noted that the “trick” with the Powerhouse is to use its full potential by “pushing and pulling audiences throughout the space … where you want them to go, and getting them off that main thoroughfare”. For Wattenberg, this issue was particularly pertinent. The Violinarium was located in the Turbine Rehearsal Room. Many festival-goers were unable to find it, or were unaware of its presence, due to poor signage. A number of solutions to this problem were mooted in focus groups. Suggestions included:

- Supplying paper maps to festival-goers
- Instigating mini-referral systems; for example, each visitor to the Violinarium is given a slip of paper which they are asked to pass on to a stranger
- Performance artists leading audiences around the space, Pied Piper style
- Coloured strings leading to the Turbine Rehearsal Room.

Such creative mapping systems would improve the Restrung model by engendering a sense of the festival as a Wonderland\(^70\) to be explored. Further, the ideas listed above would potentially encourage social interaction.

\(^70\) See Chapter 1 for a discussion of this term.
4.4.4 Use of Visual aspects

Restrung video art comprised installation works and VJ-ing (see Appendix C.13, H.3 and H.4). Miss Random (Eva Lunde and Andrea Werner) specialise in creating imagery for psy-trance and techno at electronic dance parties. Their work centres on themes of femininity, mythology and water. Miss Random created three installation works which were projected onto walls and skeins of fabric throughout the Turbine Hall. Live-mixed video art, created in consultation with performers, was projected behind performers during the night-time shows.

Three installations featured in the space. A large gilt frame was projected onto the three-storey high wall facing the stage (see Appendix H.3). Within the frame, waterfalls and curvaceous feminine imagery merged and morphed into one other. Under the stairwell, images of a woman swimming were projected onto white cloth (see Appendix H.3). Another installation was situated in the old engine room between the Graffiti Room and Bar Alto. Original plans for the festival included a “synaesthetic machine” – to be built by sound artist Robin Fox – designed to create computer-generated impressions of live performances. Miss Random volunteered to VJ when the synaesthetic machine did not eventuate.

Miss Random’s doof experience resonated with the Restrung ethos. Doofs are large outdoor electronic dance music festivals which take place in rural Australia. They are usually run entirely on a volunteer basis, and encourage a “basic co-operativism” in which “the artist is not a special person, but every person is a special sort of artist” (St John 2001b:16-17). Comparable to a doof, the Restrung model values the input of the spectators on an equal level to the performers. St John, drawing on the work of Bey (1991:70) and Gaillot (1998), says that in this way, the doof is non-hierarchical, and is a place “where all are active participants in the art ‘work’” (St John 2001b:16). Similarly, the Restrung immersive artwork enhanced festival-goers’ experiences through the use of video art to enliven the space and create visual interpretations of musical performances.
Wattenberg observed that a major challenge with combining music and visuals is achieving the right balance: “The challenge with art and video is finding moments when video comes to the forefront. Or does it always play background to the music?”

Installations were designed to address this issue through exhibiting video independently of musical performances. Lunde, who had not worked with live musicians before, found the process challenging and fulfilling. For her, it was “really great to mix live visuals to strings. It was amazing and some moments were priceless”. In terms of process, Lunde explained that one “needs some licence”. It is “daunting to go out and film things that musicians have specifically asked for”. Lunde asked for recorded samples of each ensemble, as well as a “vision” of their music. For example, Speed of Purple suggested images that encapsulated “colour, movement and femininity” (personal communication, 15 January 2008). Miss Random’s interpretation was a dancing goddess figure which merged in and out of a textured, vibrantly coloured background. Collusion requested “the image of one drowning or a deep water scene” for Nick Cave’s Little Water Song, and for the rest of their programme they suggested backgrounds of reds, pinks and starry nights (personal communication, 23 January 2008; see Appendix C.16). Simple backdrops were available for groups who preferred not to have a strong visual component. For example, the David Bentley Quartet opted for a starry night scene (see Appendix H.4).

It was intended that the process of collaboration would create a symbiotic relationship between musical and visual elements, thus fostering the sense of immersive space. Opinions regarding the success in achieving this objective were mixed. Tara Simmons (Tara Simmons Quintet) found it to be an effective immersive device:

It was different to have visuals around you as opposed to just behind you. It brought the space alive. Instead of focusing entirely on the performer, the focus was on the whole atmosphere.

Renee, an audience member, commented that the “video art was good. Excellent. Not repetitious”. However, she found it a distraction from the music: “It was hard to
concentrate on what I was supposed to be concentrating on”. By contrast, audience members Malcolm and Judith viewed the video art as auxiliary to the music. Malcolm explained that he “tends not to think of the visual aspects as a major thing, but I like the fact that something else is going on that is a visual thing, and you can take it in for a few minutes or 10 seconds … it’s there and it compliments everything”. For Judith, the installation works helped to “fill the gaps” between shows. The creation of an effective relationship between visual and musical elements appears to be contingent on the visual and musical interests of the viewer. For those with a strong interest in the visual arts, the video becomes a major focus. For those who are primarily interested in hearing music, the video is a distraction, or merges into the background.

Focus group commentary included a number of suggestions for the use of video art at the next Restrung. These included:

• Using the outside wall of the Powerhouse for projections. This would provide the ancillary effect of advertising the festival’s presence to passers by.

• A room dedicated to short films relating to experimental music and music videos, and/or “feel good shorts driven by the passion of music, or perhaps string music” (Lunde, Miss Random)

• Lunde felt that she could have positioned some of the installation works in more prominent positions. The installations under the stairwell and in the machine room were not easy to see.

In general, performers suggested the inclusion of more visual and inter-arts content:

• “more art-YEAH!” (Performer focus group comment: see Appendix F.4)

• “more Art-music stuff … inter-arts for example, a dance-strings piece. That way, you get other artists involved, and you get other audiences … dance audiences, for example (Tara Simmons)

• More inter-arts representation (Performer focus group comment: See Appendix F.4)
4.4.5 Interactive Elements: The Violinarium

Interactive activities at Restrung were important for increasing accessibility through participation. The FourPlay workshop provided a hands-on educational introduction to improvisatory playing and string sound effects. The Artist Forum was open to the public; however, almost all attendees were performers from the Powerhouse Theatre programme. It provided participants with the opportunity to provide feedback on their festival experiences, and to discuss directions in contemporary string practice. This section focuses on the Violinarium, Restrung’s most distinctive and unique interactive feature.

The Violinarium (see C.13, C.14, C.15 and H.2; listen to Disk 13) was designed and built by illumination artist Beh Wattenberg and sound artist Joel Stern (see Appendices C.18 and C.19, respectively, for CVs). With its playfully epic dimensions, interactive qualities and experimental sounds, it was educational, social and creative. It provided a platform for musicians, sound artists, children and non-musicians to create music together. This phenomenon is an example of “participatory music making”, a school of thought espoused by the DISS and composers including Holst, Cage and Wiegold (Laycock 2005). Participatory music focuses on creating performance opportunities for untrained and amateur instrumentalists, and reflects “a belief in the rights of all people to have access to creative artistic experience” (Laycock 2005:25).

Originally intended for the Turbine Platform, the Violinarium’s dimensions were substantial, with a height of 3.5 metres, a width of 4.5 metres and a length of 12 metres. Due to the intensity of its volume and the limited space on the Turbine Platform, it was positioned in the Turbine Rehearsal Room instead. This location had mixed reviews. Simon, an audience member, “liked the compression” of the Turbine Rehearsal Room.

71 Unfortunately no data is available for participants’ experiences at the workshop, and I was unable to attend due to Turbine Platform commitments.
72 It was intended that the Forum be recorded on tape, but unfortunately the sound engineer did not attend. The notes I wrote have informed the discussion in this chapter.
and believed that the Violinarium could potentially lose impact if positioned elsewhere. Other festival-goers felt that the Violinarium seemed “cramped by the ceiling” (Renee and Kate, audience members). Further, Wattenberg was concerned by the limited viewing space for John Rodgers and Joel Stern’s Violinarium performance. A number of audience members were turned away. Wattenberg proposed that the addition of more scheduled performances would help to solve this problem, and encourage more people into the space. The most prevalent concern with the Violinarium’s positioning was that many festival-goers had difficulty finding it, or did not know about it. As discussed earlier in this chapter, a number of suggestions were made to improve this situation including mini-referral systems, better signage and so forth.

The Violinarium was one of the most popular features of the Restrung programme. Simon was so “blown away” by it that he “kept running upstairs and grabbing people”, including people he did not know, “to come look at it”. For Wattenberg, the Rodgers/Stern Violinarium performance was the stand-out moment of the festival: “It was amazing to see Rodgers playing and attacking the instrument: he had a big smile on his face!” After the performance, Rodgers expressed the desire to write a composition for Violinarium and string ensemble (personal communication, 01 March 2008). Throughout the festival period, the Violinarium also attracted numerous sound artists, who came specifically to experiment with the instrument.

The installation was particularly popular with children. Wattenberg recalled with excitement seeing his 12-year-old son “being a tour guide and showing other kids around”. His son also enjoyed the Turbine Platform programme. A number of respondents indicated that they would have brought their children to Restrung if had they known how interactive it would be. In particular, they noted the Violinarium and FourPlay workshop. Ross, Davidson and all focus group participants agreed that the Violinarium would be an excellent feature for a schools programme.

The Violinarium was intended to introduce audiences to the sonic possibilities of strings (or more precisely, amplified fencing wire) through first-hand experience. Further,
through the process of public, participatory, experimental performance, social barriers were broken down. As described in Chapter 1, music can act as an integral part of facilitating social interactions, emotional responses, and cultural understandings at community festivals (Fincher and Iveson 2007; Duffy et al. 2007). The next section will evaluate the social aspects of the Restrung experiment.

4.5 Feedback on Social Aspects

The emphasis on sociality in the festival design permeates all aspects of programming. Due to its importance, I will now review and elaborate specifically on Restrung’s social aspects. The venue, in itself, is social in design. Bar Alto is located directly next to the Turbine Hall, allowing easy access to food and beverages, which can be brought onto the Platform. Seating provided a combination of rows, couches, bar tables and stools as well as ample standing area. Audience members can enter and exit the Platform at their leisure. There is no backstage area for the Turbine Platform. The stage is in close proximity to the audience and is elevated by approximately 70 centimetres. Such a design facilitates social contact between the audience and the performers. At the end of shows, performers often walked directly into the spectator area, and/or audience members came up to the stage to speak with performers. Adam (Zhivago) enjoyed performing on the Turbine Platform as he “felt laid back”, and “it was less like a stage which made it more enjoyable” (see Appendix H.1).

Before and after shows, performers tended to mingle with festival-goers in the bar area or Turbine Hall. Focus group respondents agreed this was one of the most important and successful elements of Restrung. Kate (accountant, 36) described how she met one of the CODA performers directly before the show. For her, this encounter “made the performance mean more somehow”. Simon (advertising executive, 40) felt Restrung was a “very social event” and he enjoyed “chatting to people” he had not met before: “It was a great platform for people talking about music and for talking to musicians”.

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Simon and Greta (Golden Circles) noted that the Violinarium was particularly effective in facilitating social interaction. Greta said that she “spoke to lots of people” at the Violinarium, and explained that “If you are just going in and out of a theatre you don’t have as much opportunity to chat”. Davidson considered the Violinarium as “an extension out of what it means to do music”: it provided a playful, visual, tactile and imaginative platform for music-making and listening. Its traditional shape, distorted size and the intensity and range of sounds it produced created an inimitable interactive sonic environment.

A popular and unprompted topic in both focus groups was the child-friendliness of the event. As Eugenie (Speed of Purple) observed, ease of access on and off the Turbine Platform is beneficial for parents who need to leave suddenly in order to attend to their progeny. Taking babies and young children into concert halls can be problematic. It is embarrassing if one’s child becomes noisy and it is often difficult to make a discreet exit. As noted previously, parents highlighted the Violinarium and FourPlay workshop as events their children enjoyed or would have enjoyed had they been at the festival. Had they known how child-friendly the event was, said performers Tony and Eugenie, they would have brought their children along. Whilst there had been plans to incorporate a schools programme, a programme for young children (under 6) was not discussed. Focus group responses clearly indicate that the addition of children’s activities would increase Restrung’s accessibility to young ones and their families. Notably, too, high school electric quartet Area4, which opened the Saturday programme, brought an audience of family members and teenage friends, many of whom stayed on at the festival until the evening.

Focus group and interview participants agreed that Restrung would be improved with the addition of more forums, panels, workshops, jam sessions and formalised social gatherings. Given the emphasis on participatory and interactive aspects, the limited number of such events was not ideal, and can be directly attributed to the small budget. Rowland (Brodsky Quartet) suggested at the Artist Forum to include more informal gatherings and “jam sessions” with local musicians. A number of performers at the focus
group seconded this opinion, and Ross recognised it as something to be capitalised on in future: “Having all those people in the same place at the same time … If we tried to do it again we’d try to exploit that more than last time”. Rowland suggested running the festival in a similar vein to the Dartington International Summer School (DISS). That is, a participatory music-making event where professional musicians, students and amateur players all perform together and live together for a week (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the DISS).

Another idea, forwarded by my research assistant Sarah Collins, is to combine Restrung with a student conference. The conference would ideally include forums and workshops, paper presentations, a student concert series, and a composition competition. Such a plan would increase the number of secondary and tertiary age students and make discussion a central feature of the festival model. A comparable approach can be seen at TINA, where four mini-festivals and the Critical Animals Research Symposium run simultaneously (see Chapter 3 for details of TINA).

Notwithstanding these shortfalls, Restrung was successful in bringing musicians together and facilitating discussions in both formalised contexts – the Forum and SixPack Symphony – and informal gatherings at the Turbine Platform, Bar Alto and Violinarium. Davidson and Ross felt that Restrung’s role as a meeting place for practitioners was one of its main strengths. Ross believes that the festival provided important creative inspiration:

Coming to this event sustained some of these musicians. They went back feeling like part of a community. They were inspired and wanted to do better work. They went away with a feeling of confidence and determination.

This aspect of the festival is integral to its purpose. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are very few events which bring contemporary string practitioners together as a community. New music practitioners are even more fractionalised. Whilst organisations such as the Australian Music Centre and Aurora support the community, they focus exclusively on
New music. Restrung, through positioning New music within a contemporary string-practice spectrum, exposed New music to multiple audiences and “enabled a whole lot of events to occur which potentially lifted the music to another level” (Ross). The notion of multiple audiences is the subject of the next section.

4.6 Becoming-Audience

As discussed in Chapter 1, Restrung festival-goers can be seen as a “becoming audience” (Macarthur 2010:226). There are “several audiences of multiple listeners” (Macarthur 2010:226) as the programme facilitates the cross-fertilisation “between one kind of music and another kind and one kind of venue and another” (Macarthur 2010:228). Audiences are taken on a journey in which they explore approaches used in new chamber music and in jazz, rock, folk and pop bands which derive inspiration from art music. Such an approach has the potential to increase New music’s audience base by combining audiences for the various ensembles and bands within the festival space.

As canvassed earlier, quantitative data collection was difficult due to the open nature of the space, and the free programme means that there are no box office records. However, I have developed a picture of Restrung attendees through a combination of information collected from surveys, personal observations, observations made by research assistant Sarah Collins, and previous research by Burgess concerning Topology’s audience. This data suggests that Restrung audiences exhibited omnivorous tastes and came from a wide spectrum of the community (see Chapter 1: Audience profiling). A number of trends can be identified.

Firstly, the data indicates that the majority of persons who completed the surveys (total of 48 respondents) to be under 35 (23 respondents) or over 45 (23 respondents). On Sunday, the average age of the audience for Golden Circles and CODA was observed to be between 18 and 35. This was the busiest day at the festival with approximately 500 people in attendance. As well as CODA being a major drawcard, regulars for Live Spark boosted audience numbers. There were some predicted patterns regarding audience
demographics, based on the mix of music. For example, people aged 25 and under were predominantly attending free events. FourPlay was the most well-attended ticketed act for this age group. For audiences over 45, the most popular events were ticketed: SixPack, FourPlay, CODA and the Brodsky Quartet. Participants aged 45-65 were the most active in the festival space (or perhaps the most active at survey completion). Surveys indicated that they saw more acts than other age groups and were more likely to come to the festival for more than one day. FourPlay and SixPack appear to be the most well-attended performances by all age groups.

Secondly, there was a wide range of occupations represented. Interestingly, arts occupations did not feature as highly as I would have expected. Encouragingly, students were one of the highest ranked segments.\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{Table 13: Survey respondents by occupation}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Engineering</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and administrative support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Social services</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Financial operations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare practitioners</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Design, Entertainment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst these survey results can only provide a limited picture, in conjunction with observational work it can fairly be said that the Restrung audiences represented a varied

\textsuperscript{73} Segments guided by occupational groups defined by Alaska Department of Labour and Workforce Development Occupation Employment Survey (2008).
audience, in terms of age, interests and occupation. In this respect, the model was successful in reaching a broad range of audience segments. As Macarthur notes, however, this approach does come with risks as the audience is an “unstable entity”: “Audience receptiveness to ‘new’ music cannot be easily determined in advance which means that the number of people in any given audience at the festival event cannot be known” (2010:228). Perhaps, in line with my suggestions for marketing (see Section 4.3), a more equal distribution of New music and popular music acts between the ticketed and unticketed venues would further diversify the audience, thus increasing the chances of positive audience reception.

4.7 Conclusions

Evaluation identifies what was done well and what could be done better. It helps to identify limitations and suggest ways to improvement. Through participant observation techniques, I have been able to assess the curatorial objectives against the outcomes of the festival, from a multiple-lens perspective. Such a process is invaluable to the development of a festival model which responds to its audience, performers and curators. Variance in stakeholder opinion has been extremely useful as it has opened up new and different ways of thinking about programming, festival design, and approaches to marketing.

For insiders, the inclusion of bands and video art clearly identified Restrung as a contemporary event: these aspects are not traditionally featured in festivals with classical content. The main issue that arises for practitioners is how to make an informal, cross-genre programme work without jeopardising traditional performance practices: how to recontextualise classical music without “dumbing down” content and etiquette or “pandering” to mainstream demand (Davidson). The balance lies in creating a social environment which is conducive to active listening. In this regard, the venue played its part. The Turbine Platform has an established culture of listening. Audiences know to respect performers, and tend to move about the space without being disruptive. For
recital-style performances, the Powerhouse Theatre provided a traditional concert hall context.

Restrung was identified by most audience focus group participants as a classical music event, even though the Turbine Platform programme featured mainly bands and video art. This perception can be attributed to the marketing campaign’s focus on the ticketed classical and New music programme. The suggested remedy to this problem would be to programme more bands as ticketed events in order to even out the distribution of classical and popular music events in marketing materials. Further, the festival labels would signify the conceptual design more appropriately with increased emphasis on non-classical elements. Nevertheless, Restrung’s aim to draw new audiences to New music was successful. The mixed programme enabled a cross-fertilisation of audiences at the festival, comprising Powerhouse Theatre audiences, band supporters, and Powerhouse regulars. One survey respondent stated, “WOW! Great entertainment. I was not a New music fan til this – make sure we are on your mailing list again”. And another: “Thoroughly enjoyed the whole concept. There should be more of the same”.

There was a consensus amongst respondents that Restrung could include more variety in the future, particularly in terms of interactive, educational, visual arts and inter-arts events.

The twelve focus group participants agreed that Restrung was successful as an immersive artwork. Kate noted that “it was a really interactive space, so one could walk around and spend lots of time there”. Similarly, Simon said, “I didn’t expect it to be so interactive and layered”. However, the consensus was that the festival model would be improved by using more of the spaces available.

Restrung’s main contribution was in creating a meeting place for audiences and contemporary string practitioners. As Ross asserts:
With the sorts of genres and non-genres that we are dealing with we really need an event like this to bring those artists together nationally and interact internationally. We need to find an audience for it and to attract national attention to it.

For this to work, Restrung needs to become a high-ranking event on the Australian musical calendar (discussed in Chapter 5), and to build a reputation as an “important cog in the wheel” for supporting contemporary string practice (Ross).
CHAPTER 5 – MEASURING AND BUILDING ON CREATIVE SUCCESS

5.1 Introduction

Through the Restrung New Chamber Festival, I set out to explore the nature of contemporary string practice. This was approached through designing a curatorial model intended to increase its accessibility to multiple audiences. The conclusions for this project comprise a summary of Restrung’s performance in terms of the success of marketing, staging and programming, social enhancement and evaluation strategies accompanied by a list of recommendations for improvement. These findings were informed by market research activities, participant observation, and a pre- and post-festival contextual review. Post-reception studies with festival participants and a comparative analysis with relevant festivals informed the model through providing a multiple-lens, contextualised account of research outcomes. It must be noted that some of the recommendations require an increase to the festival budget, and so financial restraints may hinder implementation. It is expected that these conclusions will provide a useful and practical guide for curators working in contemporary string practice, hybrid arts, experimental and cross-art form festival design.

5.2 Marketing

Two concepts of marketing are investigated in this work. Firstly, the festival form is of itself an “excellent marketing tool” as it provides its audience with an event-experience and opens up opportunities to experience the new and the unfamiliar (Steel 2003:7-8). Secondly, marketing design shapes the audience’s expectations for an event. Ideally, the “festival labels” (Cremona 2005:6) should reflect the event’s conceptual design, communicate its public image, and target the intended audience. Furthermore, careful consideration must be given to modes of dissemination in order to reach the desired target audiences.
5.2.1 Marketing Channels

Restrung marketing materials were effectively disseminated through a wide range of channels in order to reach a broad range of audiences. Data collected at Restrung indicated that flyers and word-of-mouth were the most effective methods. Channels included:

- Local, state and national newspaper features and advertisements
- Street press advertorials and advertisements
- Radio interviews
- Brochures and posters disseminated throughout Brisbane cafés and public spaces
- Email and mail-outs to Powerhouse subscribers
- Band and ensemble email lists.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that Restrung take advantage of internet networking sites such as Facebook for targeted marketing dissemination.
- Links to MySpace (or similar) sites can provide interested parties with samples of Restrung artists’ music, biographies, photos and so forth.

5.2.2 Marketing Focus: Classical or Contemporary?

- The focus on classical aspects of the programme – as communicated through imagery and text – did not adequately convey the diversity of the programme, particularly with respect to installation works and popular artists. This may have limited the festival’s success in drawing new audiences.
- New music events such as Gaudeamus Music Week and World New Music Days have recognised the limitations that classical imagery imposes on a festival’s image, and tend to steer clear of it. Instead, they use images which reflect their programmes’ contemporary content and artistic hybridity.
Recommendations

- The focus on classical content was driven by the need to secure audiences for ticketed classical and New music events which took place in the ticketed Powerhouse Theatre. To enable popular and classical events to have a more equal footing on marketing materials, it is recommended that more popular music groups are presented as ticketed events.
- Alternatively, a festival pass system may assist with equalising the focus between different musical styles through providing access to all acts at one price. Ticketing will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.3 Programming and Staging

Staging and programme design play important roles in enhancing audience reception (see Bontinck 1992:73; Burgess 2005:62) and audience engagement (see Duffy et al. 2007:1-2; Fincher and Iveson 2008:183-184). Furthermore, they are integral factors in the development of a festival’s uniqueness and identity (see Archer 2006:41; Mills 2006:1). Restrung programming reflected the multiplicity of musical styles which exist within contemporary string practice (see Tenzer 2006:34; Hulse n.d.:2). Envisioned as a Wonderland-inspired “immersive artwork” (see Grau 1999:365; Bartlem 2005; Ndalianis 2000), Restrung employed a continuous programme comprising musical, visual, aural, tactile and interactive features. By providing an alternative context to the traditional concert hall, Restrung aimed to open up new possibilities for New music (Macarthur 2010:228). Staging design was intended to break down barriers between audience and stage, the music and the art, thus increasing accessibility. Accessibility was further enhanced through providing a free music programme.
5.3.1 Continuity and Variety of Programming

• Continuity of programming worked effectively as an audience development strategy. Free performances before and after ticketed concerts encouraged audiences to arrive early and stay after Powerhouse Theatre performances. The open nature of the Turbine Hall provided easy access for Powerhouse bar and restaurant patrons. Further, the multiple listeners attracted by different acts on the programme created a mixed audience within the space.
• There was one overlap in the programme. On the Saturday evening, Tara Simmons Quintet performed at the same time as FourPlay in the Powerhouse Theatre. Unfortunately, the festival’s audience base was not large enough for this to work. The majority of Tara Simmons’ audience left mid-way through her set to see FourPlay perform.
• Participants enjoyed the festivity evoked through continuous programming. During festival hours there was always something to listen to, watch, participate in and interact with.
• Participants enjoyed the diversity of the programme, however there were suggestions for further widening its scope.

Recommendations

• Continuous programming was an important and effective element of the Restrung conceptual design. Since this is a Boutique-size festival, it is recommended that only one performance take place at any given time.
• Suggestions for future programmes included:
  o World music
  o More inter-arts and hybrid arts projects
  o More “New music”
  o More interactive elements
  o More participatory elements such as workshops
• More visual arts
• A sound art programme

5.3.2 Free Music

• The Turbine Platform free music programme was a successful strategy for increasing accessibility to contemporary string practice. The evidence presented throughout this exegesis suggests that new audiences were exposed to Restrung’s contemporary string ensembles. The free music provided a comfortable, informal environment for those not accustomed to a concert hall. By virtue of the public nature of the Turbine Hall, ensembles played to new audiences and patrons who had been brought into the space for other reasons. Further, potential, curious audiences could attend without being impeded by the need to financially invest in an unknown quantity.

• The downside of the free music programme was that it did not provide revenue. The festival ran at a loss due to insufficient ticket sales for the Powerhouse Theatre. Even though Ross “didn’t regret a penny spent on it”, financial losses have jeopardised the willingness of the Powerhouse to invest as much capital again (interview, 27 March 2009). Nonetheless, Ross believes that in order for Restrung to grow into a profitable self-sustaining venture, it needs to be invested in over time: “If you want to present this kind of music you might want to have a real go at popularising it and creating a context where you’re actually going to do it for an audience and build an audience beyond the aficionados” (interview, 27 March 2009). The difficulty, however, is that government funding tends to “drip feed” practitioners, rather than provide ongoing support. According to Ross, this strategy is not very effective in helping organisations become “self-sustaining”, as it does not assist in building up an audience over time (interview, 27 March 2009).
Recommendations

- Ross suggested Restrung “cash cows”, such as comedian Tim Minchin\(^{74}\) or rock band Dirty Three\(^{75}\), to improve Restrung’s profitability.
- The adoption of a festival pass system, enabling access to all events at one price. The downside to this is it limits accessibility to potential audiences who are not sufficiently au fait with the programme to justify ticket purchase. The upside is it enables access to all festival-goers to all acts on the programme. Further, the mixed nature of the programme ensures that a variety of different audiences will be attracted to the festival.

5.3.3 Use of Space

- The concept of Restrung as an immersive artwork required continuous programming and multi-sensory stimulation positioned through the building. The Powerhouse has multiple exhibition, performance and social spaces that facilitate the realisation of such a concept. However, a restricted budget limited the number of exhibitions that could be funded, and the lack of signage/maps diminished the visibility of the Violinarium. Nevertheless, Restrung was moderately successful in its ambitions. Multiple spaces were used for numerous different activities:
  - Violinarium: Turbine Rehearsal Room
  - Video installations: various locations
  - Multiple performance areas: Turbine Hall, Powerhouse Theatre and Visy Theatre
  - FourPlay workshop: Graffiti Room.

\(^{74}\) For more information see the Tim Minchin website: http://www.timminchin.com/

\(^{75}\) For more information see the Dirty Three website: http://anchorandhope.com/dc/index.php/artists/dirty-three/
Recommendations

The immersive artwork would have been more fully realised with:

- The addition of the Blunt Instruments or other interactive sound sculptures
- A more extensive video art programme
- The utilisation of more available spaces for video and film installations or showings
- Room-specific interactive or immersive installation works
- Spaces dedicated to workshops or other educational activities
- Maps and signage to assist with navigating the building. A system that was social in nature (for example, the referral strategy outlined in Chapter 4) would also assist with community building within the festival space.

5.3.4 Visual Aspects

- It was intended that the collaborative process between video artists and musicians would create a symbiotic relationship and enhance the sense of immersive space. The outcome had received mixed reviews. Some believed it contributed positively to the overall atmosphere, some felt it contributed to “filling the gaps” between shows (Judith, audience member), and others found it to be a distraction to the music.
- Video installation works were received positively, and assisted the creation of the festivalesque immersive artwork.

Recommendations

- Live mixed video art was optional for bands and ensembles. The process of collaboration between performers and video artists was effective and should remain. However, it is recommended that the available bank of
images be expanded. Overall, the VJing was a worthwhile addition to the programme.

- Smaller video installations (under the stairwell and in the machine room) could have been more effectively placed. Alternatively, a venue map could be used to assist festival-goers in locating the works.
- The addition of a viewing room for short films inspired by contemporary string practice
- To use the outside wall of the Powerhouse for video projections. This would assist in creating ambiance around the building and drawing attention to the fact a festival is in progress.
- To incorporate extensive lighting design within the Turbine Hall to enhance immersive qualities.

5.3.5 Interactive Elements of the Festival Design

- The Violinarium was popular amongst festival participants. It contributed tactile, visual, aural and educational components to the festival. However, it was difficult to locate, and the suitability of the Turbine Rehearsal Room was debated. Some respondents considered it too cramped. Others found that the smallness of the space enhanced the Violinarium’s immersive qualities.
- The Blunt Instrument series did not eventuate due to technical problems, budget and time restraints.
- The FourPlay workshop was very well attended, and contributed substantially to Restrung’s participatory ethos.
- The Restrung Forum worked effectively as a discursive context for contemporary string practitioners. All attendees, bar one, were Restrung performers or curators, highlighting the need to find a strategy to attract audience members.
Recommendations

- Inclusion of more interactive installation works
- Inclusion of more workshops and hands-on activities for students and amateur performers
- Focus group respondents identified Restrung’s suitability for young children, and suggested the inclusion of child-friendly interactive activities
- Ross recommended the addition of a schools programme. There was insufficient lead-time and budget to explore this possibility in 2008.
- The addition of an academic/performance conference has been suggested for Restrung 2012. Two possibilities have been mooted: a student conference focusing on New music composition and performance; and an international conference on marginalised musics.
- Increase curatorial participation. Pre- and post-festival focus groups provided potential audiences with the opportunity to contribute to programme design. Curatorial participation could be increased through the addition of separate streams, for example, visual arts, workshops programmes, which are designed in consultation with specialist practitioners (as seen at TINA).
- Incorporate a composition/hybrid arts competition in order to increase participation of young and emerging artists and increase the festival’s prestige. Competitions assist with industry networking, promotion of local music and provision of performance opportunities for young composers and players. They also act in a marketing capacity through attracting young practitioners to the festival.
- Schedule a jam session for Restrung performers.

5.4 Social Aspects

Restrung acted as a meeting place for contemporary string practitioners and their audiences. Burgess’ studies on Brisbane’s New music audiences (2004:66) indicate that they belong to the Creative Class (Florida 2003:167), a class typified by omnivorous taste and an enjoyment of participatory, active activities. To this end, Restrung incorporated a number of elements designed
to increase engagement with New music through social, educational and participatory activities:  

- The Brisbane Powerhouse is social in design – by virtue of its layout, bars and restaurants. This assisted with enhancing the social aspects of Restrung.
- Continuous programming and the informal nature of the Turbine Hall contributed to mixing audiences and performers in the space. Performers and audience members commented on how this phenomenon contributed positively to their festival experience.
- Parents commented that the informal and social nature of the space contributed to making Restrung a child-friendly event.
- Restrung provided an opportunity for New music and contemporary string practitioners to gather together on common ground.
- As noted in the preceding sections, participatory, educational and interactive activities contribute strongly to the creation of social opportunities. Ideally – with a larger budget – more of such events would be included.

Recommendations

- Include scheduled social occasions for networking, for example, opening and closing parties.
- Increase the number and variety of workshops, forums and educational activities.
- Incorporate children’s activities.
- Increase the number of interactive installa
tions.

5.5 Evaluation of Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods are key to ensuring that a festival can measure its success and improve its
practices (see Williams and Bowdin 2008:89; Robertson and Frew 2008; Ali-Knight 2009). Effective evaluation methods enable multiple inputs into the curatorial process, thereby keeping the festival innovative and open to new ideas (see AEA Consulting 2006:18). Data collected through these processes at Restrung was rich and varied, indicating that the qualitative methods employed were successful in ensuring stakeholders’ voices were heard, and can be acted upon. Following is a summary of the methods employed:

- Pre-festival focus groups provided useful forums for collecting market research.
- Participant observation at Restrung provided valuable direct observations of the festival in progress. However, my role as researcher was limited by a hectic schedule in my other roles as musician, stage manager and curator. This phenomenon was countered through the collection of rich visual and audio data, and through collating a multiple-lens picture of the Restrung experience through focus groups, surveys and interviews.
- Surveys provided some valuable feedback and demographic information. The fact that so few were completed meant that, on its own, the data could not be relied upon to provide an accurate depiction of participants and their festival experiences. To counteract this, data was triangulated with observational data and focus group material.
- Post-festival focus groups provided the opportunity for festival audience members, performers and curators to discuss their Restrung experiences and suggest recommendations for improvements to future models.
- The post-festival contextual review, comprising fieldwork and interviews with festival directors, was an invaluable source of information regarding what works and what does not work at comparable festivals.

Recommendations

- Market research focus groups were an integral part of Restrung, and should remain in the model. They provided the opportunity for participants to co-author the festival design.
- If a festival is to include a participant observation research component – conducted by a curator/performer – it is imperative that other strategies for data collection are
incorporated, for example, surveys, photos, video, audio recordings and focus groups.

• Post-festival focus groups were invaluable for discerning multiple perspectives of the festival, and for collecting recommendations for improvement. These sessions should remain in the model.

• In order increase the completion rate of surveys, it is recommended that a volunteer actively co-opts festival participants.

• The festival review is a recommended tool for comparing one’s own experiences, and learning from the experiences of others. It provided me with the opportunity to ascertain the success and/or failure rate of various curatorial strategies. By choosing to conduct this process both before and after Restrung, I was able to garner advice to assist with Restrung’s creation, and after the festival, to research festivals from a perspective enriched with prior curatorial experience.

5.6 Conclusions

This exegesis has served to map the multiple methods and theoretical approaches involved with the development of the Restrung New Chamber Festival. Restrung was a distinctive model designed to explore the nature of contemporary string practice, with specific focus on New music. In order to promote audience access to innovative musical practices, the model experimented with immersive, aural, visual, tactile and interactive strategies. The evaluation framework was developed to assess Restrung’s success in achieving these objectives. This exegesis concludes with a diagrammatic representation of the Restrung evaluation framework (Table 5.1). This framework summarises the four categories that were identified for evaluating creative success at a hybrid arts festival such as Restrung. Creative success is considered to represent the relationship between curatorial input and participant experience at the festival. Whilst financial restraints inevitably restrict the implementation of creative intent, it is suggested that through the evaluation of creative success, the possibility of financial sustainability will increase over time. It is hoped that this framework will be transferable to comparable hybrid arts events.
This framework was developed through multiple modes of research. Firstly, as detailed in Chapter 1, a contextual review was conducted which situated Restrung within relevant fields of practice. I explained how Restrung was conceived of as an immersive artwork, and developed a definition of New music as a “global sonorous space”. Restrung positioned New music within a context of musical hybridity and syncretism. Macarthur, in her Deleuzian analysis of the Restrung project, suggests that by virtue of this approach, the Restrung programme can be considered as representing a “becoming-music” (Macarthur 2010:228): Through placing New music within a broad spectrum of hybrid styles, the programme was intended to transform and open up possibilities for New music’s future (Macarthur 2010:228). The chapter outlined relevant festival theory, canvassed the issues surrounding audience reception for New music, and explained how Restrung incorporated strategies designed to address these issues.

In Chapter 2, I presented a review of six relevant festivals in Europe and Australia. This chapter addressed the second research question through a discussion and analysis of the strategies used by others to promote audience access to innovative musical and artistic practices. The data was presented in terms of its relationship with the four evaluation framework categories: marketing, staging and programming, social aspects and measuring creative success. The festival review provided the project with context, informed the evaluation process and contributed to the project’s culminating list of recommendations.

In Chapter 3, I detailed how the conceptual design, which formed the core of the project, explored the nature of contemporary string practice, and experimented with strategies designed to promote audience access to innovative musical and artistic practice. This approach, which is informed by the performative research paradigm, was accompanied by participant observation case study methods (including interviews, focus groups and fieldwork) which assisted in the constructivist evaluation process through the assemblage of a multiple lens picture of the Restrung experience. This chapter also provided an
overview of arts festival evaluation literature, and argued for the validation of evaluating the social and cultural impacts of festivals.

Chapter 4 presented the research outcomes as guided by the evaluation framework categories. I explored festival-goers’ perceptions of the Restrung programme through examining the event’s success in promoting audience access to innovative musical practices. I analysed the outcomes of pre-Restrung market research focus groups, the success of marketing strategies, feedback on programming, staging and social aspects. The data reveals that whilst Restrung was an overall creative success, the festival could be improved with specified changes to marketing and programming.

Finally, this concluding chapter presented a list of recommendations generated through the evaluation process. In addition to Restrung’s exploration and promotion of contemporary string practice, the recommendations list and evaluation framework represent the project’s contribution to the field of hybrid arts festival curation.
### Table 14: Restrung Evaluation Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>To be considered</th>
<th>Development/Data Collection/Evaluation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing</strong></td>
<td>Marketing channels</td>
<td>• Target audience/s</td>
<td>• Pre- and post-focus groups with stakeholder groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marketing placement</td>
<td>• Marketing through educational/participatory components, e.g., competitions, schools programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Festival labels</td>
<td>• How programming may effect marketing focus (e.g., the Restrung conflict between classical and contemporary festival labels)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Auxiliary marketing methods, e.g., audience development through continuous, mixed/hybrid arts programming</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Programming and Staging</strong></td>
<td>Continuous/staggered programming</td>
<td>• Venue to suit programme and social objectives</td>
<td>• Pre- and post-focus groups with stakeholder groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choice of venue</td>
<td>• Diverse, programmatically effective event order.</td>
<td>• Surveys at the festival</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Formal/informal setting</td>
<td>• Level of accessibility</td>
<td>• Contextual review: what others have done, and how successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>• Level of participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participatory, educational, interactive</td>
<td>• Visual aspects: lighting, venue dressing, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Events** | • Ticketing: all ticketed/free, mix of free/ticketed events or festival pass  
• Schools programme  
• Conference attached to the festival  
• Competition programme  
• Revenue raising/budgetary restrictions | • Participant observations  
• Interviews with stakeholders and festival directors |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Installation works</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual/multi-sensory aspects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Social Aspects** | Scheduled events  
• Venue choice: access to bars and restaurants.  
• Staging: informal/formal seating arrangements  
• Opening and closing parties  
• Networking opportunities for practitioners  
• Social opportunities for audience and practitioners. | Focus groups  
• Surveys  
• Participant observation of festival-goers’ activities within the space |
| **Informal opportunities** |  |  |
| **Measuring Creative Success** | Focus groups  
Surveys  
Contextual review  
Participant observation | • Audience, performer, management, staff, sponsors, government funding bodies, curator and other festival partners’ perspectives | • Assessment of the value and accuracy of data collection and analysis methods  
• Does data assist innovative, risk-taking programme development? |


Brisbane Powerhouse Arts. (2008). Restrung New Chamber Festival


http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/theatre/2007/03/freedom_of_expression_must_be.html
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=1255844961&clientId=14394 (accessed 14 July 2007).


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