

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The purpose of my thesis has been to portray a critical synopsis of the way the classical music industry has developed its business practice since the pivotal year of 1989 in which EMI released its recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. A structured marketing model based on pop album releases highlighted the potential of mass market appeal of classical music. The major record companies, in particular EMI and what was then Polygram, restructured their classical divisions in order to capitalise on the success of both the *Four Seasons* and the first Three Tenors' recording. What became Core Classical and Strategic Classical segments of the market were introduced to form a business model for the major record companies. It was fortuitous that 1990 gave the classical music sector a further boost to a mass market appeal through both the BBC using the aria *Nessun dorma* as the theme tune for the 1990 World Cup; and also Polygram recording the concert that Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras gave before the final game of the World Cup competition. The global reach of the concert (800 million viewers people) in which Pavarotti performed *Nessun dorma* ensured record-level sales of the recording.⁶⁰¹ The use of television for both events (the *Four Seasons* for advertising and a documentary on Nigel Kennedy) is significant in the raising of classical music's profile.

My own experience of participating in the *Four Seasons* campaign and witnessing the uniqueness of approach adds relevance and authentication to the details illustrated in my thesis; furthermore my broad-based contacts in the classical music industry provide reliability through a multi-faceted approach. Current and former practitioners with experience and relevant knowledge in the classical music industry have contributed to my thesis.

The four major sections in the document mirror in broad terms three principal areas of the classical music business: marketing, internet trading and broadcasting. These are areas in which I have knowledge and experience through my employment. An additional chapter

⁶⁰¹ <http://classicalmusic.about.com/od/performerbiographies/p/thethreetenors.htm>

critically evaluates the contribution of music to the cultural creativity of the UK. The latter is useful because it provides a framework for the classical music genre and highlights two facts: first that classical music organisations operate in a highly business orientated manner, and second that there is much data that still needs to be researched in order to fully contextualise the classical music industry fully within a UK cultural perspective. The four identified chapters do allow for further areas of the industry to be examined, but for this initial research I wished to concentrate on areas in which I had direct experience.

By tracing the changes in marketing techniques since the *Four Seasons*, my mission has been to chart further subsequent changes through the 1990s and 2000s. My thesis has evaluated mass-market traits in the classical music business over a 20 year period, identifying the processes involved and identifying practitioners' responses to the changes in their fields of work. The re-focusing of the classical music business, especially by the major record companies, led to other organisations in the sector following suit. Interestingly the changes in these other areas became most evident in the mid 2000s when the music industry comprehended the permanence of the internet. Trading online became one established way of selling tickets and providing marketing material for consumers. Orchestras have become adept in this field; the examples of the RPO and Philharmonia's experiments in virtual concerts indicated the potential for development in this area. Opera companies (such as ENO and ROH) have explored the visual aspect of classical music through cinema screenings (of opera productions) and the ingenious use of inclusiveness with their consumers via their websites; the latter, in particular, through blogging and social networking.

One of the most interesting aspects of my research has been to observe the growth of the empowerment of the artist. With easier access to the market through internet developments, musicians themselves are using their own websites as a tool for selling recordings, concert tickets and merchandise as well as incorporating a social networking facet. Tasmin Little's two ongoing CD ventures, and singers Barbara Hendricks and Thomas Hampson are cases in point.

In broadcasting, Radio 3 has engaged in online experiments through its Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, and Tchaikovsky broadcasts. With an average listener's age of 57 and a target age range of 35-54, these downloading endeavours indicate a classical music network developing its business tools in order to keep pace with a changing business environment (see Chapter 3, page 79).

Financial data set out in Chapter 6 indicates the mixed fortunes of the music genre in the UK. Private investment rose by 3% between 2008 and 2009 (see Chapter 6, page 192); figures from DCMS on the number of businesses in Music and the Visual & Performing Arts pointing to an over-turning of the decline between 2006 and 2007, reaching 31,200 in 2008 (see Chapter 6, page 199). This places music within the context of performing and visual arts. However further research into the classical music sector within this field would be useful in order to explore both the significance in business terms of the classical music industry (especially the economic value of imports and exports), and also the commercial adaptability of the sector to developments in its business.

The growth in interest in classical music as a genre over the last 20 years is illustrated throughout my thesis. The utilisation of classical music in high-profile, public events and venues continues today. One example is London Underground's roll-out of classical music throughout its network⁶⁰² and the results of an ICM poll showing the public favouring a classical music jingle for the London 2012 Olympics.⁶⁰³ With further proposals for the inclusion of contemporary classical music in the Olympic Games by the PRS for Music Foundation, the example of the 2012 Olympics is a major endorsement of classical music in a mass-market setting, through being associated with the greatest global sporting event available.⁶⁰⁴

Ultimately classical music has developed into a product-orientated service. Selling concert tickets or a CD is just one facet of an organisation's *modus operandi*. The musical world has

⁶⁰² http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/music/article3284419.ece

⁶⁰³ http://abo.org.uk/user_files/Press-Releases/ClassicalOlympicAnthemRelease24Feb10.pdf

⁶⁰⁴ <http://www.musicweek.com/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=1041207>

three participants: the listener, the musician and the music company (be it a record company, broadcaster, promoter, publisher or venue) and the last 20 years have seen the classical music industry move in a similar fashion. Musicians and consumers have become more independent of the industry itself through advances in new technology, and the industry developing its business model through wider-focused marketing tools.

In 2007, at Pavarotti's funeral the aria that catapulted the singer to world fame (*Nessun dorma*), was played; at the same time the Italian air force flew over Modena Cathedral where his funeral service was taking place. This was the final summation of not only an example of the acceptance of classical market in a mass-market environment, but an acknowledgement to one of its instigators.