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Constructing the Public Concert Hall

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Abstract In the current discourse surrounding classical music institutions, issues of inclusion and diversity are regularly to the fore. There is pressure to prove the relevance of orchestras and ensembles to wider society, with outreach work in educational settings and in communities already an established part of their output. Using data gathered from a research project with the International Music and Performing Arts Charitable Trust Scotland (IMPACT Scotland), which is responsible for planning a new concert hall in Edinburgh to be called the Dunard Centre, this article extends these debates by relocating them to a new arena: the buildings classical institutions inhabit. First, the public nature of the concert hall is explored by examining three 'strategies for publicness' identified in concert-hall projects: the urbanistic strategy, the living building strategy and the 'art for all' strategy. These will be discussed in relation to the extensive literature on public space. The second part of the article examines recent developments in musicology and arts policy which encourage more 'democratic' arts practice. These will be used as the basis for asking how the concert hall (and its primary tenant, the orchestra) might better achieve the publicness that is so often promised on their behalf.

In the current discourse surrounding classical music institutions, issues of inclusion and diversity are regularly to the fore.[1] There is pressure to prove the relevance of their work to wider society, with outreach work in educational settings and in communities already an established part of their output.[2] The tag of elitism hangs over their work owing to the socio-demographic profile of their concert audiences, the large majority of whose members are from relatively privileged backgrounds. The rallying cry of attempts to expand these activities and their audiences is that classical music should be an open, public art form with as few barriers to access as possible. That the elite-versus-public art debate is still alive is shown by recent discussions around the BBC's mandatory licence fee. Both those who see public funding of the arts as a middle-class conceit and those who believe it is the responsibility of the state to provide cultural opportunities are sharpening

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1 For discussions of diversity and inclusion in orchestras see, for example, Kevin LeGendre, 'We Need to Talk About: Diversity in Orchestras', <https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/News/2016/Oct/We-Need-to-Talk-About-Diversity-in-Orchestras?feed=801abc79-dc9c-471a-85ff-4a3a36bf8a3b> (accessed 28 January 2020); Lisa Tregale, 'Adopting the Social Model of Disability', < https://bsolive.com/news/social-model-of-disability/> (accessed 22 June 2021); and the work of the Chineke! Foundation (see https://www.chineke.org).

2 Tina K. Ramnarine, 'The Orchestration of Civil Society: Community and Conscience in Symphony Orchestras', *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 20/3 (2011), 327–51.

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their arguments in readiness for battle, with the corporation's five orchestras throughout Britain, a professional choir and the Proms all implicated.

While there is still much to debate regarding questions of how classical music can become more welcoming and reach more people, this article seeks to extend these debates by relocating them to a new arena, namely the buildings these institutions inhabit. Rather than discussing the construction of publics in classical music events or in the outreach work of institutions, the focus here is on how the public is understood by those engaging in new concert-hall projects. Exploring the discourses that arise from justifications for such buildings is the central aim here, not studying the physical buildings themselves. This approach will be informed by established debates concerning what actually constitutes 'the public'. What constitutes the public, how they are 'performed' and the ways in which they come into being become crucial issues when considering increasing access to the arts, as well as such important discourses as outreach and 'participation'.[3] It is argued that debates around access, and indeed elitism, permeate the work of those involved, and that the claims made for publicness here have far-reaching consequences that have so far been under-examined. That these issues should come into clearer focus is important from three primary perspectives: first, and most pragmatically, such buildings are the single largest investment in this art form, often supported by significant funds from the public purse; secondly, they are a vital site in which people encounter classical music, whose experiences are shaped by the affectual and architectural characteristics of the space; and thirdly, they are vital to the function of one of classical music's most visible institutions, the orchestra. Owing to this final point, the focus here will be on the relationship between the orchestra and its halls, rather than other classical music institutions.

Data used to inform the discussion are derived primarily from a research project undertaken with the International Music and Performing Arts Charitable Trust Scotland (IMPACT Scotland), which is responsible for creating a new concert hall in Edinburgh. The data here were gathered from the period around the planning hearing of 24 April 2019, at which the building was discussed (beginning five months before and ending four months after this event). Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the IMPACT Scotland team and central protagonists in the Edinburgh planning regime.[4] Data were also gathered via the observation of a limited number of internal IMPACT Scotland meetings; via ongoing informal conversations over this period; and via attendance at the aforementioned public hearing, which is on the public record. As part of the project, study was also made of planning and advocacy documents, including all those pertaining to the planning application as well as the (older) briefs for

[3] Veerle Spronck, Peter Peters and Ties van de Werff, 'Empty Minds: Innovating Audience Participation in Symphonic Practice', *Science as Culture*, 30 (2021), 216–36.

[4] These 14 interviews were undertaken with the IMPACT Scotland team, local councillors on the planning committee, City of Edinburgh Council staff responsible for music provision and venues, a senior architect from David Chipperfield Architects, staff at local heritage bodies and staff from the orchestra, past and present. Each interviewee signed a consent form, which gave them options as to their level of anonymity. They were also given the opportunity to see any quotations that were to be included in publications and to withdraw from the study altogether if they wished to do so.

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prospective architects and the outputs of the two previous design stages produced by David Chipperfield Architects.[5] Thematic analysis of documents and interview data was performed simultaneously. The approach was, at the outset, intended to be ethnographic, particularly influenced by a constructivist position prevalent in science and technology studies.[6] Owing to sensitivities around information leakage in what was a contentious planning process, however, the 'embeddedness' this approach requires was not achieved, resulting in the qualitative study described here. This article presents a confrontation between the empirical material and relevant theoretical approaches from literatures on public space, musicology, urban geography and democracy.

This primary case study is supplemented here by further examples from concert-hall projects in Hamburg, Porto and London (the first two completed, the last aborted in February 2021). The study of the other halls was undertaken through planning and advocacy documents only. These data are included in order to give a wider picture of concert-hall building in Europe and in order to cross-reference whether the Edinburgh project was unusual in the themes that are identified. It is argued that there is significant overlap in the way that these buildings are described in all these European examples. It is also important to note that many of the documents considered here are attempts to persuade the public and public officials of the necessity of the building: they are not descriptions of the actual function of existing halls, but constructions of their potential public impact.

The proposed building itself, designed by David Chipperfield Architects, comprises an auditorium, a rehearsal or small performance space, and a publicly accessible foyer. It is placed – rather controversially – behind Dundas House, one of the first buildings of the historic Edinburgh New Town. The upper spaces for audience circulation should double as meeting and workshop rooms, while the upper 'crown' acts as a viewpoint. There have been several attempts over the past few decades to find a new home for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (hereafter SCO), this being the latest iteration, though IMPACT Scotland describes the remit of the hall as much wider than just classical music. It is envisaged as including jazz, folk music, spoken word and comedy events, particularly during the Edinburgh International Festival. The building is to be called the Dunard Centre after the Dunard Fund, whose principal benefactor is Carol Grigor and which is a long-term supporter not only of the orchestra but also of other arts organizations in the city. At the stage of the planning hearing, the fund had already pledged £35 million, to be supplemented by further private philanthropy, while the 'City Region Deal' has promised £25 million (these funds coming from the

[5] Documents not part of the public planning application were obtained with the permission of IMPACT Scotland. Similarly, the author's presence at formal meetings was approved by the organization. Owing to potential sensitivities arising from data not in the public domain and in order to allow greater access to the field, IMPACT Scotland was given the opportunity to read and to comment on drafts of all potential publications in advance of publication. The author, as a native of the city, a current resident and a trained composer, has connections with the arts world in Edinburgh, but nevertheless knew none of the people involved in the study prior to the research taking place.

[6] For example, Bruno Latour, *Aramis, or, The Love of Technology*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

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British government at Westminster, the Scottish government and the City of Edinburgh Council). The hall was given planning consent on 24 April 2019, yet the decision was challenged through the judicial review process.

At the time of writing, a new design for the hall on the same site is being formulated in order to mitigate some of the criticisms. That some aspects of the hall described here may not become material fact does not make this empirical material irrelevant, however, as the aspirations for the hall were very much part of its story and are likely still to be present in some form.[7] Whether or not this plan is realized is immaterial to the 'strategies' the actors employed in the process. These strategies arise from the empirical material and are interpreted through the lens of literatures on publics and public space. They are relevant regardless of whether or not the project materializes.[8] The aspirations of those involved in, or affected by, the projects are grouped under three loosely defined 'strategies for publicness': the urbanistic strategy, the living building strategy and the 'art for all' strategy. These categories are not explicitly identified by those involved in any concert-hall project, but have been identified in the data as common resources from which all of them draw. Each is set against the extensive literature on public space in which the public as a construction, rather than a stable entity, comes to the fore.

The latter part of the article develops these debates around publics within the framework of recent discussions of music and democracy. These discussions from within musicology are used to ask what the concert hall's potential might be in creating a more open and inclusive experience. The status of these buildings as musical will be explored, showing that similar constructions of publicness, and democratic tensions that exist in the public space literature, are present within debates arising from within artistic practice. Finally, the discussion moves from a spatial to an institutional critique, raising the possibilities of what might be achieved not only by the concert hall but also by the orchestra.

Before moving on to the three strategies it is worth dealing briefly with two objections that may be raised against the approach taken here. The first is that classical events are not the only type that take place in these venues; the second, that concert halls are no different from other cultural buildings that could take similar positions within the urban fabric. The first is undoubtedly true, and the opening up of these buildings to various genres will be discussed below, but suffice it to say at this point that classical music holds a privileged position and that creating a 'new home' for an orchestra is often the impetus for projects that result in new halls being built.[9] Concerning the second objection, there

[7] For more information on the planning process, see Neil Thomas Smith, 'Democratic Debate or Empty Ritual? The Planning Hearing for Edinburgh's New Concert Hall', *Regulation and Planning: Practices, Institutions, Agency*, ed. Yvonne Rydin, Robert Beauregard, Marco Cremaschi and Laura Lieto (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021), 56–67.

[8] This is part of an approach, prevalent in science and technology studies, that takes failed projects and directions as seriously as those that are successful. See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).

[9] This can be seen in the case of Hamburg's famous Elbphilharmonie, as well as the Edinburgh project discussed here.

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will indeed be a good deal of overlap in the discussion that follows with considerations of other cultural institutions, yet it is a failing of the urban literature that the *differences* between cultural buildings are too often smoothed over.[10] These buildings have quite distinct uses, users and 'rhythms' (in the sense of the times at which they are busiest, open or active). There is an attempt here to take seriously the thesis that cultural buildings do not all behave in the same way, and that the particular art forms they house have important consequences for the bricks, mortar and concrete that create them, as well as their position within the city.

1 Strategies for publicness: Edinburgh's hall for all

In *Democracy and Public Space*, John Parkinson includes concert halls among places that 'affect, or are for the benefit of everyone'. This is in a long list that includes locations and institutions as diverse as libraries, public toilets, the natural environment, clean air, parks, baths, promenades and arenas, to name but a few.[11] The concert hall's inclusion here is in fact a relatively rare appearance for musical buildings in the public space literature, a deficit that is more likely to be connected with its apparently tangential relationship to the issues of chief concern to public space theorists – such as commercialization, security and political enfranchisement – than with a belief that it is not to be viewed as a public building at all. Concert halls occupy extremely prominent positions within the urban fabric, imbuing them with a sense of being part of the civic furniture, one that is rarely brought into question. As Pavlos Philippou states in his discussion of selected cultural buildings, two of which are concert halls, they have become 'not only an integral part of urban reasoning, but also amongst the normally-prioritised urban artefacts', a state of affairs that 'appears to satisfy both those professionally engaged in the formation of cities and the wider public'.[12]

[10] Pavlos Philippou's valuable discussion of the urban presence of cultural buildings makes little distinction between their uses. Philippou, 'Cultural Buildings' Genealogy of Originality: The Individual, the Unique and the Singular', *Journal of Architecture*, 20 (2015), 1032–66. Jane Jacobs does briefly discuss Carnegie Hall as a musical hub, but it is only a side issue in her larger argument regarding ghettoizing cultural buildings in general. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961; repr. New York: Modern Library, 2011), 218. City marketing and culture-led urban regeneration strategies put culture at their heart, yet often leave the identity of the cultural institutions they seek undefined. For example, the UNESCO Habitat III issue paper that elaborates on the organization's urban policies states that, 'Culture is now firmly recognized by the international community as a key component of strategic urban planning and a key innovation for the definition of a New Urban Agenda.' UNESCO, Habitat III Issue Paper: 'Urban Culture and Heritage' (2016), <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/ISSUE-Paper-En.pdf> (accessed 22 June 2021), 3. Making distinctions between cultural buildings is useful, however, in order to get beyond the approach that sees these buildings as fully interchangeable urban objects, the main contributions of which are economic, and which bear no relation to a wider creative ecology.

[11] John R. Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57.

[12] Pavlos Philippou, 'Cultural Buildings and Urban Areas', *Journal of Architecture*, 23 (2018), 1259–300 (p. 1294).

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Concert halls and opera houses inhabit prominent positions in cities all over Europe, and indeed in the USA, South America, China, India and beyond. There is no single reason for this conspicuity, though there are some fairly straightforward contributing factors regarding planning regulation, building function and footprint. In comparison with a casino or even a cinema, the rhythm of a concert hall's use adds a 'desirable' – morally uncontroversial and often affluent – evening bustle to an urban area that might otherwise feel empty and windswept. Their prominence can also be explained by the 'elite-driven' nature of the urban environment, in which bourgeois interests in autonomous and well-behaved art are reflected in cultural institutions.[13] Philippou argues that while the architecture of such buildings 'exhibits a tendency for formal and material experimentation, their urbanism is resolutely confined to a spatial strategy pursuing inflated icons, amidst open space, in search of dominant urban scenes'.[14] There is a particular role that such buildings are expected to play, therefore, within the cityscape, even within a diverse range of cultural and regulatory environments. The sheer omnipresence of this phenomenon can lead to an unreflexive inevitability with regard to their position. Even a writer as attuned to social heterogeneity as Leonie Sandercock states that, 'Our highest levels of creativity are seen in art galleries or heard in symphony halls' – without particular reflection on who is allowed to perform on these platforms or who is their primary audience.[15] The public building is constructed in this viewpoint on the basis of prominence, perhaps even dominance, of the urban scene.

Yet at the same time there is a significant body of literature that would fundamentally question the public (and democratic) practice of these buildings. In *Doing Democracy*, Nancy S. Love and Mark Mattern make a distinction between two types of cultural intervention: a 'community arts approach' and an 'elite-driven approach', with the former very much favoured as 'more intrinsically democratic'. The latter focuses on '"flag-ship" projects, cultural centres, and arts districts' which are said to encourage audience development through exposure, which 'will, in theory, increase understanding and appreciation for (high) art, generating more consumption of it'.[16] The Warwick Commission, analysing data from the Arts Council England survey Taking Part, found that in England the 'wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population [...] accounted for 44% of attendances to live music'.[17] Further

[13] See Jan Balke, Paul Reuber and Gerald Wood, 'Iconic Architecture and Place-Specific Neoliberal Governmentality: Insights from Hamburg's Elbe Philharmonic Hall', *Urban Studies*, 55 (2018), 997–1012. For a discussion of the fact that such top-down city regeneration is not only a modern phenomenon, see Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (London: Blackwell, 1995), 11, and Darryl Cressman, *Building Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam: The Concertgebouw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

[14] Philippou, 'Cultural Buildings and Urban Areas', 1033.

[15] Leonie Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities* (Chichester: Wiley, 1998), 213.

[16] Nancy S. Love and Mark Mattern, 'Conclusion: Activist Arts, Community Development, and Democracy', *Doing Democracy: Activist Art and Cultural Politics*, ed. Love and Mattern (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013), 339–65 (pp. 339–40).

[17] Jonothan Neelands, Eleonora Belfiore, Catriona Firth, Natalie Hart, Liese Perrin, Susan Brock, Dominic Holdaway and Jane Woddis, 'Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth',

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research on the classical music industry has confirmed this demographic profile of socio-economic privilege, with orchestras in particular coming under fire for a lack of diversity.[18] Working in the classical music industry has also been revealed as highly precarious, with knock-on effects for those who can 'stay in the game' and establish themselves, not to mention the less palpable exclusions of personal contacts and sense of who 'fits' within this world.[19] The concert hall, therefore, can in this light be seen as a bastion of privilege and exclusion rather than a public good.[20] In response to such critiques, perspectives of what 'counts' as cultural activity have widened dramatically in recent decades, with emphasis on the importance of 'everyday participation' and more informal disciplines and groups.[21]

It is not clear whether Karl Eric Knutsson's 1998 observation that, despite the apparent exclusions of arts practice and consumption, 'various studies […] show that government involvement in supporting the arts is welcome by the citizens' still holds true.[22] Yet, as Parkinson and other actors in this article show, there is a persistent vision of the concert hall as a public space. Considering the socio-economic positioning of audience members and the elite-driven nature of these projects, it is worth asking why this image is still so powerful. The relevance of interrogating these issues is clear from an urban perspective in the continued interest in concert-hall building around the world, from Beijing to Paris via Tenerife and Los Angeles. It is also vital from the perspective of arts policy-makers in Britain and beyond, who are subject to increasing pressures

<https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_final_report.pdf> (accessed 17 January 2020), 33.

18 Subsequent studies have not indicated any significant developments in this area: see Laurie Hanquinet, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor, 'The Coming Crisis of Cultural Engagement? Measurement, Methods, and the Nuances of Niche Activities', *Situating the Local in Global Cultural Policy*, ed. Abigail Gilmore, Leila Jancovich, David Stevenson and Victoria Durrer, special issue, *Cultural Trends*, 28/2–3 (2019), 198–219.

19 Victoria Armstrong, 'Women's Musical Lives: Self-Managing a Freelance Career', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 24 (2013), 298–314; Christina Scharff, 'Blowing your Own Trumpet: Exploring the Gendered Dynamics of Self-Promotion in the Classical Music Profession', *Gender and Creative Labour*, ed. Bridget Conor, Rosalind Gill and Stephanie Taylor, *Sociological Review*, 63/1, supplement (2015), 97–112; Neil Thomas Smith and Rachel Thwaites, 'The Composition of Precarity: "Emerging" Composers' Experiences of Opportunity Culture in Contemporary Classical Music', *British Journal of Sociology*, 70 (2019), 589–609.

20 Identifying a deficit of democratic legitimacy in such cultural institutions is by no means new: in 2001 Graeme Evans stated that the 'profile of legitimated cultural consumption persists in most Western societies and is perhaps the most problematic challenge for cultural policy and planning, in some respects undermining their public/merit good status altogether'. Evans, *Cultural Planning: An Urban Renaissance?* (London: Routledge, 2001), 112. Similarly, Donald Horne states that art is 'something that *for* many citizens is done *for* them and *to* them', all the while taking significant funding from taxpayers. Horne, *The Public Culture: The Triumph of Industrialism* (London: Pluto, 1986), 234.

21 See, for example, Nick Wilson, Jonathan Gross and Anna Bull, 'Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for Everyone', research report (London: King's College London, 2017), <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/-/projects/towards-cultural-democracy> (accessed 22 June 2021).

22 Karl Eric Knutsson, *Culture and Human Development: Report on a Conference on Culture, Cultural Research and Cultural Policy Held in Stockholm, August 1997* (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 1998), 26.

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regarding reaching a wide social demographic. In particular, the institution of the orchestra, usually the primary tenant of these buildings, is questioned by critiques of concert halls' public natures – a point that will be picked up in the conclusion of this article.

From the brief overview of Love and Mattern's distinction between elite-driven and community approaches, the conclusion may be drawn that any attempt by elites to advocate for a new, democratic concert hall must necessarily fail before it has even begun. It seems that the construction of the public under which these elites labour cannot be reconciled with the grassroots approach the authors advocate. Yet the situation is not nearly so simple. A greater self-awareness is evident in the Edinburgh project, for example, than these authors' description allows, and even they do not state that such an approach is beyond redemption, assuming that elites have an interest in 'genuine community development and not simply increasing and reinforcing their privilege'.[23] Sandercock talks of holding in 'unresolved, and unresolvable, tension the transformative *and* repressive powers of state-directed planning practices *and* their mirror image, the transformative and also repressive potential of the local, the grassroots, the "community"'.[24] Reflection on what an elite-driven approach can offer and how it might strive to be more democratic is important, therefore, particularly as most projects rely on a mixture of private and public finance. There is still potential for state intervention to effect major change, though it cannot be done without knowledge of its more local 'mirror image'.

An awareness that the new hall must be described in ways that offer a broad appeal is displayed by those involved in the Dunard Centre, with ideas of democracy and access commonly being discussed. One team member states that a mantra of IMPACT Scotland is that the new building should be 'for everybody';[25] while a second, quoting a colleague, states: 'If it's a place that anyone comes to and says "I don't feel welcome here" […] then we've failed.'[26] Having established from the beginning that the SCO and the Edinburgh International Festival – that is, two 'high art' institutions – will use the building, there was a further attempt to make it a 'facility that will be open all year all day for everybody' with 'all kinds of music'.[27] This move apparently necessitated a certain amount of persuasion directed towards the project's main benefactor, who is a classical pianist and whose initial goal was to support the orchestra and, therefore, classical music specifically.[28]

These attempts take place in the context of the 'constant challenge' of ensuring that the project is not seen as elitist.[29] There are competing constructions here of what the public can mean: the classical music public catered to by a new home for the orchestra;

[23] Love and Mattern, 'Conclusion', 354.
[24] Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, 196.
[25] Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 1, 6 March 2019.
[26] Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 2, 27 March 2019.
[27] Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 1, 6 March 2019.
[28] 'We had to take [the benefactor] with us on that because she is a classical pianist who supports *classical* music, so it was quite a step for her.' *Ibid.*.
[29] Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 2, 27 March 2019.

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the wider live-music public that would discover in the building a rich variety of genre and event; and the 'street' public who may wander into the building from the urban realm. IMPACT Scotland is aware how such a project can be seen to feed into the elite-driven approach: a rich benefactor has gifted a good deal of money to support a building most readily associated with 'high' culture. Edinburgh is just one example of how these proposed buildings are recruited to work against such a reading, through what are labelled here as 'strategies'.[30] As stated above, these are not consciously identified by those involved in the project, but have been identified in the data gathered from all the projects as common means by which the argument for the publicness of concert-hall buildings is made. Each strategy is a way of articulating the design to fight an elitist reading of its purpose through appeals to its public nature, often using justifications that seemingly relate only tangentially to the musical purposes of the building.

1.1 The urbanistic strategy

Concert halls and opera houses are often placed in prominent locations within urban regeneration strategies, acting as focal points.[31] Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, for example, supposedly the largest building project in Europe, is set by the water at the city's dockside.[32] In the literature proposing the hall, comparisons with Sydney were often employed, with the original concept paper entreating: 'Just imagine, what image potential Sydney would have lost, if they had built an office block rather than an opera house!'[33] The hope is that the building will highlight 'Hamburg, like Sydney, worldwide as a metropolis'.[34] Much is staked on new buildings providing iconic and identifiable landmarks for developing (and sometimes also well-established) areas.[35] They are intended to have an influence directed both inward towards the city, giving

[30] There is no intention here that these be identified with Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics, though there is some overlap in that the strategies discussed here are institutional and 'top-down' rather than particularly subversive. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

[31] See, for example, Steven Miles, '"Our Tyne": Iconic Regeneration and the Revitalisation of Identity in NewcastleGateshead', *Urban Studies*, 42 (2005), 913–26; Marius Hofseth, 'The New Opera House in Oslo – A Boost for Urban Development?', *Urban Research and Practice*, 1 (2008), 101–3.

[32] It should be noted, however, that the Elbphilharmonie was by no means envisaged from the beginning as part of Hamburg's HafenCity plan, but is rather more a case of cultural opportunism.

[33] In Joachim Mischke, 'Wie alles begann', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 7 January 2017, <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/elbphilharmonie-chronik-wie-alles-begann-ld.138323> (accessed 26 August 2019).

[34] Projekt-Realisierungsgesellschaft Hamburg, 'Machbarkeitsstudie zur Elbphilharmonie Hamburg', <https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/parldok/dokument/16261/haushaltsplan_2005_2006_sonderinvestitionsprogramm_hamburg_2010_sip_realisierung_des_projektes_elbphilharmonie_einzelplan_1_1_senat_personalamt_staats.pdf> (accessed 26 August 2019), 2.

[35] Whether these buildings engage meaningfully with their surroundings is discussed in Maria Kaika, 'Autistic Architecture: The Fall of the Icon and the Rise of the Serial Object of Architecture', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29 (2011), 968–92. Balke, Reuber and Wood are right, however, to point out that the role of place-loyal – though still internationally mobile – elites is still important (Balke, Reuber and Wood, 'Iconic Architecture and Place-Specific Neoliberal Governmentality').

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residents a sense of pride and identification with their forward-looking metropolis, and outward, attracting visitors and providing the city with a symbolic signifier. The Elbphilharmonie was intended to encourage the development of the HafenCity area, allowing it to achieve an 'urban character', while leading to a 'liveliness' into the evening hours.[36] Again, the issue of evening vibrancy and how it can be achieved comes to the fore.

The hopes for the Edinburgh hall are rather more modest. Terry Levinthal of Edinburgh's Cockburn Association, one of the oldest architectural conservation organizations in the world and a consultant in the planning process, describes a concert hall as a 'useful public thing' for that part of the city. It is, he argues, a good way of ensuring that the area is not 'taken over by hotels', which are 'private', 'insular' and 'anti-city' in the way they set up a barrier between the exclusive space of the hotel and the public realm.[37] The position of the site behind Dundas House and the potential connection of the busy St Andrew Square with the new St James shopping centre (under construction at the time of writing) is, according to Levinthal, an opportunity to 'create a new quarter'. This 'civic building, a concert hall, could be really interesting' in that it constitutes a 'bigger opportunity' that is 'civically minded'.[38]

The architects, too, were keen to highlight the way in which this building should contribute to urban connectivity through 'new routes opening up', as well as being a benign and inviting presence in the cityscape.[39] During the planning hearing, David Chipperfield described the 'democratic invitation' of the building, which a senior architect defined as a 'matter of opening the building up to everybody and making it inviting to the degree that the public can almost penetrate [it] at their wish'.[40] Accessibility is a vital part of this democratic invitation, the architect contrasting it favourably with the 'penthouse' of a private building, which is 'exclusive [...] expensive [...] almost seen as elitist'.[41] In this supposedly public building, the upper floor is intended to be open for all, and 'in that sense it is giving, making the urban or architectural experience available to everybody to enjoy in a way and to use'.[42] This is echoed by Gavin Reid, Chief Executive of the SCO, who states that, 'One of the things that is key to this whole elitism thing is [...] the general population's ability to bump into stuff and say, "Oh, I'm here, oh that's interesting, let's have a cup of coffee, let's have a look at this."'[43] The manner in which members of the public (in this case construed as pedestrians) see and interact with the building as a part of the cityscape is seen to contribute to its public character. The visibility of the musical building, and presumably the work of the orchestra, is intended to fight against the sense of this

[36] Projekt-Realisierungsgesellschaft Hamburg, 'Machbarkeitsstudie zur Elbphilharmonie Hamburg', 2.
[37] Interview, Terry Levinthal, 15 April 2019.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Interview, senior architect, David Chipperfield Architects, 15 July 2019.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] Interview, Gavin Reid, 10 June 2019.

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being an elitist enclave: people should see, inhabit and use the space as part of their daily lives.

There is a central division in the design of concert halls that makes openness or 'democratization' difficult from the perspective of public space. Since the nineteenth century, the design of such buildings has been based on creating a hermetic auditorium from which the outside world is excluded. The division between circulation space and auditorium has been more of a 'boundary' than a 'membrane' in Richard Sennett's terms: an interface that is policed and closed rather than porous.[44] This division is reflected in the early descriptions of London's now abandoned Centre for Music project, proposed jointly by the London Symphony Orchestra, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Barbican. According to its website, 'The light-filled, multi-level foyer presents a porous entry, accessible from street level and via the Barbican's highwalk network, while the concert hall is designed as an intimate and inclusive space for up to 2,000, in which every seat in the house is a great seat.'[45] Opening up the auditorium creates all sorts of difficulties in terms of the building's function and acoustic design that only the bravest architects, funders and civic authorities would countenance. Hence the focus on surrounding the 'inner sanctum' with easily accessible foyers and circulation spaces, and hence the intention that vitality and diversity bleed into it, in preference to opening up the central 'acoustic egg'.

The most prominent, and still rather conservative, example of opening up this space is the Casa da Música in Porto, designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (led by Rem Koolhaas), which has a glass wall behind the stage that, if unadorned by its specially designed curtain, can let in natural light and impressionistically smudged views of the trees and sky outside. The Centre for Music in London was designed with 'pods' which had windows looking onto the auditorium and a live sound link so that those inside can see and hear what is happening from outside the hall. The accompanying visualization of these pods showed a class of children and a teacher, implying that the pods would allow a lively educational experience while not disturbing rehearsing musicians. A further example is provided by a new hall in Arnhem, which can open out onto a park behind, creating greater opportunity for outdoor concerts if the orchestra pivots 180 degrees. The boundary between auditorium and outside world is evidently an area that is slowly producing innovative design solutions.[46]

For decades now, a desire has been expressed in the public space literature for more space – sometimes encapsulated by 'the street' or the Italian piazza – in which the public might freely mingle.[47] Such space has been described as being in decline,

[44] Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 219–20.

[45] See <http://centreformusic.culturemile.london/> (accessed 6 January 2020).

[46] It was only with the invention of gas and electric lighting that windows became unusual in concert-hall design. Designs for older halls sought to incorporate daylight, usually through high windows. This is a case in which innovation in concert-hall design seems to be moving backwards and forwards simultaneously.

[47] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber, 1976); Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); Jon Goss, 'The "Magic of the Mall": An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built

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whether through poor urban planning or by commercial enterprises acquiring the urban fabric.[48] This in turn has led to significant reflection on what constitutes public space and what sorts of planning and building might result in places in which, through their design and their more diffuse affectual and institutional elements, diverse people may encounter one another. This is not the place to rehearse the full range of these debates, but certain points are important to note. First, there is an established criticism in this literature of a tendency to 'romanticize' and essentialize the idea of public space to give the impression that it is a conflict-free zone. Doreen Massey states that this tendency ignores the 'need to theorise space and place as the product of social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal'.[49] Parkinson contends that appeals are often made to democracy in urban theory literature in order to resolve conflict, when in fact 'more often than not the concepts of democracy and public *give rise to* […] conflicts'.[50] If a space is democratic or public, it is a mistake to consider this as referring to a fixed, static entity: both the space itself and the public(s) that use it are dynamic processes in which tensions will certainly appear.

The term 'public' itself is a far more slippery concept than it would at first seem. Michael Warner states: 'When people address publics, they engage in struggles – at varying levels of salience to consciousness, from calculated tactic to mute cognitive noise – over the conditions that bring them together as a public.'[51] Publics are created through the means by which they are addressed. To find out what 'the public' is thinking involves going out and getting involved in community organization and agitation, as Sandercock encourages through her notion of 'insurgent planning'.[52] Often the most powerful publics come into being only around particular issues: they are defined, in other words, by conflict. This does not, of course, preclude the idealized version of public space having some power as something against which to measure existing spaces. Don Mitchell states that the idea of space being 'open to all' transforms into a 'rallying point for successive waves of political activity'.[53] Kurt Iveson, too, suggests that the job of critique could be seen as 'hold[ing] a mirror up to actually-existing public spheres' so that they live up to their own principles.[54] The concert hall is described as something that can fight against the private interests that might otherwise hold sway in the city, contributing to the civic life of the town. It is also seen to contribute to place-making in neighbourhoods in a way that housing, commercial or industrial developments cannot.

Environment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83 (1993), 18–47 (p. 24); Doreen B. Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), 152; Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*.

48 Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*; Marc Augé, 'Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity', trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995); Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

49 Massey, *For Space*, 152.

50 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 8 (emphasis original).

51 Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2002), 12.

52 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, 8.

53 Don Mitchell, 'The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85 (1995), 108–33 (p. 117).

54 Kurt Iveson, *Publics and the City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 23.

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It is important to note here that the actors connected with the concert-hall projects have primarily spatial resources at their disposal. It does little to aid their efforts to gain planning permission or garner political support to talk of widespread institutional reform rather than the urban effects of the building. The stage of the projects at which many of these data were gathered may have led to an emphasis on urbanistic strategies rather than those of collective cultural celebration and identity. This is also a consequence of the rather curious situation of cultural planning in which advocacy documents for planned institutions are far more numerous than sober and realistic evaluations of existing examples.[55] It is not the intention here to say that having an ideal of the concert hall as a public space is necessarily detrimental, as it is used as an inspiration to fight against essentialized notions of who can appreciate particular musics. Problems arise only if these aspirations become the apparently solid basis of policy decisions, or if they are used to obscure a situation on the ground that is far removed from more democratic aims. The public constructed within this strategy is very general: 'the city' is used to describe a public that is omnipresent yet somewhat intangible, potentially masking the interests of those who would rather not make them explicit.[56] In the next two strategies, this constructed public comes slowly into clearer focus.

1.2 The living building strategy

Visibility and prominence are not the only vital ingredients for a successful (and public) hall, and there is a concurrent attempt to make these buildings feel 'alive'. An important part of the Edinburgh design, for example, is a large open foyer, including an all-day café. Such cafés are a common element to many cultural buildings, which seek to offer food and drink as a way of injecting life into spaces that could otherwise feel empty or overbearing. The planning documents for Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie talk of it becoming a 'hot spot', and rather more ambitiously than most concert-hall projects, it includes various bars, restaurants and eateries in its impressive expanse.[57] In Dundee, the new Victoria and Albert Museum has a huge entrance hall with shop and café, which takes up a surprising portion of the building's footprint in relation to the exhibits. The chief architect, Kengo Kuma, describes it as a 'living room for the city'.[58] The idea of a culture-café is now a model that forms a key part of most new cultural building projects.[59]

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55 For more discussion of the challenges of these circumstances, see Smith, 'Democratic Debate or Empty Ritual?'

56 Iveson argues that the interests of 'the city' can often hide the specific interests of local elites. Iveson, *Publics and the City*, 40.

57 Projekt-Realisierungsgesellschaft Hamburg, 'Machbarkeitsstudie zur Elbphilharmonie Hamburg', 99.

58 V&A Dundee, 'Kengo Kuma Sees Vision of V&A Dundee Revealed', press release, 19 October 2017, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/dundee/info/kengo-kuma-sees-vision-of-va-dundee-revealed> (accessed 29 April 2020).

59 In early 2020 Tate London advertised a position as 'head of coffee' with a salary of £39,500 plus sales-related bonus, 'with great benefits', reflecting the importance of the role across all of its sites. See Lanre

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IMPACT Scotland team member 2 discusses how the café and foyer can contribute to the life of the building by relating experiences of their having lived outside Britain: 'I used to go [there] all the time because you could be sitting having a cup of coffee and then you would get an impromptu [traditional art form] performance […] If we could replicate something like that it would be fantastic.'[60] The café becomes a means of encountering musical experiences *by chance* in an informal environment with supposedly fewer barriers to entry than the 'official' hall itself, and certainly no need for a ticket. It becomes a way of communicating the building's musical mission, rather than just serving drinks and sandwiches.

The café is also vital in creating life in the building outside standard performance times. The concert hall, like a football stadium, though quite unlike buildings that house visual art, is a 'sequential space' with one function at a particular time, remaining empty outside its hours of operation.[61] There is pressure for these buildings to take on more functions so that their use is more evenly spread. This includes commercial activities such as conferences, meetings and – in the case of Perth Concert Hall – ceilidh dances. Incidentally, this diversification applies to football stadiums as much as to concert halls: a recent stadium development in Edinburgh includes a nursery school.[62] Yet it is not only commercial activity that should enliven the Dunard Centre. IMPACT Scotland team member 1 states: 'There will be music in the foyer *every day*, which will, I think, make it a bit different from other places.'[63] The fact that there was a rehearsal hall in the original plan that could have been used for smaller performances, as well as the main hall, also added in theory to greater visibility for the professional musicians, who would have walked through the foyer while the 'public' ate and drank. This potentially would have facilitated greater interaction between the orchestral members and their potential audience.

This focus on the café is another consequence of the boundary between the auditorium and the outside world discussed above, one that is policed by the process of purchasing tickets. Peter Spearritt argues that in 'real' public space, 'You are regarded as a citizen, as a legitimate member of society even if you don't intend to make a purchase of a product or service.'[64] Roy McEwan, a former director of the SCO, picks up on this by stating that in a modern hall there should be 'discrete hospitality facilities where you can squeeze people for money but not make other people feel as if they're,

Bakare, 'Tate Britain's £40k "Head of Coffee" Role Sparks Row over Low Curator Pay', *The Guardian*, 29 January 2020 (<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jan/29/tate-britains-40k-head-of-coffee-role-sparks-row-over-low-curator-pay>, accessed 22 June 2021).

60 Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 2, 27 March 2019.

61 Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, 206.

62 'New Nursery Opens in Tynecastle as Part of Hearts–Edinburgh Council Partnership', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 6 December 2018, <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/education/new-nursery-opens-tynecastle-part-hearts-edinburgh-council-partnership-193914> (accessed 6 January 2020). This is in many ways also a move backwards, as performance spaces have been multifunctional from the beginning. See Michael Forsyth, *Buildings for Music: The Architect, the Musician, and the Listener from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

63 Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 1, 6 March 2019.

64 Peter Spearritt, 'The Commercialisation of Public Space', *Environmental Planning – Management in New Zealand* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 81–96 (p. 82).

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you know, second-class citizens'.[65] This would also, apparently, have been part of the Centre for Music's living building strategy, which saw the building as a 'beehive of activity both day and night – creating a place where people want to spend time, even without a concert ticket'.[66]

Dismissing the concert hall because of the price of admission alone is a rather too simplistic understanding of the divide between public and private parts of the city. Parkinson, following Raymond Geuss, states that 'appeals to the publicity or privacy of something are actually appeals to other values that are bundled up in the labels "public" and "private"', and he argues that it is these values to which we should attend.[67] Warner also argues that 'public and private are not always simple enough that one could code them on a map with different colours' and that most things are 'private in one sense and public in another'.[68] Debates over the closure of shops on local high streets in Britain provide an example of how private businesses can have meaningful social functions for communities.[69] Global lockdowns due to Covid-19 have only given further weight to this argument.

It is at this intersection that the foyer culture-café is intended to function. A commercial venture should imbue the building with a liveliness in such a way as to make it a pleasant place to be, creating encounters between audience and musician, audience and non-audience. This ties in with the long history of coffee houses being places of news gathering, gossip and indeed musical performance.[70] Yet an over-reliance on such private space also has its dangers, heightened by the fact that such spaces are expected to bring in revenue. Cafés can be policed in a manner not unlike a concert in that the 'ticket' of a cup of coffee is a prerequisite for lingering there, while the affective dimensions of such businesses send out many signals (modern versus traditional, trendy versus family-friendly) that can make people feel uncomfortable. Levinthal also argues that such additions can end up being loss-leaders, while their net contribution to the urban area can be minimal, as they take away from other 'legitimate' businesses, and he questions whether a building with public funding should be doing this. He states that these spaces are often franchised, meaning that control over this crucial part of the 'life' of the building will not necessarily be in the hands of those with such democratically minded intentions.[71] To take Edinburgh as an example, such venues tend to exist in visual art spaces, such as the National Gallery of Scotland, the Scottish Portrait Gallery, the Fruitmarket Gallery, the Edinburgh Printmakers and the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop (the last also funded substantially by the Dunard Centre's benefactor). The

65 Interview, Roy McEwan, 29 October 2019.
66 See <http://centreformusic.culturemile.london/> (accessed 6 January 2020).
67 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 51; Raymond Geuss, *Public Goods, Private Goods* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
68 Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 27–30.
69 See, for example, John Harris, 'The British High Street: RIP', *The Guardian*, 22 January 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2011/jan/22/future-of-high-street-hmv> (accessed 6 January 2020).
70 See, for example, Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), and Noël Riley Fitch, *The Grand Literary Cafés of Europe* (London: New Holland Publishers, 2006).
71 Interview, Terry Levinthal, 15 April 2019.

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extent to which these spaces are attractors for people of all socio-economic demographics is far from certain.[72]

Finally, the living building strategy also relates to the offices that are to be housed in another listed building to the side of the main concert-hall site. At present the SCO offices and their main performance venue in the city are separated by a 30-minute walk, so the new location presents an opportunity for the orchestra to inhabit a particular space more visibly and to have increased informal communication between musicians and management – the face-to-face contact that Allen Scott has identified as important in creative industries.[73] Furthermore, the orchestra will be only one of the clients inhabiting the building, the idea being 'that there will be much more of a melting pot of organizations and collaboration'. Reid states that, 'One of the exciting things is what we can all do, those of us who use the hall on an occasional basis, *together*, to break down the traditional walls of "it's my data, you can't have it" and to build […] greater, more diverse audiences, increased audiences, for everything that we do together.'[74] This strays into the 'creative quarter' territory, in which collections of creative enterprises and organizations are said to create a lively atmosphere and enhanced cultural and economic prospects.[75] Behind all these attempts at a living building is the silent sentinel of the traditional concert hall, in this case typified by Edinburgh's Usher Hall, a building that interacts very minimally with any member of the public during the day, opening before an evening concert and shutting shortly afterwards.

1.3 The 'art for all' strategy

There is overlap between the final strategy, 'art for all', and the living building strategy, in that in the new building encounters with music are said to be made more easily in both. Yet, there are further distinct ways in which it is hoped that new halls will connect with and inspire the populace. The Centre for Music stated on its website that it 'aim[ed], above all, [to] be a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience the joy of making-music first hand'.[76] There is a change of emphasis in the role of these buildings, from being solely places of musical consumption to becoming sites of creation and cultural engagement, a shift that will be initiated by a wider range of artistic partners than was the case in concert-hall projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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[72] Sharon Zukin identifies restaurants as places of work for cultural workers, and it is not much of a leap to apply this to cafés as well. Judging by the present author's own patronage of some of these venues, there is a danger that they become places for those who already possess significant cultural capital. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, 153–86.

[73] See Robert C. Kloosterman, 'Come Together: An Introduction to *Music and the City*', *Music and the City*, ed. Kloosterman, special issue, *Built Environment*, 31/3 (2005), 247–57 (p. 250).

[74] Interview, Gavin Reid, 10 June 2019.

[75] Graeme Evans, 'Creative Cities, Creative Spaces and Urban Policy', *Urban Studies*, 46 (2009), 1003–41; Maryam Pourzakarya and Somayeh Fadaei Nezhad Bahramjerdi, 'Towards Developing a Cultural and Creative Quarter: Culture-Led Regeneration of the Historical District of Rasht Great Bazaar, Iran', *Land Use Policy*, 89 (2019), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264837719309731> (accessed 28 January 2020).

[76] <http://centreformusic.culturemile.london/> (accessed 6 January 2020).

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This strategy is an important part of the justification for the Edinburgh hall. Team member 1 responsible for City of Edinburgh Council music provision states that IMPACT Scotland is 'utterly determined that this is going to be a music centre for everybody, open access and opportunities for, you know, making music, singing involving both artists and choir groups, extending over to Celtic Connections in Glasgow – they're doing all that work'.[77] This will be the home of the SCO's education activities, which have a track record of engaging with a wide variety of social groups. It is also intended to be the base for the National Youth Choir of Scotland, which aims to take a portion of the office space. The argument is that the activities already being undertaken by these groups are given a boost and increased visibility by this new facility – not to mention, of course, extra capacity and rooms to use for their sessions. Team member 2 responsible for council music provision states that the project is not 'landing with no hinterland, with no previous experience, with no capability', and that the track records of those involved in education and outreach mean that impact from this point of view is likely.[78] Orchestras, from this perspective, are already attempting to engage with those outside their core audiences, and a new building will help them to achieve this to a greater extent.

The 'art for all' strategy is also present in the type of programming in which this building is expected to be involved – that is, in what types of music will be performed. As mentioned above, new halls are rarely described in terms of their classical programme alone. In fact, in the Edinburgh project the orchestra was strategically placed as *a* client rather than *the* client. IMPACT Scotland team member 1 states: 'It was very clear that if we [...] tried to develop this project as being an SCO project it would fail.' This was because, 'The SCO was regarded as too elitist to be the front runner, so we had to make sure that the SCO was a prime tenant [...] and would have a strong educational role but was not the [...] rationale and essence of doing this project.'[79] This interviewee does point out, however, that – with its three out of ten trustees – the organization is very well represented. Discussing the hall, Reid states that the 'more people can grab hold of it, see what it is and how they can relate to it, we hope that more organizations will find a way [...] in[to the hall] on a regular basis', and that 'commercially, let alone artistically, this has to operate on many different levels', whether this be 'folk and traditional, jazz, mid-scale rock and pop, comedy, or spoken word'.[80] This account of a modern concert hall is far broader than a palace for classical music, something that Reid ascribes to more diverse artistic vision as well as commercial necessity.

One consequence of the messy and dynamic public/private divide, and the ability of institutions to define the affectual properties of space, is an idea summed up by the phrase

[77] Interview, team members 1 and 2 responsible for City of Edinburgh Council music provision, 8 August 2019. Celtic Connections is a festival celebrating Celtic music that takes place annually in Glasgow.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Interview, IMPACT Scotland team member 1, 6 March 2019.

[80] Interview, Gavin Reid, 10 June 2019.

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'access is not enough'.[81] The theoretical ability to go somewhere and be in a space does not instantly fulfil the remit of a public space, as so many other, institutional and affectual, issues come into play. The definition of the concert hall as a public space, therefore, is not just a matter of the physical environment, but also of the organizations involved and their relationship with audiences. Iveson further argues that, 'Assessment of sites will depend on what it is we might want to say, to whom we might want to say it, how we might want to say it, the circumstances in which we might want to connect with others, and our ability to imagine and exploit the opportunities afforded by a given site.'[82] Spatial issues do play a role here in what types of encounter they encourage, but in reaching publics there is a great deal more that needs to be considered. The 'art for all' strategy engages with these issues, as the users of these buildings should be encouraged to take ownership of the building. Amos Rapoport states that built environment is given meaning 'through personalization – through taking possession, completing it, changing it'.[83] Stewart Brand answers his own question, 'What makes buildings loved?' with the word 'use'.[84] The concert hall as a site of creativity is matched in Rapoport's account by a creative process of place-making, of taking ownership of a building through its use.

1.4 The strategies and public space

These three strategies are attempts to make the concert hall more open, democratic and public using quite different means. The halls' programmes, their personnel, the presence of various organizations on site, the café, the design of the building within the urban fabric and its vivacity are seen as potential contributions to fighting the tag of elitism, which is a constant presence in the backdrop to actors' activities. The actual effects of these buildings are likely to have consequences for cultural and artistic ecologies quite different from the terms of their justification. The vision of public buildings laid out above relies on specific constructions of the public: as café-goers, as schoolchildren, as pedestrians and as the amorphous 'city'.

In the light of the literature on public space, the attempts to make the concert hall a space for all appear to rely on idealized notions both of the impact of a new building and of the ability of music to appeal outside its well-worn social demographic areas. One solution, advanced by Sandercock in *Towards Cosmopolis*, is that the city must be viewed as a far more heterogeneous entity than was the case in past planning practice.[85]

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81 Mary G. Dietz, 'Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship', *Feminism and Politics*, ed. Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 378–400 (p. 379). See also Iveson, *Publics and the City*, 25, and Carole Pateman, 'Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy', *Public and Private in Social Life*, ed. Stanley I. Benn and Gerald F. Gaus (London: St Martin's Press, 1983), 281–303.

82 Iveson, *Publics and the City*, 35.

83 Amos Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 21.

84 Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*, rev. edn (London: Phoenix Illustrated, 1997), 10.

85 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis.* See also Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 119; Iveson, *Publics and the City*, 44.

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This approach, while helpful from a planning perspective, serves only to raise more questions, however, when applied to the concert hall. The spatial concerns of planning mean that a variety of spaces allow different publics to enjoy the city in different ways simultaneously, which might imply that the 'classical' concert hall should be perfectly acceptable as long as there is ample provision for other musics elsewhere, in arenas, theatres and studio venues. This is one vision of spatial diversity in music provision, and it is an important aspect of cultural planning. Yet, these other spaces tend to act as private enterprises that are not expected to receive state support, leading back once again to the question of democratic legitimacy for the funding that concert halls – and orchestras – receive.

Diverse programming is certainly a step towards the democratic concert hall, yet the timebound nature of the performing arts results in something of a 'temporal ghettoization'. If a youthful audience is attracted to an event with a singer-songwriter one evening, and a chamber orchestra with primarily grey-haired listeners takes place the next, does that meet the pleas for heterogeneity and government demands for effective use of public funds? Certainly, this does not quite meet the vision of the 'art for all' strategy above; nor does it fit with Sennett's ethical vision for the city, in which there is an 'awareness of' and 'encounters with […] others unlike oneself'. He warns that, 'Indifference to strangers, because they are incomprehensibly strange, degrades the ethical character of the city.'[86] Meeting the unfamiliar in the concert hall is also not just a question of audience numbers but of the social, as well as the aesthetic, experience that is offered there.

Some may point to the role of technology and broadcasting at this point as a means of spreading the activities of the concert hall far and wide in a highly accessible manner, particularly considering the needs of people with disabilities, who are often disadvantaged by the urbanistic strategies explored above. Indeed, much of the literature concerning public space engages with the 'mediatization' of spaces of protest, which creates a hybrid form of physical and virtual spatial characteristics.[87] The Centre for Music proposal picked up on this point, the website stating that digital technology will be 'fully integrated into the building's design and infrastructure' so that 'music and education activity' can be 'distributed to a global audience'.[88] No other project delved with any particular depth into these issues, meaning that detailed discussion is beyond the analytical frame described here. It is likely, however, that such attempts will become increasingly important in new concert-hall projects and will create a new means by which these buildings can argue for their publicness. Yet, it is important to remember that 'access is not enough' applies just as readily to the digital as it does to the physical realm. Technology is no shining solution to the demographic issues of audiences and lack of encountering the unknown, while the significant investment in the live experience evidenced by carefully designed auditoria implies a privileging of co-presence in classical performance.

86 Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, 125.
87 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 2.
88 See <http://centreformusic.culturemile.london/> (accessed 6 January 2020).

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The discussion of these strategies has shown that the way in which an elite-driven intervention can create a successful public space is made more rather than less complicated by the considerations of what makes public space in the rest of the city. One important recommendation that comes from a variety of literatures is for a *diversity* of spaces, though there is also a discussion of how uses for public space can be conflicting: space for quiet solitude versus space for public performance, for example.[89] The 'Towards Cultural Democracy' report encourages an 'ecological' view of artistic practice in which central and formal arts spaces and organizations should be seen as linked to the more informal and local cultural practices that take place in communities.[90] The 'palaces' of culture have an important role here, as is shown in the report when two members of a choir talk of the joy of singing in their local town hall; but central intervention is not tantamount to the creation of a positive ecology throughout a city or region.[91] The issue is often one of funding allocation rather than the merits of centralized cultural buildings per se: whereas local authority and council funding has dwindled for local arts groups, grand multimillion projects still go ahead, though often not without controversy and risk. The next section considers how a more critical understanding of 'the public' might aid attempts to make concert halls more democratic institutions. This relies on an understanding of democracy and public space as conflicting, and of the roles of cultural institutions as provocative.

2 Music of community; music of challenge

A purely spatial approach to the question of the concert hall's publicness certainly raises important issues, yet it is not the full picture. Important debates around democracy have arisen from within artistic practice, the inclusion of which is important to aid the process of extending beyond generalities regarding cultural buildings and their effects. Using these discussions of how the aesthetic experience should reflect or promote democratic values within society, this section explores what implications this has for the relationship between concert halls and their publics.

The fact that this building is a concert hall, a place for music, is important. Beyond its architecture, there is a strong sense of the ideal that music as a universal language is a symbol of bringing people together and that the concert hall is a marker of cultural identity, a place for the community to celebrate musical experience. The academic literature is by no means immune to this viewpoint, with David J. Elliott, Marissa Silverman and Wayne Bowman asking why music is 'so extraordinarily effective at promoting social bonding and group cohesion'.[92] This narrative is problematic in the

89 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, 214; John Parkinson, 'How Is Space Public? Implications for Spatial Policy and Democracy', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 31 (2013), 682–99 (p. 682).
90 Wilson, Gross and Bull, 'Towards Cultural Democracy', 4.
91 *Ibid.*, 29.
92 David J. Elliott, Marissa Silverman and Wayne Bowman, 'Artistic Citizenship: Introduction, Aims, and Overview', *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Practice*, ed. Elliott, Silverman and Bowman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3–21 (p. 4).

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light of the previous discussion of audience profiles; indeed, awareness that such universalism does not exist is a strong reason for the strategies described above. As with public space, there is certainly idealism here in focusing on such buildings' potential to provide music for all, but just as few would say that the failure of so many spaces to be truly public is a reason to give up on public space altogether, the ideal of a concert hall as a space of cohesion should not be dispensed with entirely. The conversations on public space have painted an image of the concert hall as it is, with all its layers of difficulty, but keeping in mind the aesthetic potential of musical experience maintains a perspective of concert halls that sees them as places of possibility. The 'lack' of collection in such buildings brings this sense of potential to the fore, as concert halls are essentially an elaborate method of housing empty space, one that can be made to sound in a huge variety of ways.

So far in this discussion, the purpose of concert halls and other cultural institutions has been seen as one of 'catering' to different publics. The implied experience is one of identity and community building in which consensus is presumed. Yet, there is an alternative view of these institutions' purpose and effect. David Carr states that there is a 'tendency to see museums and libraries as public places where all problems have been solved, and they merely await our attention', whereas he believes they should be seen as places where 'problems are perpetually refreshed, assembled, and discovered'.[93] This is very much in line with Iveson's focus on the creation of publics rather than their *de facto* existence.[94] Although Carr's focus is on other cultural institutions, the implications for the concert hall and its relationship to wider society are tantalizing and will be discussed further below.

First, however, two different images of the purpose of cultural institutions will be examined: the first as a place in which communities perform their identities to themselves and celebrate their artistic achievements; the second as one in which societal issues are made visible and audible, in such a way as to contribute to some form of public debate or consciousness raising. These relate to what Robert Adlington describes as 'two different understandings of democracy' that feature in a debate that began with a response by Stella Duffy to the 'Towards Cultural Democracy' report mentioned above.[95] The first, with an 'emphasis on community', reflects 'an idea of democracy revolving around inclusive participation, with culture viewed as a means to heal […] social rifts'.[96] The second contains 'contestation' and 'the facilitation of different, often minoritarian, visions and values as part of the public sphere'.[97] Two versions of the role of art within society are seen to map onto differing

[93] David Carr, *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2003), 168.
[94] Iveson, *Publics and the City*.
[95] Stella Duffy, 'Excellence in the Arts Should Not Be Defined by the Metropolitan Elite', *The Guardian*, 30 June 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/30/excellence-arts-should-not-be-defined-by-metropolitan-elite> (accessed 13 August 2018); Robert Adlington, 'Music Together, Music Apart: On Democratic Communities', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 144 (2019), 191–204 (p. 192).
[96] Adlington, 'Music Together, Music Apart', 192.
[97] *Ibid.*, 193.

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conceptions of democracy itself, one characterized by consensus building, the other by bringing out conflicts that are already present in society. Both suggest radically different roles for these buildings in relation to their constructed publics.

The first of these visions of art and democracy is most readily seen in the report that began this debate, which has a vision of 'cultural democracy' in which all people have the option to participate in cultural activity and that such activity is viewed far more broadly than just participation in 'the arts'. The authors argue that a 'deficit model' has plagued much community intervention with the idea of 'taking great art to the people', presuming a lack on the part of those communities and 'sustaining dubious hierarchies of cultural value'.[98] Instead, they propose that, for adults and young people, both access to high-quality cultural offering and the ability to create and co-create their own versions of culture are vital. These activities, say the authors, should be encouraged by 'a wide range of organisations, groups and information, resources and individuals who are familiar with each other's work and services – regularly sharing information, resources and expertise'.[99] Community arts often make good on this promise of inclusion by typically choosing more everyday locations than the palaces of culture.[100] There is a specific spatial element to the distinctions made between these approaches, as 'community arts seek to create a public and address a public issue, not just exist in a public space'.[101]

Adlington's second conception of democracy can be summed up by Anthony Gardner, who states that democracy is 'not a politics of harmony, but a politics of conflict'.[102] This reacts to the emphasis on community and cohesion in the communitarian position by stating that, in the words of Ian Pace, art 'is not just a means for producing social harmony'.[103] There is significant common ground here with the discussion of public space as potentially conflictual and unstable, as opposed to the idealized vision of it simply being a place for all. Indeed, Parkinson's criticism of the publics posited by new public space can usefully be applied to orchestral audiences: he states that, 'Buildings of the formal public sphere are increasingly and systematically excluding people as citizens, purposive publics, and privileging incidental or leisure publics.'[104] This can be seen in the intersection of such concert-hall projects with tourism and entertainment strategies.

A conflictual attitude to democracy does not necessarily mean that the art that finds a place in democratic spaces is in some way antisocial or set against 'the community'. Indeed, working 'with the community' has the ability to be a far more conflictual field than is often acknowledged in positions that have a lingering nostalgia for 'meaningful

[98] Wilson, Gross and Bull, 'Towards Cultural Democracy', 19.
[99] *Ibid.*, 3.
[100] Love and Mattern, 'Conclusion', 346.
[101] *Ibid.*, 343.
[102] Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art against Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 32.
[103] Ian Pace, quoted in Adlington, 'Music Together, Music Apart', 192.
[104] Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 17.

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social relations' and 'wholesome (non-market) values' that were only ever one part of the story, ignoring inequality, imperialism and racism.[105] For Sandercock, working within the community is far more about specific intervention and particular issues and problems within society. Her vision of insurgent planning includes practices such as 'mobilizing constituencies, protest, strikes, acts of civil disobedience, community organization, professional advocacy and research, publicity, as well as the proposing and drafting of laws and new programmes of social intervention'.[106] Communities are created and disperse with each new intervention or societal issue.

There is a persistent tension in trying to square music's potential to bring people together with its capabilities in distinction, its apparent potential for societal cohesion with its ability to mark out social tribes.[107] A constructivist vision of publics posits that all publics create exclusions; the best that can be hoped for, it seems, is that their bounds must be as flexible as possible.[108] In terms of the concert hall, it is not necessary to dismiss the cohesive potential of music-making entirely as this is a vital part of the musical experience, but it cannot be the building's entire mission. A conflictual understanding of democracy reveals a challenge to music institutions and concert spaces. It is worth asking, with Chantal Mouffe, what would happen if 'instead of trying to erase the traces of power and exclusion' such issues were 'brought to the fore, making them visible so that they can enter the terrain of contestation'.[109] Carr offers a similar vision for cultural institutions when he states that the 'problem' they address is that, 'They trouble us, and so assist us in becoming who and what we are meant to be.'[110] There is no need for musical practice to make an either/or choice here between cohesion and contestation; rather, there can be a mix of cohesive – yet open – events with those of a more insurgent nature. A democratic hall would be a place where negotiations between these two tendencies are ongoing.

Imagining the concert hall as a 'troubling' space in fact creates a rare connection between the call for community art and the work of contemporary artists. For community workers, the approach of 'expert' artists who produce 'difficult' works are something of a *bête noire*, yet in offering the unfamiliar and strange, or focusing on areas of conflict, the two may in fact both hold the potential for contributing to the transformation of these spaces. There are also mutual lessons to be learnt, for artists to rid themselves of deficit-model perspective, and for workers in the community to see the products of their work as potentially a provocation rather than a forced cohesion. Laura Iannelli and Carolina M. Marelli state that the work of an engaged artist requires

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[105] Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, 190.

[106] *Ibid.*, 204.

[107] Zukin asks a related question orientated towards the city: 'How can we make the city as a cultural object more accessible when cultural institutions regularly create markers of social distinction?' Her definition of cultural institutions is, however, a little wider than that used here. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, 284.

[108] 'As well as objecting to the new privatisations and exclusions, we might address the question of the social relations which could construct any new, and better, notion of public space. And that might include, sometimes, facing up to the necessities of negotiated exclusion.' Massey, *For Space*, 152–3.

[109] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 149.

[110] Carr, *The Promise of Cultural Institutions*, 46.

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'knowledge of the places and their problems',[111] suggesting that both contemporary artists and community projects have the ability to create a new orientation for art in the concert hall, one that is more concerned with the places in which this art is performed than with an apparently spatially diffuse 'great' tradition. This is not to say, however, that the latter should be abandoned, nor that the former will not have resonance in other locations.

Both also offer a vision of the concert hall as a troubling place in which to encounter otherness, one that is very distant from the 'bathing' in the light of the great works which is the mainstay of many an orchestral programme. This distance indicates the challenge of such moves, however, in that 'selling' such an experience to an audience accustomed to a more cohesive musical experience courts the danger of pleasing no one.[112] In this, it might be argued, cultural workers already have enough of a struggle on their hands maintaining their institutions and simply doing their jobs. This is precisely the point that Ana Vujanović addresses when she argues that it is still important, despite such challenges, to ask: 'In what ways can and should we think about how to transform art and its institutions while austerity measures, and the overall privatization of the public, threaten to throw the arts into the dustbin of history?'[113]

Conclusion: from space to institution

It may seem that the discussion has moved away from the practical attempts of projects to involve as many people as possible, yet there are important lessons to be learnt here. Concert halls certainly have the potential to be public space, yet the move towards accessibility – towards a situation where everyone could go to the hall if they wished to do so – has already been problematized by the literature on public space. 'Everyone' is a public too general for the kind of insurgent intervention that is implied by a more conflictual understanding of democracy. There is no 'all' that can be appealed to, as every intervention is some kind of construction. There must be specific groups and events, particular publics that are constructed, specific alliances that are made, in order to claim democratic legitimacy. In this, the 'art for all' strategy comes closest, but only if it grasps the potential for these places to be where people themselves engage with and make art on their own terms.

Spatial critiques regarding access, visibility and classed/gendered spaces easily morph into critiques of the institutions themselves, showing how the spatial can reveal important elements of the social. Yet it should also be considered whether issues are being too easily elided: institutions and their spatial instantiations are not synonymous. Clearly there are buildings which in their permeability and welcoming qualities offer

[111] Laura Iannelli and Carolina M. Marelli, 'Performing Civic Cultures: Participatory Public Art and its Publics', *Performance and Citizenship*, ed. Maria Rovisco and Peter Lunt, special issue, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22/5 (2019), 630–46 (p. 637).

[112] A director of a major London venue said recently at an industry conference that arts managers work in 'retail' and that sensitivity to audience's desires, at the expense of one's own particular tastes, is vital.

[113] Ana Vujanović, 'Art as a Bad Public Good', *Artistic Citizenship*, ed. Elliott, Silverman and Bowman, 104–23 (p. 119).

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themselves to various publics with greater ease, and it is the job of architects and their clients to create these. It is also clear, however, that the abilities of these characteristics to make significant impacts on the appeal of classical music are easily overstated. The appeal to commercial activities to achieve vivacity, as in the culture-café model, can be part of this mix, but it is not the only solution. It remains an open question whether the concert hall can be a place of informal small-scale gathering that does not require the purchase of any commodity. There is also potential for specifically musical elements in such time spent in a concert hall, through free listening exhibitions or areas of reflective quiet that encourage private musical or sonic experience, or simply contemplation. An earlier example of such attempts can be found in the museum in Paris's Cité de la Musique. With more radical design approaches, there may even be ways of opening up the auditorium so that 'openness' permeates the entire space.[114]

Yet, as discussed above, 'access is not enough' and the discussion of the construction of publics raises questions and makes challenges to the orchestra as the most prominent institution within these halls. The first question is, quite starkly, whether the orchestra is capable of becoming the democratic institution that an open vision of the concert hall would require. It could simply be one tenant among many, if an important one, as in the Edinburgh case study, thereby giving other organizations more access to the space to create diverse programming and audience demographics.

This is certainly plausible, yet it does not necessarily meet the requirements of democratic space owing to the danger of temporal ghettoization. In the discussions rehearsed above, the conditions for democratic institutional practice are seen to concern displaying difference and revealing the tensions of the social: anything less would be seen as homogenization. This need not be a dumbing down, however, as there is potential here for challenging work; indeed, the institution of the concert hall as a place *to be challenged* is a vital component. This is not, either, an appeal to do away with the 'traditional' orchestral programme, but rather an invitation not to feel afraid to add to it, or to reframe and reimagine it. There should be no underestimation of the challenge that orchestral institutions face in order to become more democratic and to make their homes more democratic places. Nevertheless, many institutions are already involved in such work.[115] What the intersection of theories of democracy and the claims for these buildings reveals is the different perspectives on what access means from the point of view of performance, community, institution and policy: architects, in the cases discussed here, want their buildings to be permeable and to flow well; communities seek ownership through the active presence of a diverse range of people; and institutions want to increase the size and diversity of audiences. Access is not only 'not enough', but it is also defined in highly differing terms.

[114] There are barriers to this, however, as the main auditorium is the principal asset of these institutions: if they are used for rehearsal, for example, this can have a negative impact on the hall's business model.

[115] The present research forms part of the work of the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music, which is a collaboration between the Philharmonie Zuidnederland, the Maastricht Conservatorium and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. There is great willingness, in some organizations at least, to change and develop their offering.

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Yet, all is not doom and gloom for the orchestra. It has a scalability and identity that allows it to function in many spaces and times, while still connecting these activities to a wider spectrum of musical activity. The exceptionally disciplined tradition of orchestral playing and the critical mass of musicians that this allows; its (in many cases long-established) education and outreach activity; and its increasing flexibility in arrangement mean that the orchestra as an institution is uniquely placed to inhabit a building in ways that few other musical institutions can achieve. The skill of its musicians is an incredible resource that can cut across genres, particularly if the space of the concert hall is seen as a place of collaboration among musical groups rather than the sole preserve of classical music. The report 'Towards Cultural Democracy' also makes this point, stating that 'developing new partnerships and networks' is crucial, and that at present 'there are significant limitations to the ways that partnerships and networks across different domains of cultural creativity operate'.[116] Such work is ideal for countering the temporal ghettoization that is a potential side effect of diverse programming. The concert hall can be a space that looks outwards beyond the city to the traditions and artists that have been so influential in constituting cultures around the world, yet there is far more room here to engage directly with local populations, to be a space of democratic dispute and self-reflection.[117]

It should be recognized, however, that no organization can cater to everyone. This means that, in terms of space, the question must be asked whether there is room in these buildings not just for the 'official' musical organizations but also for 'counterpublics' and their organizational constellations,[118] which require resources and space at an affordable rate. This suggests that a certain redundancy could be factored into these buildings, to be filled by local need, something that will be a difficult topic to broach when talking with funders, particularly with buildings in sought-after central locations. It would also require a shift in what is thought 'appropriate' for these buildings: the affectual properties of the space, for example, and who should be seen there. If greater openness is the aim, then it is precisely those people whom audiences and administrators do not expect, or even desire, to see in the concert hall who should be targeted. The question is how the building might become a useful resource for these counterpublics.

The answers to the issues identified here cannot be only spatial, yet there are spatial recommendations to be considered around creating these welcoming spaces that do not require users to make payment in order to dwell in them, making space for other organizations that reflect the community, and providing space for reflection and musical experience in a busy world. Yet the work of the orchestra, if it is to take responsibility for democratizing the concert hall, is likely to be more important than any specific spatial strategies. Key here is understanding that 'access' is an active rather

[116] Wilson, Gross and Bull, 'Towards Cultural Democracy', 50.

[117] The complications for the SCO as being responsible for Scotland *as a nation* on account of its Scottish government funding are worth noting here.

[118] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics.*

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than a passive state, and that expansion of the art form requires the construction of radically different publics. Then the concert hall can make good on some of its promises as a place where many publics can create, enjoy and experience a culture that reflects where they are from, that reveals the diversity in their own communities and that lets them encounter the strange, new, disturbing and exciting.

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